

4 Income status of overseas-born SAAP clients

People born overseas in predominantly non-English speaking countries are often particularly vulnerable to homelessness. This is especially so when they are ineligible for income support, have little or no family support, are not familiar with the environment in which they find themselves, do not speak English, or due to discrimination have difficulty accessing housing, employment and support services (CACH 2001:68). In 1999–00, 14% of SAAP support periods to people who reported they had no income before support were provided to people born overseas (Table 2.1).

The following analysis includes support periods provided to clients from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (see Appendix 2), whose main reason for seeking assistance was reported as financial difficulty in the Client Collection. Only clients who reported financial difficulty as their main reason for seeking assistance were selected from the entire SAAP population, in order to more closely align the results presented here with the data from the Income Issues Collection. Results from the Income Issues Collection, specifically the income circumstances of SAAP clients from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, follow analysis of the Client Collection data.

Client Collection 1999–00

In 84% of cases, SAAP clients were Australian-born (Table 4.1). In the remaining 16% of support periods, the birthplace of clients was evenly distributed across various regions. Three per cent of clients were born in Oceania, other European nations and the former Soviet Union, 'other' regions including the Middle East, Africa, the Americas and the Caribbean, and the UK, Ireland and associated islands respectively. Slightly more support periods were provided to clients born within Asia, at 4%.

Of the States and Territories, Tasmania reported the greatest proportion of support periods to clients who were Australian-born (96%), considerably higher than the national average of 84%, while Western Australia reported the lowest proportion of Australian-born clients (79%). Western Australia provided more support periods to clients born in Asia (6%) and the UK, Ireland and associated islands (4%). New South Wales agencies had slightly greater proportions of support periods to clients who were born in the Oceania region (5%). The Australian Capital Territory had proportionately more clients born in other European regions and the former Soviet Union (5%), while Victorian agencies had higher proportions of support periods to clients from Asia and 'other' regions including the Middle East, Africa, the Americas and the Caribbean (5%).

Some gender and age differences can be noted across birthplace (Table 4.2). In general, the percentage of Australian-born people receiving support declined as age increased (92% of clients aged less than 20 years to 69% of those aged 65 and over). In contrast, the general trend for persons born overseas was that proportions in each age group increased with age. This pattern is consistent with the profile of overseas-born people in the general population, i.e. there is a large proportion of overseas-born people of older ages.

Table 4.1: SAAP support periods: birthplace of clients with financial difficulty, by State and Territory, Australia, 1999–00 (per cent)

Birthplace	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Total (%)	Total (number)
Australia	80.6	81.9	89.4	78.7	86.3	95.6	83.9	93.6	83.9	47,400
Oceania (excluding Australia)	4.7	2.7	4.0	4.2	2.2	0.6	2.9	1.6	3.3	1,900
UK, Ireland & associated islands	3.4	1.5	2.1	3.9	2.8	1.5	2.3	1.4	2.5	1,300
Other Europe & former Soviet Union	3.8	3.8	1.8	3.3	3.3	0.9	4.8	1.4	3.2	1,800
Asia	3.4	5.2	1.6	5.8	3.6	0.4	3.3	1.7	3.7	2,100
Other (including Middle East, Africa, Americas & Caribbean)	4.1	4.9	1.1	4.1	1.8	0.9	2.7	0.3	3.4	1,100
<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	34.7	15.1	7.3	7.2	4.2	2.6	3.9	100.0	..
Total (number)	14,200	19,700	8,500	4,100	4,100	2,400	1,500	2,200	..	56,600

Notes

1. Number excluded due to errors (weighted): 0
2. Number excluded due to omissions (weighted): 966
3. Figures have been weighted to adjust for agency non-participation and client non-consent.

Source: SAAP Client Collection.

Of clients aged 65 and over, a much greater proportion of females were born in Asia (19%), compared with males born in Asia (2%). In support periods to male clients born outside of Australia, it was more common for those aged 45–64 (11%) and 65 years and over (13%) to have been born in other European countries or the former Soviet Union. Outside of Australia, younger clients were more likely to have been born in Oceania or Asia (2–3% in each age group).

Primary income source varied considerably by place of birth (Table 4.3). Australian-born clients (84%) were under-represented in the no income category (69%), compared with Asian-born clients (4%) who made up 12% of the support periods in the no income source category. Further, overseas-born clients reported that they had no income source in a greater proportion of support periods than those with an income or awaiting a benefit (31%, compared with the national average of 17%). The high number of SAAP clients from birthplaces other than Australia with no income may reflect the 2-year waiting period precluding newly arrived migrants from the income support system and the uncertain status of asylum seekers, which in many cases prevents them from obtaining employment (CACH 2001:69).

In 74% and 73% of cases respectively in which the primary income source was wages, salary or own business or Other payments, clients were born in Australia. Clients born overseas were generally over-represented in support periods in which the primary income source was wages, salary or own business or Other payments.

Over-representation also occurred for Australian-born clients on Youth Allowance (92%), those born in Other Europe and the former Soviet Union for wages, salary or own business (6%), those born in Oceania who were registered or awaiting a benefit (6%) and those born in the UK, Ireland and associated islands on the Disability Support Pension (4%). In contrast, those born in Asia (1%) and those born in the Middle East, Africa, the Americas and the Caribbean (2%) were under-represented in cases receiving the Disability Support Pension.

Table 4.2: SAAP support periods: birthplace of clients with financial difficult: birthplace, by age and gender of client, Australia, 1999–00 (per cent)

Birthplace	Under 15 years	15–17 years	18–19 years	20–24 years	25–44 years	45–64 years	65+ years	Total	
Male clients								%	No.
Australia	94.6	92.2	89.9	88.1	85.2	73.3	74.0	84.8	21,500
Oceania (excluding Australia)	3.1	1.5	1.9	2.7	3.8	3.1	2.9	3.1	800
UK, Ireland & associated islands	—	1.1	0.6	1.3	3.2	7.2	6.2	3.1	800
Other Europe & former Soviet Union	—	0.4	1.0	0.9	2.5	10.6	12.9	3.3	900
Asia	0.5	2.1	2.8	3.5	2.2	1.9	2.0	2.4	600
Other ^(a)	1.7	2.8	3.7	3.4	3.1	3.9	1.8	3.3	800
<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>..</i>
Total (%)	0.9	8.6	8.4	15.9	49.2	15.1	1.9	100.0	..
Total (number)	200	2,200	2,100	4,000	12,500	3,800	500	..	25,400
Female clients									
Australia	90.7	93.3	91.6	87.0	80.9	66.1	55.3	83.1	25,500
Oceania (excluding Australia)	2.1	1.8	2.1	3.3	4.0	5.4	-	3.5	1,100
UK, Ireland & associated islands	—	0.6	0.8	1.0	1.9	4.5	7.0	1.7	500
Other Europe & former Soviet Union	1.0	0.8	1.0	1.5	3.3	11.7	15.6	3.2	1,000
Asia	4.2	2.4	2.0	3.7	5.8	6.9	18.8	4.9	1,500
Other ^(a)	1.9	1.1	2.5	3.6	4.1	5.4	3.2	3.6	1,100
<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>..</i>
Total (%)	0.9	10.0	9.7	18.9	52.3	7.6	0.7	100.0	..
Total (number)	300	3,100	3,000	5,800	16,000	2,300	200	..	30,700
All clients									
Australia	92.3	92.8	90.9	87.5	82.8	70.7	68.5	83.9	47,300
Oceania (excluding Australia)	2.8	1.7	2.0	3.0	3.9	3.9	2.1	3.3	1,900
UK, Ireland & associated islands	—	0.8	0.7	1.1	2.5	6.1	6.6	2.4	1,300
Other Europe & former Soviet Union	0.6	0.6	1.0	1.3	2.9	10.9	13.7	3.2	1,800
Asia	2.5	2.2	2.4	3.6	4.3	3.8	6.9	3.7	2,100
Other ^(a)	1.8	1.8	3.0	3.5	3.6	4.5	2.2	3.4	1,900
<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>..</i>
Total (%)	0.9	9.4	9.1	17.5	50.9	11.0	1.2	100.0	..
Total (number)	500	5,300	5,100	9,900	28,700	6,200	700	..	56,400

(a) 'Other' includes the Middle East, Africa, the Americas and the Caribbean.

Notes

1. Number excluded due to errors (weighted): 0
2. Number excluded due to omissions (weighted): 513
3. Figures have been weighted to adjust for agency non-participation and client non-consent.

Source: SAAP Client Collection.

Table 4.3: SAAP support periods: birthplace of clients with financial difficulty, by primary income source, Australia, 1999–00 (per cent)

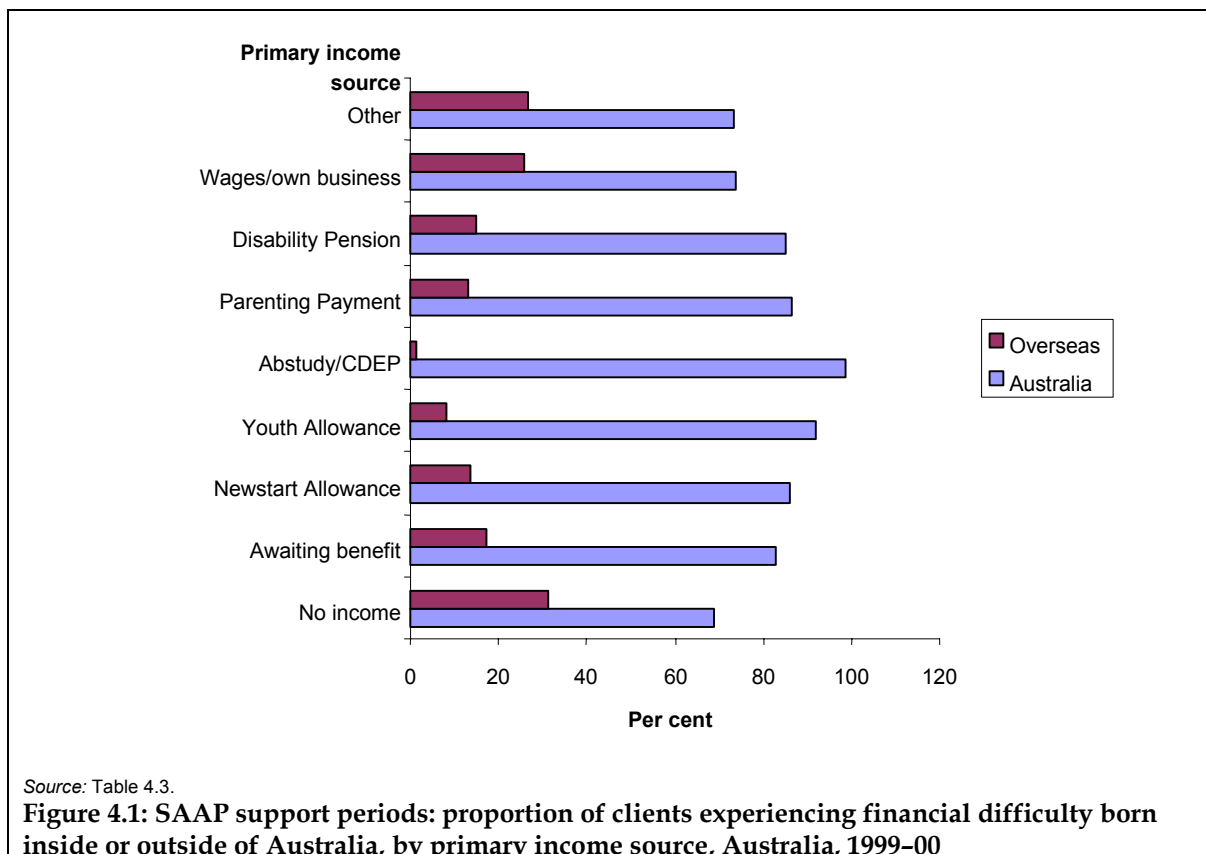
Birthplace	No income	Reg./ await benefit	Newstart Allow	Youth Allow.	Abstudy/ CDEP	Parenting payment	Disability Support Pension	Wages/ salary/ own bus		Total (%)	Total (no.)
								Other			
Australia	68.7	82.9	86.2	91.8	98.8	86.6	85.0	74.0	73.3	83.7	44,900
Oceania (excluding Australia)	5.2	5.9	3.6	1.6	—	3.3	2.6	5.5	3.4	3.3	1,800
UK, Ireland & assoc. islands	2.2	1.2	2.1	0.6	1.2	1.8	3.9	4.0	3.5	2.4	1,300
Other Europe & former Soviet Union	4.6	1.4	2.4	0.9	—	2.0	5.3	5.9	6.3	3.3	1,800
Asia	11.6	5.3	2.4	2.0	—	3.3	1.3	6.9	8.0	3.8	2,000
Other ^(a)	7.7	3.2	3.3	3.1	—	2.9	1.8	3.6	5.5	3.5	1,900
<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>	<i>..</i>
Total (%)	7.6	1.6	24.9	12.3	0.6	21.8	17.5	3.9	9.8	100.0	..
Total no.	4,100	800	13,400	6,600	300	11,700	9,400	2,100	5,300	..	53,600

(a) 'Other' includes the Middle East, Africa, the Americas and the Caribbean.

Notes

1. Number excluded due to errors: 693
2. Number excluded due to omissions: 3,215
3. Number excluded due to no consent: 0
4. Figures have been rounded.
5. The results presented rely on data reported by SAAP agencies and their clients. Based on income support eligibility criteria, for the collection period those aged under 16 or entitled to the Age Pension are not entitled to the Disability Support Pension or Youth Allowance, and those aged under 21 years or entitled to the Age Pension are not entitled to Newstart Allowance. However in some cases clients have reported receiving such payments. See counting rules in Appendix 2 for further discussion.

Source: SAAP Client Collection.



Income Issues Collection

According to data collected in the Income Issues Collection, only 2% of support periods (approximately 160 forms) were provided to clients who were not Australian citizens or permanent residents (Table 4.4).

Of the 2%, the greatest proportion were born in Asia (38%) or 'other' regions including the Middle East, Africa, the Americas and the Caribbean (27%). However the low consent rate on questions of resident and visa status must be kept in mind, when reviewing the data on migrant groups collected in the Income Issues Collection. The Income Issues Collection recorded a similar proportion of support periods to clients who were Australian-born (86%, compared with 84% in the Client Collection experiencing financial difficulty), despite migrants being one of the target groups of the collection. In particular, in the Income Issues Collection only 1% of support periods were provided to people from other European regions or the former Soviet Union, compared with 3% in the Client Collection.

Table 4.4: SAAP support periods: birthplace of clients, by Australian citizenship/permanent residency, Australia, 2000 (per cent)

Birthplace	Australian citizen or permanent resident	Not an Australian citizen or permanent resident	Total (%)	Total (no.)
Australia	87.5	6.3	85.7	5,900
Oceania (excluding Australia)	2.8	18.4	3.1	210
UK, Ireland & assoc. islands	1.8	6.3	1.9	130
Other Europe & the former Soviet Union	0.6	3.8	0.7	50.0
Asia	3.7	38.0	4.5	310
Other (inc. Middle East, Africa, the Americas & Caribbean)	3.6	27.2	4.1	290
<i>Total</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>..</i>
Total (%)	97.7	2.3	100.0	..
Total (number)	6,720	160	..	6,880

Notes

1. Number excluded due to errors: 0
2. Number excluded due to omissions: 491
3. Number excluded due to no consent: 2,542
4. Figures have been rounded.

Source: Income Issues Collection.

A survey of SAAP agencies in 2000 reported that service providers indicated they had experienced increased pressure as a result of the denial of government assistance to refugees on Temporary Protection Visas (ACOSS 2000:20). However, based on the results of the Income Issues Collection it is difficult to shed further light on the ACOSS findings. Only 41 records in total from the Income Issues Collection provided information about support periods where clients were seeking a bridging or protection visa (Table 4.5). Twenty-three had submitted a primary application to the Department of Immigration and eight had submitted a secondary application or were in the process of a post tribunal appeal. The seeming inability of the Income Issues Collection to gather information about migrant clients requiring SAAP assistance may be attributed to the perceived intrusiveness of the collection, and the extreme sensitivity of this area for the individuals involved (see Appendix 1 for further discussion).

Table 4.5: SAAP support periods: stage of application for bridging or protection visa, Income Issues Collection, Australia, 2000 (per cent)

Stage of visa application				
Not yet applied	Primary application to Department of Immigration	Secondary applications and post tribunal appeals	Other	Total
9	23	8	1	41

Notes

1. Number excluded due to errors and omissions: 447
2. Number excluded due to no consent: 2,542
3. Figures have been rounded.

Source: Income Issues Collection.