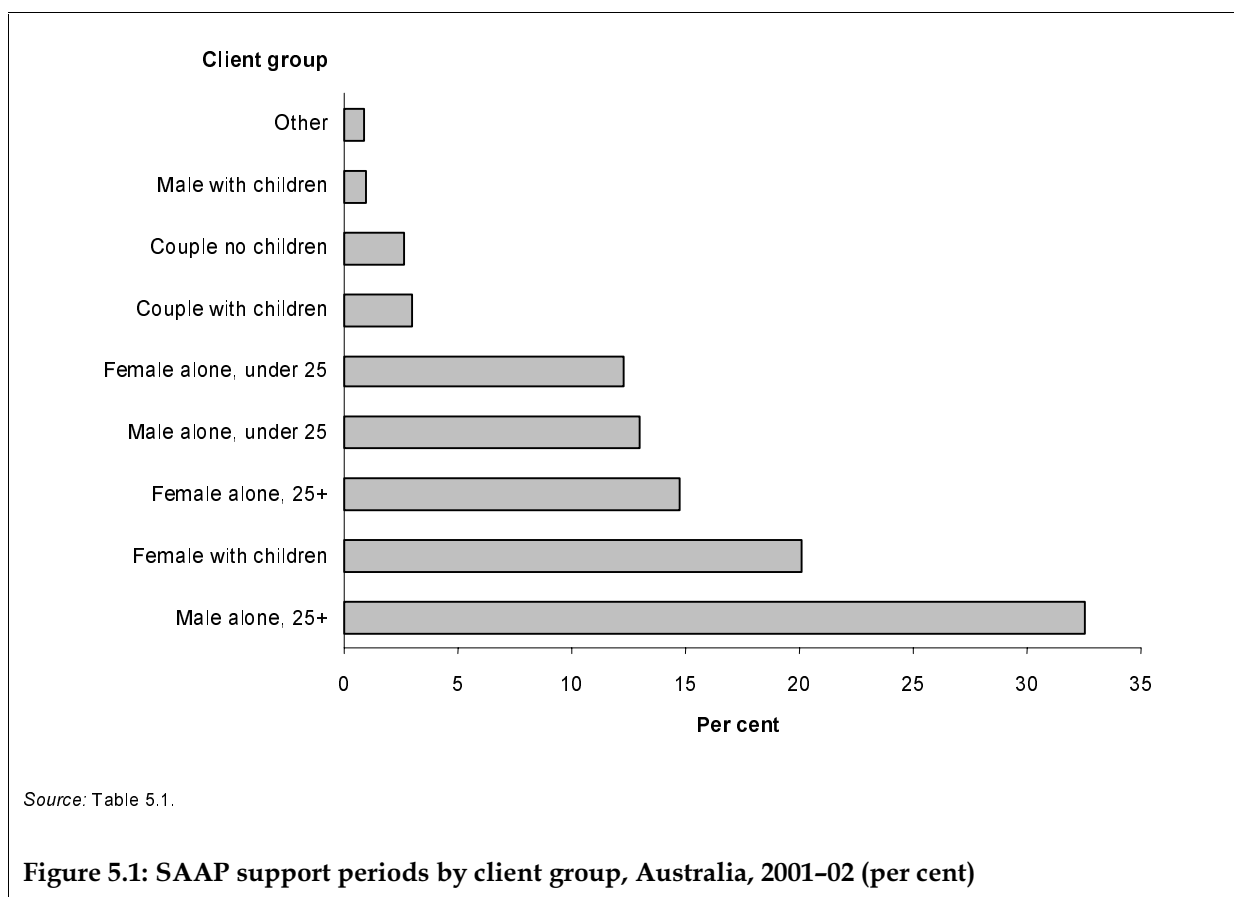


5 Client groups and reasons for seeking assistance

Client groups

Figure 5.1 gives a breakdown of the number of support periods provided to the main client groups. Nationally, one-third (33%) of support periods were provided to males aged 25 years and over presenting alone at SAAP agencies and 20% were provided to female clients with children. Unaccompanied females aged 25 years and over accounted for 15%, while unaccompanied males and females under 25 years accounted for 13% and 12% of support periods respectively. Overall, 6% of support periods were for couples with or without children. Males with children accounted for just 1% of all support periods.



Client group profiles varied between States and Territories. For example, agencies in New South Wales more commonly supported unaccompanied males compared with other States and Territories, with 57% of their support periods being for this client group (Table 5.1). At the same time, agencies in New South Wales had the lowest percentage of support periods for unaccompanied females, at 24%. Conversely, agencies in the Northern Territory provided the lowest percentage of support periods to unaccompanied males (32%) and the highest to

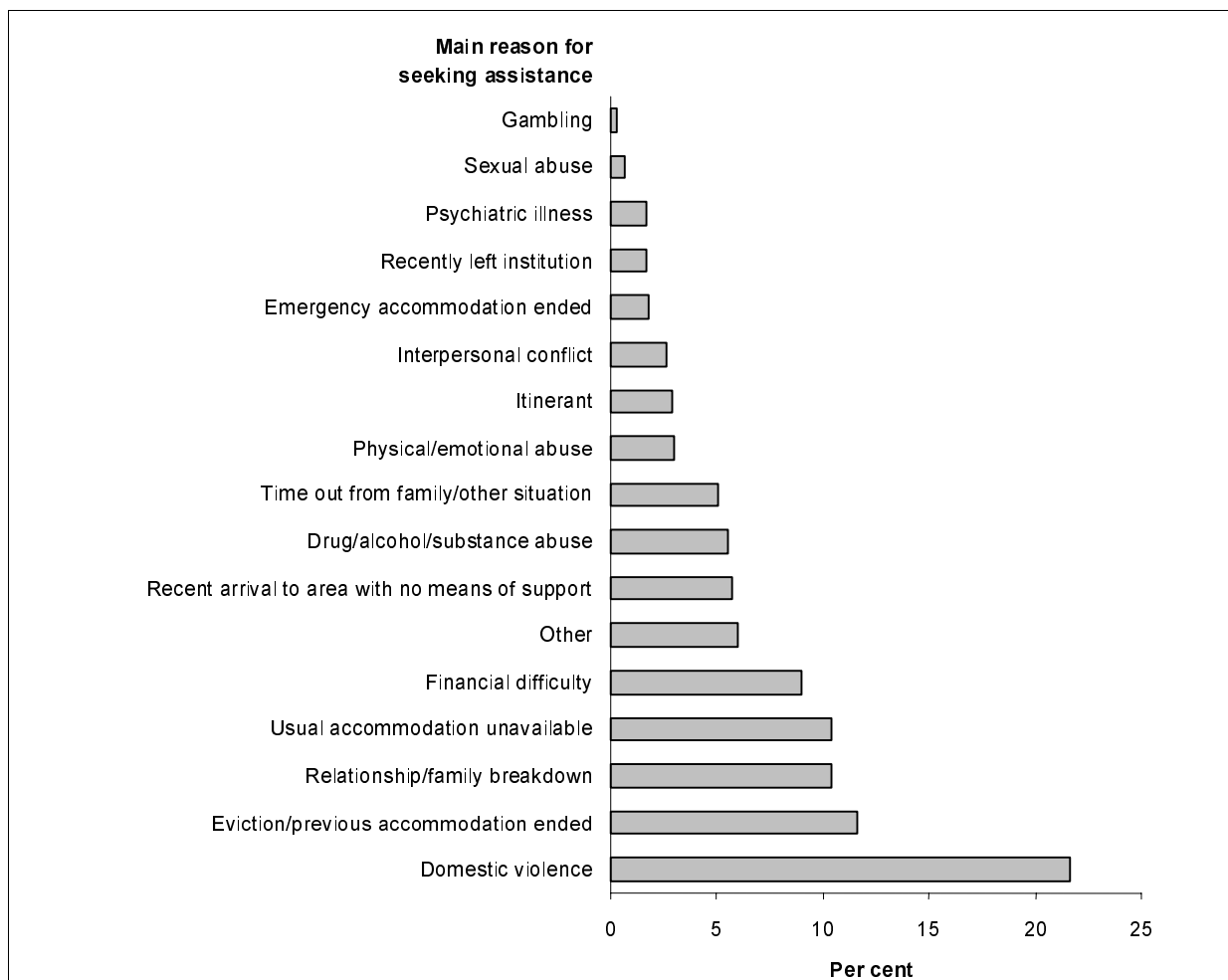
unaccompanied females (35%). Victorian agencies provided almost double the national average of support periods to couples with or without children (11%, compared with 6% nationally). Support periods provided to females with children ranged from 14% in Queensland to 30% in South Australia.

The client profile within agencies of various target groups is shown in Table 5.2. As might be expected, agencies with specific target groups tended to provide services predominantly to that client group. Consequently, 80% of support periods at agencies targeting young people were for people under 25 presenting on their own, while agencies targeting single men were overwhelmingly used by unaccompanied males aged 25 or over (83% of their support periods). Similarly, agencies that targeted women escaping domestic violence were mainly used by females with children (accounting for 56% of support periods in these agencies) and unaccompanied females (41%). Half (50%) of the support periods provided by cross-target group agencies were to unaccompanied men aged over 25 years.

Main reason for seeking assistance

In addition to recording client characteristics, the SAAP Client Collection collects information on the main reasons clients seek assistance from general SAAP agencies. Overall, the most common main reasons clients gave for seeking assistance in 2001–02 were domestic violence (in 22% of support periods), eviction or the ending of previous accommodation (12%), and relationship or family breakdown and usual accommodation unavailable (both 10%) (Figure 5.2). Drug and alcohol abuse was cited as the main reason for seeking assistance in 6% of support periods. This may, however, understate the importance of substance abuse in homelessness since data on reasons for seeking assistance are not collected from high-volume agencies, which often support single men (see Table 5.4 for reasons given by unaccompanied males).

The main reason given for seeking support varied considerably according to the client group. In 53% of support periods for females with children and 44% for unaccompanied females 25 years and over, assistance was sought primarily because of domestic violence (Table 5.4). Unaccompanied people under 25 most often reported relationship or family breakdown as their main reason for seeking assistance (in 17% and 21% of support periods for males and females respectively). For unaccompanied male clients aged 25 years or over, the most common main reasons for seeking assistance were financial difficulty (16%) and drug, alcohol or substance abuse (14%). Among couples with children, eviction or the ending of previous accommodation was the most common main reason for seeking assistance (in 28% of support periods for this client group). Eviction or the ending of previous accommodation was also the prime reason couples without children reported that they sought assistance, being cited in 21% of their support periods.



Source: Table 5.4.

Figure 5.2: Main reason for seeking assistance, Australia, 2001-02 (per cent support periods)

In general, there were only small variations across the States and Territories in the proportions for most of the main reasons for seeking assistance. However, some main reasons showed marked variation. Most notably, domestic violence ranged from 12% of cases in Tasmania to 35% in the Northern Territory (Table 5.3). There was also substantial variation in the proportions of support periods for which eviction or the ending of previous accommodation was given as the main reason (from 4% in the Northern Territory to 16% in both Tasmania and Victoria). The proportions citing drug, alcohol or substance abuse varied from 2% in the Northern Territory to 10% in Western Australia.

Other main reasons for seeking assistance varied across the States and Territories, including the percentage of support periods in which relationship and family breakdown was reported (from 6% in the Northern Territory to 12% in the Australian Capital Territory) and the percentage noting that the reason they sought assistance was because they had recently arrived in the area from another town or country with no means of support (from 4% in Victoria to 9% in both the Northern Territory and Tasmania).

5.1 Tables

Table 5.1: SAAP support periods: client group by State and Territory, Australia, 2001–02 (per cent)

Client group	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Total	
									%	Number
Male alone, under 25	13.1	12.8	12.1	12.8	14.8	15.5	21.7	8.8	13.0	22,500
Male alone, 25+	44.3	20.1	41.2	25.3	19.7	29.7	24.4	23.3	32.5	56,300
Female alone, under 25	11.4	13.6	10.1	10.9	15.3	13.8	21.9	14.5	12.3	21,200
Female alone, 25+	12.6	13.5	16.7	19.7	15.0	10.5	9.1	20.8	14.7	25,500
Couple, no children	1.1	5.5	2.0	1.9	1.4	2.5	0.8	2.0	2.6	4,500
Couple with children	1.3	5.4	2.5	2.1	2.7	3.6	3.6	2.9	3.0	5,100
Male with children	0.6	1.8	0.7	0.5	0.9	2.0	0.8	0.4	1.0	1,700
Female with children	14.9	25.8	14.3	25.1	29.6	21.9	15.6	26.2	20.1	34,900
Other	0.6	1.5	0.4	1.6	0.6	0.5	2.1	1.0	0.9	1,600
<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 (%)	27.0	25.3	23.6	8.2	8.2	3.3	1.5	2.7	100.0	..
Total (number)	46,900	44,000	40,900	14,300	14,300	5,800	2,600	4,800	..	173,400

Notes

1. Number excluded due to errors and omissions (weighted): 3,522.
2. Figures have been weighted to adjust for client non-consent and agency non-participation.

Source: SAAP Client and Administrative Data Collections.

Table 5.2: SAAP support periods: client group by primary target group of agency, Australia, 2001–02 (per cent)

Client group	Young people	Single men only	Single women only	Families	Women escaping DV	Cross-target/multiple/general	Total	
							%	Number
Male alone, under 25	38.6	13.9	0.8	2.4	0.4	7.9	13.0	22,500
Male alone, 25+	2.0	82.7	0.8	5.8	0.6	50.2	32.5	56,300
Female alone, under 25	41.5	0.4	18.4	3.8	7.7	5.1	12.3	21,200
Female alone, 25+	1.8	1.5	55.9	6.7	33.5	15.7	14.7	25,500
Couple, no children	3.1	0.4	0.4	5.3	0.3	4.7	2.6	4,500
Couple with children	2.0	0.2	0.8	23.5	0.5	3.7	3.0	5,100
Male with children	0.6	0.3	—	6.0	0.1	1.5	1.0	1,700
Female with children	8.7	0.4	21.9	44.9	56.3	10.4	20.1	34,900
Other	1.7	0.2	0.9	1.6	0.7	0.8	0.9	1,600
<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>..</i>
Total (%)	19.8	17.7	2.2	5.0	21.4	34.0	100.0	..
Total (number)	34,300	30,600	3,900	8,600	37,100	58,900	..	173,400

Notes

1. Number excluded due to errors and omissions (weighted): 3,522.
2. Figures have been weighted to adjust for client non-consent and agency non-participation.

Source: SAAP Client and Administrative Data Collections.

Table 5.3: SAAP support periods: main reason for seeking assistance by State and Territory, Australia, 2001-02 (per cent)

Main reason for seeking assistance	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Total	
									%	Number
Usual accommodation unavailable	9.8	10.9	10.0	12.5	9.0	11.5	10.3	8.5	10.5	13,300
Time out from family/other situation	4.8	3.8	6.9	5.9	5.5	4.8	6.8	7.8	5.1	6,500
Relationship/family breakdown	10.9	11.4	10.0	7.8	10.4	11.3	12.0	5.5	10.4	13,200
Interpersonal conflict	2.2	2.5	3.2	2.9	3.0	4.3	2.8	2.2	2.7	3,400
Physical/emotional abuse	2.4	2.3	3.6	3.9	3.8	3.2	2.8	6.6	3.0	3,800
Domestic violence	17.9	21.3	22.1	25.1	30.1	12.2	13.8	34.7	21.5	27,300
Sexual abuse	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.4	1.5	3.6	0.7	0.5	0.7	900
Financial difficulty	10.6	7.3	11.7	9.2	6.0	8.0	5.0	10.6	9.0	11,500
Gambling	0.7	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.3	400
Eviction/previous accommodation ended	9.6	15.7	10.6	7.1	11.0	15.8	14.1	4.3	11.6	14,700
Drug/alcohol/substance abuse	9.3	3.3	3.4	9.8	2.7	4.3	4.1	2.4	5.6	7,100
Emergency accommodation ended	1.3	2.6	0.9	2.2	1.3	2.2	2.5	1.1	1.8	2,300
Recently left institution	1.8	1.6	1.3	1.6	2.5	1.8	2.3	0.8	1.7	2,100
Psychiatric illness	2.4	1.5	1.7	1.0	1.5	2.1	2.0	0.4	1.7	2,200
Recent arrival to area with no means of support	5.9	3.6	8.2	5.3	5.1	8.6	7.2	8.6	5.6	7,200
Itinerant	2.7	3.4	2.5	3.0	3.1	2.5	3.4	1.6	2.9	3,700
Other	7.3	8.2	3.4	2.2	3.4	3.5	9.8	4.2	5.9	7,600
<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 (%)	26.7	30.6	14.6	11.0	7.4	4.3	2.0	3.3	100.0	..
Total (number)	34,000	38,900	18,500	14,000	9,400	5,500	2,600	4,200	..	127,100

Notes

1. Number excluded due to errors and omissions (weighted): 6,773.
2. Table excludes high-volume records because not all items were included on the high-volume form.
3. Figures have been weighted to adjust for agency non-participation and client non-consent.

Source: SAAP Client Collection.

Table 5.4: SAAP support periods: main reason for seeking assistance by client group, Australia, 2001-02 (per cent)

Main reason for seeking assistance	Male alone under 25	Male alone 25+	Female alone under 25	Female alone 25+	Couple no children	Couple with children	Male with children	Female with children	Other	Total
Usual accommodation unavailable	14.5	14.6	10.2	5.3	15.3	13.4	16.5	5.7	9.8	10.4
Time out from family/other situation	8.2	3.5	9.4	3.8	4.7	4.2	3.5	3.2	8.0	5.1
Relationship/family breakdown	16.9	6.6	20.7	5.7	8.1	5.1	19.1	7.1	16.7	10.4
Interpersonal conflict	3.8	2.4	4.3	2.3	2.5	2.7	2.0	1.5	1.3	2.6
Physical/emotional abuse	1.6	0.6	4.2	5.1	1.0	0.9	1.2	4.7	2.8	3.0
Domestic violence	1.1	0.6	12.1	43.6	2.1	3.2	3.1	52.5	15.5	21.6
Sexual abuse	0.4	0.1	1.9	1.0	0.1	0.4	0.1	0.7	0.5	0.7
Financial difficulty	9.4	16.3	5.9	4.7	14.2	15.0	13.7	4.7	6.7	9.0
Gambling	0.1	1.0	0	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.3
Eviction/previous accommodation ended	16.5	9.5	13.3	5.9	21.2	27.9	18.4	9.1	13.8	11.6
Drug/alcohol/substance abuse	5.2	13.9	2.7	5.1	3.7	1.5	1.9	0.8	4.9	5.5
Emergency accommodation ended	2.7	2.1	2.0	1.1	2.0	2.9	1.5	1.1	1.9	1.8
Recently left institution	2.8	3.5	1.1	1.2	1.1	0.6	1.0	0.3	0.4	1.7
Psychiatric illness	1.4	4.0	0.7	2.6	0.6	0.3	0.5	0.2	0.3	1.7
Recent arrival to area with no means of support	5.6	10.6	2.9	3.5	7.7	11.2	7.4	2.6	8.0	5.7
Itinerant	3.8	4.6	2.9	2.2	5.9	2.3	2.9	1.1	3.1	2.9
Other	6.1	6.3	5.7	6.6	9.7	8.2	7.0	4.6	6.2	6.0
<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>100.0</i>
Total (%)	14.3	23.2	14.5	14.6	2.9	3.8	1.2	24.4	1.1	100.0
Total (number)	17,800	29,000	18,200	18,300	3,600	4,800	1,500	30,500	1,400	125,000

Notes

1. Number excluded due to errors and omissions (weighted): 8,796.
2. Table excludes high-volume records because not all items were included on the high-volume form.
3. Figures have been weighted to adjust for agency non-participation and client non-consent.

Source: SAAP Client Collection.

