

# 1 An overview of homelessness and SAAP

This chapter provides a context for how the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) fits into the bigger picture of homelessness, and outlines the difference between the 'service delivery' definition of homelessness, as used by SAAP, and the 'cultural' definition of homelessness. It is important to point out that the estimates provided on people accessing and turned away from SAAP do not represent the total homeless population and that other methods of defining homelessness exist.

## 1.1 The SAAP National Data Collection

The overall aim of SAAP is to provide transitional supported accommodation and related support services to help people who are homeless or at imminent risk of homelessness achieve the maximum possible degree of self-reliance and independence. SAAP is an important part of Australia's overall response to homelessness and represents a broader social safety net designed to assist people in crisis in the community. With the exception of SAAP, CAP and Reconnect, there are very few programs directed specifically at homeless people.

In 2003–04, 1,300 non-government, community and local government organisations were funded nationally under SAAP (AIHW 2005a:1). These organisations range from small stand-alone agencies with single outlets to larger auspice bodies with multiple outlets. Each agency primarily targets a particular client group, such as young people, single men, single women, women escaping domestic violence, families, or a combination of client groups.

This report contains 2003–04 data from the SAAP National Data Collection. The SAAP National Data Collection is the main source of data about how SAAP is meeting its objectives. It consists of a number of distinct components, and each can be regarded as a separate collection. There were four components in 2003–04: the Client Collection, the Demand for Accommodation Collection, the Casual Client Collection, and the Administrative Data Collection (Box 1). This report is based on the analysis of the first three of these collections. Further details about each collection are provided at Appendix 2 and the forms used for collecting the data can be found at Appendix 3.

## **Box 1: The SAAP National Data Collection**

### ***The Client Collection***

*The Client Collection consists of information about clients receiving SAAP accommodation or support that generally lasts for more than 1 hour or is of an ongoing nature. The information is collected throughout the year and includes data on services required by and provided to each client, information concerning clients' situations before and after receiving SAAP support, and some basic socio-demographic data. Details about accompanying children are also obtained through the Client Collection.*

*The main findings from the Client Collection are published in the national and state and territory SAAP NDC annual reports (see, for example, AIHW 2005a). Chapter 3 of this report also contains summary information on the distinct types of services provided to clients and accompanying children.*

### ***The Casual Client Collection***

*The Casual Client Collection covers 2 weeks each year and consists of information about people receiving one-off SAAP assistance that lasts for less than 1 hour. For each casual contact, the different types of one-off assistance provided are recorded. In 2003–04 the Casual Client Collection was conducted during the fortnight of 3–16 March 2004.*

*The Casual Client Collection gathers information on all cases where one-off assistance is provided, regardless of whether the person receiving assistance requested more substantial support or accommodation. Consequently, one-off assistance provided to those who sought more substantial assistance is recorded in the Casual Client Collection and also through a question on the Demand for Accommodation form. However, the reference period for the Casual Client Collection is different from that for the Demand for Accommodation Collection.*

*A Casual Client Collection form may be filled out for an existing client if that client also receives one-off assistance from another agency – for example, a soup kitchen.*

### ***The Demand for Accommodation Collection***

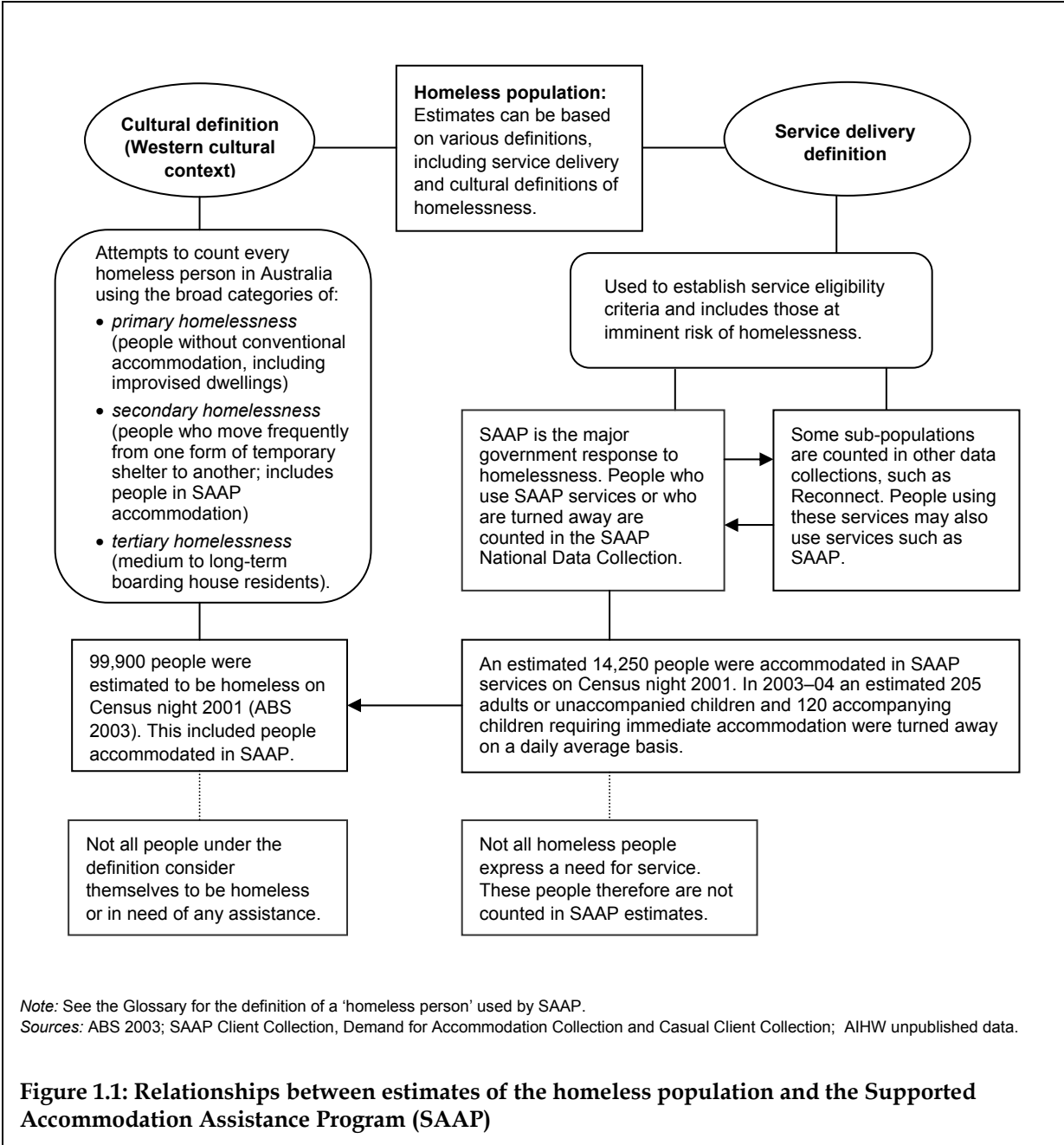
*The Demand for Accommodation Collection covers 2 weeks each year. In 2003–04 it was conducted from 26 November–2 December 2003 and from 5–11 May 2004.*

*The Collection measures the levels of met and unmet demand for SAAP accommodation by collecting information about requests for accommodation by individuals or groups. SAAP agencies were required to fill out a form every time a person or group sought accommodation. This included when a request for accommodation was met and also when the potential client(s) was turned away. These data are used in conjunction with Client Collection data to calculate the proportion of people turned away from SAAP accommodation.*

*Often when a request for accommodation is not met, agencies are still able to provide one-off assistance to the person or group. For example, when an agency is unable to provide accommodation but able to provide a referral for accommodation. This information is also collected on the Demand for Accommodation form.*

## **1.2 Estimating the number of homeless people**

A key issue for estimating the extent of homelessness lies in defining it. Different definitions of homelessness have been proposed to accommodate the extensive range of circumstances that could be considered to be a homeless experience – from a person having no shelter at all, to a person occupying shelter that compromises their health or safety (AIHW 2005b: Chapter 7). Figure 1.1 illustrates where SAAP fits into the bigger picture of homelessness, and how different definitions of homelessness produce different estimates of the homeless population.



The definition of a 'homeless person' underpinning the SAAP National Data Collection (see Glossary) is a 'service delivery' definition that establishes criteria for the provision of assistance. It includes people who have no shelter at all, as well as people who are at risk of homelessness because their living situation and/or housing places them in circumstances that adversely affect the adequacy, safety, security or affordability of that housing. The estimates of the number of homeless people or people at imminent risk of homelessness accessing SAAP services are an important indicator of the performance of SAAP as the major program assisting those people.

In contrast, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) applied the 'cultural definition' of homelessness devised by Chamberlain and MacKenzie in the 2001 Census of Population and Housing homeless enumeration strategy (ABS 2003:10). Cultural definitions of homelessness suggest that homelessness should be defined by reference to the community standards for

housing of the place and time where the definition is to be used. The Census used a household-based collection methodology, which would under-count highly mobile people with no permanent residence, but include in its count people who were inadequately housed but had not sought assistance from a homeless program. The ABS count of homeless people includes a total of 14,250 people (adults or unaccompanied children) in SAAP accommodation on Census night 2001 (ABS 2003:32). Using this method, the 2001 Census results showed that there were 99,900 homeless people in Australia on Census night 2001.

There are difficulties with directly comparing the number of people in SAAP accommodation with the 2001 Census because of the different definitions. The major service delivery count (that is, SAAP clients) will be smaller than the cultural definition because there are people who need services but do not seek them. Also, there are people who are defined as homeless under the cultural definition, but do not consider themselves as homeless (for example, people living in boarding houses). The use of the cultural definition to estimate the total homeless population is examined in more detail in *Australia's Welfare 2005* (AIHW 2005b: Chapter 7).

Given the above difficulties in determining which of these people experiencing homelessness need the type of support that SAAP offers, the daily counts of people turned-away from immediate SAAP accommodation are important in providing policy makers, program developers and advocates evidence of the minimum response required to support people needing accommodation from SAAP or similar homelessness programs.

## **2 Total demand for SAAP assistance**

This chapter presents an overview of the total demand for SAAP assistance in 2003–04 by drawing together data from the Client, Casual Client, and Demand for Accommodation Collections. There is a particular emphasis on the demand for accommodation, as the provision of accommodation is one of the core activities of SAAP.

The demand for SAAP assistance refers to both the service requirements of people who are already receiving support from SAAP (clients, accompanying children and casual clients – see Glossary) and also the requests of people who wish to receive services but who are turned away (potential clients – see Glossary). Both groups are essential when considering the demand for SAAP assistance because, although SAAP agencies support many individuals on a daily basis, there are still instances when an agency cannot provide the support or accommodation requested by people in crisis. This includes requests for services from both people who are already clients of a SAAP agency and people who approach a SAAP agency but are turned away. Unfortunately, the level of ‘hidden’ demand by people who do not approach SAAP services but require SAAP support cannot be measured.

### **2.1 How is the total demand for SAAP estimated?**

To obtain an overview of the total demand for SAAP assistance it is first necessary to understand the relationship between the different Collections. As described in Chapter 1, SAAP data are collected via a number of different components. Figure 2.1 displays the relationships between assistance provided by SAAP agencies and the data collected related to this assistance. It is important to note that there are overlaps between the Client, Casual Client and Demand for Accommodation Collections but the extent to which this happens is unknown. For example, a person can be a client of one agency, request casual one-off assistance from another agency and have an unmet request for accommodation at the same time.

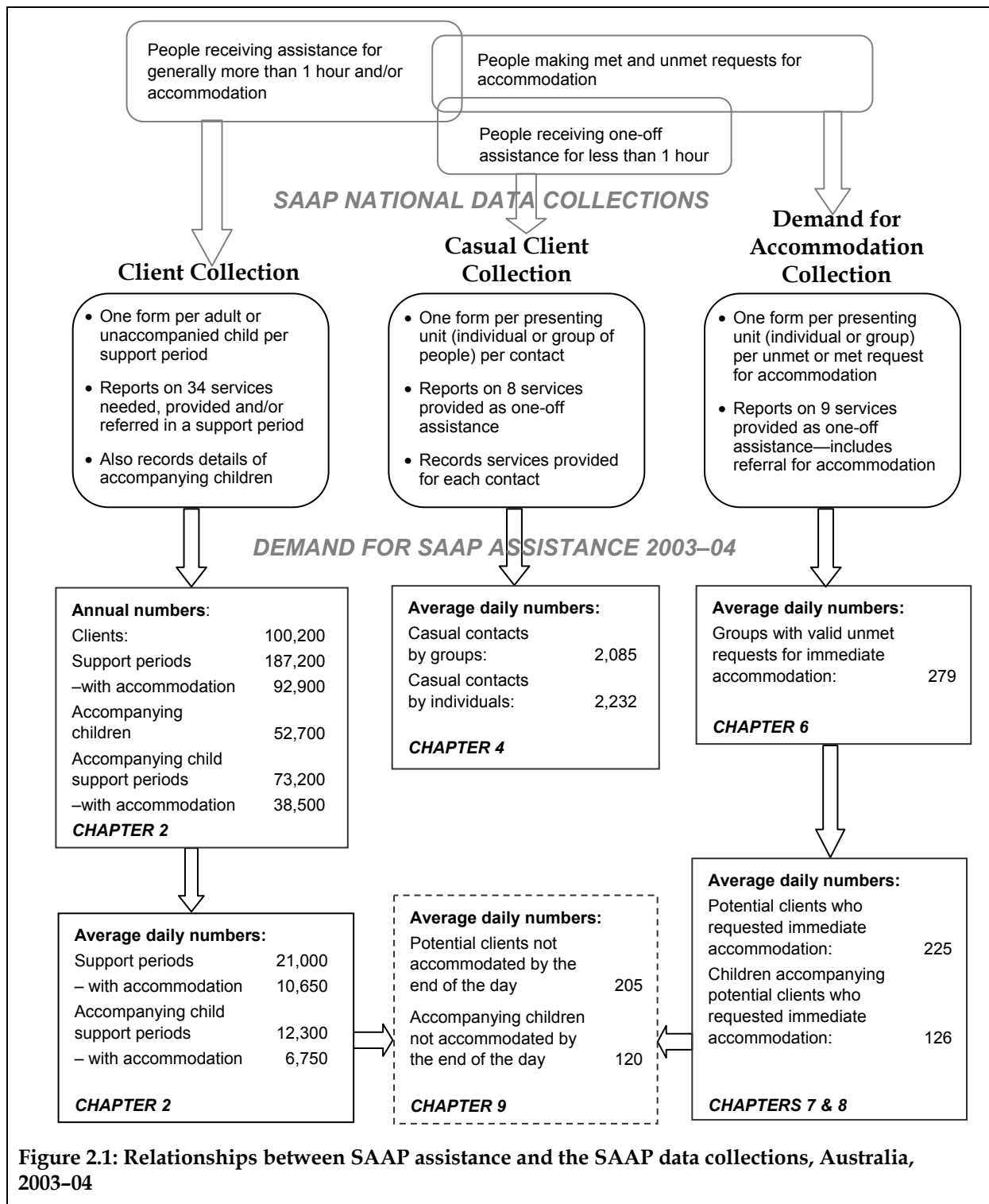


Figure 2.1: Relationships between SAAP assistance and the SAAP data collections, Australia, 2003-04

## 2.2 Daily and annual estimates of the demand for SAAP services and accommodation

As mentioned, the demand for SAAP services combines the provision of services to clients and casual clients as well as the services that could not be provided to both clients and potential clients.

There are two collections that gather data on the provision of services to people who are able to receive services from SAAP agencies – the Client Collection and the Casual Client Collection. According to data from the Client Collection and the Casual Client Collection, it was estimated that, on a daily basis, there were between 17 and 18 people using SAAP services for every 10,000 people in the general population.<sup>1</sup>

The remainder of this section presents the demand for SAAP assistance as gathered by the various collections. Firstly, the number of clients and accompanying children and their associated support periods on a daily average and annual basis are discussed. Next, the number of casual client contacts made during the 2-week Casual Client Collection is outlined. Finally, the requests for accommodation and number of people making those requests during the 2-week Demand for Accommodation Collection are presented.

### Demand for SAAP services and accommodation by clients and accompanying children

#### Clients

An estimate of the types of services that are unmet for clients and accompanying children on a daily basis cannot be provided as dates are not collected for service types in the Client Collection. Annual figures on the types of services that clients are provided with, referred on for, or that remain unmet by the end of their support are discussed in Chapter 3.

Data from the 2003–04 Client Collection show that nationally, on a daily basis, SAAP agencies provided an average of 21,000 support periods to adults or unaccompanied children, with 10,650 (51%) of these being support periods with accommodation. In the remaining 10,350 support periods, clients received other types of substantial support (Table 2.1).

When examining the number of support periods for adults and unaccompanied children by state and territory, some variations in the proportions with accommodation and without accommodation emerge. These differences are generally a reflection of the different agency and client profiles between the states and territories. For example, although Victoria had the highest daily average number of support periods (7,250), only around 43% of these support periods involved accommodation (derived from Table 2.1). Queensland, on the other hand,

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<sup>1</sup> The population as at 30 June 2003 was 19,872,600 (ABS 2004). The lower limit of use per 10,000 is derived as  $10,000 \times (21,000 \text{ support periods} + 12,300 \text{ accompanying child support periods}) / 19,872,600 = 16.8$ . (This figure should, in fact, be slightly lower because an individual may have multiple support periods on any day. The number of support periods and accompanying child support periods are used as a rough indicator only.) The upper limit of use per 10,000 is derived as  $10,000 \times (21,000 + 12,300 + 2,232 \text{ casual client contacts by individuals}) / 19,872,600 = 17.9$ . (It should be noted that the number of people utilising services as casual clients refers to adults and unaccompanied children only, that is, it does not include the number of accompanying children (Note 2, Table 4.1).)

reported the third highest daily average number of support periods (2,650) but the highest proportion of support periods with accommodation (66%). The higher proportion of support periods with accommodation in Queensland is attributable to two main factors. Firstly, Queensland had a higher proportion of support periods that encompassed short periods of accommodation. Secondly, in Victoria, many homeless people are accommodated in Transitional Housing Management properties (THMs) and this accommodation is not always recorded in the SAAP National Data Collection. At 31 December 2004, there were 3,277 tenancies in THM properties. This, in addition to the clients in SAAP accommodation, would mean that the percentage of people accommodated in SAAP and THM accommodation in Victoria would likely be higher than 43%.

On an annual basis, approximately 100,200 clients received 187,200 periods of support, with 92,900 (50%) of these being support periods with accommodation (Table 2.2). As with daily average numbers, it is also the case with annual numbers that THMs and varying patterns in length of accommodation influence the proportions of support periods with accommodation in each state and territory.

In general, jurisdictions with higher average lengths of accommodation have lower proportions of support periods involving accommodation. For example, Victoria had a much lower annual proportion of support periods with accommodation (22% compared with 50% nationally) primarily due to THMs and had the highest average length of accommodation (79 days compared with 40 days nationally) (Table 2.2 and Table 9.7). As clients reside in THM properties for periods ranging from 4 months up to 2 years it may be that, although not all the THM accommodation periods are reported in the SAAP data, the number that are reported are inflating the average length of accommodation. Furthermore, a proportion of Victoria's short-term accommodation is not included as it is provided through the THM Housing Establishment Fund. In contrast, the Northern Territory had the shortest average length of accommodation (16 days) and the highest proportion of support periods with accommodation (81%). The reasons for variations in length of accommodation are complex and relate to the different client and agency profiles in each state and territory. More information can be found in the SAAP NDCA 2003–04 annual report (AIHW 2005a) and associated supplementary reports.

### **Accompanying children**

In general, the proportions of support periods with accommodation on a daily average and an annual basis for accompanying children follow the same pattern as for clients across the states and territories. The daily average number of accompanying child support periods was 12,300. In 6,750 (55%) of these support periods, accompanying children were accommodated. It should be noted that support period and accommodation period start and end dates are not collected for accompanying children, and a child may not be supported for the entire duration of the parent's or guardian's support period. However, it can be reasonably assumed that accompanying children have the same support period and accommodation period start and end dates as their parent or guardian in the majority of cases.

In 2003–04 there were 52,700 accompanying children. These children received 68,800 periods of support (AIHW 2005a:13). The number of accompanying children is actually higher than this figure because the statistical linkage key, which allows the number of accompanying children to be estimated, is not collected on the form used in high-volume SAAP agencies. The number of accompanying child support periods is 73,200 when the high-volume records are included.

## **Demand for SAAP services by casual clients**

There were 29,190 casual contacts by groups who required one-off assistance during the 2 weeks of the Casual Client Collection (3–16 March 2004). These casual contacts corresponded to approximately 31,250 contacts by individuals (Table 2.2).

On a daily average basis there were 2,085 casual contacts made by an estimated 2,232 individuals (Table 2.1). On an average day, Queensland had a significantly larger number of casual client contacts by groups (787 or 38% of the average daily contacts by groups) and individuals (838 or 38% of average daily contacts by individuals) than the other states and territories.

## **Demand for SAAP accommodation by potential clients and accompanying children**

Although people may request support, accommodation or a combination of both, only the number of requests for accommodation and the number of people associated with those requests are collected during the Demand for Accommodation Collection. For this reason, the figures presented cannot be used to estimate the total number of people turned away from SAAP services. Only the number of people who requested accommodation from SAAP agencies but did not receive that accommodation during the 2-week collection period (26 November–2 December 2003 and 5–11 May 2004) are presented.

The number of valid requests from the Demand for Accommodation Collection is discussed in Chapter 6 and the number of people making these requests is discussed in Chapters 7 and 8. Tables 2.1 and 2.2 provide a summary of the information in those chapters. Yearly estimates of the demand for SAAP accommodation cannot be provided (Appendix A2.2.1). Therefore, the annual figures for Demand for Accommodation shown in Table 2.2 refer to the 2-week collection period only.

During the 2 weeks of the Demand for Accommodation Collection, there was a daily average of 279 valid requests for immediate accommodation that could not be provided (valid unmet requests for accommodation – see Glossary) (Table 2.1). These requests were made by 351 people (225 potential clients and 126 accompanying children). After adjusting for people who made a valid unmet request for accommodation but were subsequently accommodated later in the day (27), around 325 people (just under 205 potential clients and 120 accompanying children) could not be accommodated.

Chapter 9 provides the turn-away rate for daily requests for accommodation. The turn-away rate is an estimate of the proportion of people who were turned away from SAAP accommodation on an average day during the collection period. Chapter 9 also provides an unmet demand to total demand for accommodation ratio as a measure of the overall ability of SAAP to meet the demand for accommodation by people turned away from agencies from which they requested accommodation on an average day during the Demand for Accommodation Collection period.

## 2.3 Tables

**Table 2.1: Total demand for SAAP assistance: summary table, by state and territory, Australia, 2003–04 (daily average number)**

	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Aust
<b>Client Collection (ongoing)</b>									
Clients	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Support periods	5,700	7,250	2,650	1,150	2,300	1,050	500	350	21,000
With accommodation	3,200	3,100	1,750	750	1,050	300	250	200	10,650
Without accommodation	2,500	4,150	900	400	1,250	750	250	150	10,350
Accompanying children <sup>(a)</sup>	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Accompanying child support periods <sup>(b)</sup>	2,400	4,800	1,850	650	1,500	500	300	250	12,300
With accommodation	1,500	2,050	1,400	500	800	200	150	150	6,750
Without accommodation	900	2,700	450	150	700	300	150	100	5,550
<b>Casual Client Collection (3 March–16 March 2004)</b>									
Casual contacts by groups	374	465	787	201	153	40	40	26	2,085
Casual contacts by individuals	397	501	838	215	166	43	43	29	2,232
<b>Demand for Accommodation Collection (26 November–2 December 2003 and 5–11 May 2004)</b>									
Valid unmet requests for immediate accommodation	64	80	63	24	17	16	12	3	279
Potential clients who requested immediate accommodation	54	56	50	21	15	13	13	3	225
Accommodated later in the day	6	6	4	1	2	1	1	<1	20
Not accommodated	48	51	46	20	13	12	12	2	205
Children accompanying potential clients who requested immediate accommodation	30	15	35	20	10	10	4	3	126
Accommodated later in the day	1	3	2	1	1	<1	<1	—	7
Not accommodated	30	13	33	19	10	10	4	3	120

(a) Includes data from the general Client Collection form only (see Appendix 3).

(b) Includes data from both the general and high-volume Client Collection forms (see Appendix 3).

### Notes

1. Support periods excluded due to missing data: 68.
2. Accompanying child support periods excluded due to missing data: 48.
3. Adjustments have been made for missing data for data from the Demand for Accommodation Collection (see Appendix 2).
4. Figures are unweighted.
5. Client Collection and Demand for Accommodation Collection figures include only data from agencies that participated in both the Client Collection and the Demand for Accommodation Collection. Consequently, the figures understate the level of activity in SAAP agencies.

Sources: SAAP Client Collection, Demand for Accommodation Collection and Casual Client Collection.

**Table 2.2: Total demand for SAAP assistance: summary table, by state and territory, Australia, 2003–04 (annual number)**

	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Aust
<b>Client collection (ongoing)</b>									
Clients	25,000	34,900	17,900	8,400	9,700	4,500	1,700	3,200	100,200
Support periods	48,600	67,200	28,400	13,800	14,700	6,600	3,000	4,800	187,200
With accommodation	33,300	14,700	18,500	10,700	6,900	2,600	2,200	3,900	92,900
Without accommodation	15,300	52,500	9,800	3,100	7,800	4,000	900	900	94,300
Accompanying children <sup>(a)</sup>	10,100	19,700	8,600	5,900	4,900	2,400	700	2,100	52,700
Accompanying child support periods <sup>(b)</sup>	12,900	25,700	11,100	7,900	9,100	2,700	1,100	2,600	73,200
With accommodation	8,300	8,300	8,100	6,800	3,400	1,100	600	1,900	38,500
Without accommodation	4,500	17,400	3,100	1,100	5,700	1,600	500	700	34,700
<b>Casual Client Collection (3–16 March 2004)</b>									
Casual contacts by groups	5,240	6,500	11,020	2,810	2,140	560	570	360	29,190
Casual contacts by individuals	5,560	7,020	11,740	3,010	2,320	600	600	400	31,250
<b>Demand for Accommodation Collection (26 November–2 December 2003 and 5–11 May 2004)</b>									
Valid unmet requests for immediate accommodation	900	1,120	890	340	240	230	160	50	3,910
Potential clients who requested immediate accommodation	750	790	700	300	210	190	180	40	3,150
Accommodated later in the day	80	80	60	10	20	20	10	<5	280
Not accommodated	670	710	650	280	190	170	170	30	2,870
Children accompanying potential clients who requested immediate accommodation	430	220	490	280	140	140	50	40	1,770
Accommodated later in the day	10	40	20	10	10	10	<5	—	100
Not accommodated	420	180	460	260	130	130	50	40	1,670

(a) Includes data from the general Client Collection form only (see Appendix 3).

(b) Includes data from both the general and high-volume Client Collection forms (see Appendix 3).

**Notes**

1. Cases excluded due to missing data: 0.
2. Adjustments have been made for missing data for data from the Demand for Accommodation Collection (see Appendix 2).
3. Number of clients within a state or territory relates to clients who ever received assistance from a SAAP agency in that state or territory. Since a client may have support periods in more than one state or territory, state and territory figures do not sum to the national figure.
4. Support periods and accompanying child support periods have been weighted to adjust for agency non-participation.
5. Client and accompanying children figures have been weighted to adjust for agency non-participation and client non-consent.
6. Figures from the Demand for Accommodation and Casual Client Collections are unweighted.
7. Demand for Accommodation figures include only data from agencies that participated in both the Client Collection and the Demand for Accommodation Collection. Consequently, the figures understate the level of activity in SAAP agencies.

Sources: SAAP Client Collection, Demand for Accommodation and Collection Casual Client Collection.



### 3 Meeting the needs of clients and accompanying children

A detailed discussion on the support given to SAAP clients and accompanying children is contained in the 2003–04 national annual report (AIHW 2005a). This chapter provides a summary of the services clients and accompanying children requested during their support periods and whether these services were provided, referred, or neither provided nor referred (unmet).

The diverse nature of client needs is reflected in the considerable range of services SAAP agencies provide to people who are homeless or at imminent risk of becoming homeless. Support may involve the provision of supported accommodation and/or a range of support services generally lasting more than 1 hour or of an ongoing nature.

Although SAAP agencies endeavour to meet all the needs of clients and accompanying children, people who are clients of a SAAP agency and their accompanying children may express a need for a particular service that is unable to be provided or referred on by the agency. These are termed unmet needs.

Both existing clients and potential clients (see Glossary) can have requests for services that agencies are not able to meet, however, unmet needs for existing clients cannot be considered alongside unmet requests for potential clients. This is because the number of occasions on which unmet requests are made by existing clients are not reported. For example, a client may request financial assistance 3 times in a support period, but the Client Collection shows only that financial assistance was needed, not that it was requested 3 times. In addition, only demand for accommodation is collected for potential clients, not the demand for all SAAP services. As a result, the unmet need of existing clients for both support and accommodation is discussed here, and unmet demand for accommodation by potential clients is discussed in Chapters 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9. It should also be noted that during the Demand for Accommodation Collection period, a person can be both a client and a potential client if he or she is receiving support from a SAAP agency but has a request for accommodation unmet.

During 2003–04, SAAP agencies provided an estimated 100,200 clients and 52,700<sup>2</sup> accompanying children with accommodation and/or support. Twenty-eight per cent of clients and 16% of children accompanying clients received more than one period of support during the year, resulting in 187,200 support periods and 73,200 accompanying child support periods (AIHW 2005a:12–13).

However, the ability of SAAP agencies to meet the needs of their clients and accompanying children can be measured only after a client has finished receiving support. For this reason, it is necessary to look at closed support periods when examining the provision of the services requested by clients and accompanying children. In 2003–04, there were 168,300<sup>3</sup> support

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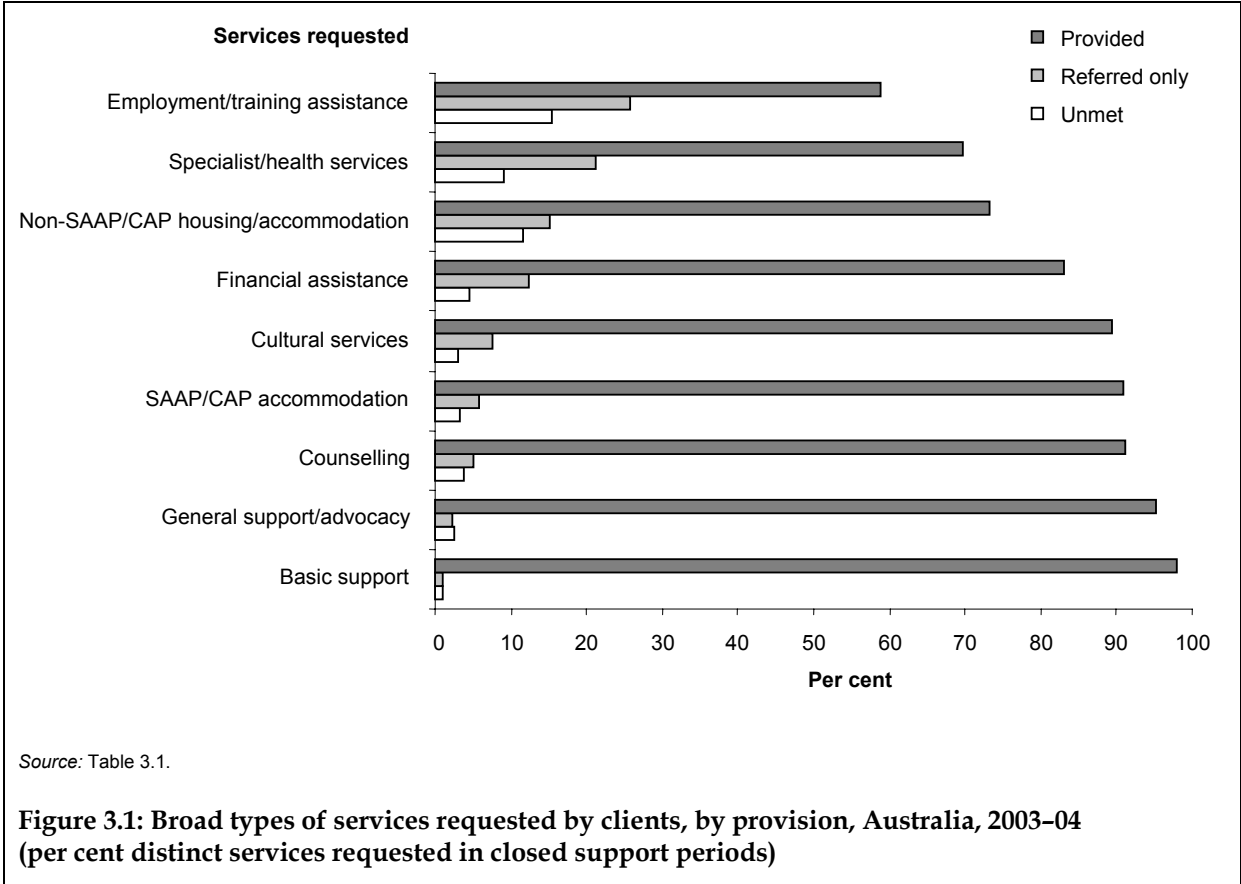
2 The number of accompanying children is an underestimate as the number of accompanying children cannot be estimated on the high-volume form (see Appendix 3).

3 Figure consists of 162,300 closed support periods where a service was requested, 1,700 closed support periods where information on service provision or referral was provided but no need was expressed for those services, and 4,344 closed support periods where no information on service requirements or provision was provided.

periods and 59,700<sup>4</sup> accompanying child support periods that finished on or before 30 June 2004 (Tables 3.1 and 3.6).

### 3.1 Meeting the needs of clients

During 2003–04, there were 914,700 distinct services requested by clients in a total of 162,300 closed support periods in which information was available about service requirements and provision. This equated to approximately 5.6 service types requested by clients in these support periods (derived from Table 3.1). Of the services requested, 90% were directly provided by SAAP agencies and 6% were referred to other organisations, leaving 4% (35,400) of requested services not met by the end of support (Figure 3.1).



<sup>4</sup> Figures represents only data collected via the general client collection form as information on the support requested for, provided to, or referred on for accompanying children is not collected on the high-volume form (see Appendix 3). Figure consists of 35,700 closed accompanying child support periods where a service was requested for accompanying children, 1,400 closed accompanying child support periods where information on service provision or referral was provided but no need was expressed for those services, and 22,586 closed accompanying child support periods where no information on service requirements or provision was provided.

The three broad service types that were most commonly provided were basic support, such as meals and showers (98%), general support or advocacy (95%), and counselling (91%). SAAP or CAP accommodation was also provided directly in 91% of requested services.

A client might request many services in a single support period, but in some cases SAAP agencies might not be able to meet all the client's requests directly. In these instances referrals to appropriate organisations might be arranged. For some requested services, however, it might not be possible either to provide the service or to refer the client on, resulting in unmet needs.

There were 57,000 referrals made where a request for a service was not met directly by the agency (Table 3.1). However, these figures are likely to be underestimates because, as with service provision, a referral may have been arranged for a particular service more than once. It should be noted that there is no information about client outcomes from referrals. In the context of the National Data Collection (NDC), a referral means that an agency (SAAP or non-SAAP) has accepted the client for an appointment or interview. However, providing a client with a referral does not guarantee that their needs will then be met.

Referrals for services that could not be provided directly were generally more frequent for the services with higher levels of unmet needs. For example, employment and training assistance was unmet in 15% of requests for this broad service type, but had the highest proportion of referrals (26%). Requests for assistance to obtain or maintain non-SAAP housing were unmet in 12% of cases and were referred in 15% of cases.

## **Requesting group**

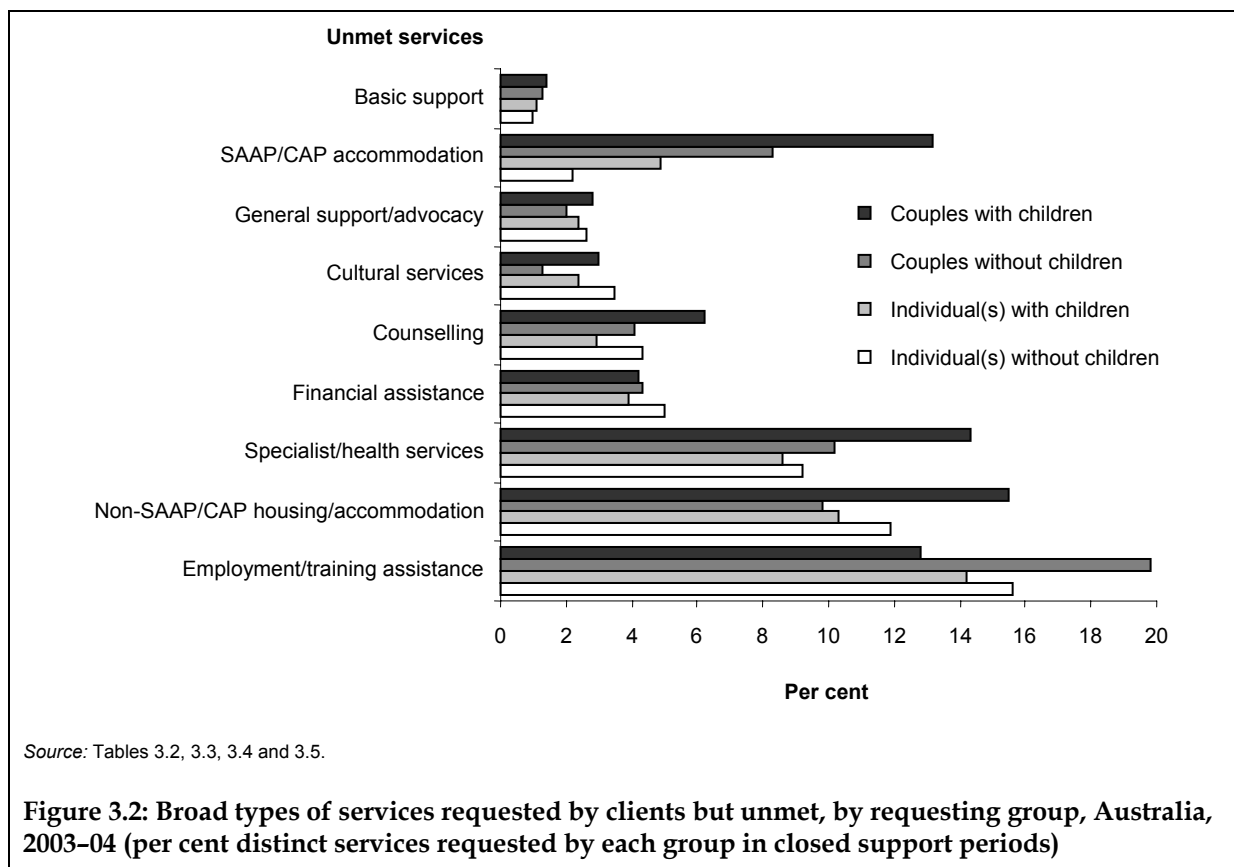
When examining the provision of requested services according to client group it becomes apparent that some groups have higher proportions of unmet needs overall and that the types of services remaining unmet vary between the groups. For example, couples with children had 7% of requested services remaining unmet at the end of support, compared with between 4% and 5% for the other client groups (Tables 3.2, 3.3, 3.4 and 3.5). In particular, requests for independent non-SAAP housing or accommodation made by couples with children remained unmet in 16% of requests, compared with between 10% and 12% for the other client groups (Figure 3.2). Couples with children also had a relatively high level of unmet need for specialist and health services, with these types of services remaining unmet in 14% of cases for couples with children compared with between 9% and 10% for the other client groups.

Couples with and without children had relatively high levels of unmet need for SAAP or CAP accommodation. Couples with children had requests for SAAP or CAP accommodation remaining unmet in 13% of requests, while couples without children had requests unmet in 8% of requests. This compares with 2% for individual(s) without children and 5% for individual(s) with children.

Couples with and without children also had higher proportions of services that were referred on when they could not be provided directly (9% compared with between 6% and 8%). Interestingly, for couples with children and couples without children, referrals for cultural services were the highest of all the groups at 16% for couples without children and 11% for couples with children, compared with between 7% and 8% for the other groups.

Couples without children reported higher levels of unmet need for employment and training assistance (20% of requests in closed support periods).

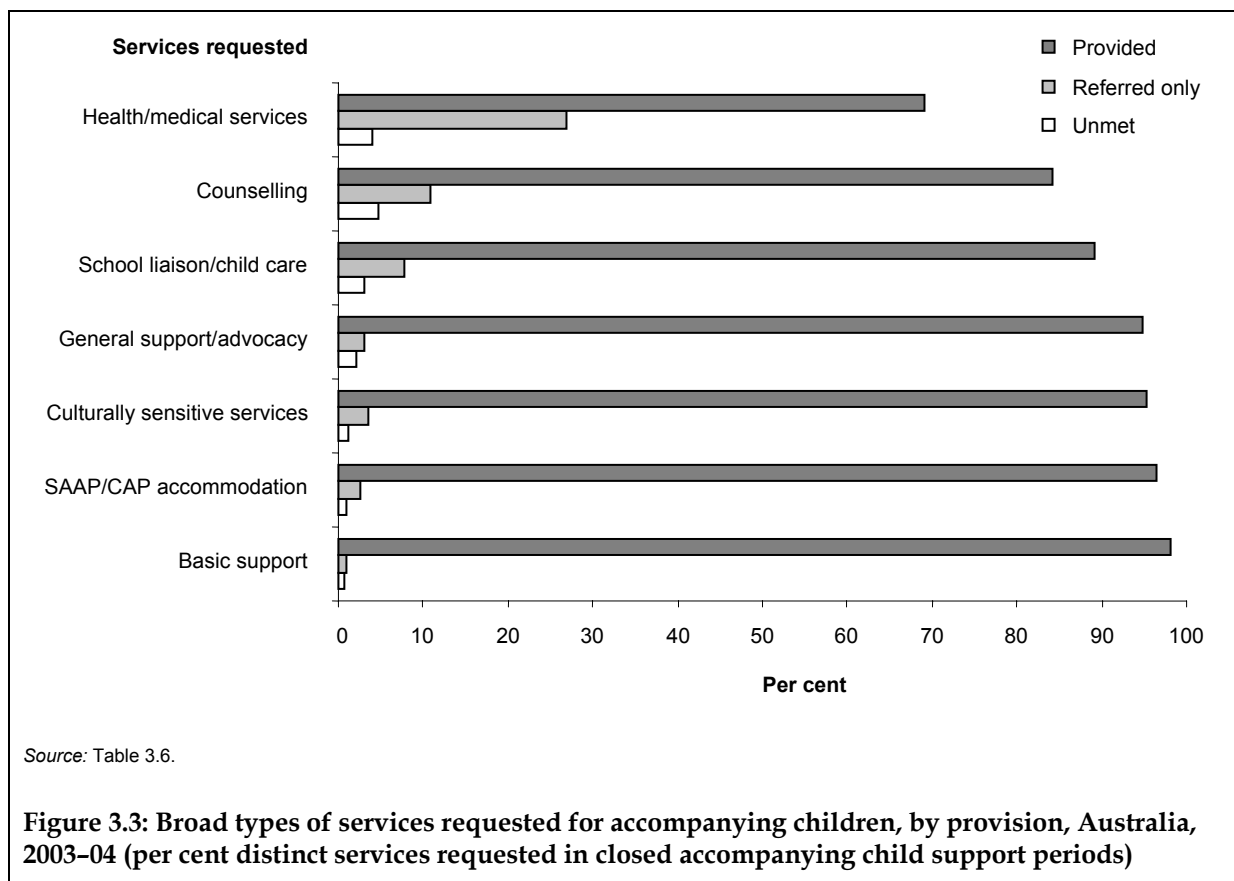
Note, however, that couples both with and without children accounted for the smallest number of closed support periods of the groups.



## 3.2 Meeting the needs of accompanying children

During 2003-04, agencies reported that children who accompanied clients required 151,300 distinct services types within 35,700 associated closed accompanying child support periods. Of these requested services, 94% were provided directly by agencies and 4% were referred on. This left 2% of required services unmet (neither provided nor referred) (Table 3.6).

Figure 3.3 illustrates that some requested services were provided more often than others. Basic support services, such as meals, showers and hygiene services, recreation and transport, had the highest number of requests (69,500 in 25,900 associated closed accompanying child support periods) and these requests were provided in 98% of cases. There were 26,800 requests for SAAP accommodation and this was provided in 96% of cases. Counselling services and health or medical services were the types of services that were most often neither provided nor referred on, remaining unmet in 5% and 4% of requests, respectively. However, although these services could not be provided directly, they were the types of services that were most often referred on. In particular, health or medical services for children were referred on in 27% of cases.



### 3.3 Tables

**Table 3.1: SAAP services requested by clients in closed support periods: broad type of service by provision, Australia, 2003–04 (per cent distinct services requested)**

Broad type of service	Unmet	Referred	Provided	Total	Distinct services requested	Assoc. closed support periods
					Number	Number
	% distinct services requested					
SAAP/CAP accommodation	3.2	5.8	91.0	100.0	92,400	92,400
Assistance to obtain/maintain non-SAAP/CAP housing or accommodation	11.6	15.2	73.2	100.0	71,100	57,400
Employment and training assistance	15.4	25.8	58.8	100.0	8,400	8,400
Financial assistance	4.6	12.3	83.1	100.0	81,500	62,700
Counselling	3.8	5.1	91.1	100.0	122,400	78,800
General support/advocacy	2.6	2.3	95.1	100.0	229,600	117,800
Specialist/health services	9.2	21.2	69.6	100.0	63,800	45,600
Cultural services	3.0	7.7	89.3	100.0	13,900	11,800
Basic support and other services n.e.s.	1.0	1.0	97.9	100.0	231,700	97,200
<b>Total (%)</b>	<b>3.9</b>	<b>6.2</b>	<b>89.9</b>	<b>100.0</b>	..	..
<b>Total (number)</b>	<b>35,400</b>	<b>57,000</b>	<b>822,300</b>	..	<b>914,700</b>	<b>162,300</b>

*Notes*

1. Number excluded due to errors and omissions (weighted): 4,344 closed support periods (cases with no information on service requirements or provision).
2. There were approximately 1,700 closed support periods where information on service provision or referral was provided but no need was expressed by the client for those services (AIHW 2005a: 54).

**Table 3.2: SAAP services requested by individual(s) without children in closed support periods: broad type of service by provision, Australia, 2003–04 (per cent distinct services requested)**

Broad type of service	Unmet	Referred	Provided	Total	Distinct services requested	Assoc. closed support periods
					Number	Number
	% distinct services requested					
SAAP/CAP accommodation	2.2	4.5	93.3	100.0	69,200	69,200
Assistance to obtain/maintain non-SAAP/CAP housing or accommodation	11.9	15.0	73.1	100.0	45,000	36,300
Employment and training assistance	15.6	25.3	59.1	100.0	6,600	6,600
Financial assistance	5.0	11.6	83.4	100.0	52,100	41,000
Counselling	4.3	4.7	91.0	100.0	72,200	51,200
General support/advocacy	2.6	1.9	95.4	100.0	157,000	82,500
Specialist/health services	9.2	19.1	71.8	100.0	51,200	36,900
Cultural services	3.5	7.3	89.2	100.0	7,600	6,600
Basic support and other services n.e.s.	1.0	0.9	98.2	100.0	183,100	76,000
<b>Total (%)</b>	<b>3.8</b>	<b>5.6</b>	<b>90.6</b>	<b>100.0</b>	..	..
<b>Total (number)</b>	<b>24,500</b>	<b>35,900</b>	<b>583,600</b>	..	<b>644,000</b>	<b>116,100</b>

*Note:* Number excluded due to errors and omissions (weighted): 3,378 closed support periods (cases with no information on service requirements or provision).

**Table 3.3: SAAP services requested by individual(s) with children in closed support periods: broad type of service by provision, Australia, 2003–04 (per cent distinct services requested)**

Broad type of service	Unmet	Referred	Provided	Total	Distinct services requested	Assoc. closed support periods
					Number	Number
	% distinct services requested					
SAAP/CAP accommodation	4.9	9.6	85.5	100.0	19,300	19,300
Assistance to obtain/maintain non-SAAP/CAP housing or accommodation	10.3	16.4	73.4	100.0	19,600	16,000
Employment and training assistance	14.1	27.3	58.6	100.0	1,300	1,300
Financial assistance	3.9	13.7	82.4	100.0	23,400	16,900
Counselling	2.9	5.5	91.6	100.0	45,400	24,300
General support/advocacy	2.4	3.4	94.2	100.0	59,500	28,300
Specialist/health services	8.6	29.9	61.5	100.0	10,400	7,200
Cultural services	2.4	7.7	89.9	100.0	5,700	4,800
Basic support and other services n.e.s.	1.1	1.4	97.5	100.0	42,800	17,800
<b>Total (%)</b>	<b>3.7</b>	<b>7.6</b>	<b>88.7</b>	<b>100.0</b>	..	..
<b>Total (number)</b>	<b>8,300</b>	<b>17,300</b>	<b>201,800</b>	..	<b>227,400</b>	<b>36,800</b>

Note: Number excluded due to errors and omissions (weighted): 758 closed support periods (cases with no information on service requirements or provision).

**Table 3.4: SAAP services requested by couples without children in closed support periods: broad type of service by provision, Australia, 2003–04 (per cent distinct services requested)**

Broad type of service	Unmet	Referred	Provided	Total	Distinct services requested	Assoc. closed support periods
					Number	Number
	% distinct services requested					
SAAP/CAP accommodation	8.3	11.9	79.8	100.0	1,500	1,500
Assistance to obtain/maintain non-SAAP/CAP housing or accommodation	9.8	14.2	75.9	100.0	2,700	2,200
Employment and training assistance	19.8	30.3	50.0	100.0	200	200
Financial assistance	4.3	14.6	81.1	100.0	2,400	2,000
Counselling	4.1	6.8	89.1	100.0	1,600	1,200
General support/advocacy	2.0	2.6	95.4	100.0	5,300	2,900
Specialist/health services	10.2	29.5	60.2	100.0	900	600
Cultural services	1.3	15.6	83.1	100.0	200	100
Basic support and other services n.e.s.	1.3	4.2	94.5	100.0	2,900	1,600
<b>Total (%)</b>	<b>4.7</b>	<b>9.3</b>	<b>86.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	..	..
<b>Total (number)</b>	<b>800</b>	<b>1,600</b>	<b>15,300</b>	..	<b>17,800</b>	<b>4,200</b>

Note: Number excluded due to errors and omissions (weighted): 100 closed support periods (cases with no information on service requirements or provision).

**Table 3.5: SAAP services requested by couples with children in closed support periods: broad type of service by provision, Australia, 2003–04 (per cent distinct services requested)**

Broad type of service	Unmet	Referred	Provided	Total	Distinct services requested	Assoc. closed support periods
					Number	Number
	<b>% distinct services requested</b>					
SAAP/CAP accommodation	13.2	10.9	75.8	100.0	2,400	2,400
Assistance to obtain/maintain non-SAAP/CAP housing or accommodation	15.5	12.2	72.3	100.0	3,800	3,000
Employment and training assistance	12.8	26.4	60.7	100.0	300	300
Financial assistance	4.2	11.8	84.0	100.0	3,600	2,700
Counselling	6.2	8.0	85.8	100.0	3,100	2,000
General support/advocacy	2.8	2.3	95.0	100.0	7,800	4,000
Specialist/health services	14.3	29.5	56.3	100.0	1,300	800
Cultural services	3.0	11.2	85.8	100.0	400	300
Basic support and other services n.e.s.	1.4	3.5	95.1	100.0	2,900	1,800
<b>Total (%)</b>	<b>6.8</b>	<b>8.5</b>	<b>84.7</b>	<b>100.0</b>	..	..
<b>Total (number)</b>	<b>1,700</b>	<b>2,200</b>	<b>21,600</b>	..	<b>25,500</b>	<b>5,200</b>

Note: Number excluded due to errors and omissions (weighted): 110 closed support periods (cases with no information on service requirements or provision).

Notes for tables 3.2 to 3.5

- In groups of service types, a client may require more than one type of service within the group. Percentages for broad groups relate to all needs and not to support periods. For individual types of services, a need can be recorded only once within a support period, so percentages relate to support periods.
- The 34 individual service types have been grouped into 9 major classifications as follows:
  - SAAP or CAP accommodation;
  - assistance to obtain/maintain non-SAAP/CAP housing or accommodation—assistance to obtain/maintain short-term accommodation and assistance to obtain/maintain independent housing;
  - employment and training assistance;
  - financial assistance—assistance to obtain/maintain a benefit or pension or other government allowance, financial assistance or material aid, and financial counselling and support;
  - counselling—incest or sexual assault counselling and support, domestic violence counselling and support, family or relationship counselling and support, emotional support and other counselling, and assistance with problem gambling;
  - general support or advocacy—living skills or personal development assistance, assistance with legal issues or court support, advice or information, retrieval, storage or removal of personal belongings, advocacy or liaison on behalf of clients, and brokerage services;
  - specialist/health services—psychological services, psychiatric services, pregnancy support, family planning support, drug or alcohol support or intervention, physical disability services, intellectual disability services, and health or medical services;
  - cultural services—culturally appropriate support, interpreter services, and assistance with immigration issues; and
  - basic support and services n.e.s.—meals, laundry or shower facilities, recreation, transport, and other support not elsewhere specified.
- Figures have been weighted to adjust for agency non-participation.

Source: SAAP Client Collection.

**Table 3.6: SAAP services requested for accompanying children in closed support periods: broad service type by provision, Australia, 2003–04**

Broad type of service	Unmet	Referred	Provided	Total	Distinct services requested	Assoc. closed accompanying child support periods
						Number
	<b>% distinct services requested</b>					
SAAP/CAP accommodation	1.0	2.5	96.4	100.0	26,800	26,800
School liaison/child care	3.1	7.8	89.1	100.0	14,600	12,300
Counselling	4.8	10.9	84.2	100.0	14,100	10,200
General support/advocacy	2.1	3.1	94.9	100.0	17,700	12,100
Health/medical services	4.0	26.8	69.1	100.0	4,500	4,500
Culturally sensitive services	1.2	3.5	95.3	100.0	4,000	4,000
Basic support and other services n.e.s.	0.8	1.0	98.2	100.0	69,500	25,900
<b>Total (%)</b>	<b>1.7</b>	<b>3.9</b>	<b>94.4</b>	<b>100.0</b>	..	..
<b>Total (number)</b>	<b>2,600</b>	<b>6,000</b>	<b>142,800</b>	..	<b>151,300</b>	<b>35,700</b>

*Notes*

1. Number excluded due to errors and omissions (weighted): 22,586 closed accompanying child support periods (including cases with no information on service requirements or provision).
2. There were approximately 1,400 closed accompanying child support periods where information was recorded on the provision and referral of services for children but no need was expressed for those services by either the client or the accompanying child (AIHW 2005a: 55).
3. Table excludes high-volume records because not all items were included on the high-volume form.
4. In groups of service types, an accompanying child may require more than one type of service within the group. Percentages for broad groups relate to all needs and not to support periods. For individual types of services, a need can be recorded only once within a support period, so percentages relate to accompanying child support periods.
5. The 18 individual service types have been grouped into 7 major classifications as follows:
  - SAAP or CAP accommodation;
  - school liaison and child care;
  - counselling—including help with behavioural problems, sexual or physical abuse counselling or support, skills education, and general counselling or support;
  - general support or advocacy—including access arrangements, advice or information, brokerage services and advocacy;
  - health or medical services;
  - culturally sensitive services; and
  - basic support and services not elsewhere specified—including meals, showers or hygiene services, recreation, transport and other support not elsewhere specified.
6. Figures have been weighted to adjust for agency non-participation.

Source: SAAP Client Collection.



# 4 One-off assistance to casual clients

This chapter examines the casual contacts made during the fortnight of the Casual Client Collection (3–16 March 2004), the different types of one-off assistance that were provided and the number of people receiving one-off-assistance.

One-off assistance includes being given a meal, a shower, transport, money, clothing, telephone advice, information or a referral. People who receive one-off assistance may be potential clients, clients from another SAAP agency, or people who want only one-off assistance (Figure 2.1). For example, a person might be accommodated at one SAAP agency, but seek meals from another agency.

During the 2 weeks of the Casual Client Collection, there were 29,190 casual contacts made by groups. These were made by an estimated 31,250 individuals (Table 2.2).<sup>5</sup> This corresponded to an estimated daily average of 2,085 casual contacts by 2,232 individuals (Table 2.1).

## 4.1 Requesting group

On average, 1.8 types of one-off assistance were provided during a casual client contact (Table 4.1). The average number of types of assistance provided during a casual contact varied to a modest degree between the different presenting groups, ranging from 1.7 for people who presented alone or with an unrelated person to 2.2 for couples who presented with children.

People presenting alone accounted for 71% of casual client contacts by individuals. The next largest proportion of casual contacts by individuals was by individuals presenting with children (15%). A relatively small number of casual contacts were by couples with or without children (6% each).

The most common types of one-off assistance provided to groups of casual clients were information (in 58% of contacts), meals (28%) and other services (26%). However, the level of provision of the eight types of assistance varied between the different presenting groups. Information, referrals, and emotional support were provided in larger proportions of casual contacts to an individual who presented with children than any other client group. In particular, information was provided to individuals with children in 84% of casual contacts by groups, compared with 51% of contacts when an individual presented alone or with an unrelated person.

On the other hand, meals and laundry and/or shower facilities were provided more often to people who presented alone or with an unrelated person, while couples with children were

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<sup>5</sup> The figures for casual client contacts are likely to be an underestimation because not all in-scope agencies participated in the Casual Client Collection. Between 3–16 March 2004, 72% of in-scope SAAP agencies participated in the Casual Client Collection (Table A2.3). Further, the method used to estimate the number of individuals may also lead to an underestimate (Note 2, Table 4.1).

more likely than the other client groups to receive financial assistance or material aid (in 21% of contacts by groups compared with between 12% and 16% for the other presenting groups).

## **4.2 State and territory**

During the 2003–04 Casual Client Collection period, the average number of types of one-off assistance provided per contact did not vary greatly between the states or territories, ranging from 2.3 in the Australian Capital Territory to 1.5 in Queensland (Table 4.2).

However, the amount of one-off assistance provided did vary between the states and territories. Queensland accounted for 38% (10,860) of contacts where one-off assistance was provided, followed by Victoria (22% or 6,410 contacts) and New South Wales (18% or 5,140 contacts). Not surprisingly, the smaller jurisdictions had much lower proportions of casual contacts: Tasmania and the Australian Capital Territory each accounted for 2% and the Northern Territory for 1%. This pattern was repeated when looking at casual contacts by individuals.

Information, referrals, and emotional support were provided in higher proportions of casual contacts in Tasmania than in the other states and territories, while financial or material aid and transport were more often provided in the Northern Territory. Meals were provided in Queensland in a far higher proportion than the other states and territories (46% of casual contacts by groups compared with between 6% and 29% for the other states and territories). Laundry and shower facilities were provided in 13% of casual contacts in the Australian Capital Territory, compared with between 1% and 10% in the other states and territory.

## 4.3 Tables

**Table 4.1: SAAP casual contacts: one-off assistance provided, by presenting group, Australia, 3–16 March 2004 (per cent contacts)**

One-off assistance provided	Person alone	Person with children	Couple without children	Couple with children	Other/ unknown	Total	
						%	Number
Information	51.0	84.1	77.3	83.3	61.8	58.3	16,710
Referral arranged	18.0	36.8	30.3	33.3	25.3	22.0	6,320
Emotional support	14.0	39.2	17.4	30.8	25.5	18.9	5,410
Meals	32.9	5.6	21.9	11.8	29.9	27.5	7,880
Financial/material aid	12.3	14.8	15.6	21.0	13.3	13.0	3,740
Transport	4.4	7.4	5.2	6.1	7.6	5.0	1,430
Laundry/shower facilities	7.9	1.0	3.1	1.5	2.8	6.4	1,830
Other	26.3	25.9	24.0	29.4	26.9	26.2	7,520
<b>Mean number of types of one-off assistance provided</b>	<b>1.7</b>	<b>2.1</b>	<b>1.9</b>	<b>2.2</b>	<b>1.9</b>	<b>..</b>	<b>1.8</b>
<b>Total (% contacts)</b>	<b>76.2</b>	<b>16.2</b>	<b>3.0</b>	<b>3.0</b>	<b>1.6</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>..</b>
<b>Total (number of contacts)</b>	<b>21,860</b>	<b>4,650</b>	<b>860</b>	<b>850</b>	<b>460</b>	<b>..</b>	<b>28,690</b>
<b>Contacts by individuals (%)</b>	<b>71.2</b>	<b>15.1</b>	<b>5.6</b>	<b>5.6</b>	<b>2.4</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>..</b>
<b>Contacts by individuals (number)</b>	<b>21,860</b>	<b>4,650</b>	<b>1,730</b>	<b>1,710</b>	<b>750</b>	<b>..</b>	<b>30,700</b>

### Notes

1. Cases excluded due to missing data: 508 contacts; 558 contacts by individuals.
2. In the Casual Client Collection, casual contacts are reported for the group receiving assistance. Casual contacts by individuals have been derived from data on 'person(s) receiving assistance' in a contact (see questionnaire in Appendix 3). 'Person alone' and 'person with children' are counted as a contact by one individual, and couples (with or without children) are counted as contacts by two individuals. Presenting units classified as 'other' are also counted as contacts by two individuals. Cases where there is no information on the type of presenting unit are counted as a contact by one individual. Although this approach will lead to an understatement of the number of individuals, this understatement will be less than if contacts of unknown composition were counted as missing.
3. Estimates of contacts by individuals exclude the number of children accompanying casual clients.
4. In any casual contact, the assisted group was able to receive more than one type of one-off assistance, so percentages do not total 100.
5. 'Other/unknown' includes those cases where the assisted unit was reported as 'other' or where it was not reported at all.
6. Figures are unweighted.

Source: SAAP Casual Client Collection.

**Table 4.2: SAAP casual contacts: one-off assistance provided, by state and territory, Australia, 3–16 March 2004 (per cent contacts)**

One-off assistance provided	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Australia	
									%	Number
Information	81.7	67.9	37.6	65.5	56.0	86.5	68.3	75.4	58.3	16,710
Referral arranged	36.9	25.7	11.2	24.5	19.8	38.2	25.9	32.7	22.0	6,320
Emotional support	20.8	22.3	12.4	23.5	20.1	38.8	37.5	25.4	18.9	5,410
Meals	11.0	19.0	46.3	23.2	10.1	5.6	29.3	10.1	27.5	7,880
Financial/ material aid	5.5	23.1	8.3	15.8	22.7	7.7	6.5	24.6	13.0	3,740
Transport	9.4	3.2	3.0	9.1	4.0	1.9	4.5	12.3	5.0	1,430
Laundry/shower facilities	6.7	4.5	7.6	2.7	9.9	1.3	13.4	3.6	6.4	1,830
Other	18.5	35.4	21.4	25.6	39.1	23.2	45.3	24.3	26.2	7,520
<b>Mean number of types of one-off assistance provided</b>	<b>1.9</b>	<b>2.0</b>	<b>1.5</b>	<b>1.9</b>	<b>1.8</b>	<b>2.0</b>	<b>2.3</b>	<b>2.1</b>	<b>..</b>	<b>1.8</b>
<b>Total (% contacts)</b>	<b>17.9</b>	<b>22.3</b>	<b>37.9</b>	<b>9.6</b>	<b>7.2</b>	<b>1.9</b>	<b>1.9</b>	<b>1.2</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>..</b>
<b>Total (number of contacts)</b>	<b>5,140</b>	<b>6,410</b>	<b>10,860</b>	<b>2,760</b>	<b>2,080</b>	<b>530</b>	<b>550</b>	<b>360</b>	<b>..</b>	<b>28,690</b>
<b>Contacts by individuals (%)</b>	<b>17.8</b>	<b>22.5</b>	<b>37.6</b>	<b>9.6</b>	<b>7.3</b>	<b>1.9</b>	<b>1.9</b>	<b>1.3</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>..</b>
<b>Contacts by individuals (number)</b>	<b>5,460</b>	<b>6,920</b>	<b>11,550</b>	<b>2,960</b>	<b>2,250</b>	<b>580</b>	<b>590</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>..</b>	<b>30,700</b>

*Notes*

1. Cases excluded due to missing data: 508 contacts; 558 contacts by individuals.
2. In the Casual Client Collection, casual contacts are reported for the group receiving assistance. Casual contacts by individuals have been derived from data on 'person(s) receiving assistance' in a contact (see questionnaire in Appendix 3). 'Person alone' and 'person with children' are counted as a contact by one individual, and couples (with or without children) are counted as contacts by two individuals. Presenting units classified as 'other' are also counted as contacts by two individuals. Cases where there is no information on the type of presenting unit are counted as a contact by one individual. Although this approach will lead to an understatement of the number of individuals, this understatement will be less than if contacts of unknown composition were counted as missing.
3. Estimates of contacts by individuals exclude the number of children accompanying casual clients.
4. In any casual contact the assisted group was able to receive more than one type of one-off assistance, so percentages do not total 100.
5. Figures are unweighted.

Source: SAAP Casual Client Collection.