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**Australian Institute of
Health and Welfare**

*Authoritative information and statistics
to promote better health and wellbeing*

Government-funded specialist homelessness services

**SAAP National Data Collection
annual report
2010–11**

Australia

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Contents

Acknowledgments..... iv

Summary v

1 Introduction.....1

2 How many people were supported?4

3 Who was supported?.....7

4 Why do people seek support?12

5 For how long were people supported?15

6 What type of support was needed and were these needs met?18

7 What happened after support?25

References30

List of figures31

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Summary

Homelessness can affect anyone in the community. Each year many Australians either experience homelessness or find themselves in circumstances that put them at risk of becoming homeless. In response to this, Australian governments fund a range of services specifically designed to reduce the incidence or frequency of homelessness and the impact it has on people and families. These services are known as specialist homelessness services and are largely delivered by non-government organisations.

This report presents the 2010–11 data on the use of government-funded specialist homelessness services (see Box 1.1). It is the final annual report to be sourced from the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) National Data Collection (NDC). From 1 July 2011, data on the people using specialist homelessness services will be reported from the new Specialist Homelessness Services (SHS) collection.

In 2010–11, an estimated 230,500 people (equivalent to 1 in 97 Australians) used specialist homelessness services. Of these, 142,500 (62%) were clients and 88,000 (38%) were children accompanying clients (see Box 3.1).

The people supported by specialist homelessness agencies come from diverse sections of the community – with young people, families, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people continuing to be significant service users in 2010–11. As such, it is not surprising that people’s reasons for seeking assistance and their requirements in relation to support vary. In 2010–11:

- unaccompanied women, females with children and young people commonly sought assistance because of issues in their interpersonal relationships, such as domestic or family violence or the breakdown of a relationship with a family member, spouse or partner
- unaccompanied men aged 25 and over commonly sought assistance because of drug, alcohol or substance use or as a result of financial difficulties
- couples, both with and without children, and males with children commonly sought assistance because of accommodation-related issues, such as being evicted.

With the exception of a small increase in the average age of clients, there has been little change in recent years in the overall demographic profile of clients and their accompanying children, their reasons for seeking assistance, or in their circumstances immediately following support. There have, however, been some changes in the use of government-funded specialist homelessness services. From 2006–07 to 2010–11 there has been:

- a small increase in the overall rate of Australians using specialist homelessness services – from 1 in every 110 to 1 in every 97
- a decrease in the proportion of support periods that included a period of specialist homelessness accommodation – from 38% to 27%
- an increase in the overall length of support and accommodation – support from an average of 50 days to 68 days; and accommodation from an average of 50 days to 65 days.

1 Introduction

This national report provides an overview of the use of government-funded specialist homelessness services in 2010–11. It is accompanied by an appendix – containing tables and further information about the data (AIHW 2011a) – and by individual state and territory supplementary reports (AIHW 2011b, c, d, e, f, g, h, i).

The 2010–11 data from government-funded specialist homelessness agencies was collected in the SAAP National Data Collection (SAAP NDC) (see AIHW 2011a:Appendix 2). This is the final annual report that will be produced using data from this collection. A new collection, the Specialist Homelessness Services (SHS) collection, which is intended to better reflect the changed arrangements under the National Affordable Housing Agreement (NAHA) and the national partnership agreements, replaced the SAAP NDC on 1 July 2011. Reporting from the SHS is expected to commence in early 2012.

Readers should note that figures presented here and in the supplementary state and territory reports may not add or match exactly between tables and text due to rounding (see AIHW 2011a:Appendix 5).

1.1 The government response to homelessness

The government response to homelessness has been shaped by the White Paper on homelessness – *The road home: a national approach to reducing homelessness* (Australian Government 2008). The response is administered under the NAHA and the national partnership agreements. These agreements cover people who are homeless and those who are at risk of homelessness.

The White Paper on homelessness

The White Paper on homelessness outlines the Australian Government's response to homelessness, with a focus on the reduction and prevention of homelessness. In order to achieve this, three broad strategies are highlighted. They are:

1. turning off the tap – prevention and early intervention to stop people from becoming homeless and to lessen the impact of homelessness
2. improving and expanding services – improving and expanding the service response to homelessness to achieve sustainable housing, improve economic and social participation, and end homelessness
3. breaking the cycle – getting people back on their feet and moving them through the crisis system to stable housing and, where possible, employment, with the support they need so that homelessness does not recur.

National Affordable Housing Agreement

The NAHA is designed to provide a framework for all levels of governments to work together to reduce homelessness and improve housing affordability. The objective of the NAHA is to ensure that 'all Australians have access to affordable, safe and sustainable housing that contributes to social and economic participation'. Funding for the NAHA commenced on 1 January 2009.

Box 1.1: Interpreting data in this report

Government-funded specialist homelessness services are only part of the picture

Currently there is no accurate measure of the proportion of people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness who make contact with a specialist homelessness agency. While the SAAP NDC provides reliable estimates of those using specialist homelessness services, it should not be interpreted as representing the entire population of those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

The SAAP NDC is designed to capture the government response to homelessness and therefore service providers who do not receive government funding are excluded. Further, the collection is focused on services provided by 'specialist homelessness agencies' – those that specifically target and provide services to people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness – and more general service providers are not included.

The model of service delivery and client target groups vary by jurisdiction

Variations between the jurisdictions in the models of service delivery and client focus need to be considered when analysing the national results and when comparing between the states and territories.

For example, accommodation-related data for Victoria, both in regard to the assessed need for and the provision of accommodation, is affected by Victoria's model of service delivery. Much of the specialist homelessness accommodation in Victoria is provided through the complementary Transitional Housing Management (THM) program, which collects data separately to the SAAP NDC. As such, accommodation-related data in Victoria has not been recorded in the SAAP NDC in a way that is consistent with other states and territories. This impacts accommodation-related data at the national level and also means that Victorian accommodation-related data is not strictly comparable with that reported by other jurisdictions. Estimates of affected data excluding Victoria are contained in Appendix 1 to this report (AIHW 2011a).

Accommodation-related data for South Australia is also affected by the model of homelessness service delivery used in this state. A large number of South Australian agencies provide support services only, with accommodation being provided through other sources which do not provide data to the SAAP NDC.

The states and territories also vary in their client focus ('primary target group') for service delivery. For example, Western Australia has a high proportion of agencies primarily focused on delivering services to women escaping domestic violence.

Policy and service delivery arrangements have changed over recent years

There have been changes in policy and service delivery arrangements over recent years. Midway through 2008–09, the SAAP agreement was discontinued and replaced by the NAHA. Then, in 2009–10, the national partnership funding commenced. Although data collection continued under the SAAP NDC, it has been affected by these changes. In particular, the addition of agencies funded under the revised arrangements has not been uniform across jurisdictions nor across years. For example, not all jurisdictions have included national partnership funded services in the SAAP NDC for 2009–10 or 2010–11 (see AIHW 2011a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h, i:Table A1 and Appendix 2).

Changes to homelessness data collection

On 1 July 2011, the SHS collection replaced the SAAP NDC. The SHS pre-implementation requirements may have impacted the ability of some agencies to fully participate in data collection in the final stages of the SAAP NDC (see AIHW 2011a:Table A2).

National partnership agreements

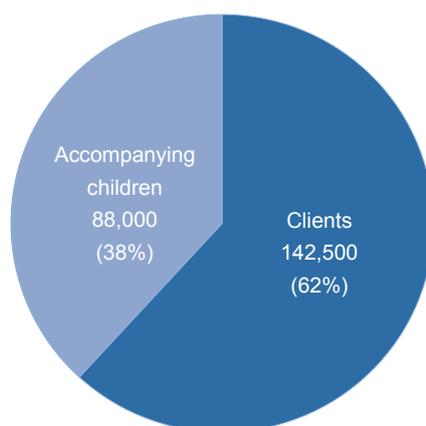
The NAHA is supported by the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness (NPAH), which outlines the roles and responsibilities of the Australian Government and the state and territory governments specifically in relation to reducing and preventing homelessness. It contributes to the NAHA outcome that 'people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness achieve sustainable housing and social inclusion'. The NPAH was signed in December 2008 and funding commenced 1 July 2009.

The NPAH is complemented by other partnership agreements that are designed to respond to a range of housing needs including homelessness. These include the National Partnership Agreement on Social Housing and the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing.

Not all jurisdictions included their NPAH or other national partnership agreement funded services in the SAAP NDC (see AIHW2011a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h, i:Table A1).

2 How many people were supported?

During 2010–11, it is estimated that 230,500 people (equivalent to 1 in 97 Australians) received support from a government-funded specialist homelessness agency (AIHW 2011a:Table A3). Of these, 142,500 (62%) were clients and 88,000 (38%) were children accompanying clients (Figure 2.1) (see Box 3.1 for an explanation of clients and accompanying children).



Sources: tables A3, A4 and A5.

Figure 2.1: Clients and accompanying children, 2010–11

Box 2.1: Number of support periods and number of people

Data in the SAAP NDC Client Collection are collected in relation to support periods. A support period is a discrete period of time over which a person receives ongoing support from a government-funded specialist homelessness agency. A person may have one or more periods of support within a year. To calculate the number of people associated with these periods of support, a statistical linkage key (SLK) is created for each person receiving support where consent was provided to record this information. In this way, people with multiple periods of support can be ascertained and estimates of the number of people can be made. See the appendix to this report for more detail (AIHW 2011a).

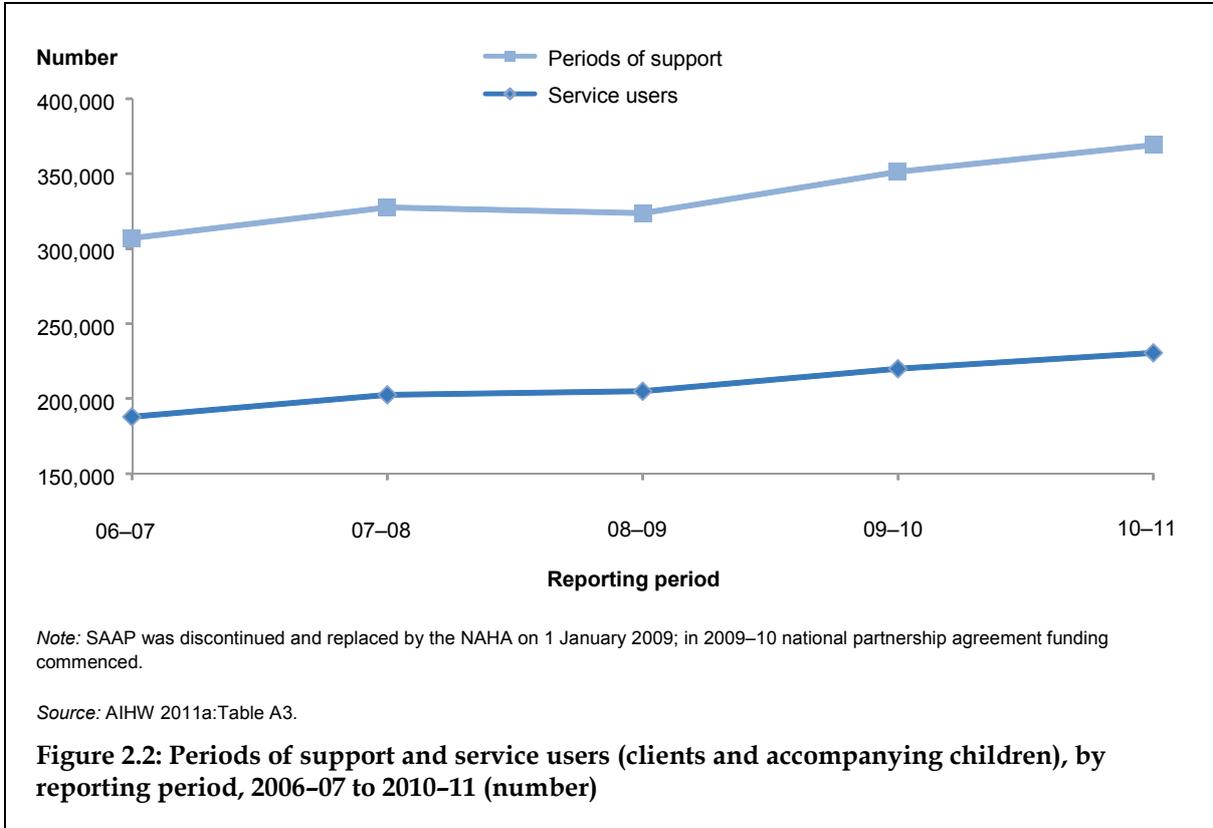
In the context of this report, 'service users' refers to clients plus accompanying children (see Box 3.1).

Most clients and accompanying children presented only once for support during the year (72% of clients and 81% of accompanying children) (tables A4 and A5) (see Box 2.1). The average number of support periods was 1.6 overall, 1.7 for clients, and 1.4 for accompanying children.

The majority of services delivered were non-accommodation related support services. Only 27% of support periods included a period of specialist homelessness accommodation (AIHW 2011a:Table A4).

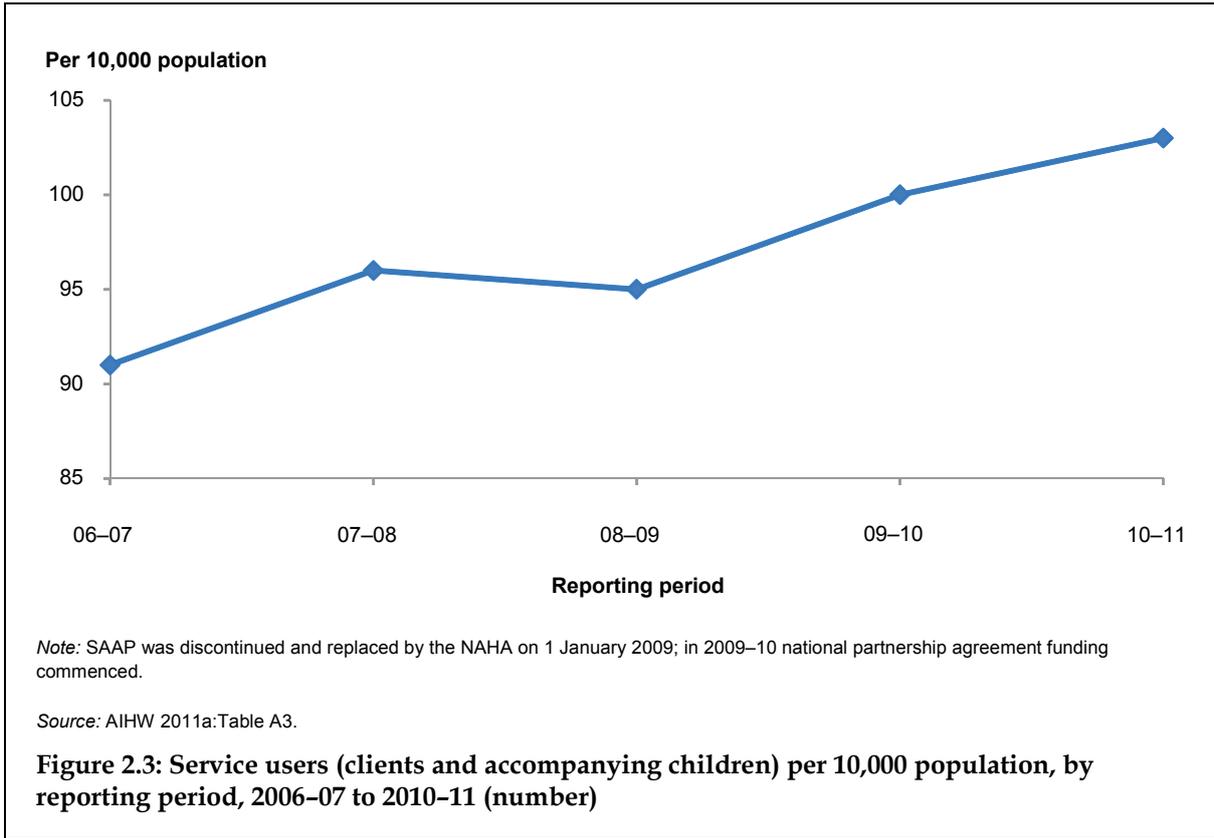
2.1 Changes over time

Both the number of people supported (service users) and their associated periods of support have generally increased over recent years – service users from 187,900 in 2006–07 to 230,500 in 2010–11; and periods of support from 307,000 to 369,100.



The rate of people using specialist homelessness services has also generally increased – from 91 per 10,000 in 2006–07 (or 1 in 110 people) to 103 per 10,000 in 2010–11 (or 1 in 97 people) (Figure 2.3).

An increase or decrease in the periods of support, the number of people supported, or in the rate of use of services does not necessarily indicate an increase or decrease in the number of Australians who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. Consideration needs to be given to factors such as the level of funding, the number of agencies operating and the scope of government programs, as these changes may instead reflect an expansion or reduction in the level of, and access to, services available (see Box 1.1; tables A1 and A2).



3 Who was supported?

People experiencing, or at risk of, homelessness come from diverse sections of the community. In 2010–11, young women, children and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people continued to be significant users of specialist homelessness services.

Box 3.1: Clients and accompanying children

The SAAP NDC collects information on people who present to government-funded specialist homelessness agencies. This includes adults and children who present independently (clients) as well as children who present as part of a family group (accompanying children). See the appendix to this report for more detail (AIHW 2011a).

Many children accompanying clients do not receive direct service provision (in around 49% of their periods of support). That is, the child may have indirectly benefited from the support provided to the family as a whole but no particular types of support were required, provided or referred on specifically for that child.

In the context of this report, 'service users' refers to clients plus accompanying children.

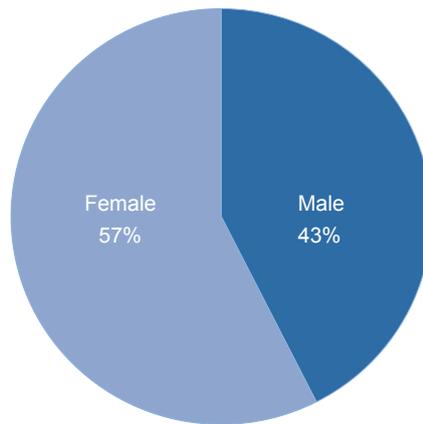
3.1 Age and sex

In 2010–11, there were more females (57%) than males (43%) who used specialist homelessness services (Figure 3.1; includes clients and children accompanying clients).

The average (mean) age of service users overall was 23; 33 for clients; and 7 for children accompanying clients (tables A6, A8 and A11).

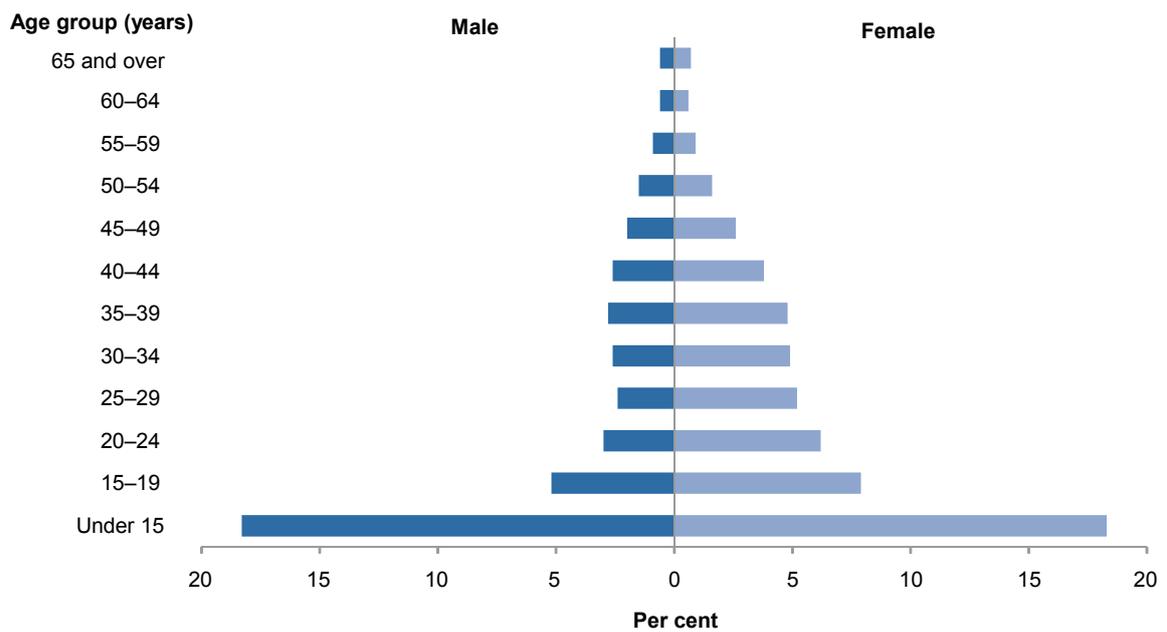
Young people, especially young women, and children were generally the most likely to use specialist homelessness services (AIHW 2011a:Table A7 and figures 3.2 and 3.3; includes clients and children accompanying clients). The highest rates of use by any age groups were by people aged under 19 – with an equivalent of 1 in every 50 Australians aged under 15 (or 199 per 10,000 people) and 1 in every 50 Australians aged 15–19 using specialist homelessness services (or 202 per 10,000 people). The highest rate of use by any one age and sex group was by females aged 15–19 (1 in 40 or 250 per 10,000 people).

People aged 65 and over were the least likely to use specialist homelessness services (1 in every 1,000 or 10 per 10,000 people).



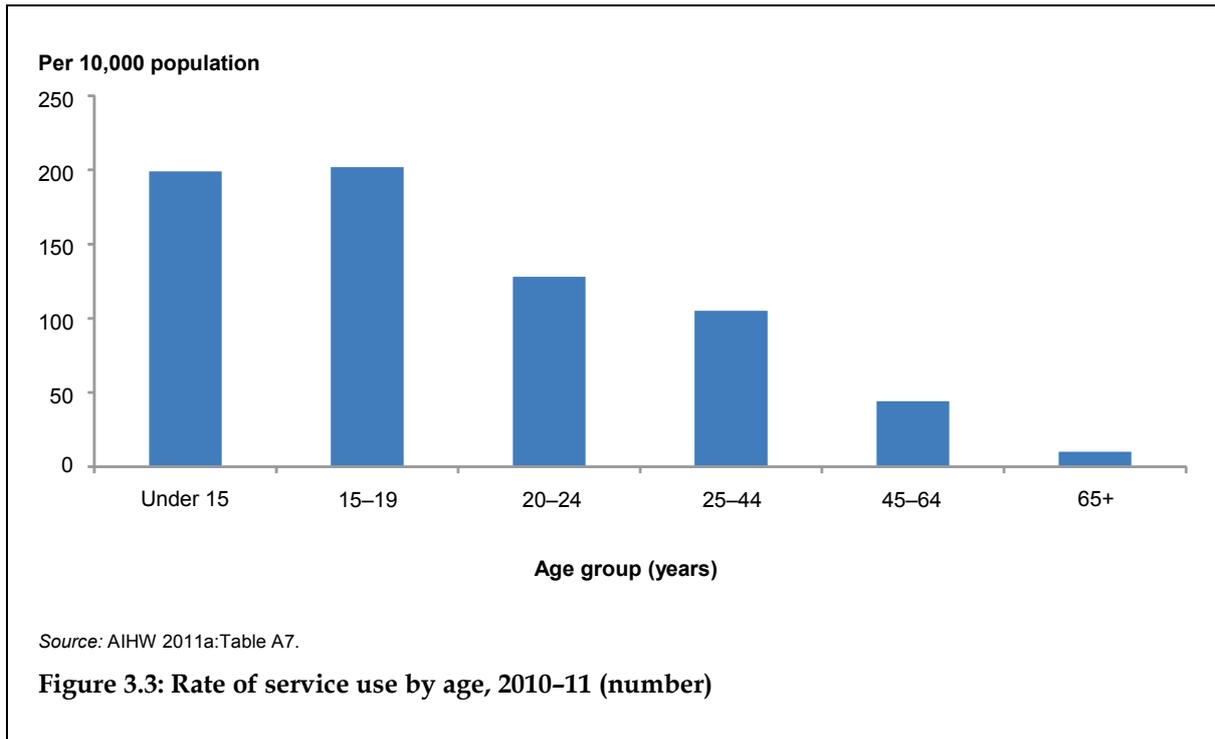
Source: AIHW 2011a:Table A6.

Figure 3.1: Service users by sex, 2010-11 (per cent)

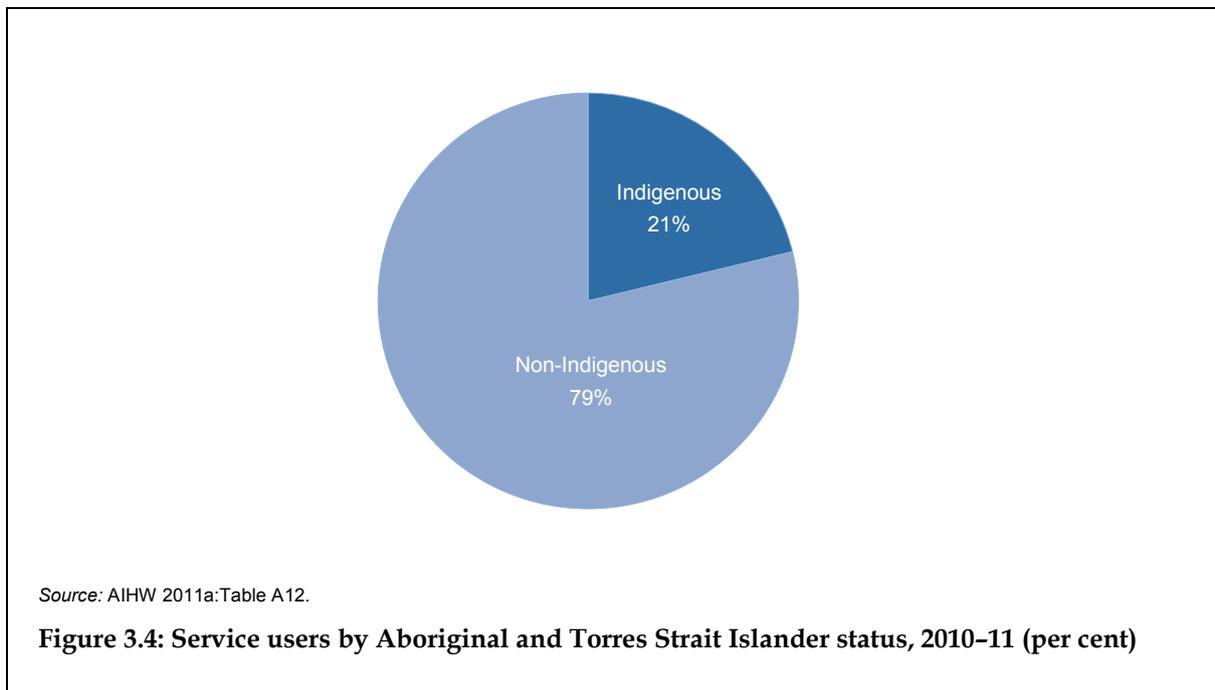


Source: AIHW 2011a:Table A6.

Figure 3.2: Service users by age and sex, 2010-11 (percentage of all service users)



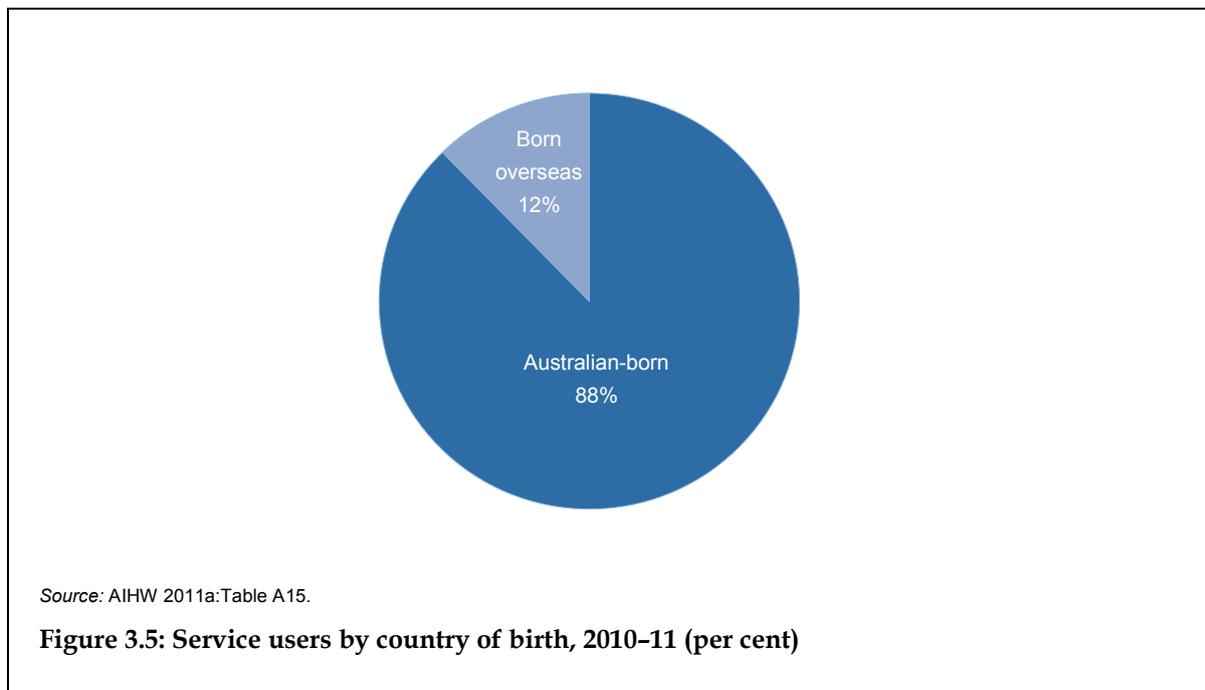
3.2 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people



The majority of service users were non-Indigenous – 79% of service users overall; 81% of clients; and 74% of accompanying children (Figure 3.4; tables A12, A13 and A14). Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were, however, over-represented relative to their population size – 21% of service users were reported to be Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, compared with around 3% of the Australian population (ABS 2009).

3.3 Country of birth

The majority of service users were born in Australia – 88% of service users overall; 84% of clients; and 94% of accompanying children (Figure 3.5; tables A16 and A17). This was higher than in the general Australian population, of which around 73% were Australian-born (ABS 2011:45). For those born overseas, the most common countries of birth were New Zealand and Sudan.



3.4 Client groups

This section contains information on the client groups to which a person who received assistance belongs (see Box 4.1). Client groups are classified according to the relationship the client has to the people with whom they are supported. Clients may have more than one support period during a reporting year (see Box 2.1). Because a client may present with different people in each support period, data in this section relate to support periods rather than to clients.

According to the number of support periods, men aged 25 and over who presented alone or with an unrelated person (25%) and females with children (23%) were the largest groups of users of specialist homelessness services (AIHW 2011a:Table A18). This, however, does not include the many periods of support for children accompanying clients (see AIHW 2011a:Table A5). When children accompanying clients are included, the largest group of users was females with children (35%) (AIHW unpublished data).

3.5 Changes over time

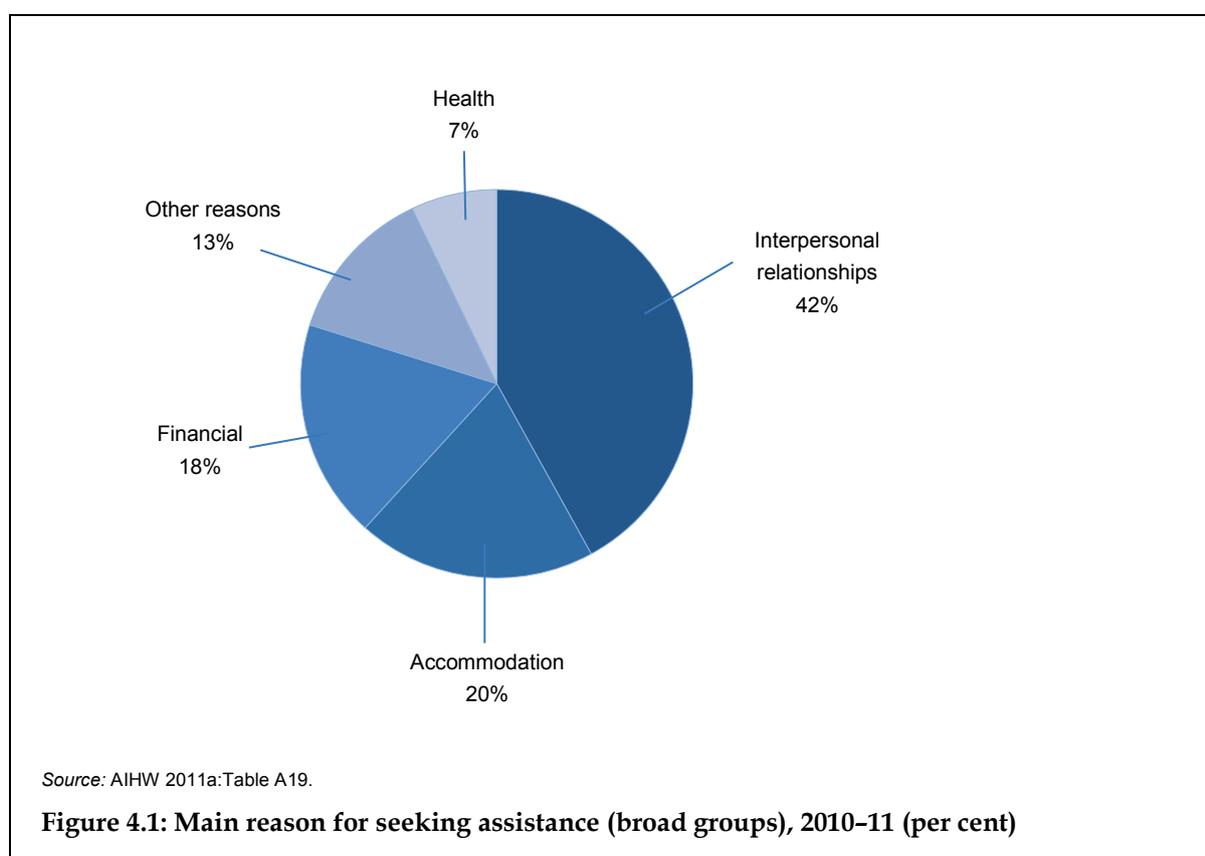
In recent years there has been little overall change in the demographic profile of the people supported by government-funded specialist homelessness agencies (tables A6–A17). Across the years, service users:

- were mostly female
- were often relatively young, but there has been a slight increase in the age of clients and in the use of services by adults
- were mostly non-Indigenous, however, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were over-represented relative to their population size.

4 Why do people seek support?

The most common reasons why people sought support were:

- interpersonal relationship issues (42% of support periods) – such as domestic or family violence (22%); or the breakdown of a relationship with a family member, spouse or partner (10%) (Figure 4.1 and AIHW 2011a:Table A19)
- accommodation-related issues (20%) – such as having their usual accommodation become unavailable (7%) for some reason; or being evicted or otherwise made to leave existing accommodation (7%)
- financial issues (18%) – such as having insufficient money to pay for accommodation, food, bills or other essentials (10%); or budgeting problems (7%).



4.1 Client group

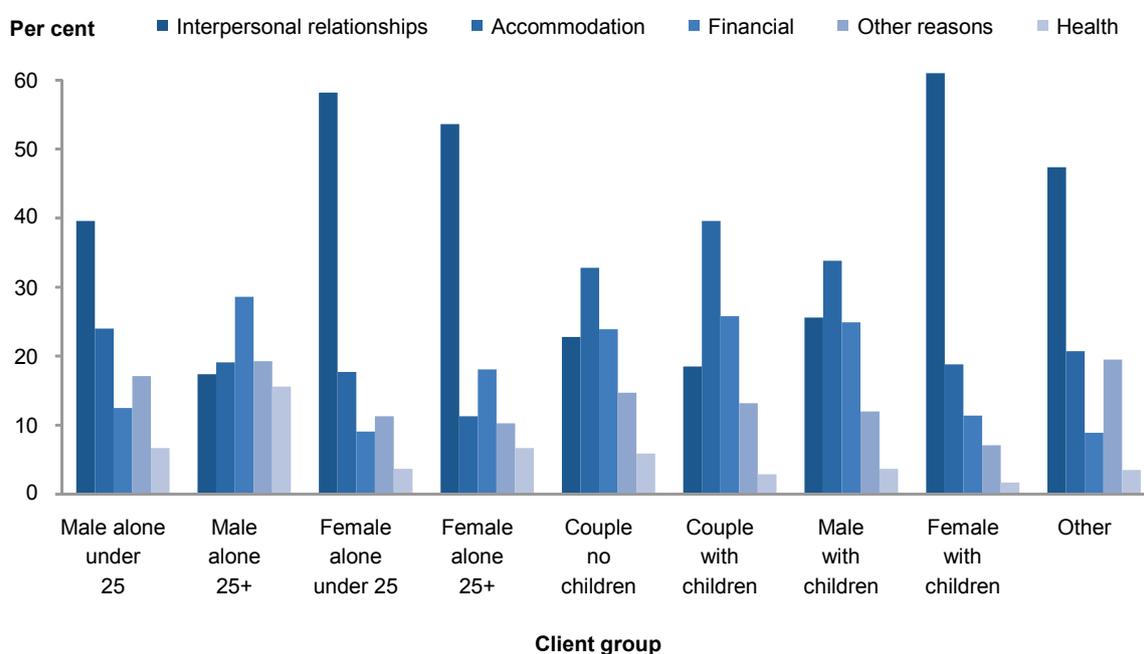
As presented in Chapter 3, people experiencing or at risk of homelessness come from diverse sections of the community. As such their reasons for seeking assistance can vary considerably. This section looks at these variations in terms of client group (see Box 4.1 and AIHW 2011a: Table A20).

Box 4.1: Client group

Client groups are classified according to the relationship the client has to the people with whom they are supported and should not be confused with their family type (see AIHW 2005 and AIHW 2011a:Appendix 5). For example, if a married woman with children is escaping a violent situation and is supported without her partner by an agency, she would be classified as a female with children, not as a couple; and a 17 year-old presenting with a group of friends would be classified as a person presenting 'alone or with an unrelated person(s)' (sometimes referred to as an unaccompanied client).

The 'other' client group is used to record all other groups of related individuals, such as siblings and multigenerational families, who are supported together.

Clients may have more than one period of support during a reporting year (see Box 2.1). Because the reasons they seek support may vary each time, analyses in this chapter relate to support periods rather than to clients.



Source: AIHW 2011a: Table A20.

Figure 4.2: Main reason for seeking assistance (broad groups), by client group, 2010-11 (per cent)

Individuals without children

Unaccompanied young people aged under 25 commonly sought assistance because of interpersonal relationship issues, particularly the breakdown of relationships with a family member or with a spouse or partner, followed by accommodation-related issues (Figure 4.2 and AIHW 2011a:Table A20). Young females sought assistance because of interpersonal relationship issues in 58% of their support periods and because of accommodation-related issues in 18%. Young males sought assistance because of interpersonal relationship issues in 40% of their support periods and because of accommodation-related issues in 24%.

Unaccompanied women aged 25 and over most commonly sought assistance because of interpersonal relationship issues (54%), predominantly related to domestic or family violence (40%) (Figure 4.2 and AIHW 2011a:Table A20). This was followed by financial reasons (18%).

In contrast, unaccompanied men aged 25 and over most commonly reported financial (29%), accommodation (19%) or health (16%) related reasons (Figure 4.2). In particular, for these older men, drug, alcohol or substance use was reported in a higher proportion of cases than for other client groups (8% compared with between 1% and 4% for the other client groups) (AIHW 2011a:Table A20).

Individuals with children

Females with children most often cited interpersonal relationship issues as their main reason for seeking assistance (in 61% of their support periods) – in particular domestic or family violence (45%) – followed by accommodation-related issues (19%) (Figure 4.2 and AIHW 2011a:Table A20).

Males with children commonly reported either accommodation issues (34%), such as being evicted or having their previous accommodation end, or interpersonal relationship issues (26%), such as relationship or family breakdown, as their main reasons for seeking assistance (AIHW 2011a:Table A20).

Couples

For couples, accommodation-related issues were the most frequent reason for seeking assistance followed by financial reasons (Figure 4.2 and AIHW 2011a:Table A20).

Accommodation-related issues were reported in 40% of support periods for couples with children and in 33% for couples without children, while financial reasons were reported in 26% and 24%, respectively.

4.2 Changes over time

There has been little change in recent years in the main reasons clients seek support (AIHW 2011a:Table A19). The predominant reason across all years has been interpersonal relationship issues, followed by accommodation and financial issues. This is influenced by the large number of women who access specialist homelessness services (see Chapter 3).

5 For how long were people supported?

In 2010–11, clients were supported for an average (mean) of 68 days (Figure 5.1). For clients who were accommodated, the average (mean) length of accommodation was 65 days.

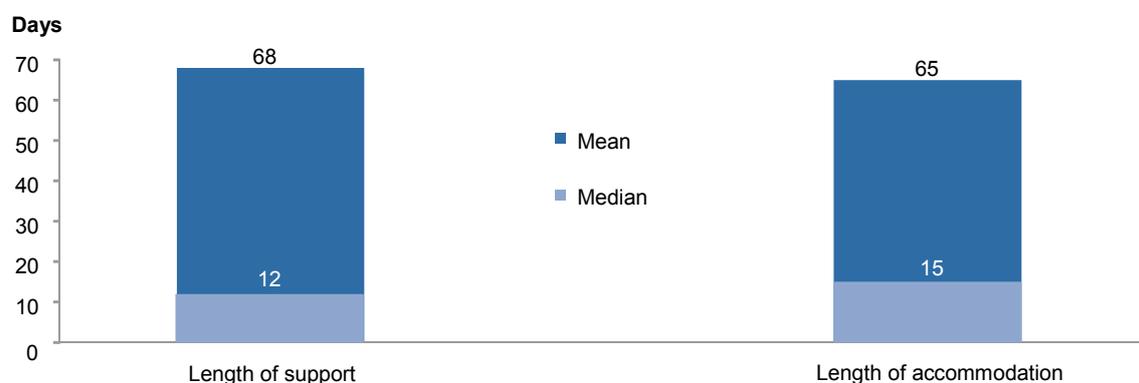
People in family groups tended to have longer periods of support and accommodation than clients who presented alone or with unrelated people (figures 5.2 and 5.3; see also Box 4.1). Unaccompanied men and women aged 25 and over, in particular, were generally supported and accommodated for relatively short periods.

Box 5.1: Lengths of support and accommodation

The analysis in this chapter is based on closed support periods only; that is, support periods that finished on or before the end of the reporting year. In 2010–11, there were an estimated 203,100 closed support periods; and 55,100 (27%) of these closed support periods included a period of specialist homelessness accommodation.

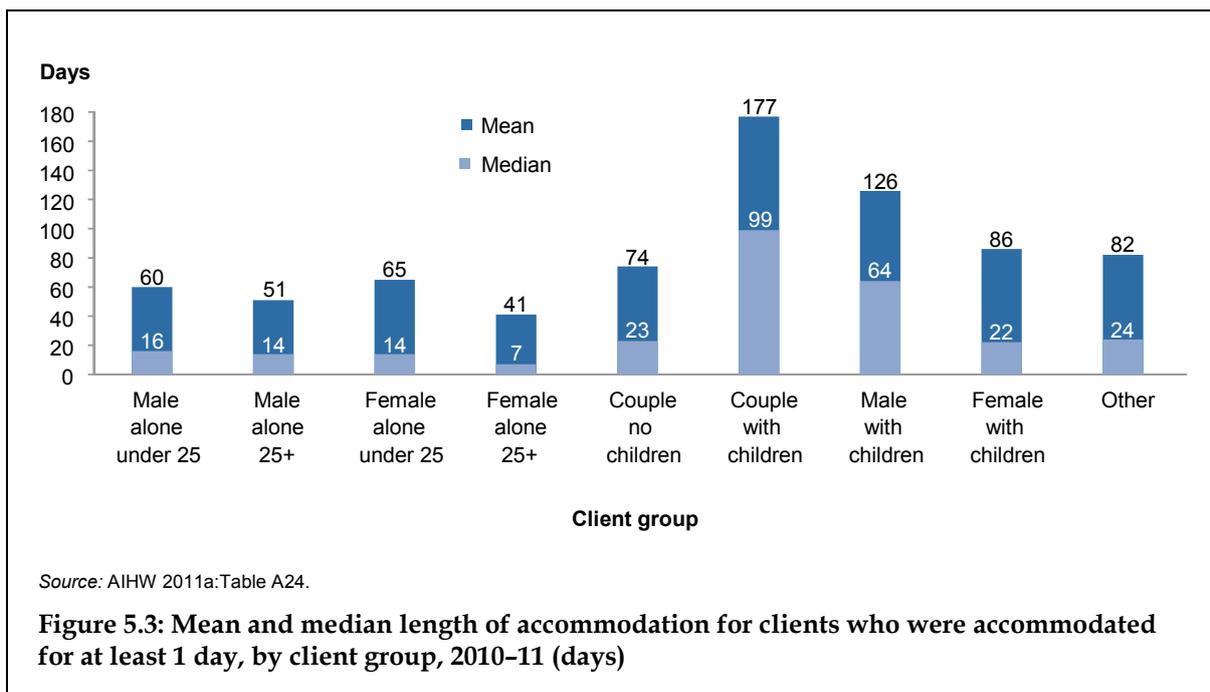
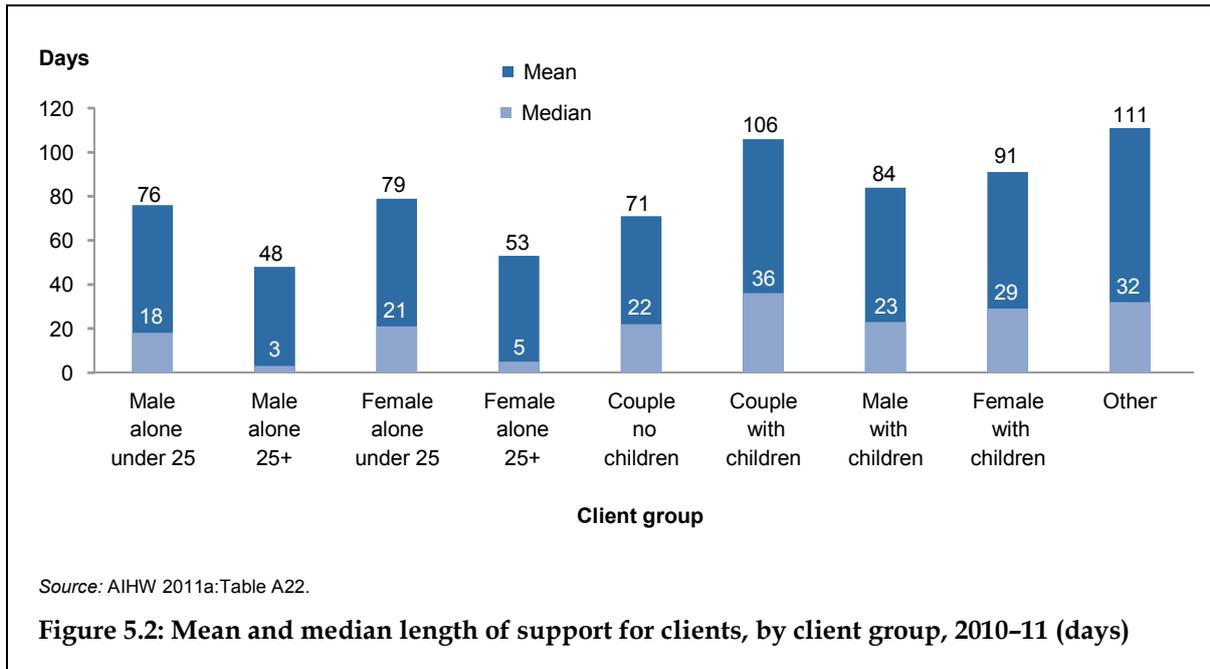
It is important to note that, when accommodated, a client may be accommodated for all or only some of the total time they were supported. Further, a client may have more than one period of accommodation within a period of support.

For definitions and counting rules, see Appendix 5 to this report.



Source: tables A21 and A23.

Figure 5.1: Mean and median length of support and accommodation for clients, 2010–11 (days)



5.1 Changes over time

The overall lengths of both support and accommodation have generally increased in recent years (tables A21 and A23). These increases are likely to reflect shifts in policy to place more emphasis on meeting the wider needs of clients and their accompanying children, with a particular focus on case management and pre- and post-crisis support. These policies are aimed at preventing and reducing homelessness: by improving early intervention strategies for those at risk of homelessness to stop them from becoming homeless; by better managing

the needs of clients while they are in the system; and by providing improved follow-up support to reduce the reoccurrence of homelessness. This has resulted in an expansion in the scope of programs to include more people at risk of homelessness as well as in an increase in the length of time that clients are supported.

The length of accommodation may also have been influenced by limitations on the availability of more secure and sustainable accommodation. For example, over recent years the demand for low cost accommodation, including social housing, has generally outstripped supply (AIHW 2009, 2011j). This is evidenced by declining vacancy rates and long waiting lists in all forms of social housing as well as low vacancy rates in the private rental market. As a result, some clients may be unable to exit specialist homelessness accommodation because there is no appropriate alternative accommodation available to them.

6 What type of support was needed and were these needs met?

Agencies were able to meet the needs of clients and accompanying children in the majority of cases (see Box 6.1; tables A27 and A30). Basic support – such as meals and shower facilities – were the most likely type of support to be provided directly. Specialist services – such as physical or intellectual disability services – were the least likely type of support to be provided directly, and the most likely type to be referred on. This was also the group of services most likely to remain unmet at the completion of support.

Box 6.1: Meeting the needs of clients and accompanying children

In the SAAP NDC Client Collection, the ability of agencies to meet the needs of their clients and accompanying children is measured by whether the agency worker indicated that a particular type of support was required and then whether that support was able to be provided or formally referred on. For some of the required support, however, it might not be possible either to provide the support directly or to refer the person on, which results in an unmet need.

The number of times a type of support was required, provided, referred or remained unmet is not collected: only that the support type was required, provided, referred or unmet sometime during the support period. For example, a client may have required a meal three times within a support period, but the SAAP NDC Client Collection only shows that a meal was required sometime during the client's support, not that it was required three times. Further, a type of support is only reported as unmet if it was needed but never provided or referred throughout the entire period of support. If, for example, a support type was needed three times but only able to be provided once, it is reported as provided.

Support needs are reported by the agency workers and usually reflect the reasons why people sought support. However, this is not always the case. For example, a person may be at risk of losing their accommodation because of mental health issues. Support would be expected to involve assistance around their mental health issues but would also likely involve other more general tenancy-related support.

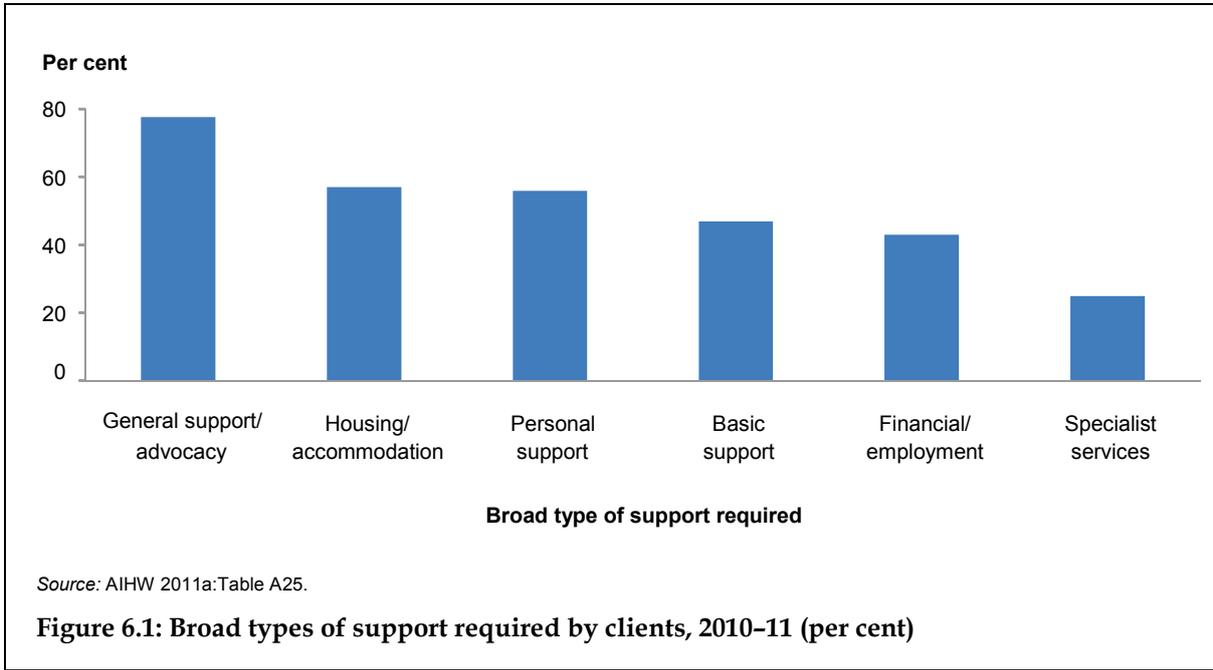
Whether or not the needs of a client or accompanying child have been met can only be fully measured after the support period has ended. It is therefore necessary to look at closed support periods, that is, support periods that finished on or before the end of the reporting year, when examining the provision of required support.

6.1 Clients

Support required

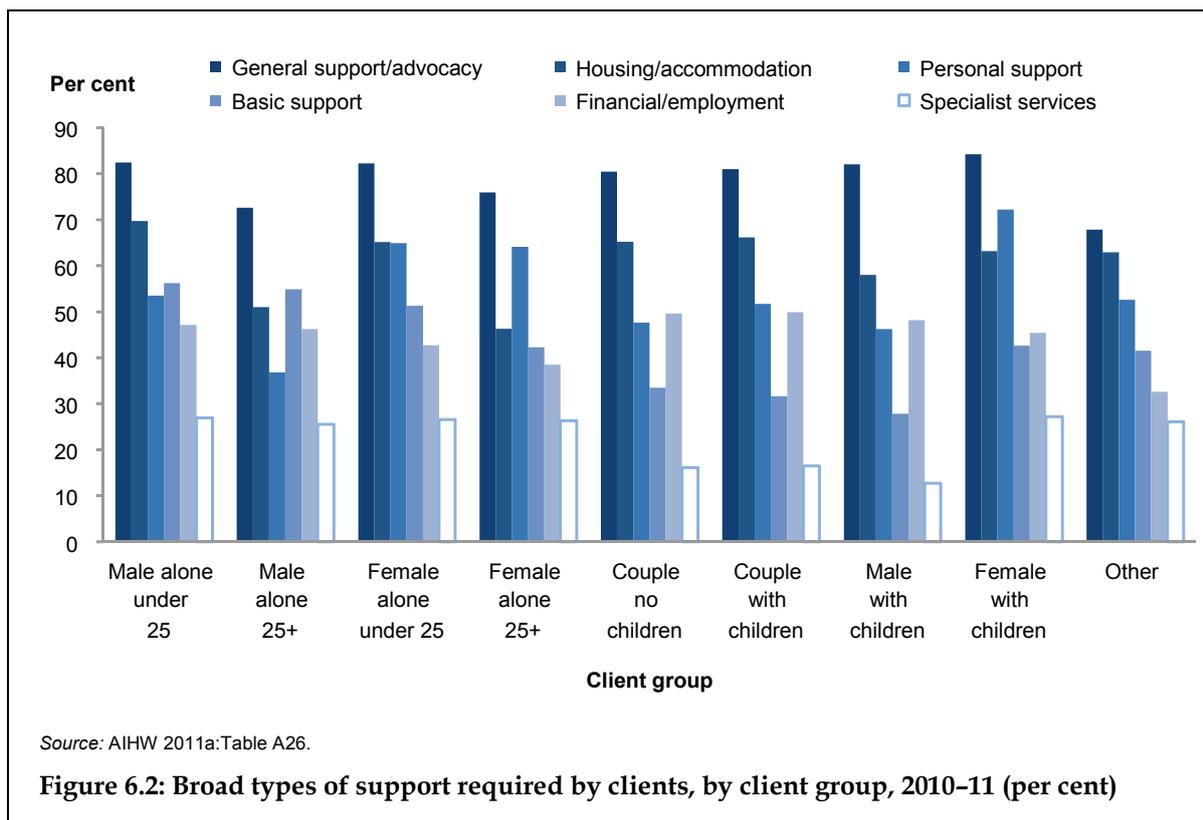
The most commonly required broad group of support was general support or advocacy (needed in 78% of closed support periods) (Figure 6.1 and AIHW 2011a:Table A25). This category includes 'Advice or information' (needed in 71% of closed support periods), which is often used to record generic advice or information given to a client.

General support or advocacy was followed by housing or accommodation-related support (required in 57% of closed support periods), personal support (56%), basic support (47%), and financial or employment services (43%). Specialist services were required least (25%).



Client group

The people supported by specialist homelessness agencies come from diverse sections of the community and have a wide range of needs (see Chapter 3 and Box 4.1). As such, it is not surprising that their requirements in relation to support differ (Figure 6.2 and AIHW 2011a:Table A26). These requirements generally aligned with the reasons why people sought assistance in the first place (see also Chapter 4 on why people seek support).



Individuals without children

Unaccompanied young people aged under 25 often sought assistance because of the breakdown of a family or other relationship. Not surprisingly then, this group required family or relationship support more often than the other client groups. Unaccompanied young people also required assistance to obtain or maintain a government allowance and assistance with employment and training more often than the other client groups.

Unaccompanied men aged 25 and over commonly sought assistance because of financial or health related issues. Reflecting this, they needed financial assistance or material aid in a high proportion of cases and more often required support related to problematic drug, alcohol or substance use and health or medical services when compared with the other client groups. They generally had a lower requirement for personal support services, with the exception of assistance with problem gambling.

Interestingly, although seeking assistance primarily because of problematic drug, alcohol or substance use was not as commonly reported for unaccompanied young men, they required assistance with drug or alcohol support or intervention in roughly the same proportion of cases as their older counterparts. Young unaccompanied men aged under 25 also had a high requirement for specialist homelessness accommodation and assistance to obtain or maintain short- or medium-term accommodation when compared with other client groups.

Unaccompanied women aged 25 and over often sought support because of domestic or family violence. Linked with this, they had a high requirement for personal support services, particularly support related to domestic or family violence.

Individuals with children

Females with children commonly sought assistance because of domestic or family violence. To help address this, they often required personal support services, particularly support

related to domestic or family violence. They also had a higher requirement for specialist counselling services compared with the other client groups.

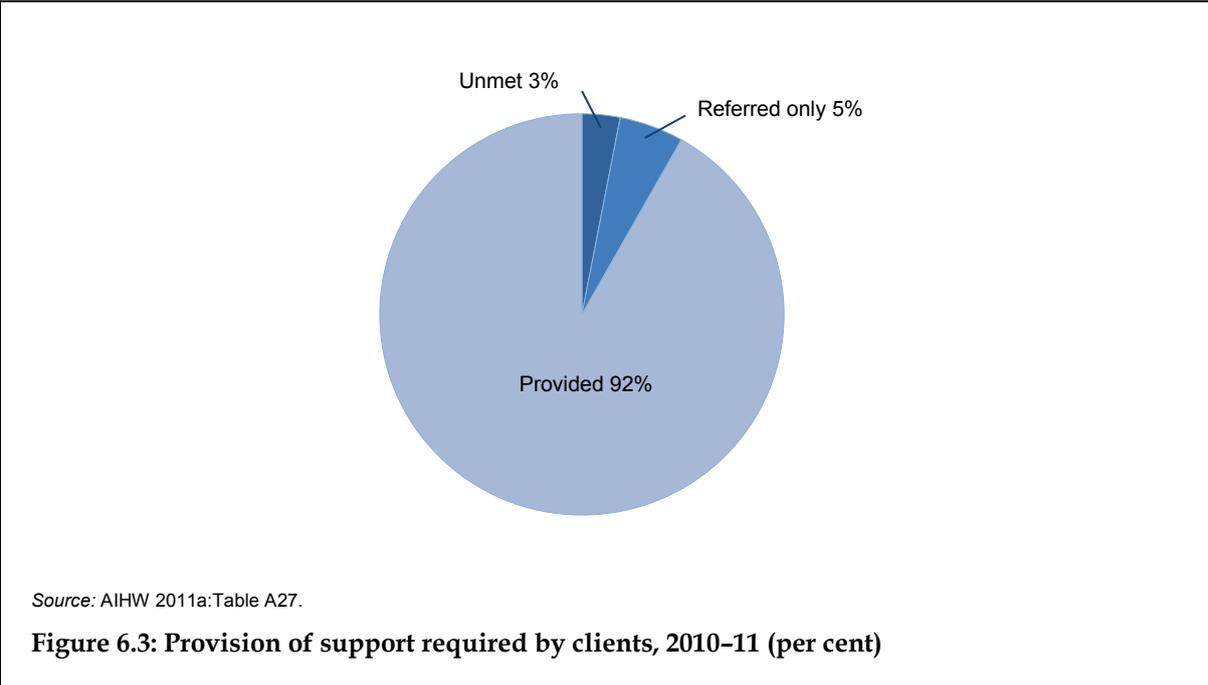
Males with children commonly reported accommodation and financial issues as their main reasons for seeking assistance. Reflecting this they had a relatively high requirement for housing and accommodation related services, particularly assistance to obtain or maintain independent housing, and for financial assistance or material aid.

Couples

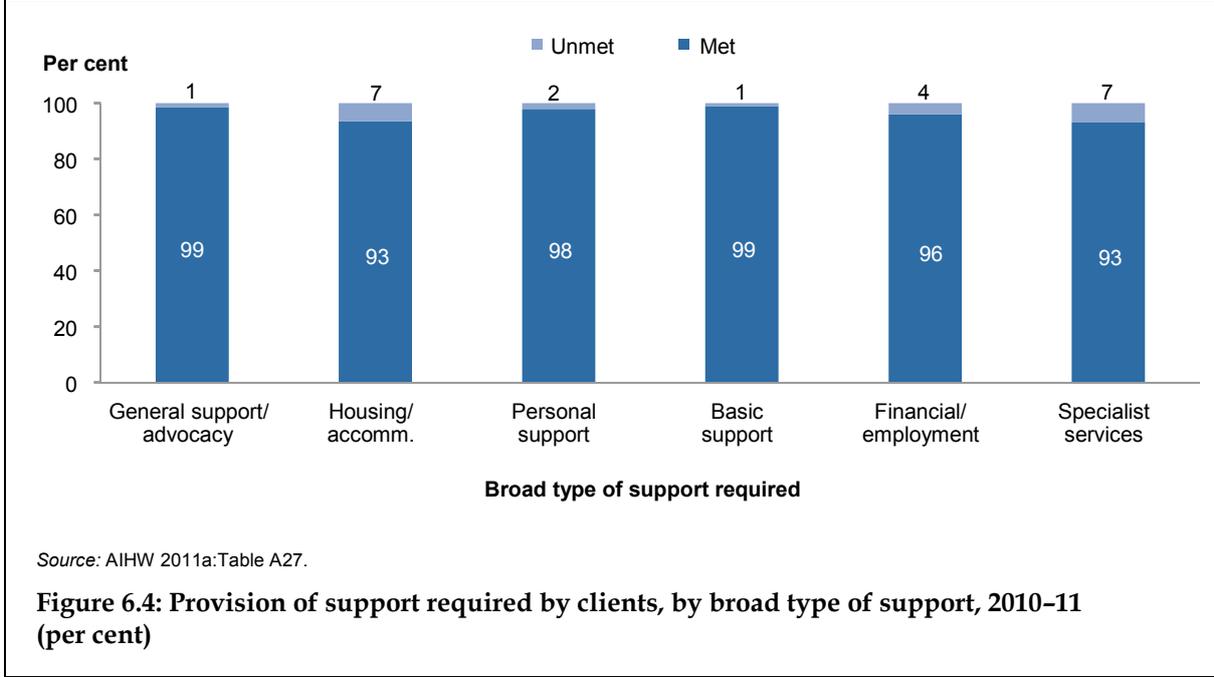
Couples often sought assistance because of financial and accommodation related issues. Reflecting this, they often required financial assistance or material aid and had a high requirement for assistance to obtain or maintain independent housing when compared with the other client groups.

Support provision

An inability to provide a particular type of support can have a significant impact on the client requiring it. Specialist homelessness agencies, however, cannot provide the entire homelessness response directly. When support cannot be provided directly, an agency’s ability to refer clients on to other appropriate service providers assumes added importance. For this reason, the need for a particular type of support is considered to be met if the support could be provided directly by the agency or formally referred on.



Overall, agencies were able to meet the needs of clients in the majority of cases (Figure 6.3). Agencies directly provided support or referred clients on to other organisations in 97% of cases (provided directly in 92% and referred on in 5%). The broad type of support most likely to be met was basic support (99%), though this was required relatively less often than some other types of support (figures 6.1 and 6.4).



Unmet need

Overall, client need for specific types of support remained unmet in 3% of cases (AIHW 2011a:Table A27). Specialist services and housing or accommodation related support were the most common broad types of support to remain unmet (both 7%) (Figure 6.4).

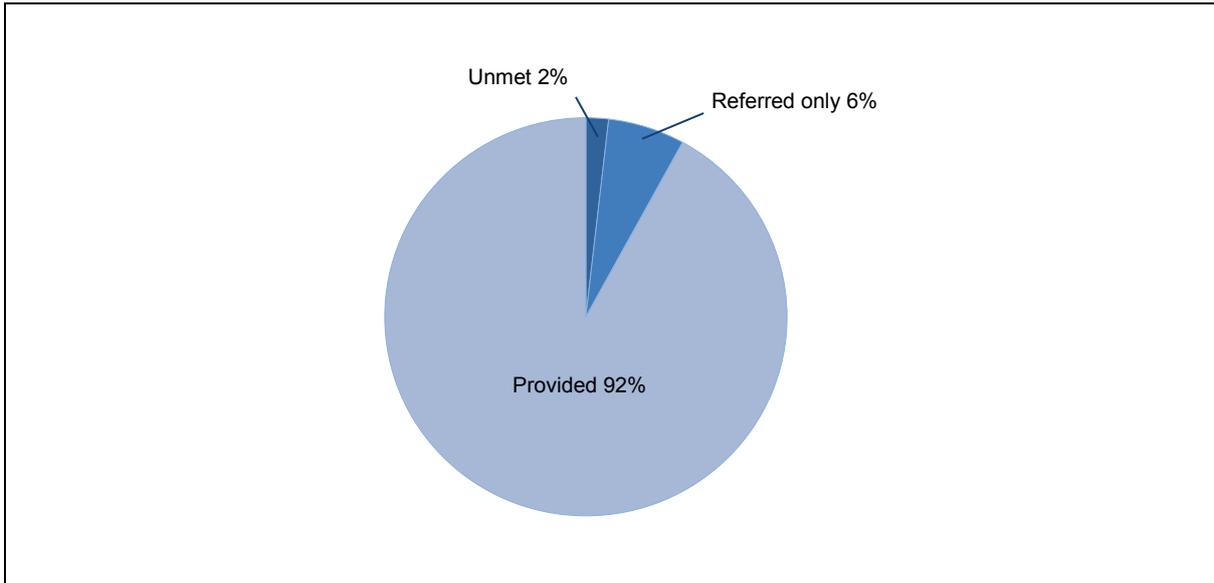
6.2 Accompanying children

Support required

At the broad level, accompanying children most often required accommodation-related support (‘SAAP/CAP accommodation’) (in 58% of closed accompanying child support periods) (AIHW 2011a:Table A29). Personal support (18%) and specialist services (20%) were required the least.

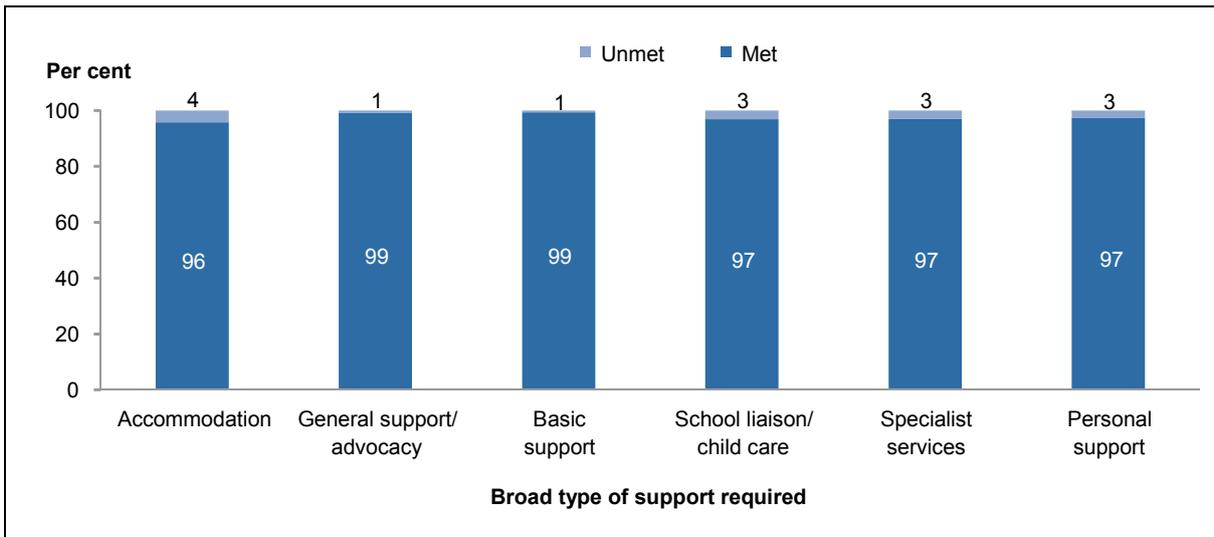
Support provision

Overall, agencies were able to meet the needs of accompanying children in the majority of cases (Figure 6.5). Agencies directly provided the required support in 92% of cases and referred the child on for a further 6%, resulting in 98% of support needs being met in some way by the completion of support. Basic support and general support or advocacy services were the broad type of support most often met (both 99%) (Figure 6.6).



Source: AIHW 2011a:Table A30.

Figure 6.5: Provision of support to accompanying children, 2010-11 (per cent)



Source: AIHW 2011a:Table A30.

Figure 6.6: Provision of support required by accompanying children, by broad type of support, 2010-11 (per cent)

Unmet need

Overall, accompanying children’s need for specific types of support remained unmet in 2% of cases (AIHW 2011a:Table A30). The need for specialist homelessness accommodation remained unmet the most often (4%) (Figure 6.6).

6.3 Changes over time

Over time, there has been a decrease in the reported need for government-funded specialist homelessness accommodation – from 45% of closed support periods in 2006-07 to 33% in 2010-11 (AIHW 2011a:Table A25). This decrease can be partly explained by the increased emphasis in recent policies on pre-crisis intervention and post-crisis transitional support. These policies have led to an increase in the provision of support-only services to prevent people at risk of homelessness from becoming homeless in the first place and to assist those people who have previously been homeless from falling back into homelessness. In line with this there has been an increase in the need for assistance to obtain or maintain other accommodation, particularly independent housing which increased from 22% in 2006-07 to 27% in 2010-11.

Across years, the majority of requested services were able to be either provided directly or referred on by the time the client completed support (tables A27-A31). The proportion has remained relatively steady for all years since 2006-07.

7 What happened after support?

Generally, the immediate circumstances of clients had improved by the end of period of support. This was particularly the case for clients who specifically required assistance with income, employment and housing; and for those who were supported for longer periods.

Box 7.1: Measuring client outcomes

The data collected in the SAAP NDC Client Collection describe only immediate outcomes and therefore do not provide information on the longer term situation of the client. It is also important to note that the achievement of client goals does not depend on the intervention of agencies alone – a complex interplay of policies and programs relating to housing and community services, as well as individuals' personal circumstances, will influence outcomes for clients.

Outcome data relate to clients only. Data are not collected on the circumstances of accompanying children before or after support.

Because outcomes can only be measured once a client has left support, closed support periods – that is, support periods that finished on or before the end of the reporting year – are used as the basis for analysis.

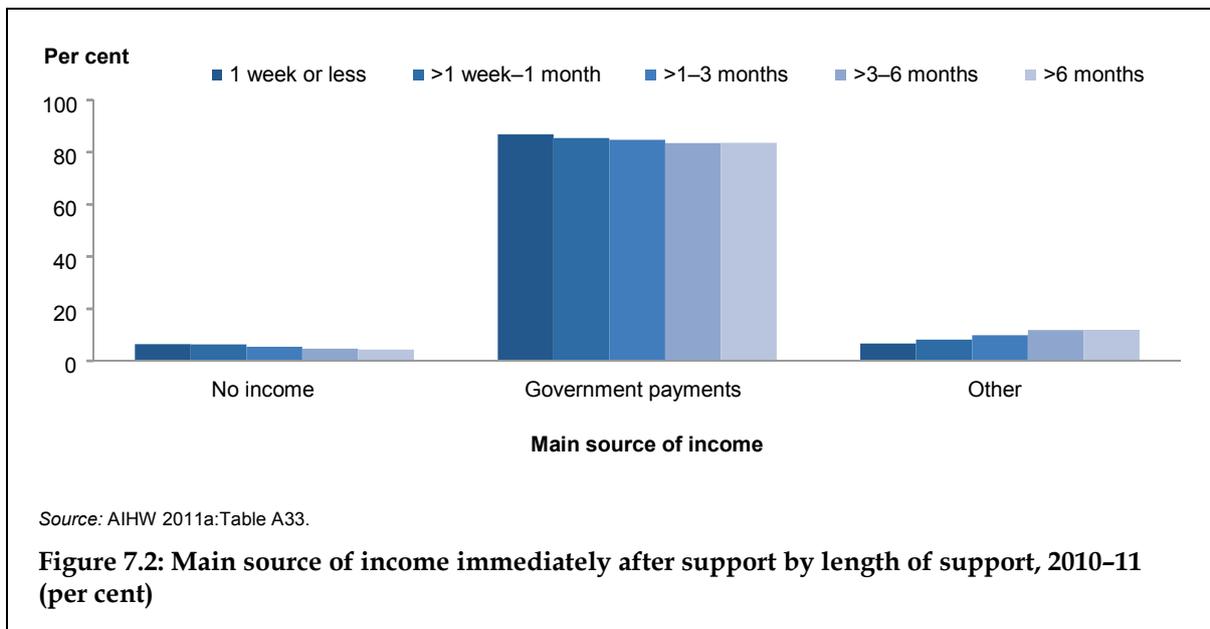
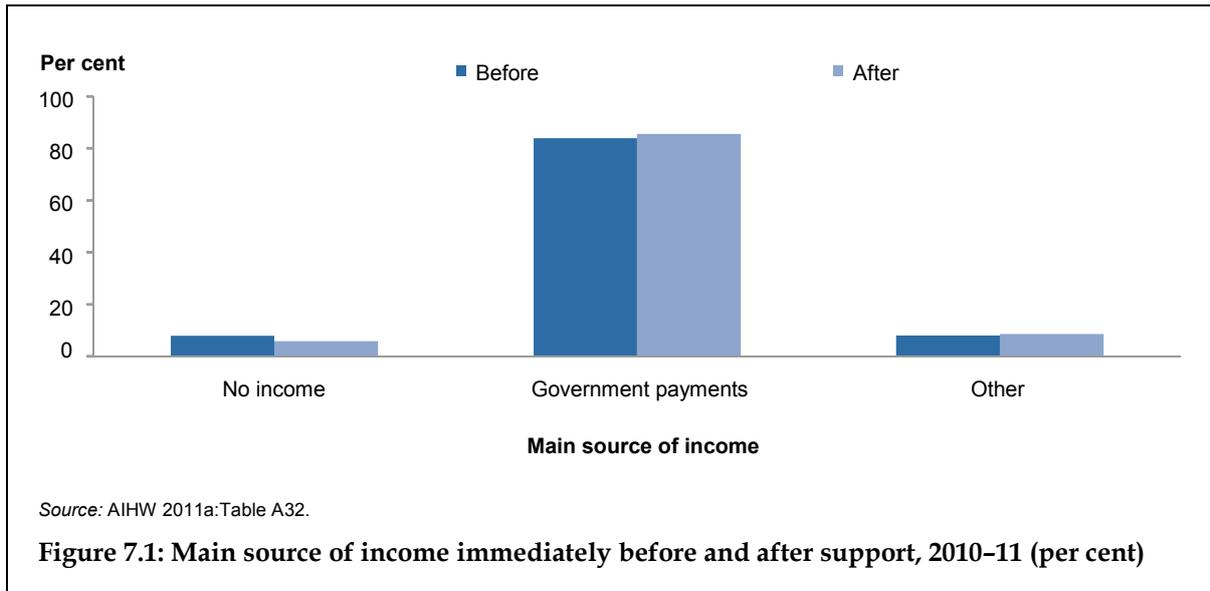
For some outcome data there are relatively high proportions where client circumstances following support were not known or missing.

7.1 Income

In the majority of cases, clients were recipients of a government payment both before and after support (in 84% of closed support periods immediately before support and 86% after) (Figure 7.1 and AIHW 2011a:Table A32).

Although across all closed support periods clients' main source of income did not vary much from before to after support, when clients specifically required assistance to obtain or maintain a government pension or benefit, there was a marked improvement. After support, these clients were receiving a government payment in 83% of closed support periods compared with 75% before support. Consequently, the proportion of closed support periods in which these clients had no income dropped from 17% before support to 7% after support. The proportion with 'other' sources of income remained relatively unchanged.

In general, the longer a client was supported, the more likely they were to have a source of income after they exited support (Figure 7.2).

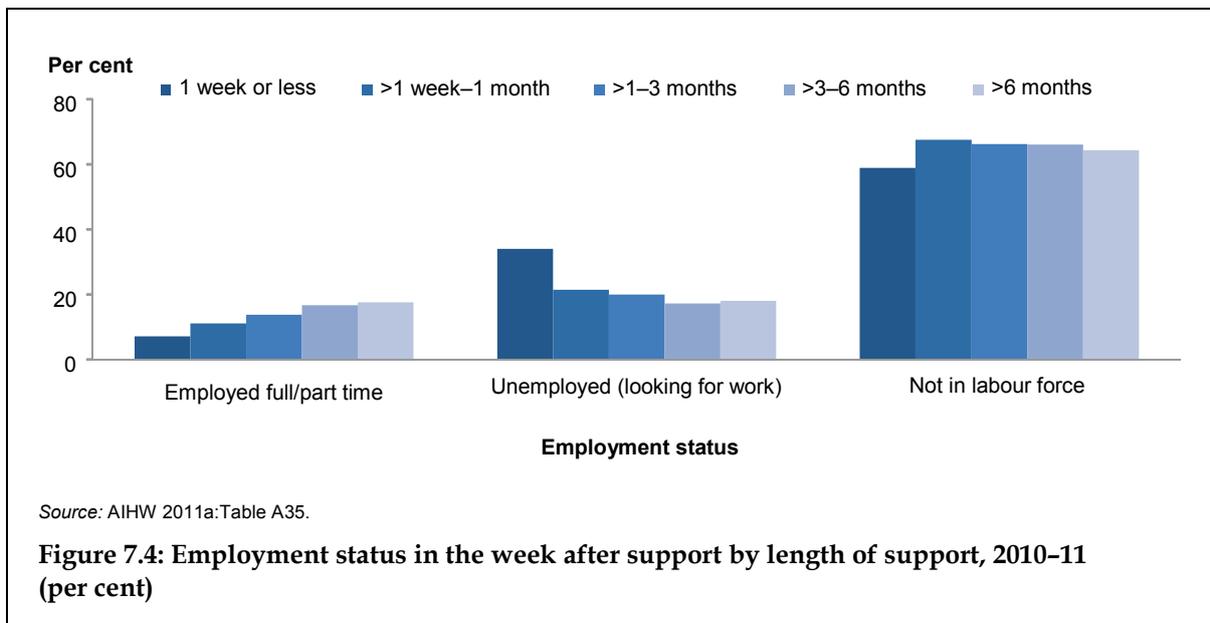
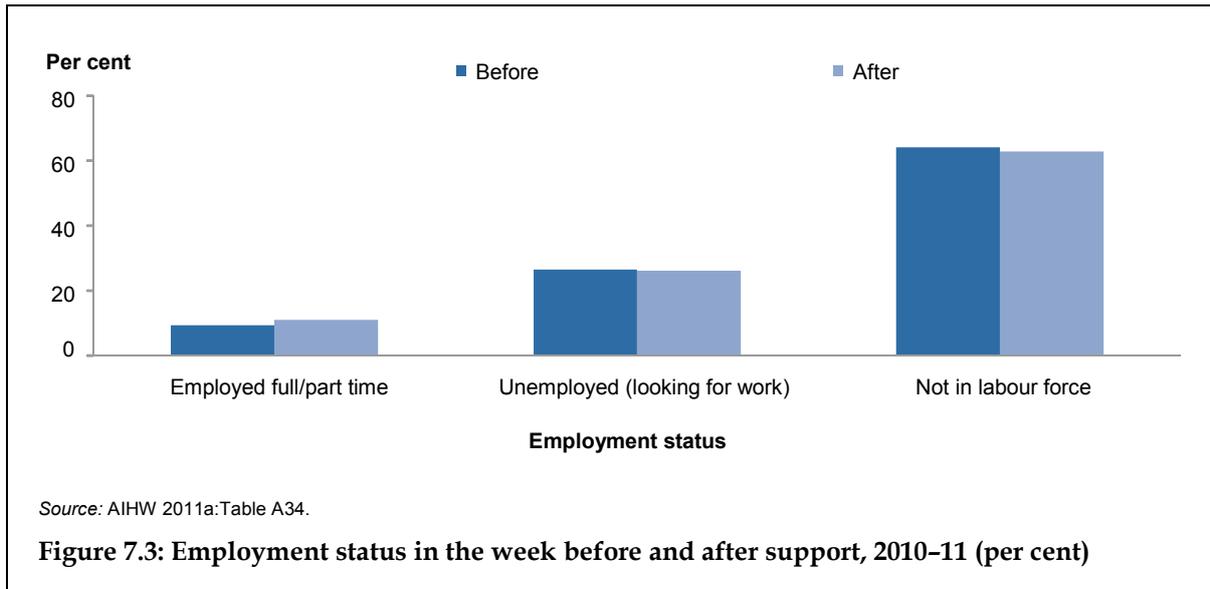


7.2 Employment

The majority of clients were not in the labour force or unemployed and looking for work on entry to and exit from support (Figure 7.3 and AIHW 2011a:Table A34).

There were only small changes in the employment profile of clients before and after support. However, among those clients who specifically required assistance in the area of employment and training during their period of support, there was a marked increase in the proportion in paid work following support. These clients were employed, either full time or part time, at the end of 20% of closed support periods, compared with 11% before support.

In general, the longer a client was supported, the more likely they were to be employed, either full time or part time, after exiting support (Figure 7.4).

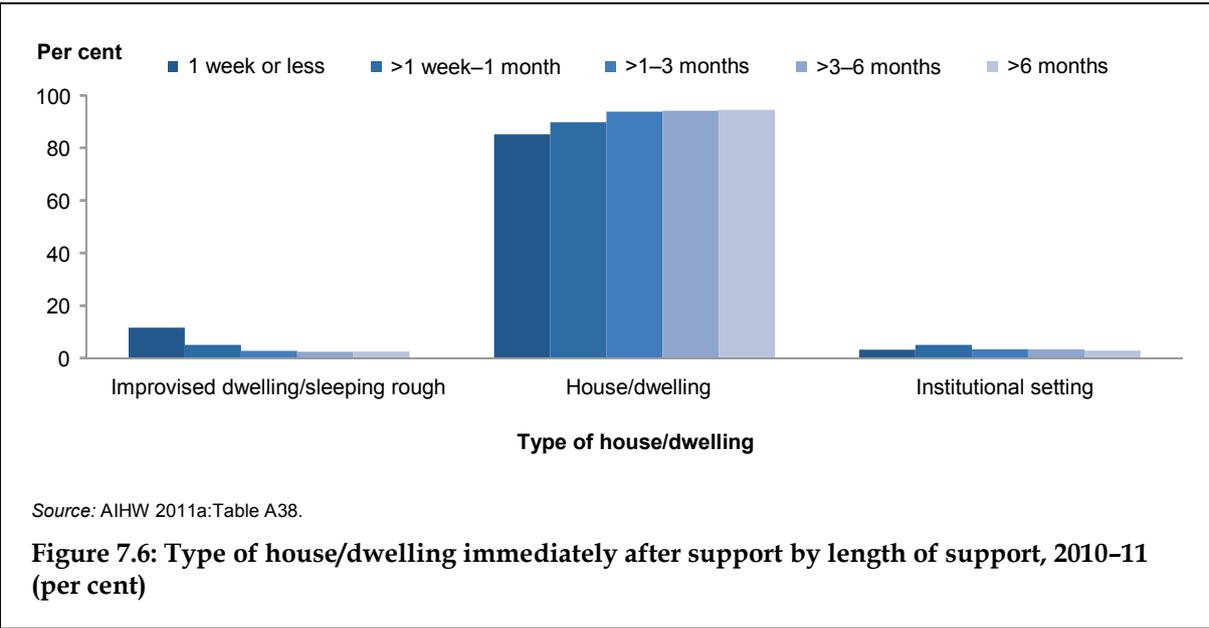
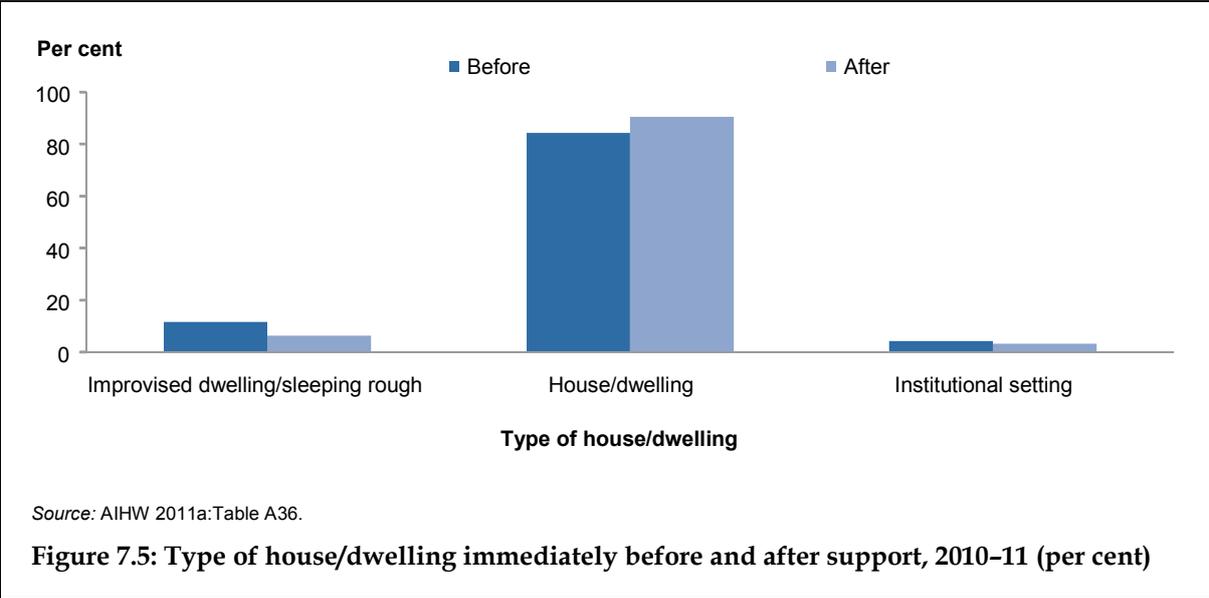


7.3 Housing

Positive housing outcomes were reported for most people following support. In the majority of closed support periods, clients were living in a house or other dwelling and the majority had security of tenure both before and after support (Figure 7.5 and AIHW 2011a:tables A36 and A37). These proportions increased following support, particularly for those who specifically required assistance to obtain or maintain independent housing.

In 12% of closed support periods, clients were living in an improvised dwelling or sleeping rough before support. This decreased to 6% after support. When clients specifically required assistance with obtaining or maintaining independent housing, the proportion of closed support periods in which clients were living in an improvised dwelling or sleeping rough decreased from 8% of closed support periods before support to 2% after support.

In general, the longer a client was supported, the more likely they were to have a positive housing outcome after exiting support (Figure 7.6 and AIHW 2011a:Table A38).



7.4 Living situation

By the time support had finished, the living arrangements for some clients had changed considerably. The most common situation both before and after support was living alone; however, the proportion had increased on exit (AIHW 2011a:Table A40). There was also an increase after support in the proportion living alone with children. In contrast, there was a decrease in the proportion living with relatives or friends in the short term, and a decrease in the proportion living with a spouse or partner and children.

7.5 Education

In around half of cases, clients aged 5–17 were not students immediately before a period of support (in 49% of closed support periods) and there was little change following support (48%) (AIHW 2011a:Table A41). Note that this does not include children accompanying clients (see Box 7.1).

Most clients aged 18 and over were not students immediately before or after a period of support (in 95% of closed support periods before and 94% after support). A small proportion were engaged in post-secondary education or employment training (in 4% before support and 5% after).

7.6 Changes over time

Over recent years, there has been little change in the immediate income, employment and housing outcomes of clients upon exiting support (AIHW 2011a:tables A32, A34, A36, A37, A40, and A41). Across the years, the majority were in receipt of a government payment, were either not in the labour force or were unemployed, and were living in a house or flat with some form of tenure immediately following support.

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List of figures

Figure 2.1:	Clients and accompanying children, 2010-11.....	4
Figure 2.2:	Periods of support and service users (clients and accompanying children), by reporting period, 2006-07 to 2010-11	5
Figure 2.3:	Service users (clients and accompanying children) per 10,000 population, by reporting period, 2006-07 to 2010-11.....	6
Figure 3.1:	Service users by sex, 2010-11	8
Figure 3.2:	Service users by age and sex, 2010-11	8
Figure 3.3:	Rate of service use by age, 2010-11	9
Figure 3.4:	Service users by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status, 2010-11	9
Figure 3.5:	Service users by country of birth, 2010-11	10
Figure 4.1:	Main reason for seeking assistance (broad groups), 2010-11	12
Figure 4.2:	Main reason for seeking assistance (broad groups), by client group, 2010-11	13
Figure 5.1:	Mean and median length of support and accommodation for clients, 2010-11	15
Figure 5.2:	Mean and median length of support for clients, by client group, 2010-11	16
Figure 5.3:	Mean and median length of accommodation for clients who were accommodated for at least 1 day, by client group, 2010-11	16
Figure 6.1:	Broad types of support required by clients, 2010-11.....	19
Figure 6.2:	Broad types of support required by clients, by client group, 2010-11	20
Figure 6.3:	Provision of support required by clients, 2010-11	21
Figure 6.4:	Provision of support required by clients, by broad type of support, 2010-11	22
Figure 6.5:	Provision of support to accompanying children, 2010-11	23
Figure 6.6:	Provision of support required by accompanying children, by broad type of support, 2010-11.....	23
Figure 7.1:	Main source of income immediately before and after support, 2010-11	26
Figure 7.2:	Main source of income immediately after support by length of support, 2010-11	26
Figure 7.3:	Employment status in the week before and after support, 2010-11.....	27
Figure 7.4:	Employment status in the week after support by length of support, 2010-11	27
Figure 7.5:	Type of house/dwelling immediately before and after support,2010-11	28
Figure 7.6:	Type of house/dwelling immediately after support by length of support, 2010-11	28