

8 Circumstances of clients before and after support

The *Supported Accommodation Assistance Act 1994* describes SAAP's overall aim as being 'to provide transitional supported accommodation and related support services, in order to help people who are homeless to achieve the maximum possible degree of self-reliance and independence'. The Act further states:

Within this aim the goals are:

- a) to resolve crisis;
- b) to re-establish family links where appropriate; and
- c) to re-establish a capacity to live independently of SAAP.

To enable some assessment of the program's ability to achieve these goals, this chapter details changes in clients' circumstances following the provision of SAAP services. It is important, however, to remember that the achievement of such goals does not depend on the intervention of SAAP agencies alone – a complex interplay of policies and programs relating to income security, housing and community services, as well as individuals' personal circumstances, will influence outcomes for SAAP clients. Thus, the data in this section have limitations when attempting to assess SAAP's success on the basis of client circumstances before and after support. In addition, there is a significant amount of missing data relating to client circumstances (especially after assistance has ended) and this should be taken into account.

Income source

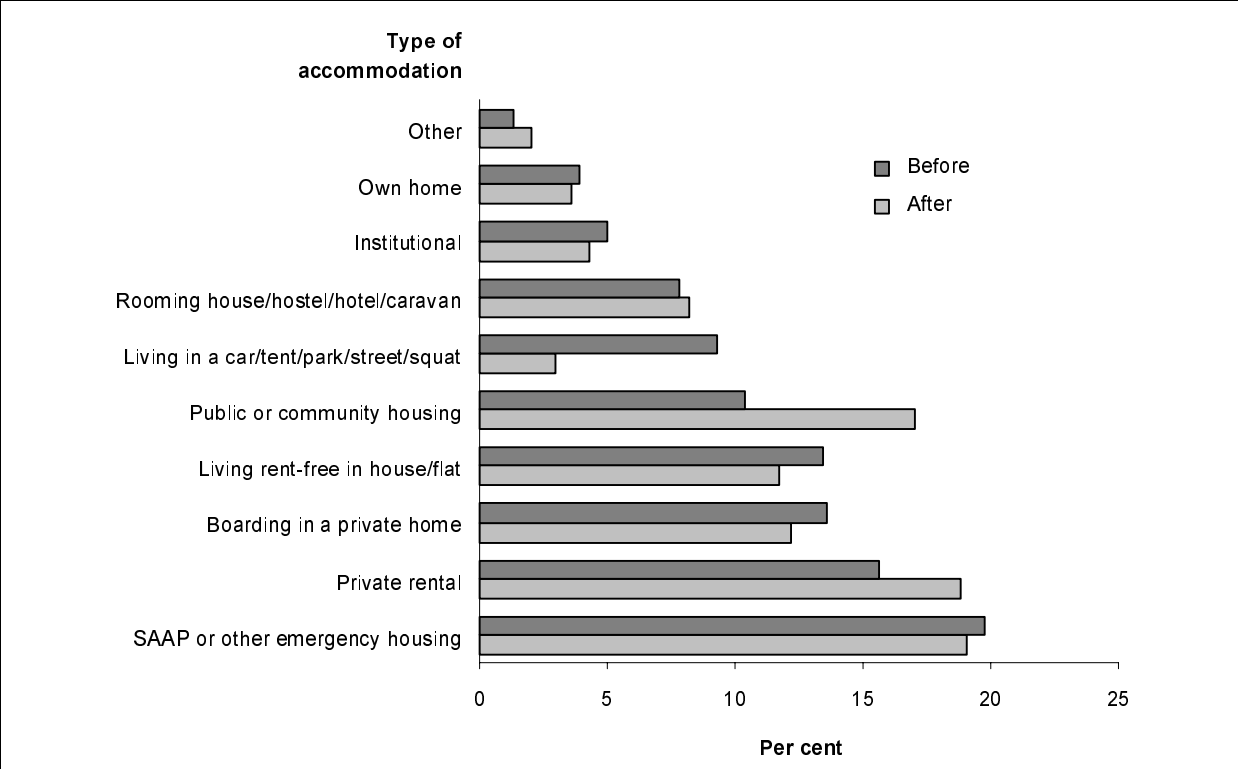
In 83% of all closed support periods, SAAP clients were recipients of a government pension or benefit before support (Table 8.1). In a further 8% of support periods, clients were reported as having no source of income and not awaiting a government payment; in another 7% as having 'other' sources of income; and in a final 1% as having no income but awaiting receipt of a pension or benefit. These proportions had changed slightly by the time support had ended. After having received support, clients were on a government pension or benefit following 86% of support periods, while clients had no income and were not awaiting a pension or benefit following 6%. The other two categories remained relatively unchanged in percentage terms.

For those clients who specifically requested assistance with obtaining or maintaining a government pension or benefit, there were more noticeable changes. After support, these clients were receiving a government pension or benefit in 86% of support periods, a marked increase on the figure of 71% before support (Table 8.1). Consequently, the proportion of support periods in which these clients had no income and were not awaiting a government payment had dropped from 18% before support to 6% after support.

Accommodation

Nationally, as Figure 8.1 shows, the most common forms of client accommodation immediately before support were SAAP or other emergency housing (in 20% of support periods), followed by private rental (16%), boarding in a private home (14%), and living rent-

free in a house or flat (13%). Apart from private rental, which rose to 19% after support had ended, these types of accommodation saw relatively minor changes in the proportion of clients accommodated following support. There were, however, some noticeable differences in the use of other types of accommodation before and after support. The proportion in which clients were accommodated in public or community housing rose from 10% of support periods before support to 17% after (Table 8.3). In contrast, clients were living in a car, tent, park, street or squat before 9% of support periods compared with only 3% after support.



Source: Table 8.3.

Figure 8.1: Type of accommodation immediately before and after a support period, Australia, 2001-02 (per cent closed support periods)

The most common forms of client accommodation varied significantly between the States and Territories, both before and after support (Table 8.2). Immediately before support, the Northern Territory had the highest proportion of clients in any single type of accommodation, with clients being accommodated in public or community housing before 31% of support periods. Public or community housing was also the most common type of accommodation before support in Western Australia (19% of support periods). SAAP or other emergency accommodation was the most common type of accommodation before support in the Australian Capital Territory (29% of support periods), New South Wales (23%), Queensland (23%) and South Australia (20%). Private rental was the main type of accommodation before support in Tasmania (20%) and Victoria (18%).

In general, the most common types of accommodation before support were also those most commonly used after support. South Australia was the only State or Territory where the

most common type of accommodation changed: before support, SAAP or other emergency housing (20%) was the most common form of accommodation; after support this had changed to public or community housing (22%). The shift observed nationally away from living in a car or tent or other such inadequate accommodation and towards public or community housing was seen to some extent in all jurisdictions. In addition, in all States and Territories except the Australian Capital Territory there was an increase in the use of private rental accommodation. This movement was particularly strong in Tasmania, where clients were in private rental following 27% of support periods, compared with 20% before support. For clients who specifically requested assistance to obtain or maintain independent housing, the changes in accommodation type before and after support followed a similar pattern to that for all closed support periods, but were more marked for several accommodation types. In particular, accommodation in public or community housing nearly tripled, rising from 8% of support periods before support to 22% after (Table 8.3). In addition, accommodation in privately rented dwellings increased from 18% before support to 25% after. Conversely, the proportion of support periods in which clients were living in a car, tent, park, street or squat decreased from 7% before support to 1% after. Living rent-free in a house or flat also decreased – from 13% of support periods before to 8% after. These shifts in accommodation type suggest a certain level of success for clients specifically seeking assistance from SAAP agencies to obtain or maintain independent housing.

Living situation

The most common living situations for clients before receiving SAAP support were with their spouse or partner either with or without children (in 23% of support periods), living alone (in 20%), and living short-term with relatives or friends (18%) (Table 8.4). By the time support had finished, the living arrangements for clients had changed considerably. There was a marked decrease in the proportion of clients living with a spouse or partner either with or without children: after 16% of support periods clients were living with a spouse or partner. There was also a drop in the proportion of clients living short-term with relatives or friends: clients were in this living situation after 14% of support periods. On the other hand, there were increases in the proportion of clients living alone with children (up from 10% of support periods before support to 18% after) and living long-term with relatives or friends (up from 4% before to 5% after). The most common living situations for clients after support were living alone (21% of support periods) and living alone with children (18%).

Employment status

The employment profile of clients (that is, employed full-time, part-time, casual, unemployed or not in the labour force) generally differed very little before and after support for all closed support periods. There was, however, a small reduction in the proportion of support periods where SAAP clients indicated they were unemployed, from 34% before support to 32% after, and there were also small increases in the proportions of support periods where clients stated they were employed (Table 8.5). Among those clients who asked for assistance in the area of employment and training during their period of support, there was an increase in the proportion who were in paid work. After support these clients were employed in some capacity in 19% of support periods; this was double the figure of 9% before support. Further, the proportion of support periods where these clients were unemployed or were not in the labour force dropped from 52% and 39% respectively before support to 44% and 37% after support.

8.1 Tables

Table 8.1: SAAP closed support periods: source of income immediately before and after a support period, Australia, 2001-02 (per cent)

Source of income	Closed support periods in which clients needed assistance to obtain/maintain a pension or benefit		All closed support periods	
	Before	After	Before	After
No income	17.5	5.6	8.4	5.8
No income, awaiting pension/benefit	3.5	2.9	1.4	1.0
Government pension/benefit	70.9	85.5	83.2	85.9
Other	8.2	6.0	6.9	7.4
<i>Total</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>
<i>Total (number with valid data)</i>	<i>14,800</i>	<i>13,600</i>	<i>102,800</i>	<i>90,100</i>
Number with missing data	800	2,000	14,700	27,300
Total (number)	15,700	15,700	117,500	117,500

Notes

1. Table excludes high-volume records because not all items were included on the high-volume form.
2. Figures have been weighted to adjust for agency non-participation and client non-consent.
3. See example 2 in Appendix 1, Section A1.3 for information about interpreting this type of table.

Source: SAAP Client Collection.

Table 8.2: SAAP closed support periods: type of accommodation immediately before and after a support period, by State and Territory, Australia, 2001-02 (per cent)

Type of accommodation	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Total		
										%	Number
Before support											
SAAP or other emergency housing	23.3	16.0	23.3	17.9	19.9	17.6	29.2	10.6	19.7	20,200	
Living rent-free in house/flat	13.5	15.2	12.7	8.7	11.6	14.1	21.4	13.8	13.4	13,700	
Private rental	15.3	17.9	17.7	11.6	12.3	20.1	8.2	8.6	15.7	16,000	
Public or community housing	8.2	8.4	7.1	18.6	12.3	9.5	7.5	30.7	10.4	10,600	
Rooming house/hostel/hotel/caravan	7.1	8.8	9.0	7.3	6.8	6.1	2.6	9.0	7.9	8,000	
Boarding in a private home	11.0	15.5	14.1	14.1	17.0	13.5	10.2	6.5	13.5	13,800	
Own home	3.0	5.2	3.3	3.3	5.5	2.8	1.6	1.7	3.8	3,900	
Living in a car/tent/park/street/squat	10.3	8.2	8.7	11.0	8.0	10.1	8.3	12.7	9.4	9,600	
Institutional	7.2	3.4	3.2	5.5	5.5	5.0	8.9	4.1	5.0	5,100	
Other	1.0	1.4	0.8	1.9	1.1	1.1	2.1	2.5	1.3	1,300	
<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>	
<i>Total (number with valid data)</i>	<i>26,600</i>	<i>30,100</i>	<i>16,600</i>	<i>11,300</i>	<i>7,200</i>	<i>4,600</i>	<i>2,200</i>	<i>3,700</i>	<i>..</i>	<i>102,300</i>	
Number with missing data	4,400	4,900	2,300	2,000	700	500	100.0	400	..	15,300	
Total (number)	31,000	34,900	18,900	13,300	7,900	5,100	2,300	4,100	..	117,500	
After support											
SAAP or other emergency housing	21.1	17.5	24.7	16.8	15.6	13.2	29.4	10.5	19.2	14,500	
Living rent-free in house/flat	13.8	10.1	12.4	9.4	11.1	11.8	18.9	12.3	11.7	8,800	
Private rental	19.2	20.6	19.0	14.5	18.1	26.6	8.2	10.9	18.8	14,200	
Public or community housing	14.0	18.1	10.3	22.3	21.6	17.7	22.1	31.5	17.0	12,800	
Rooming house/hostel/hotel/caravan	6.8	10.2	10.2	6.1	5.7	6.3	2.0	7.5	8.2	6,200	
Boarding in a private home	11.1	12.6	13.5	13.4	13.7	12.4	7.3	7.0	12.2	9,200	
Own home	3.2	4.5	2.7	3.2	5.9	1.9	1.6	1.8	3.6	2,700	
Living in a car/tent/park/street/squat	3.1	1.6	2.6	5.5	2.6	4.6	1.5	10.6	3.0	2,300	
Institutional	6.0	2.7	3.5	6.7	3.9	4.0	7.3	2.8	4.3	3,200	
Other	1.8	2.2	1.3	2.2	1.8	1.5	1.7	5.1	2.0	1,500	
<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>	
<i>Total (number with valid data)</i>	<i>18,300</i>	<i>23,200</i>	<i>12,900</i>	<i>7,900</i>	<i>5,500</i>	<i>3,300</i>	<i>1,600</i>	<i>2,600</i>	<i>..</i>	<i>75,300</i>	
Number with missing data	12,600	11,700	6,000	5,400	2,400	1,800	700	1,500	..	42,100	
Total (number)	31,000	34,900	18,900	13,300	7,900	5,100	2,300	4,100	..	117,500	

Notes

1. Table excludes high-volume records because not all items were included on the high-volume form.
2. Figures have been weighted to adjust for agency non-participation and client non-consent.
3. See example 2 in Appendix 1, Section A1.3 for information about interpreting this type of table.

Source: SAAP Client Collection.

Table 8.3: SAAP closed support periods: type of accommodation immediately before and after a support period, Australia, 2001–02 (per cent)

Type of accommodation	Closed support periods in which clients needed assistance to obtain/maintain independent housing		All closed support periods	
	Before	After	Before	After
SAAP or other emergency housing	18.6	15.2	19.7	19.2
Living rent-free in house/flat	13.2	8.2	13.4	11.7
Private rental	17.5	25.3	15.7	18.8
Public or community housing	7.9	22.0	10.4	17.0
Rooming house/hostel/hotel/caravan	8.3	8.3	7.9	8.2
Boarding in a private home	19.1	13.6	13.5	12.2
Own home	2.7	1.6	3.8	3.6
Living in a car/tent/park/street/squat	7.1	1.4	9.4	3.0
Institutional	4.1	2.4	5.0	4.3
Other	1.5	2.0	1.3	2.0
<i>Total</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>
<i>Total (number with valid data)</i>	<i>33,600</i>	<i>26,700</i>	<i>102,300</i>	<i>75,300</i>
Number with missing data	1,900	8,800	15,200	42,200
Total (number)	35,500	35,500	117,500	117,500

Notes

1. Table excludes high-volume records because not all items were included on the high-volume form.
2. Figures have been weighted to adjust for agency non-participation and client non-consent.
3. See example 2 in Appendix 1, Section A1.3 for information about interpreting this type of table.

Source: SAAP Client Collection.

Table 8.4: SAAP closed support periods: living situation immediately before and after a support period, Australia, 2001-02 (per cent)

Living situation	Before	After
With parent(s)	10.3	8.5
With foster family	0.5	0.4
With relatives/friends short-term	17.7	14.1
With relatives/friends long-term	3.5	5.4
With spouse/partner with/without children	22.9	15.7
Alone with children	10.0	18.4
Alone	19.5	21.4
With other unrelated persons	14.8	15.1
Other	0.9	1.0
<i>Total</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>
<i>Total (number with valid data)</i>	<i>101,100</i>	<i>76,300</i>
Number with missing data	16,400	41,100
Total (number)	117,500	117,500

Notes

1. Table excludes high-volume records because not all items were included on the high-volume form.
2. Figures have been weighted to adjust for agency non-participation and client non-consent.
3. See example 2 in Appendix 1, Section A1.3 for information about interpreting this type of table.

Source: SAAP Client Collection.

Table 8.5: SAAP closed support periods: employment status immediately before and after a support period, Australia, 2001–02 (per cent)

Employment status	Closed support periods in which clients needed assistance in employment and training		All closed support periods	
	Before	After	Before	After
Employed full-time	1.7	5.6	2.9	3.5
Employed part-time/casual	7.3	13.3	5.7	6.6
Unemployed (looking for work)	51.9	44.4	34.1	31.9
Not in labour force	39.1	36.6	57.3	57.9
<i>Total</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>
<i>Total (with valid data)</i>	<i>8,100</i>	<i>6,800</i>	<i>103,400</i>	<i>88,000</i>
Number with missing data	300	1,600	14,000	29,500
Total (number)	8,400	8,400	117,500	117,500

Notes

1. Table excludes high-volume records because not all items were included on the high-volume form.
2. Figures have been weighted to adjust for agency non-participation and client non-consent.
3. See example 2 in Appendix 1, Section A1.3 for information about interpreting this type of table.

Source: SAAP Client Collection.