



Specialist homelessness services 2020–21: Western Australia

Homelessness can profoundly affect a person’s mental and physical health, their education and employment opportunities, and their ability to fully participate in society. Governments across Australia fund a range of specialist services to support people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. Specialist Homelessness Services (SHS) deliver services for specific groups (such as people experiencing family and domestic violence and young people) as well as more generic services for people in housing crisis.

How many people were assisted?

One in 109 people in Western Australia (WA) received homelessness assistance, lower than the national rate (1 in 92). The top 3 reasons for clients seeking assistance were:

- family and domestic violence (39%, compared with 39% nationally)
- financial difficulties (32%, compared with 39%)
- lack of family and/or community support (25%, compared with 21%).

Quick facts

- 24,500 clients were assisted in WA—9% of the national SHS population (278,300 total clients).
- Of WA clients:
- 40% were homeless on first presentation, lower than the national rate (43%).
 - 9 in 10 (90%) who were at risk of homelessness were assisted to maintain housing.
 - 1 in 3 (29%) who were homeless were assisted into housing.

Client characteristics, 2020–21

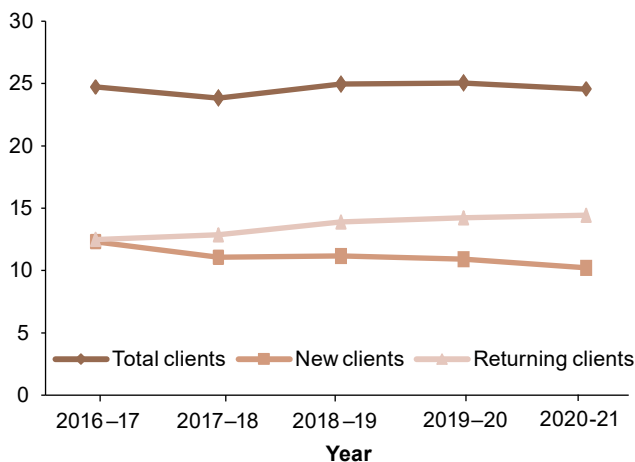
	WA	Australia
Sex (%)	Male	40
	Female	60
Indigenous (%)	51	28
Remoteness (%)	Major cities	60
	Inner regional	23
	Outer regional	11
	Remote and very remote	6
Living arrangements (%)	Living alone	32
	One parent with child/ren	33
	Couple with child/ren	12
	Couple without child/ren	5
	Other family or group	18
Labour force (%)	Employed	13
	Unemployed	53
	Not in labour force	35
Education status (%)	Education/training	21
	Not in education/training	79
Median length of support (days)	22	51
Median nights of accommodation	8	31
Proportion receiving accommodation (%)	49	31

Note: Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

Source: SHSC supplementary tables 2020–21.

Trends in WA client numbers

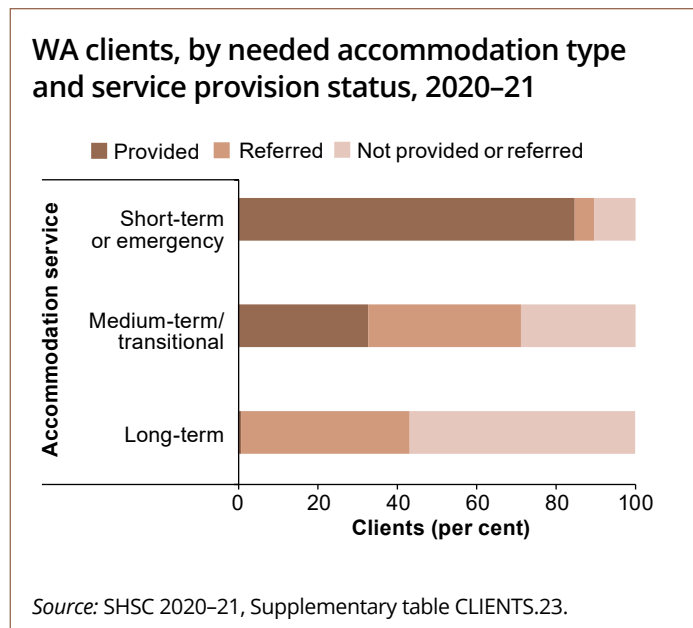
Number of clients ('000)



Source: Specialist Homelessness Services Collection (SHSC) unpublished data**.

Accommodation services

A greater proportion of clients in WA than nationally needed accommodation (66% and 60%, respectively).



Client groups of interest

The overall client rate was lower in WA in 2020–21 than the previous year, and client rates decreased for all client groups other than Indigenous clients and older people.

Clients per 10,000, by interest groups

	WA		Australia	
	2019–20	2020–21	2019–20	2020–21
All clients	95.1	91.9	114.5	108.3
Indigenous	1,108.6	1,110.7	799.9	810.6
Young people presenting alone (15–24)	11.0	10.8	16.7	16.2
Older people (55 and over)	8.8	8.8	9.6	9.3
Family and domestic violence	39.7	38.0	47.0	45.2
Disability	1.6	1.3	2.6	2.7
Mental health	23.4	23.1	34.8	34.3
Exiting custodial arrangements	1.8	1.7	3.7	3.5
Leaving care	2.2	1.8	2.7	2.5
Children on protection orders	2.9	2.4	3.5	3.2
Drug/alcohol use	11.7	11.4	11.2	10.6

Notes:

- Crude rates are used except for Indigenous rates which are directly age-standardised (see online technical information).
- Minor adjustments in rates may occur between publications reflecting revision of the estimated resident population by the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

Source: SHSC Supplementary tables 2019–20 to 2020–21.

Housing outcomes

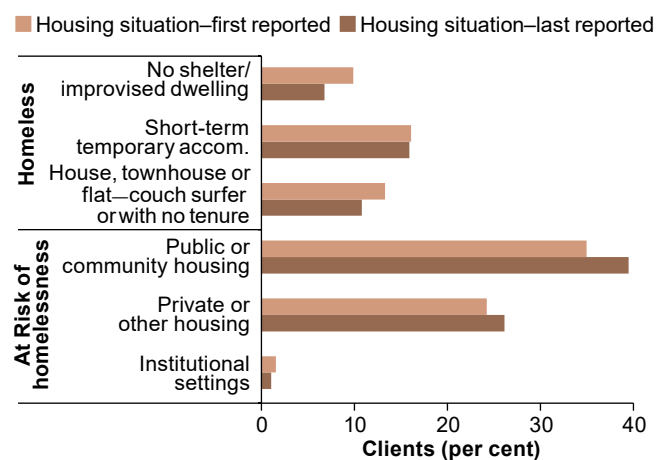
Housing outcomes are described for clients whose support ended in the financial year and detailed information about housing situation was known at the start and end of support.

Of the 6,500 WA clients who began support homeless in 2020–21, 29% (more than 1,900 clients) were assisted into housing. Of these clients, around 1,000 clients were housed in public or community housing, while more than 800 clients were housed in private or other housing.

Of the 10,400 clients who began support housed but at risk of homelessness, 9 in 10 (90% or 9,400) were assisted to maintain housing. Of these clients at risk:

- 9 in 10 (90% or 5,400) of those in public or community housing were assisted to remain in their tenancy and a further 200 clients were assisted into private or other housing.
- 8 in 10 (81% or 3,300) of those in private or other housing were assisted to remain in their tenancy and a further 300 clients were assisted into public or community housing.

WA clients, by housing situation at beginning and end of support, 2020–21



****Note:** Data for 2011–12 to 2016–17 have been adjusted for non-response. Due to improvements in rates of agency participation and SLK validity, 2017–18 data onwards are not weighted. The removal of weighting does not constitute a break in time series and weighted data from 2011–12 to 2016–17 are comparable with unweighted data for 2017–18 onwards. For further information, refer to the Technical notes.

More information

More information on WA and national SHS data is available from [Specialist homelessness services annual report](#).