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**Australian Institute of
Health and Welfare**

Homelessness among Indigenous Australians



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

Homelessness among Indigenous Australians

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
Canberra

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Abbreviations

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ACT	Australian Capital Territory
AIHW	Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
CNOS	Canadian National Occupancy Standard
COAG	Council of Australian Governments
DFV	domestic and family violence
NAHA	National Affordable Housing Agreement
NPAH	National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness
NSW	New South Wales
NT	Northern Territory
Qld	Queensland
SA	South Australia
SAAP	Supported Accommodation Assistance Program
SHSC	Specialist Homelessness Services Collection
Tas	Tasmania
Vic	Victoria
WA	Western Australia

Summary

The rate of homelessness among Indigenous Australians fell between 2006 and 2011

Indigenous Australians are over-represented in the homeless population. On Census night in 2011, an estimated 26,743 Indigenous people were experiencing homelessness. Taking into account the size of the Indigenous population, 1 in 20 Indigenous people were homeless on Census night in 2011 – 14 times the rate for non-Indigenous people (1 in 284 people).

These data are based on a new method of estimating the homeless population developed by the ABS which distinguishes between 6 groups of homeless people according to their living situation. Among Indigenous people who were homeless in 2011, three-quarters (75%) were living in severely crowded dwellings – these dwellings contained an average of 12 people each. A further 12% were living in supported accommodation for the homeless, 6% were staying in improvised dwellings, tents or sleeping out, and the remainder were staying temporarily with other households, or in other temporary lodgings.

Between 2006 and 2011, the rate of homelessness among Indigenous people fell by 14%. In contrast, there was a 12% increase in the rate of homelessness among non-Indigenous people.

About 4 in 10 Indigenous homeless people were aged 18 or under

Indigenous people experiencing homelessness were more likely to be female, and tended to be younger than non-Indigenous people experiencing homelessness. In 2011, 51% of Indigenous homeless people were female, compared with 42% of non-Indigenous homeless people. About 4 in 10 (42%) of the Indigenous homeless population were aged 18 or under, compared with 23% of non-Indigenous homeless people.

In 2011, 60% of Indigenous people experiencing homelessness were in *Very remote* areas. Nearly all (97%) Indigenous homeless people in *Very remote* areas were living in severely crowded dwellings.

One-fifth of specialist homelessness services clients were Indigenous

Clients of specialist homelessness services are either homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. In 2012–13, about 1 in 5 (22%) clients were Indigenous – an estimated 54,885 clients. In comparison, about 3% of the total Australian population were Indigenous.

In 2012–13, an estimated 9.2% of the Indigenous population accessed specialist homelessness services. This was an increase from 8.8% in 2011–12.

Indigenous clients were more likely to be female (62%) than non-Indigenous clients (57%), and they tended to be younger – one-quarter (24%) of Indigenous clients were aged under 10 compared with 14% of non-Indigenous clients.

Domestic and family violence was the most commonly reported main reason that Indigenous people sought assistance from specialist homelessness services (22%), as it was for non-Indigenous clients (21%).

Agencies were able to support some Indigenous clients into more stable housing. Among Indigenous clients who ended support in 2012–13, the proportion who were homeless decreased from 48% at the start of support to 41% at the end of support, while the proportion in social housing increased from 28% to 35%.

1 Introduction

Homelessness has many causes, including from housing crises arising from a shortage of affordable housing, unemployment, financial issues, violence or relationship breakdown, substance abuse, mental health problems, or a combination of issues. It is well known that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are over-represented in the homeless population. They are also over-represented among users of services provided by specialist homelessness agencies.

Since 2009, the National Affordable Housing Agreement (NAHA) has been the principal agreement between the Australian Government and state and territory governments for improving housing affordability and outcomes for homeless Australians (DSS 2013a). The National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness (NPAH) supports the NAHA in the area of homelessness (DSS 2013b). Further information about the policy framework for reducing homelessness is in Box 1.1.

Box 1.1: Policy response to homelessness

The national framework for Australian Government and state and territory governments to work together to reduce homelessness and improve housing outcomes for Australians is provided by the National Affordable Housing Agreement and the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness.

The NPAH contributes to the NAHA outcome that ‘people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness achieve sustainable housing and social inclusion’. The agreement focuses on 3 key strategies to reduce homelessness:

- prevention and early intervention to stop people becoming homeless
- breaking the cycle of homelessness
- improving and expanding the service response to homelessness.

The NPAH includes performance indicators and outcome measures to assess progress towards targets agreed by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) in the NAHA and which were informed by the Australian Government’s White Paper on homelessness (Australian Government 2008). It notes the need to address the specific needs of particular groups, including Indigenous people.

Funding associated with the NPAH began on 1 July 2009 and was due to expire on 30 June 2013 (with over \$1.1 billion in funding committed by Australian and state and territory governments over this period). It was initially extended to 30 June 2014 (with an additional \$159 million of Australian Government funding, matched by the jurisdictions) and, more recently, to 30 June 2015 (with a further \$115 million of Australian Government funding) while longer-term arrangements are being agreed between governments.

Sources: Andrews 2014; DSS 2013b, 2014a, 2014b; SCFFR 2014; SCRGSP 2014.

1.1 Purpose and key data sources

The purpose of this paper is to provide an overview of the prevalence of homelessness among Indigenous people, and their use of specialist homelessness services.

The topic of Indigenous homelessness has been covered previously in an Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) paper, *A profile of homelessness for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people*, which was released in 2011 (AIHW 2011). That paper presented data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2006 Census of Population and Housing and made use of homelessness concepts as defined by Chamberlain and MacKenzie (see Section 1.3). It also presented information on the use of homelessness services based on data for 2006–07 to 2008–09 from the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) national data collection.

Since the release of AIHW's 2011 paper, the ABS has developed a new statistical definition of 'homelessness' (as described in Section 1.3) for use in its statistical collections. The ABS has also developed a new method of estimating the homeless population (based on their definition) using Census data. Due to the different definitions and methodologies used, the Census data in this paper are not comparable to the Census data presented in AIHW's 2011 paper (see Appendix A for further details).

To allow comparisons of homelessness over time, the ABS retrospectively applied their definition and methodology to data from earlier Censuses. This paper presents comparable data for 2006 and 2011, based on ABS' definition and method.

This paper also presents data for 2012–13 from the AIHW Specialist Homelessness Services Collection (SHSC), with some data from 2011–12 also included for comparison. Data from this collection pertain not only to clients who are homeless, but also to clients at risk of homelessness.

In 2011, reporting requirements for specialist homelessness services were revised such that agencies began providing data to the AIHW SHSC rather than the SAAP national data collection. The new collection has a broader scope and changed collection methods; for example, data are collected each month a person is receiving assistance (rather than only at the start and end of support as in SAAP). The SHSC also includes some new data items (for example, about diagnosed mental health issues and previous experiences of homelessness) and some revised data items (for example, about reasons for seeking assistance). The definition of homelessness as used in this data collection is aligned as closely as possible to the ABS definition (AIHW 2013c). The AIHW's annual reports on *Specialist homelessness services* (AIHW 2012b, 2013c) have included separate chapters on Indigenous clients.

See Box 1.2 for information about how homelessness data from the Census and the SHSC compare, and Appendix B for further details about each collection.

People who are homeless or at risk of homelessness may access housing assistance programs other than specialist homelessness services. Information on the use of such programs by Indigenous people is covered in a companion paper entitled *Housing assistance for Indigenous Australians* (AIHW 2014a). As shown in that paper, Indigenous households were 6 times as likely as other households to live in social housing in 2013, while about one-quarter of Indigenous households received Commonwealth Rent Assistance.

In addition, homeless people or those at risk of becoming homeless may make use of a range of other support services, including income support, hospital and other health services (for example, mental health services, and alcohol and other drug treatment services), aged care

services, disability support services, and other family and community support services. This paper does not describe the use of such services.

Box 1.2: How do homelessness data from the Census and Specialist Homelessness Services Collection compare?

Together, data from the ABS Census of Population and Housing and the AIHW Specialist Homelessness Services Collection help to build a picture of Indigenous homelessness in Australia.

Every 5 years, data from the Census provide estimates of the number of homeless people and the number of people in selected marginal housing circumstances on Census night. Census data are also useful for providing descriptive information of people who are homeless at a point in time, but they do not provide contextual information about an individual's experiences over time.

The SHSC, by contrast, is an ongoing administrative data collection that gathers information about those who seek assistance from government-funded specialist homelessness agencies across Australia – some of whom are homeless and some who are at risk of homelessness. Rather than pertaining to one point in time, these data pertain to the period(s) of support provided by the agency, including changes in clients' housing situation during this period.

In concept, specialist homelessness services clients who are homeless are a subset of the total homeless population as estimated using Census data. In determining which clients are homeless (as differentiated from those who are at risk of homelessness), the AIHW adopts the ABS definition of homelessness with the exception of people living in severely crowded dwellings. Furthermore, the SHSC, by definition, does not include information on those who do not seek help from these services.

Conversely, since specialist homelessness agencies have contact with many clients who are 'sleeping rough' or in non-conventional accommodation, the SHSC may capture homeless people who are missed in the Census.

Sources: ABS 2012b; AIHW 2013a, 2013c.

1.2 Structure of this paper

This paper is structured as follows.

The remainder of this section discusses the definition of homelessness.

Section 2 presents data on people experiencing homelessness, including:

- the number and rate of Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians experiencing homelessness in 2011, as well as in 2006 for comparison purposes (Section 2.1)
- characteristics of the homeless, including where they are located (Section 2.2).

In addition, information on the number of Indigenous people living in selected types of marginal housing is also presented (Section 2.3). These people are considered to be 'at risk' of homelessness.

Section 3 presents data based on the Specialist Homelessness Services Collection, including:

- the use of government-funded specialist homelessness services by Indigenous and non-Indigenous people (Section 3.1)

- characteristics of specialist homelessness services clients, including where they received assistance (Section 3.2)
- the services needed by (and provided to) these clients (Section 3.3)
- the reasons support periods ended, and the housing outcomes achieved (sections 3.4 and 3.5).

Note that, in addition to indicating the *number* of people who were homeless or accessing homelessness services, this paper also presents the data as *rates*. See Box 1.3 for further details about the presentation of data.

Box 1.3: Notes about the data presented in this paper

Both numbers and rates are shown

This paper describes the extent of homelessness and the use of specialist homelessness services using both numbers and rates. The number of people experiencing homelessness or using services at a given point in time is, on its own, a useful measure to indicate how many people are affected and the volume of support and services that may be required.

Rates, on the other hand, are a way of comparing like with like. The use of rates is important when making comparisons:

- over time to take into account any change in the size of the group being considered
- between groups of different sizes (for example, Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations) to take into account differences in the sizes of the groups being compared.

All rates presented in this paper are crude rates. The rates of homelessness are derived by dividing the number of homeless people in the group of interest (such as the homeless Indigenous population) by the number of people in that same group (such as the Indigenous population). The rates in this paper are generally expressed as the number of homeless people per 10,000 population.

Confidentialisation of Census data

Homelessness data from the Census were randomly adjusted by the ABS to avoid the release of confidential information; as a result, components of tables may not sum exactly to the totals, and data in any one table may vary slightly from corresponding data presented in other tables in this paper and data presented elsewhere.

1.3 How is homelessness defined?

Homelessness can mean different things to different people. Many people who may be viewed as homeless using statistical or research definitions may not consider themselves homeless. In popular conceptions, homelessness is usually equated with having no shelter or sleeping rough, but in the homelessness research and policy context, broader definitions are usually adopted. These definitions recognise the effects on individuals who do not have a 'home' – which is understood to provide security, privacy and stability (among other things), and not merely a roof over their head. Thus, people living temporarily with other households, in supported accommodation provided by a specialist homelessness agency or in other temporary arrangements are, in many cases, considered homeless.

There is no internationally agreed definition of homelessness (ABS 2011d). Until recently, the most widely accepted definition of homelessness in Australia was the 'cultural definition'

which is based on the degree to which people's housing needs are met within conventional expectations or community standards (Chamberlain & MacKenzie 2008) (see Appendix A).

In 2012, the ABS released a new definition of homelessness for use in its statistical collections (ABS 2012f). Under that definition, a person is considered homeless if they do not have suitable accommodation alternatives and their current living arrangement:

- is in a dwelling that is inadequate (is unfit for human habitation or lacks basic facilities such as kitchen and bathroom facilities), or
- has no tenure, or if their initial tenure is short and not extendable, or
- does not allow them to have control of, and access to, space for social relations (including personal – or household – living space, ability to maintain privacy and exclusive access to kitchen and bathroom facilities).

These living arrangements are not mutually exclusive; for example, people can lack tenure, but also lack access to space for social relations. Further, not all people who fall into 1 or more of these categories will be classified as homeless.

The ABS definition specifically excludes some people whose living situations share some of the characteristics of homelessness but where the person is assumed to be able to access alternative housing if needed, for example, owner-builders living in basic accommodation while they build a permanent dwelling (ABS 2012f). It also excludes: those in prisons or other institutions; students living in halls of residence; and members of religious orders living in seminaries, nunneries or similar institutions.

Of note, the ABS definition of 'homelessness' includes people who are living in 'severely' crowded dwellings. There are many situations of overcrowding which do not threaten the health and safety of the residents. However, severe and sustained overcrowding may put the health and safety of the residents at risk (ABS 2012f). A 'severely' crowded dwelling is defined as one that needs 4 or more extra bedrooms to accommodate the people who usually live there, according to the Canadian National Occupancy Standard (CNOS) (see Appendix B for information about the CNOS). People in these types of dwellings are considered homeless because they do not have control of, or access to, space for social relations.

Concept of homelessness among Indigenous Australians

The ABS definition of homelessness was developed for the general population in Australia. There are likely to be additional aspects of homelessness from an Indigenous perspective that this definition does not adequately capture (ABS 2014b). Some authors have related homelessness experienced by Indigenous Australians to their history, values and beliefs (ABS & AIHW 2008). For example, 'spiritual homelessness' and 'public place dwelling' (also known as 'sleeping in the long grass' and 'itinerancy') are experiences more commonly faced by Indigenous Australians than others. 'Spiritual homelessness' is defined as the state of being disconnected from one's homeland, separation from family or kinship networks, or not being familiar with one's heritage. 'Public place dwelling' or 'itinerancy' generally describe a group of people, usually Indigenous Australians, from remote communities who are living – usually sleeping rough in the 'long grass' – on the outskirts of a major centre (for example, Darwin).

Experiences such as these are difficult to capture in statistical definitions of homelessness. The ABS has undertaken research about how its statistical definition of homelessness may be understood in the Indigenous Australian context (ABS 2013b, 2014b). See Box 1.4 for an

overview of key findings from that research. Overall, the research suggests that many homeless situations experienced by Indigenous people are reflected in current estimates of homelessness from the Census based on the ABS definition. However, the research also indicates that there are some Indigenous people who would be included in Census homelessness estimates but would not consider themselves to be homeless. Conversely, there are some Indigenous people who may see themselves as homeless but who would not be included in the homelessness estimates (for example, those experiencing spiritual homelessness).

The ABS is using the outcomes of its research to inform the estimation of Indigenous homelessness in upcoming ABS survey collections and Censuses (ABS 2014b). For example, these findings have been used to inform the development of a culturally-appropriate set of questions on past experiences of homelessness to be used in the 2014–15 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey.

Box 1.4: Indigenous perspectives on homelessness

During 2013 and 2014, the ABS consulted with Indigenous people and service providers about Indigenous concepts of 'home' and 'homelessness', and how these perceptions align with the statistical definition of homelessness. During those consultations, multiple understandings of these terms were reported; many perspectives of homelessness among Indigenous people aligned with the ABS statistical definition, while some differed and are not captured in existing data sources.

Homelessness was understood by many Indigenous people in relation to place, particularly in regional and remote areas – such that if their dwelling was not located in their community or 'on country', they considered themselves to be homeless. It was also noted that, in some cases, people living on country in an improvised dwelling (such as a tent) felt at home through their connection to country. To avoid disconnection from country, some Indigenous people reported that, rather than moving to suitable housing in another area, they may live on country in crowded conditions, or sleep outside or in improvised dwellings if no suitable housing was available.

In Indigenous communities where cultural and kinship ties were strong, homelessness was often understood to be disconnected from family while, conversely, home could be somewhere other than their usual place of residence if they were with family (including their immediate and extended family).

As well, it was reported that Aboriginal people are often mobile and may be connected to multiple communities, having more than one 'usual address' where they feel at home. In contrast, the findings suggested that Torres Strait Islander people tend to be less mobile, and understand their usual address to be the home where they live most of the time.

Sources: ABS 2013b, 2014b.

2 Homeless Indigenous people

This section provides information on the number and characteristics of Indigenous people who were experiencing homelessness based on Census data.

The ABS employs a number of strategies to identify Indigenous (and other) people who are homeless during the Census (ABS 2012b, 2012e). However estimates of Indigenous homelessness from the Census should be considered to be underestimates for a number of reasons (see Appendix B). These include that Indigenous people are known to be under-enumerated in the Census and that many Indigenous people have different cultural understandings of the concepts of 'home' and 'usual address'. In addition, 8% of all homeless people on Census night in 2011 did not provide information on their Indigenous status (8,412 people). Note that these people were excluded before the calculation of proportions shown in this section.

This section also provides information about Indigenous people who were living in selected marginal housing circumstances on Census night (see Section 2.3). These are people who are living in conditions that are close to the boundary of the statistical definition of homelessness and therefore may be 'at risk' of homelessness.

2.1 How many Indigenous people are homeless?

Indigenous people are over-represented in the homeless population. On Census night in 2011, there were an estimated 26,743 Indigenous people experiencing homelessness in Australia – 28% of all homeless people who provided information on their Indigenous status (Table 2.1). By comparison, Indigenous people comprised about 3% of the total population in 2011 (ABS 2012h).

Table 2.1: Homeless people, by Indigenous status, 2006 and 2011

Indigenous status	2006 ^(a)			2011		
	Number	Rate ^(b)	Per cent ^(c)	Number	Rate ^(b)	Per cent ^(c)
Indigenous	25,950	570.6	31.2	26,743	487.9	27.6
Non-Indigenous	57,324	31.4	68.8	70,060	35.2	72.4
Not stated ^(c)	6,454	57.0	..	8,412	79.5	..
Total	89,728	45.2	100.0	105,215	48.9	100.0

.. not applicable.

(a) These data are based on the ABS statistical definition of homelessness (ABS 2012f) and the new method of estimating the homeless from the Census (ABS 2012g) (see Section 1.3). Because of this, these data do not match the 2006 data published in an earlier paper about homelessness among Indigenous people (AIHW 2011).

(b) Per 10,000 population of the usual resident population as enumerated in the Census (see Appendix B for information about the calculation of rates).

(c) People for whom information on Indigenous status was missing were excluded before the calculation of proportions.

Note: Census data have been randomly adjusted by the ABS to avoid the release of confidential information. Thus, data in this table may vary slightly from corresponding data presented in other tables and data presented elsewhere.

Sources: AIHW analyses of ABS 2012b: Table 1 (for 2006 data) and ABS 2014b: Table 1 (for 2011 data).

Taking into account the size of the Indigenous population, 1 in 20 Indigenous people (488 per 10,000 population) were considered homeless on Census night in 2011. This is 14 times the rate for non-Indigenous people (1 in 284 people, or 35 per 10,000 population). As detailed

below, three-quarters of Indigenous people experiencing homelessness were living in severely crowded dwellings (that is, a dwelling that needed 4 or more extra bedrooms to accommodate the people who usually live there).

Between 2006 and 2011, the estimated number of Indigenous homeless people increased by 3%, from 25,950 to 26,743 people (Table 2.1). However, when growth in the total number of Indigenous people in the population between the 2 time points is taken into account, the rate of homelessness *decreased* by 14% (from 571 to 488 per 10,000 people).

By comparison, while the number of non-Indigenous people experiencing homelessness also grew between 2006 and 2011, the extent of growth was larger, at 22%. In addition, rather than a decrease in the rate of homelessness, as was observed among the Indigenous population, the rate of homelessness among non-Indigenous people was 12% higher in 2011 than in 2006.

Since the Indigenous status of a person is collected through self-identification in the Census, any change in the propensity of people to identify as Indigenous from one Census to the next will affect the count of Indigenous people over time. Between the 2006 and 2011 Censuses, there was a 21% increase (comprising 93,300 people) in the count of Indigenous people. While 70% (65,500 people) of the total increase could be accounted for by demographic factors of population change, 30% of the increase (27,800 people) was due to other factors including an increased propensity to identify as Indigenous (ABS 2013d). The effect of the upward trends in Census counts of Indigenous people on estimates of homeless Indigenous people is unknown.

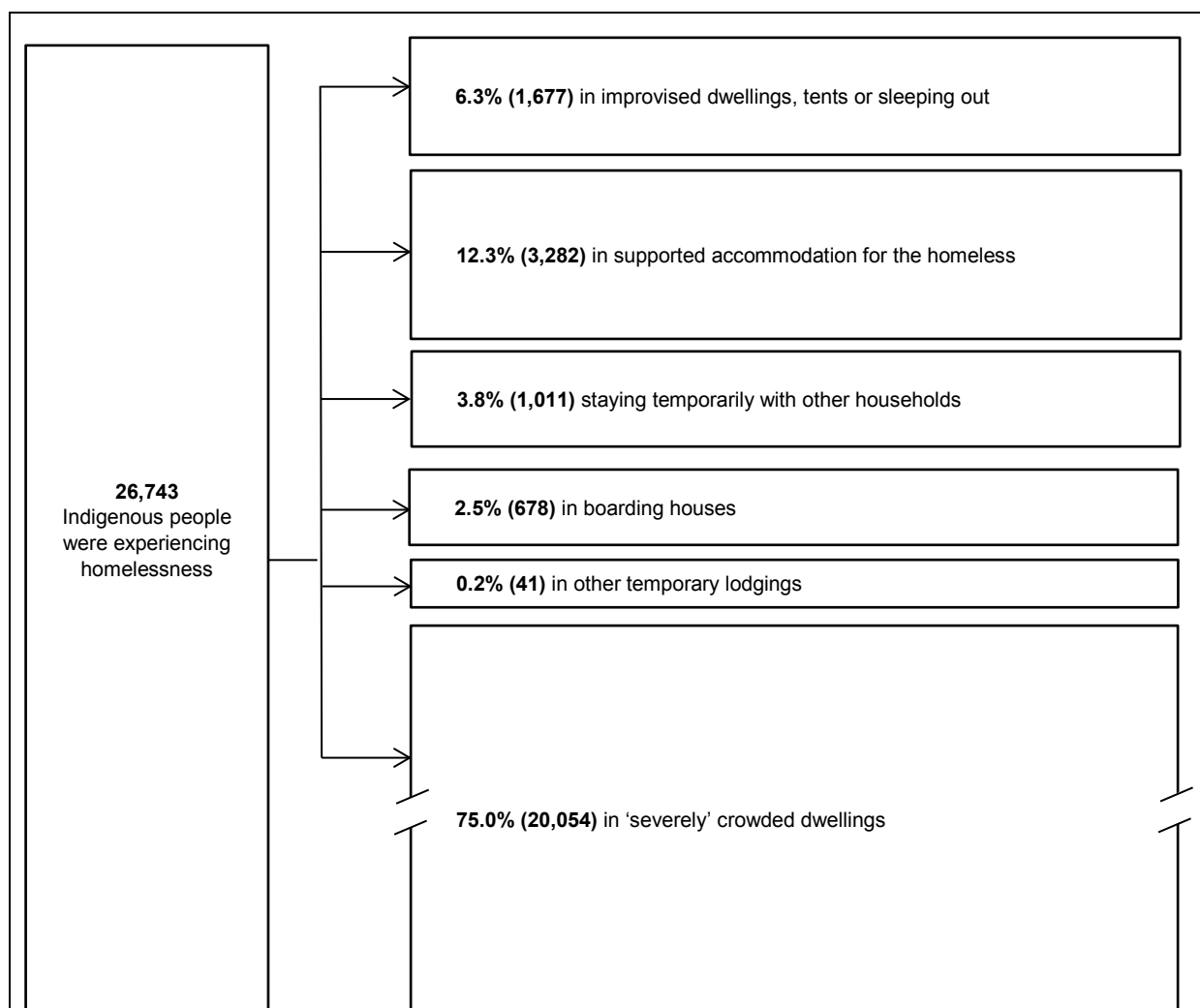
Types of homelessness

The ABS distinguishes between 6 broad groups of homeless people according to the living situation of the person at the time. As these groups may overlap in a small number of circumstances, the ABS assigns people to only 1 category based on a hierarchy from people who are in improvised dwellings, tents or sleeping out, to people living in severely crowded dwellings (Figure 2.1).

Of the estimated 26,743 Indigenous people experiencing homelessness in 2011 (Figure 2.1):

- three-quarters (75%, 20,054 people) were living in severely crowded dwellings
- 12% were living in supported accommodation for the homeless
- 6% were living in improvised dwellings, tents or sleeping out
- 4% were staying temporarily with other households
- the remainder were living in boarding houses (2.5%) or staying in other temporary lodgings (0.2%).

Among severely crowded dwellings with one or more Indigenous people, there was an average of 12 people per dwelling in 2011 (ABS 2012b). This was higher than the average for all severely crowded dwellings (9 people per dwelling).



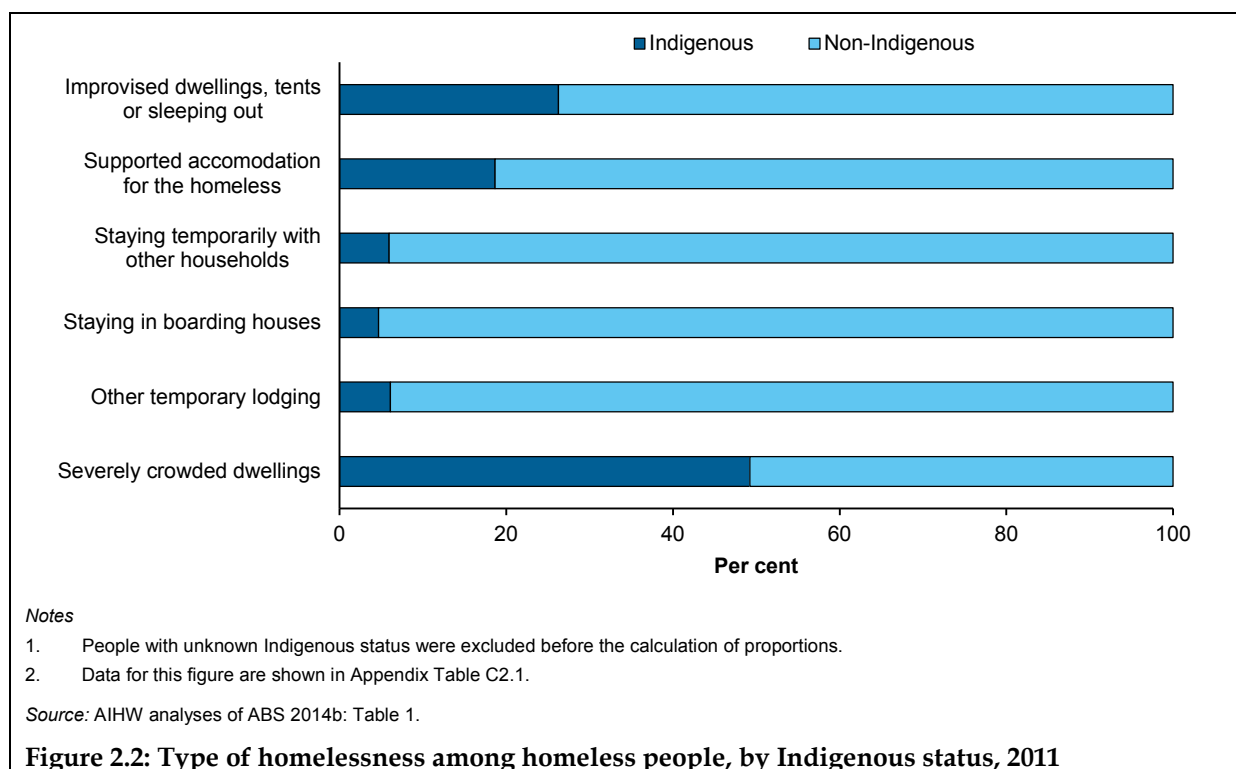
Note: Data for this figure are shown in Appendix Table C2.1.

Source: ABS 2014b.

Figure 2.1: Indigenous homeless people, by type of homelessness, 2011

Indigenous homeless people were over-represented in all homelessness groups. While Indigenous people comprised about 3% of the Australian population in 2011, 49% of those in severely crowded dwellings were Indigenous (Figure 2.2). Furthermore, Indigenous people comprised:

- 26% of people living in improvised dwellings, tents or sleeping out
- 19% of those people staying in supported accommodation for the homeless
- 6% of those staying temporarily with other households.



Considered as a population rate, 366 Indigenous people per 10,000 population were living in severely crowded dwellings – this was 35 times the rate for non-Indigenous people (Table 2.2). In addition, Indigenous people were:

- 13 times as likely to be living in improvised dwellings, tents or sleeping out
- 8 times as likely to be in supported accommodation for the homeless
- between 2 and 3 times as likely to be experiencing the other forms of homelessness.

Table 2.2: Indigenous and non-Indigenous homeless people, by type of homelessness, 2006 and 2011 (number per 10,000 population^(a))

Type of homelessness	Indigenous		Non-Indigenous	
	2006	2011	2006	2011
In improvised dwellings, tents or sleeping out	46.0	30.6	2.6	2.4
In supported accommodation for the homeless	59.2	59.9	6.4	7.2
Staying temporarily with other households	19.1	18.4	9.0	8.0
Staying in boarding houses	17.2	12.4	6.8	6.9
In other temporary lodging	0.5	0.7	0.3	0.3
Living in 'severely' crowded dwellings	428.5	365.9	6.3	10.4
All homeless people	570.6	487.9	31.4	35.2

(a) Rate is shown per 10,000 population as enumerated in the Census (see Appendix B for information about the calculation of rates).

Sources: AIHW analyses of ABS 2012a: Table 1 (for 2006 data) and AIHW 2014b: Table 1 (for 2011 data).

Consistent with the overall trend, the rate of homelessness among Indigenous people declined across most homelessness groups between 2006 and 2011 (Table 2.2). For example, the rate of:

- people living in improvised dwellings, tents, or sleeping out fell by 33% (from 46 to 31 per 10,000 population)
- people staying in boarding houses declined by 28%
- people living in severely crowded dwellings fell by 15%.

In contrast, among non-Indigenous people, the rate of homelessness across the different homelessness types was fairly similar in 2006 and 2011, with the exception of those living in severely crowded dwellings, which increased between these 2 time points (from 6 to 10 per 10,000 population). Most of the increase in the homelessness rate among non-Indigenous people between 2006 and 2011 can be attributed to this rise (Table 2.2).

2.2 Characteristics of the homeless

Age and sex

In 2011, just over half (51%) of Indigenous homeless people were female, compared with 42% of non-Indigenous homeless population (Table 2.3). The rate of homelessness among Indigenous females was similar to that of Indigenous males (both about 488 per 10,000 population). In contrast, among non-Indigenous people, males were more likely than females to be homeless (42 per 10,000 population and 29 per 10,000 respectively).

Table 2.3: Indigenous and non-Indigenous homeless people, by sex and age, 2011

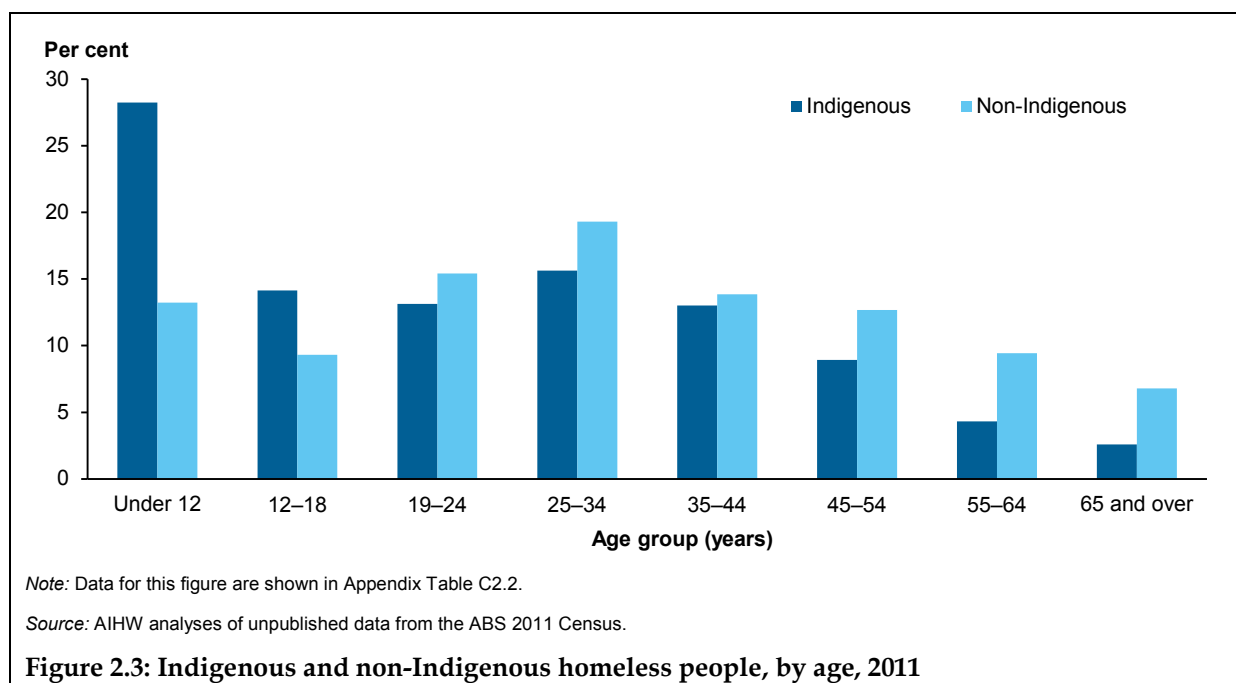
	Per cent		Rate ^(a)		Rate ratio ^(b)
	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous	
Sex					
Males	49.2	58.4	487.2	41.7	11.7
Females	50.8	41.6	488.6	28.9	16.9
Age group (years)					
Under 12	28.2	13.2	477.3	30.9	15.4
12–18	14.1	9.3	432.4	36.7	11.8
19–24	13.1	15.4	617.1	67.9	9.1
25–34	15.6	19.3	582.2	49.5	11.8
35–44	13.0	13.8	515.0	34.0	15.1
45–54	8.9	12.7	450.1	32.1	14.0
55 and over	6.9	16.2	348.5	21.9	15.9
Total	100.0	100.0	488.0	35.2	13.9

(a) Per 10,000 population as enumerated in the Census (see Appendix B for information about the calculation of rates).

(b) The rate ratio is the rate for Indigenous people divided by the rate for non-Indigenous people.

Source: AIHW analyses of unpublished data from the ABS 2011 Census.

The Indigenous homeless population tended to be younger than the non-Indigenous homeless population (Figure 2.3). In 2011, about 4 in 10 (42%) Indigenous people experiencing homelessness were aged 18 or under. By comparison, fewer than 1 in 4 (23%) non-Indigenous homeless people were aged 18 or under.



Half (51%) of Indigenous homeless people were aged 19–54, and 7% were aged 55 and over. This compares with 61% and 16% of non-Indigenous homeless people, respectively (Appendix Table C2.2).

Taking into account the number of Indigenous people in each age group, those aged 19–24 were most likely to be experiencing homelessness – in 2011, 617 per 10,000 population in this age group were experiencing homelessness (Table 2.3). The second highest rate of homelessness among Indigenous people was observed for those aged 25–34 (582 per 10,000 population). Meanwhile, the homelessness rate was lowest among those aged 55 and over (349 per 10,000 population).

Similarly, among non-Indigenous people:

- those aged 19–24 were the most likely of all the age groups of to be homeless although at a much lower rate (68 per 10,000 non-Indigenous population in this age group)
- the homelessness rate was lowest among those aged 55 and over but again at a much lower rate (22 per 10,000 population).

While Indigenous people had a higher rate of homelessness than non-Indigenous people for each of the age groups, the extent of the difference varied with age (Table 2.3). Comparing the rates of homelessness for Indigenous and non-Indigenous people as a ratio, the difference was smallest among those aged 19–24, with Indigenous people in this age group 9 times as likely to be homeless as non-Indigenous people. The greatest difference was among people aged 55 and over – the rate for Indigenous people in this age group was almost 16 times the rate for non-Indigenous people.

State and territory

There were almost 14,000 Indigenous people experiencing homelessness in the Northern Territory in 2011, constituting just over half (52%) of all Indigenous homeless people in Australia (Table 2.4). The vast majority (92%) of Indigenous homeless people in the Northern Territory were classified as such because they were living in severely crowded dwellings (AIHW analyses of unpublished data from the ABS 2011 Census).

Table 2.4: Indigenous and non-Indigenous homeless people, by state and territory, 2011

	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Australia
Indigenous									
Number	2,202	835	4,824	3,385	1,090	171	260	13,978	26,745
Per cent	8.2	3.1	18.0	12.7	4.1	0.6	1.0	52.3	100.0
Rate (per 10,000 population)	127.6	219.8	309.6	485.9	358.2	87.2	501.6	2,462.0	488.0
Non-Indigenous									
Number	23,515	19,223	13,485	5,700	4,371	1,313	1,294	1,160	70,061
Per cent	33.6	27.4	19.2	8.1	6.2	1.9	1.8	1.7	100.0
Rate (per 10,000 population)	36.7	37.9	34.1	28.0	29.1	28.8	38.3	84.3	35.2

Source: AIHW analyses of unpublished data from the ABS 2011 Census.

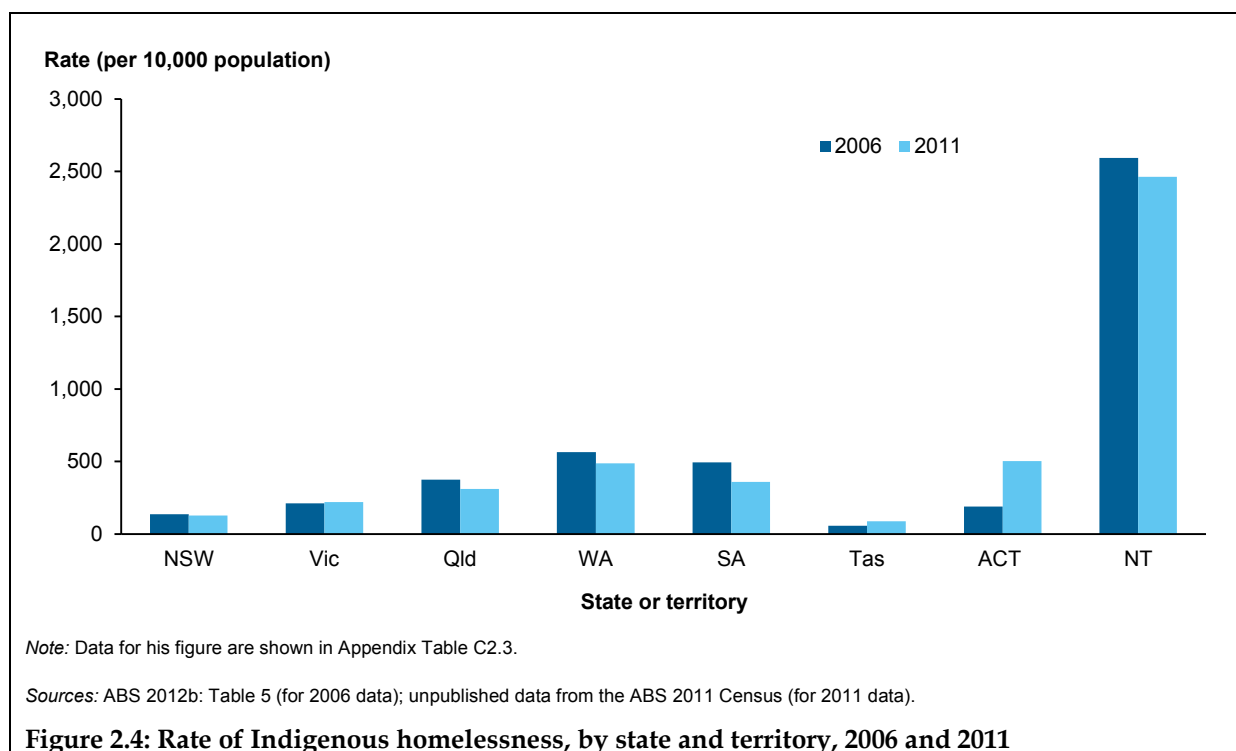
A further 18% of Indigenous people experiencing homelessness were located in Queensland, 13% in Western Australia, and 8% in New South Wales. For non-Indigenous people, New South Wales (34%), Victoria (27%) and Queensland (19%) had the highest numbers of homeless people (Table 2.4) – the 3 most populous states for non-Indigenous people.

The rate of Indigenous homelessness varied considerably across jurisdictions. The highest rate was observed in the Northern Territory, with 1 in 4 Indigenous people in that jurisdiction considered to be homeless (2,462 per 10,000 population) (Table 2.4). Across the other jurisdictions, the rate of homelessness for Indigenous people ranged from 87 homeless people per 10,000 population in Tasmania to 502 homeless per 10,000 population in the Australian Capital Territory.

Between 2006 and 2011, the rate of homelessness among Indigenous people decreased in most jurisdictions (Figure 2.4). In contrast, for non-Indigenous people the rate of homelessness *increased* in all but 2 jurisdictions (Queensland and the Northern Territory) (Appendix Table C2.3).

In 2011, the types of homelessness experienced by Indigenous homeless people varied across the states and territories. As noted earlier, most (92%) of the homeless in the Northern Territory, were living in severely crowded dwellings. Severe crowding among Indigenous homeless people in the other jurisdictions ranged from 6% in Victoria to 79% in Western Australia.

In Victoria, the Australian Capital Territory and Tasmania, relatively high proportions of Indigenous homeless people were staying in supported accommodation for the homeless (64%, 62% and 44% respectively). The jurisdictions with the highest proportions of Indigenous people who were living in improvised dwellings, tents or sleeping out were Tasmania (15%) and New South Wales (13%).

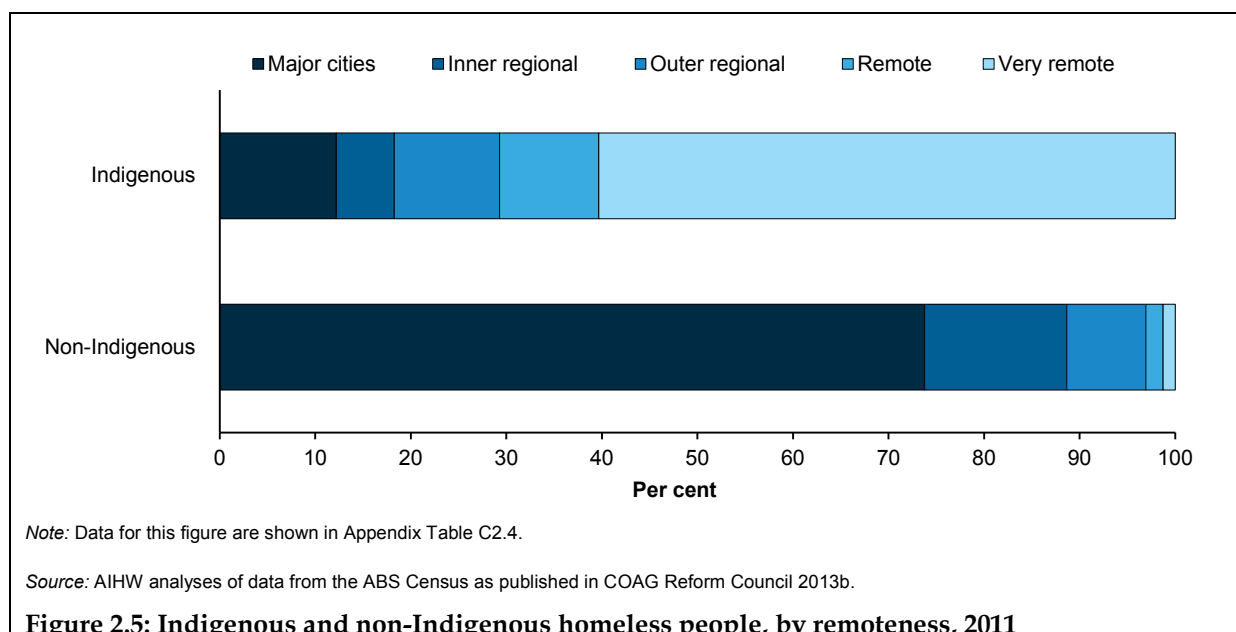


Remoteness

There were substantial differences in the distribution of Indigenous and non-Indigenous people experiencing homelessness across remoteness areas. For Indigenous people, the highest proportion of homeless people was in *Very remote* areas, followed by *Major cities* (Figure 2.5). On Census night in 2011, 7 in 10 Indigenous people experiencing homelessness were in remote areas – 60% in *Very remote* areas and 10% in *Remote* areas. By comparison, 21% of all Indigenous Australians lived in *Remote and Very remote* areas of Australia on Census night (AIHW analyses of COAG Reform Council 2013b), indicating homeless Indigenous people were over-represented in these areas. As detailed below, nearly all (97%) of the Indigenous homeless people in *Very remote* areas and most (71%) of those in *Remote* areas were living in severely crowded dwellings. About 12% of Indigenous homeless people were enumerated in *Major cities*, and the remaining 17% in regional areas (6% in *Inner regional* and 11% in *Outer regional*).

For non-Indigenous people, the number experiencing homelessness decreased with increasing remoteness, broadly reflecting the distribution of the total non-Indigenous population. Nearly three-quarters (74%) were in *Major cities*, 15% in *Inner regional* areas, 8% in *Outer regional* areas, with 3% in *Remote and very remote* areas.

Taking into account population size, the rate of homelessness was highest in *Very remote* areas and lowest in *Inner regional* areas for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous homeless people (Table 2.5). However, the difference between *Very remote* areas and all other areas was far more stark among Indigenous people than non-Indigenous people – with the rate for Indigenous people in *Very remote* areas (2,080 per 10,000 population) 3 times as large as the next highest rate (695 per 10,000 population in *Remote* areas). In contrast, among non-Indigenous people, the rate of homelessness in *Very remote* areas (89 per 10,000 population) was 1.6 times as large as the next highest rate (54 per 10,000 population in *Remote* areas).



Between the 2006 and 2011 Censuses, the rate of homelessness among Indigenous people declined across all remoteness areas, with the greatest decline in *Remote* areas, where the rate was 27% lower in 2011 than in 2006 (Table 2.5). Among non-Indigenous people, the rate of homelessness increased in some areas, but decreased or stayed the same in others, with the biggest difference being a decrease in *Very remote* areas (from 112 per 10,000 population in 2006 to 89 per 10,000 in 2011).

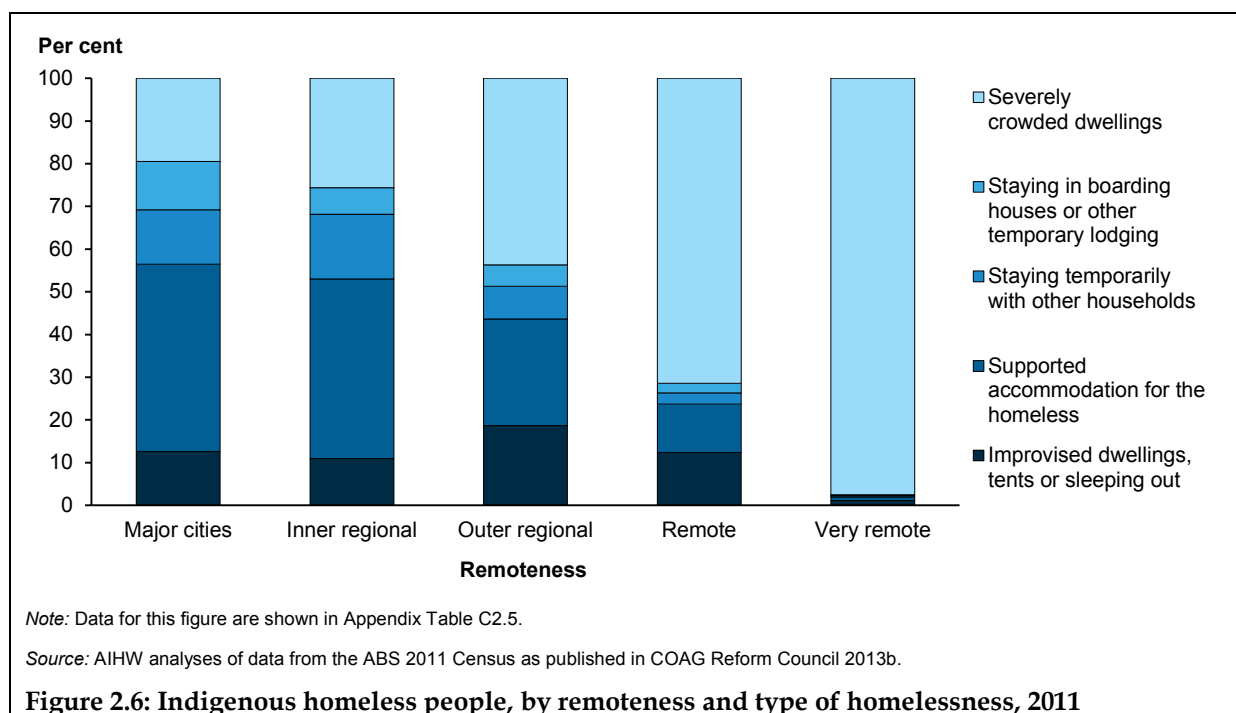
Table 2.5: Rate of homelessness among Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, by remoteness, 2006 and 2011 (per 10,000 population)

Remoteness ^(a)	Indigenous		Non-Indigenous	
	2006	2011	2006	2011
Major cities	188.7	172.0	31.3	36.6
Inner regional	141.0	132.8	25.8	28.1
Outer regional	274.5	248.0	37.7	33.3
Remote	951.0	694.7	54.0	54.0
Very remote	2,220.3	2,079.7	111.8	88.9
Total	570.7	488.0	31.4	35.2

(a) Remoteness areas for 2006 are based on the Australian Standard Geographical Classification (ABS 2006); remoteness areas for 2011 are based on the Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ABS 2013a).

Sources: AIHW analyses of data from the ABS 2006 and 2011 Censuses as published in COAG Reform Council 2013a, 2013b.

There was considerable variation in the types of homelessness experienced by Indigenous homeless people across remoteness areas (Figure 2.6). The proportion of Indigenous homeless people who were living in severely crowded dwellings increased with remoteness, from 19% of those in *Major cities* to 97% of those in *Very remote* regions. Indigenous people in *Very remote* areas who were living in severely crowded dwellings made up 59% of the total Indigenous homeless population on Census night in 2011. *Major cities* and *Inner regional* areas had the highest proportions of Indigenous people who were homeless and living in supported accommodation (44% and 42% of homeless Indigenous people respectively).



In comparison, among non-Indigenous homeless people, those in severely crowded dwellings made up 13% of the homeless in *Very remote* areas, and a relatively larger proportion (35%) of those in *Major cities* (Appendix Table C2.5). The proportion of non-Indigenous homeless people in supported accommodation was highest in *Inner regional* areas (27%), followed by *Major cities* (20%).

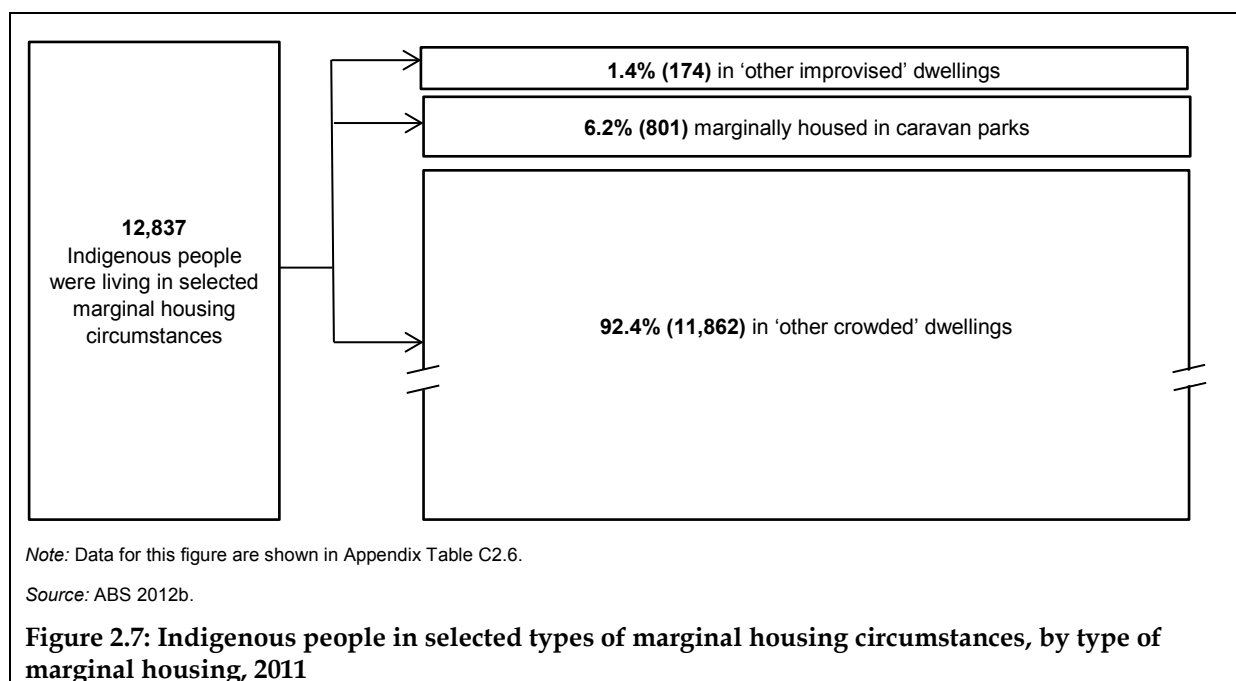
2.3 Indigenous people in marginal housing

In addition to estimating the number of people experiencing homelessness, the ABS also estimates the number of people in selected marginal housing circumstances on Census night. These are people who can be identified, based on characteristics reported in the Census, as living in conditions that are close to the boundary of the statistical definition of 'homelessness', and so may be 'at risk' of homelessness (ABS 2012g). Using the Census, 3 groups of marginally housed people can be identified:

- people living in 'other crowded' dwellings—that is, people in dwellings that needed three extra bedrooms to accommodate the usual residents adequately as defined by the CNOS (see Appendix B)
- people in 'other improvised' dwellings—people living in an improvised dwelling, tent or sleeping out, excluding those who were considered to be homeless using the ABS methodology
- people who are marginally housed in caravan parks who do not appear to have suitable accommodation alternatives (based on their employment status and level of household income).

Estimates of people living in other types of marginal housing—such as housing with major structural problems—cannot be obtained from the Census, and so are not included in these estimates.

In 2011, there were about 12,800 Indigenous people living in these selected marginal housing groups (Figure 2.7). Most (92%) were living in 'other crowded' dwellings. The remainder were marginally housed and living in caravan parks (6%), or living in 'other improvised' dwellings (1.4%).



As with the homeless population, Indigenous people are over-represented among people who are marginally housed, particularly among those in 'other crowded' dwellings. Among people who provided information on their Indigenous status, Indigenous people comprised 1 in 5 (20%) of those in 'other crowded' dwellings in 2011. Indigenous people also comprised 7% of those who were marginally housed in caravan parks, and 4% of those living in other improvised dwellings (Appendix Table C2.6).

Between 2006 and 2011, there was an increase in the estimated number of Indigenous people living in these selected marginal housing circumstances (from 11,731 to 12,837). When population growth is taken into account, the estimates suggest a decline in the rate of Indigenous people living in marginal housing – from 2.6% of Indigenous people in 2006 to 2.3% in 2011. The number of non-Indigenous people in marginal housing increased between 2006 and 2011, with the rate also increasing, largely due to an increase in the number of non-Indigenous people living in 'other crowded' dwellings (Appendix Table C2.6).

3 Use of specialist homelessness services by Indigenous people

Governments across Australia fund a range of services to support people who are experiencing homelessness or are at risk of becoming homeless (see Box 3.1). These specialist homelessness services, which are delivered by non-government organisations on behalf of government, operate within different service delivery frameworks and provide various types of support to clients. These services often specialise in providing assistance to specific population groups – for example, young people, people escaping domestic violence, or those sleeping rough (AIHW 2013a, 2013c).

The data in this section are from the AIHW Specialist Homelessness Services Collection. This data collection commenced on 1 July 2011, and 2 years of data are now available. This collection relates to clients assisted by government-funded specialist homelessness services. The data collected by these agencies are based on support periods, or episodes of assistance provided to individual clients. Support periods may be relatively short or much longer – and some may have been ongoing from the previous year or still ongoing at the end of 2012–13.

Agencies only provide information on Indigenous status to the SHSC if clients have given explicit consent for this information to be reported. In 2012–13, Indigenous status was not reported for 15% of clients (or 36,830 people). See Appendix B for further information about the SHSC.

Box 3.1: Key terms in the Specialist Homelessness Services Collection

The SHSC distinguishes between clients who are experiencing homelessness and those who are at risk of homelessness:

- Clients are assumed to be ‘homeless’ if they are: living without shelter, in improvised or inadequate accommodation; staying in short-term temporary accommodation; or living in a house, townhouse or flat with relatives for free or couch surfing or with no tenure. The definition of homelessness used in the SHSC aligns with the ABS definition, except that it does not cover people living in severely crowded dwellings.
- Clients are assumed to be ‘at risk of homelessness’ if they have sought assistance from a homelessness agency but do not fall into a homeless category – that is, they are living in social housing, private or other housing, or an institutional setting.

A ‘support period’ is an episode of assistance provided to a client; clients may have more than 1 support period in any 1 collection period (that is, financial year).

Clients with ‘closed support’ refers to clients who had a support period cease during the collection period and who were not being provided with support at the end of the collection period.

3.1 Number of Indigenous clients

In total, 46,607 specialist homelessness services clients were identified as being Indigenous in the 2012–13 SHSC (Table 3.1). After adjusting the total client counts for missing information about Indigenous status, an estimated 54,885 clients were considered to be Indigenous. This corresponds to a rate of 9.2% of Indigenous people (or 922 per 10,000 population).

Table 3.1: Specialist homelessness services clients, by Indigenous status, 2012–13

Indigenous status	Unadjusted ^(a)		Adjusted ^(a)		Per cent ^(c)
	Number	Rate ^(b)	Number	Rate ^(b)	
Indigenous	46,607	783.3	54,885	922.4	22.5
Non-Indigenous	160,740	72.4	189,291	85.2	77.5
Not stated	36,830	..	..	..	..
Total	244,176	107.0	244,176	107.0	100.0

.. not applicable

(a) Unadjusted/adjusted for missing information about Indigenous status (see Appendix B for further details).

(b) Per 10,000 population. Indigenous rates were calculated using ABS experimental projections of Indigenous populations (Series B) (ABS 2009). Non-Indigenous rates were calculated using populations derived by subtracting the projected Indigenous population from the corresponding Australian population as sourced from *Population projections, Australia, 2006 to 2101* (Series B) (ABS 2008).

(c) People for whom information on Indigenous status was missing were excluded before the calculation of proportions.

Source: AIHW analyses of AIHW 2013c.

Indigenous people are over-represented among specialist homelessness services clients. While they comprise 3% of the Australian population (AIHW analyses of ABS 2013c), over one-fifth (22%) of clients in 2012–13 who provided information on their Indigenous status identified as being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin (Table 3.1). The proportion of clients who were Indigenous in 2012–13 was the same as in 2011–12 (Appendix Table C3.1).

In 2012–13, an estimated 88,389 support periods were provided to Indigenous specialist homelessness services clients, with an average of 1.6 support periods per client. This compares with an average of 1.7 support periods for non-Indigenous clients. Indigenous clients were supported for an average of 93 days in 2012–13, compared with 87 days for non-Indigenous clients (AIHW 2013c).

From 2011–12 to 2012–13, the number of Indigenous clients increased by 6.8% (from an estimated 51,368 clients in 2011–12), and the rate of service use increased by 4.5% (from a rate of 8.8% of Indigenous people in 2011–12) (Appendix Table C3.1). In comparison, the number of non-Indigenous clients increased by 2.3% between these 2 time points, while the rate increased by less than 1%.

3.2 Characteristics of clients

The SHSC distinguishes between clients who, at the beginning of their support period, were homeless and those who were at risk of homelessness. In 2012–13, a slightly larger proportion of Indigenous clients (52%) were homeless at the beginning of their first support period when compared with non-Indigenous clients (49%) (AIHW 2013c). The remaining clients were considered to be at risk of homelessness at the time they began receiving support from an agency (48% of Indigenous clients and 51% of non-Indigenous clients).

Of Indigenous clients who had experienced homelessness at some time during 2012–13, 4.9% experienced more than 1 period of homelessness (that is, moved out of homelessness and back into homelessness during the year). This compares with 5.2% in 2011–12 (SCRGSP 2014). Among non-Indigenous clients, 3.7% had more than 1 period of homelessness during 2012–13, compared with 4.6% during 2011–12 (unpublished SHSC data).

Age and sex

The majority of Indigenous clients were female—62% in 2012–13 (Table 3.2). Considered in relation to the total Indigenous population, about 1 in 10 Indigenous females (970 per 10,000 population) accessed specialist homelessness services in 2012–13, compared with about 1 in 17 Indigenous males (595 per 10,000 population).

Table 3.2: Specialist homelessness services clients, by Indigenous status, sex and age, 2012–13

	Per cent		Rate ^(a)		Rate ratio ^(b)
	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous	
Sex					
Males	37.9	43.3	595.1	62.9	9.5
Females	62.1	56.7	970.2	81.7	11.9
Age group (years)					
0–9	23.6	13.7	792.0	80.6	9.8
10–14	7.2	4.7	513.9	56.8	9.0
15–17	6.6	5.9	798.4	113.8	7.0
18–24	18.4	17.2	1,011.2	129.6	7.8
25–34	17.7	19.9	974.6	101.7	9.6
35–44	14.4	19.0	955.3	98.3	9.7
45–54	8.4	11.8	701.3	62.7	11.2
55–64	2.8	5.1	380.4	31.3	12.2
65 and over	0.8	2.7	173.9	13.2	13.2
Total	100.0	100.0	783.3	72.4	10.8

(a) Per 10,000 population (see Appendix B for information about the calculation of rates). Rates in this table are based on data that have not been adjusted for missing information about Indigenous status (see Table 3.1).

(b) The 'rate ratio' is the rate for Indigenous people divided by the rate for non-Indigenous people.

Source: AIHW analyses of AIHW 2013c: Table S4.1.

In 2012–13, 24% of Indigenous clients were aged under 10, 14% were aged 10–17, 59% were aged 18–54, while the remainder (4%) were 55 and over (Table 3.2). The distribution by age differed according to the sex of the Indigenous clients. Compared with Indigenous female clients, a higher proportion of Indigenous male clients were children aged under 10 (31% compared with 19% of females) (Appendix Table C3.2). Meanwhile, higher proportions of female clients were aged 25–54 (43% compared with 36% of male clients).

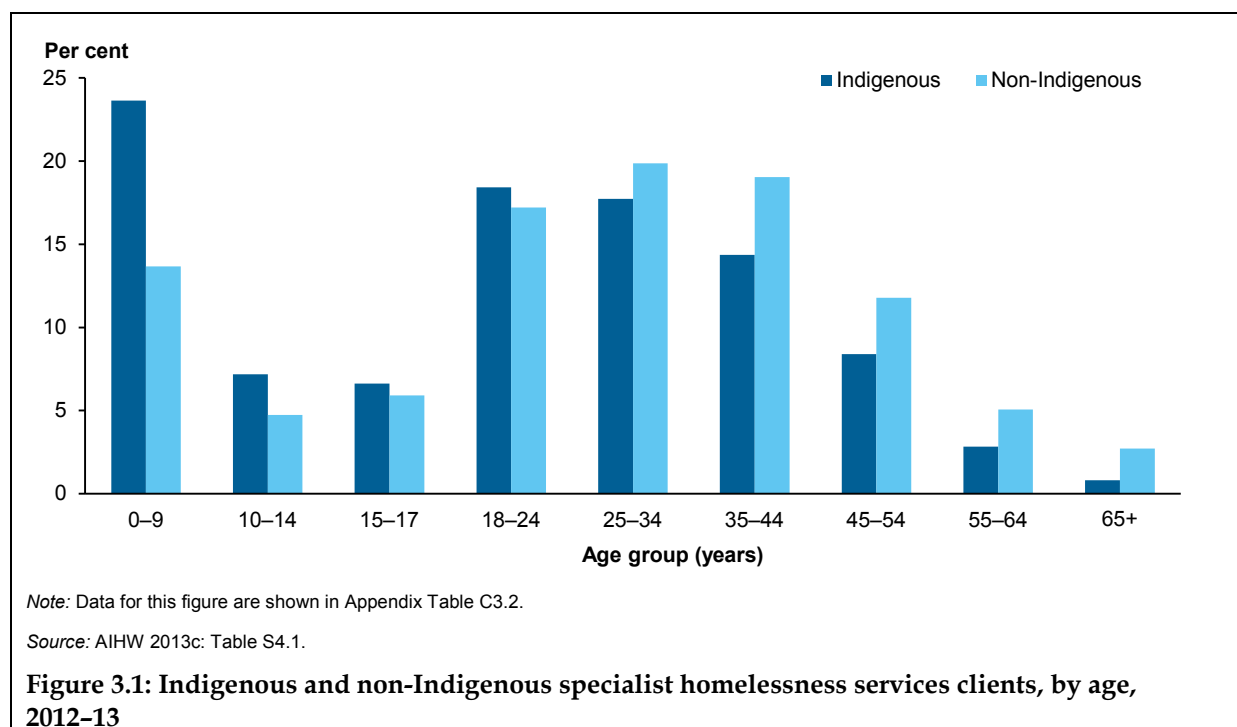
In terms of population rates, Indigenous clients aged 18–24 had the highest rate of service use; 1 in 10 Indigenous people (1,011 per 10,000 population) of this age received assistance from specialist homelessness agencies at some point during 2012–13 (Table 3.2). However, this difference is due to relatively high use of such services by Indigenous females in this age

group, not by males (1,482 per 10,000 population and 568 per 10,000 population respectively) (Appendix Table C3.3).

Across all of the age groups, Indigenous females had higher rates of use than Indigenous males, but the differences were smaller among the younger (under age 15) and older (aged 65 and over) age groups than other age groups (Appendix Table C3.3).

While overall, Indigenous clients were more likely than non-Indigenous clients to be female (62% and 57% respectively), this difference was largest among the older age groups; 62% of Indigenous clients aged 55 and over were female compared with 49% of non-Indigenous clients in that age range (see Appendix Table C3.2).

Indigenous clients were younger than non-Indigenous clients (Figure 3.1). For example, clients aged under 10 comprised nearly one-quarter (24%) of Indigenous clients compared with 14% of non-Indigenous clients. Meanwhile, 12% of Indigenous clients were aged 45 and over, compared with 20% of non-Indigenous clients. These differences by age of clients at least partly reflect the younger age structure of the total Indigenous population.



Clients presenting alone and in groups

People who seek services from specialist homelessness agencies may do so individually, or as part of a family or other group of people. This may or may not reflect the person's living arrangements at the time of support; for example, over half (56%) of Indigenous clients who presented alone said that they lived in a family group at the time they began receiving support (unpublished SHSC data). When presenting as part of a family or other group, each individual (including children) is counted as a separate client in the SHSC.

In 2012-13, 62% of Indigenous clients presented to specialist homelessness agencies alone and 38% presented as a member of a family (Table 3.3). Compared with Indigenous clients, non-Indigenous clients were more likely to present alone (73%) and less likely to present in a family group (27%).

Table 3.3: Indigenous and non-Indigenous specialist homelessness services clients, by presenting unit type at the beginning of support, 2012–13

Presenting unit type	Indigenous		Non-Indigenous	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
Alone	28,665	61.5	116,693	72.6
Family group				
Couple with child/ren	2,793	6.0	7,729	4.8
Single with child/ren	13,545	29.1	30,846	19.2
Couple without children	992	2.1	3,469	2.2
Other family group	252	0.5	757	0.5
<i>Total family group</i>	<i>17,582</i>	<i>37.7</i>	<i>42,801</i>	<i>26.6</i>
Other group	360	0.8	1,246	0.8
Total	46,607	100.0	160,739	100.0

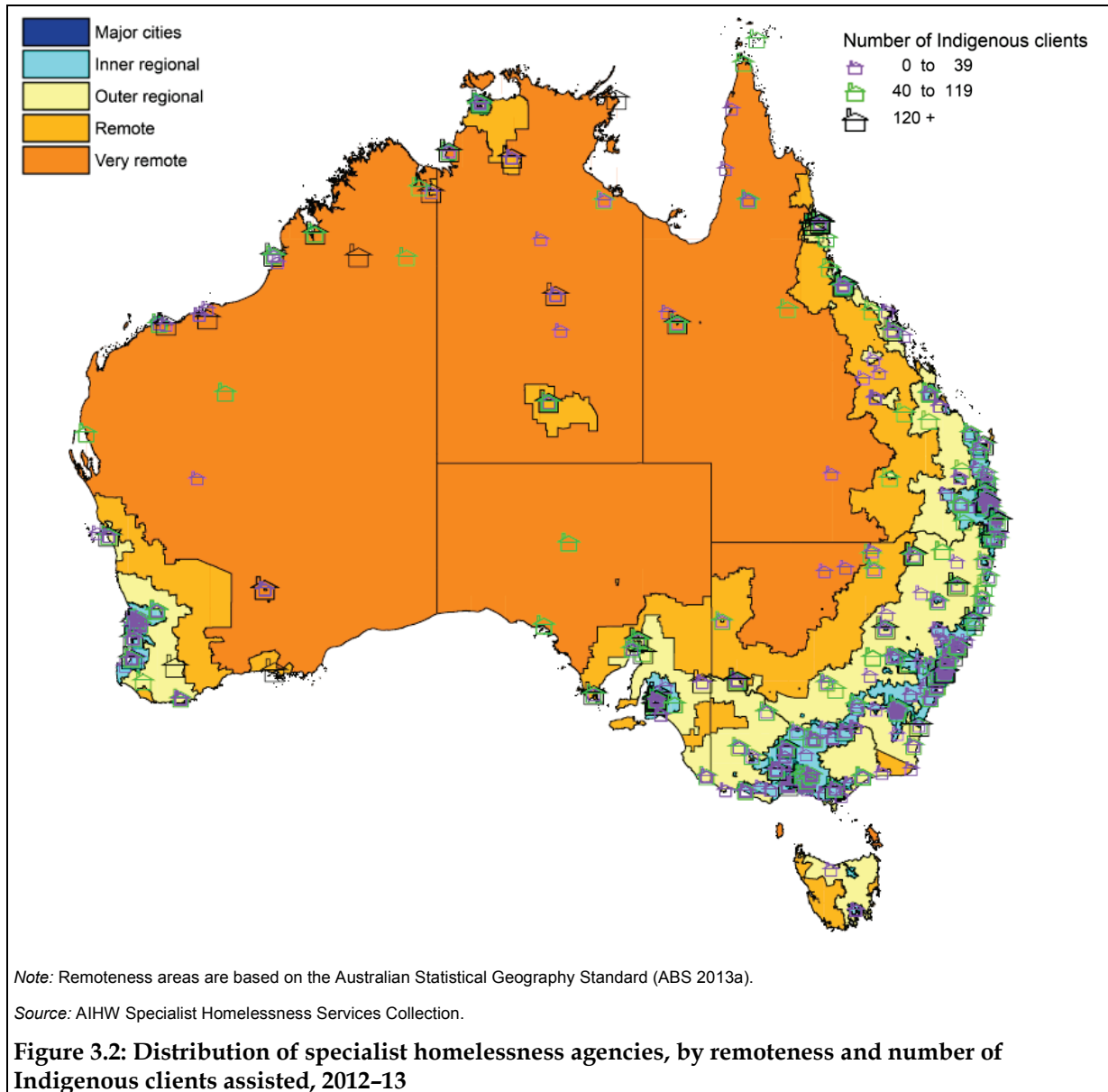
Source: AIHW Specialist Homelessness Services Collection.

Client location

For the purposes of this analysis, clients have been ascribed a geographical location based on the location of the specialist homelessness agency from which they received assistance. For clients who received services from more than one agency, the location of the agency from which they first received assistance in 2012–13 was used.

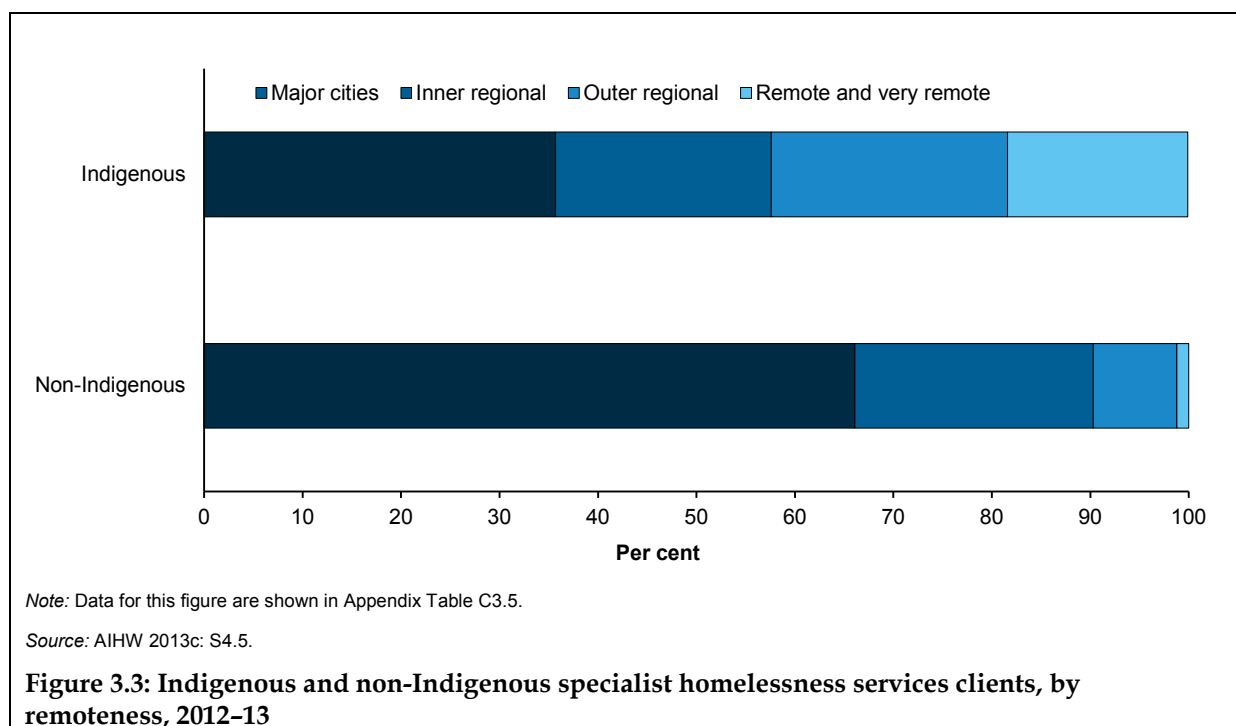
In line with Australia's population distribution, specialist homelessness agencies are concentrated in urban areas. In 2012–13, 59% of agencies were in *Major cities*, 35% in *Inner regional and outer regional* areas, and 7% in *Remote and very remote* areas (see Appendix Table C3.4).

Agencies based in more remote areas tended to assist larger numbers of Indigenous clients (Figure 3.2). In 2012–13, 60% of agencies in *Remote and very remote* areas assisted 40 or more Indigenous clients, compared with 20% of agencies in *Major cities* and 36% in *Inner and outer regional* areas (Appendix Table C3.4).



Remoteness

There was a clear difference by Indigenous status in the geographical distribution of clients across remoteness areas (Figure 3.3). For both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, the largest number of clients were assisted in *Major cities* but the proportion was particularly large for non-Indigenous people (66% of non-Indigenous clients compared with 36% of Indigenous clients). However, as expected given the distribution of the Indigenous homeless population (see Section 2.2), substantially larger proportions of Indigenous clients were assisted in *Remote and very remote* areas (18% collectively) than non-Indigenous clients (1%).



State and territory

Agencies based in Queensland assisted the largest number of Indigenous clients, followed by New South Wales, with half (51%) of all Indigenous clients accessing services in these 2 states. Across all jurisdictions, Indigenous people were over-represented among people accessing specialist homelessness services relative to their proportion of the population (Appendix Table C3.6).

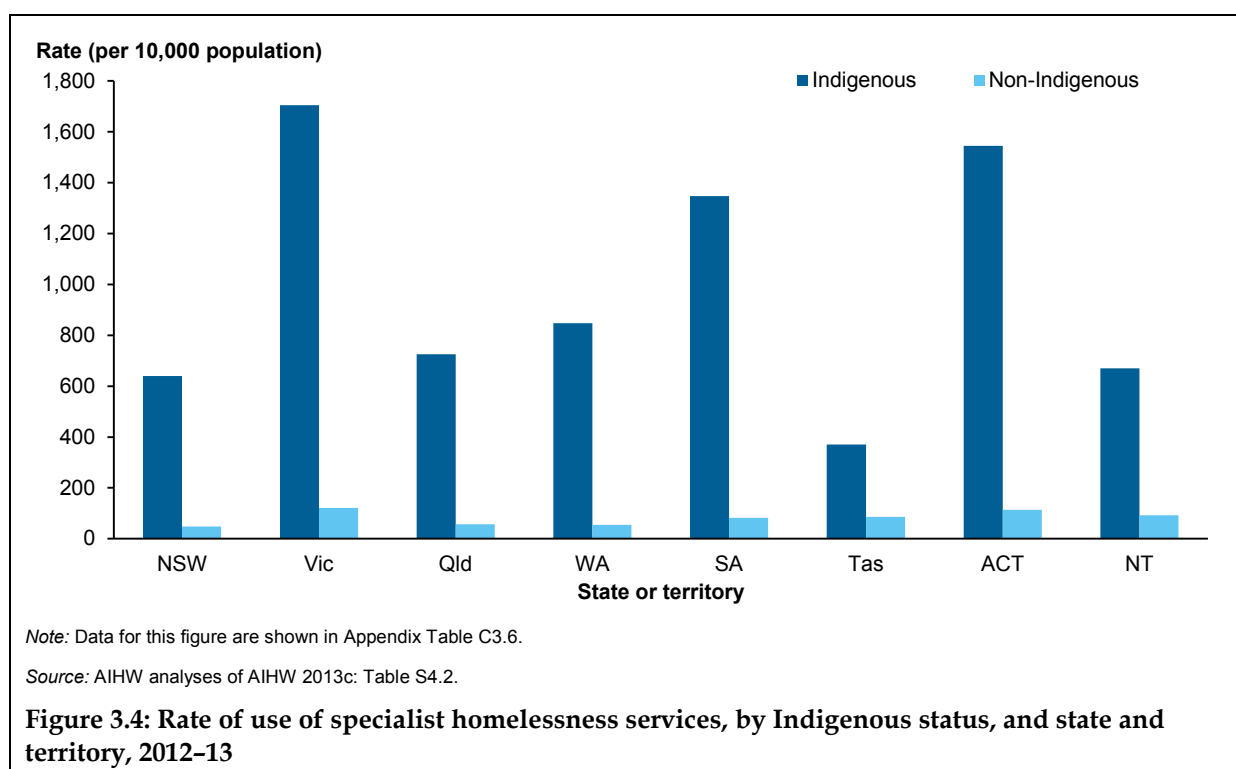
Relative to their representation in the community, Victoria had the highest rate of support provided to Indigenous people (where 17% of the Indigenous population received specialist homelessness services at some time during 2012-13), followed by the Australian Capital Territory (15%) and South Australia (13%) (Figure 3.4).

3.3 Services needed and provided

Specialist homelessness agencies provide a wide range of services to people who are experiencing, or at risk of, homelessness. These services can include accommodation or assistance with obtaining or maintaining housing, basic support services (such as meals, assistance with transport, material aid/brokerage or recreational services), and more specialised services (including specialised counselling and support for health and mental health issues, professional legal services, and financial advice and counselling).

In the SHSC, information is captured about:

- reasons for seeking assistance
- needs for specific services
- whether those needs were met to any extent by the agency and, if not, whether the client was referred to another agency for specific support.



For these analyses, a client's need for a service is recorded if the client needed that service at any time in 2012-13 (regardless of how many times it was needed). Likewise, a service is recorded as having been provided if the client was given that type of assistance at least once during the reporting period (2012-13).

A high proportion of clients were recorded as needing advice, information, advocacy and/or liaison services, with the need for such services generally well met by agencies. For example, in 2012-13, 76% of Indigenous clients were recorded as needing advice/information, and 99% of these clients were provided with these services directly by the agency. These types of services are not included in the analyses presented in this section.

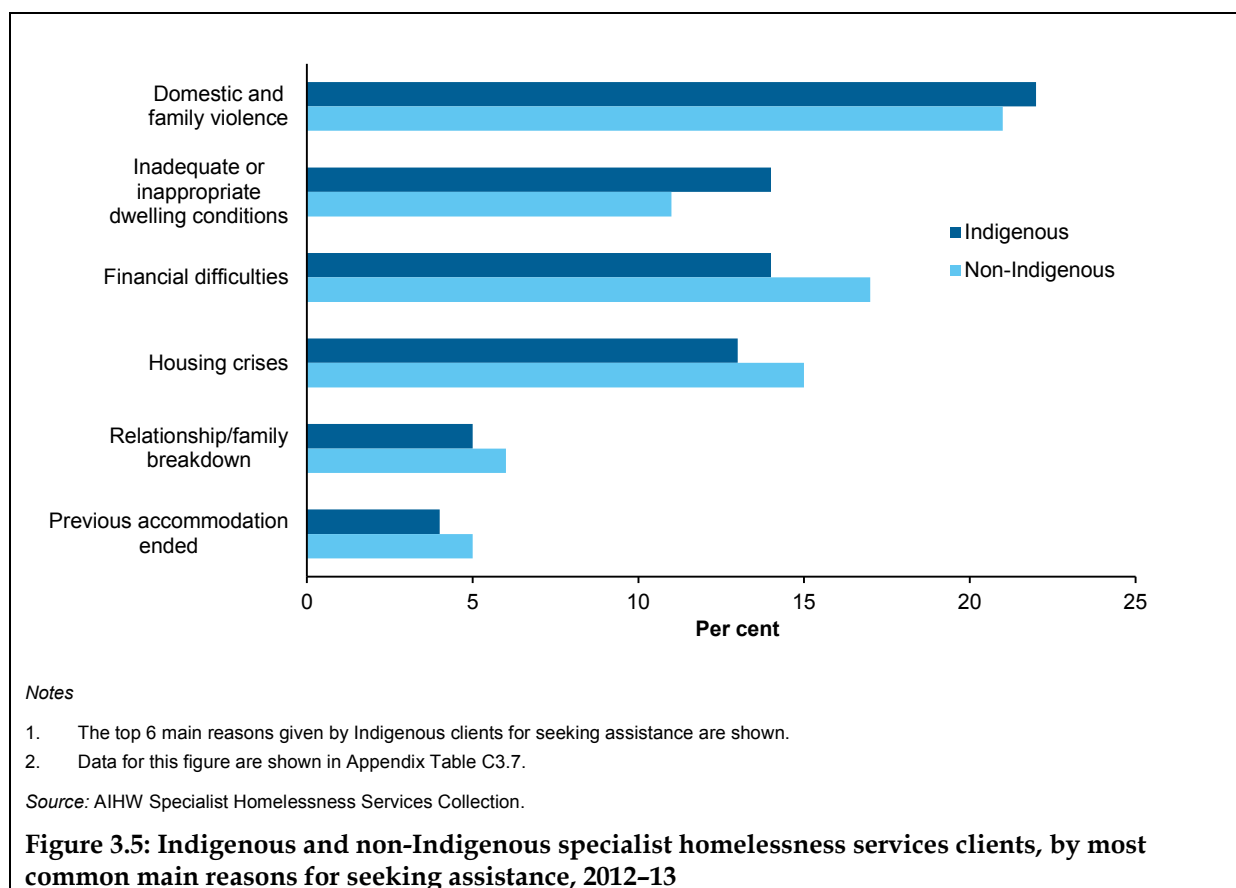
Reasons for seeking assistance

In the SHSC, information is collected from clients about all the reasons assistance was sought, as well as the main reason.

The main reasons given by Indigenous clients for seeking assistance from specialist homelessness services were domestic and family violence (22%), inadequate or inappropriate dwelling conditions (14%) and financial difficulties (14%) (Figure 3.5).

Among non-Indigenous clients, domestic and family violence (21%) and financial difficulties (17%) were similarly the most common main reasons for seeking assistance, followed by housing crises (15%) and inadequate or inappropriate dwelling conditions (11%).

Both Indigenous and non-Indigenous females were more likely than to seek assistance mainly due to domestic and family violence (28% and 30% respectively) than their male counterparts (12% of Indigenous males and 8% of non-Indigenous males).



Considering *all* reasons for seeking assistance, financial difficulties was the reason most often reported by Indigenous clients (36%), followed by domestic and family violence (32%) and inadequate or inappropriate dwellings (29%) (Appendix Table C3.8).

Compared with Indigenous clients, non-Indigenous clients were more likely to report financial difficulties as a reason for seeking assistance (44%), but less likely to report domestic and family violence (28%) and inadequate or inappropriate dwellings (25%).

Clients who experienced domestic and family violence

Domestic and family violence is recognised as a major risk factor for homelessness in Australia (Australian Government 2008) and, as described previously, was the most common main reason that Indigenous (and non-Indigenous) specialist homelessness services clients gave for seeking assistance.

In the SHSC, it is possible to identify clients who, during a specific reporting period:

- reported seeking assistance due to domestic and family violence
- required assistance for domestic and family violence.

In this section, clients who were identified as meeting 1 or both of these criteria are referred to as having ‘experienced domestic and family violence’. This concept refers to the reporting period only, not to whether they had ever experienced such violence.

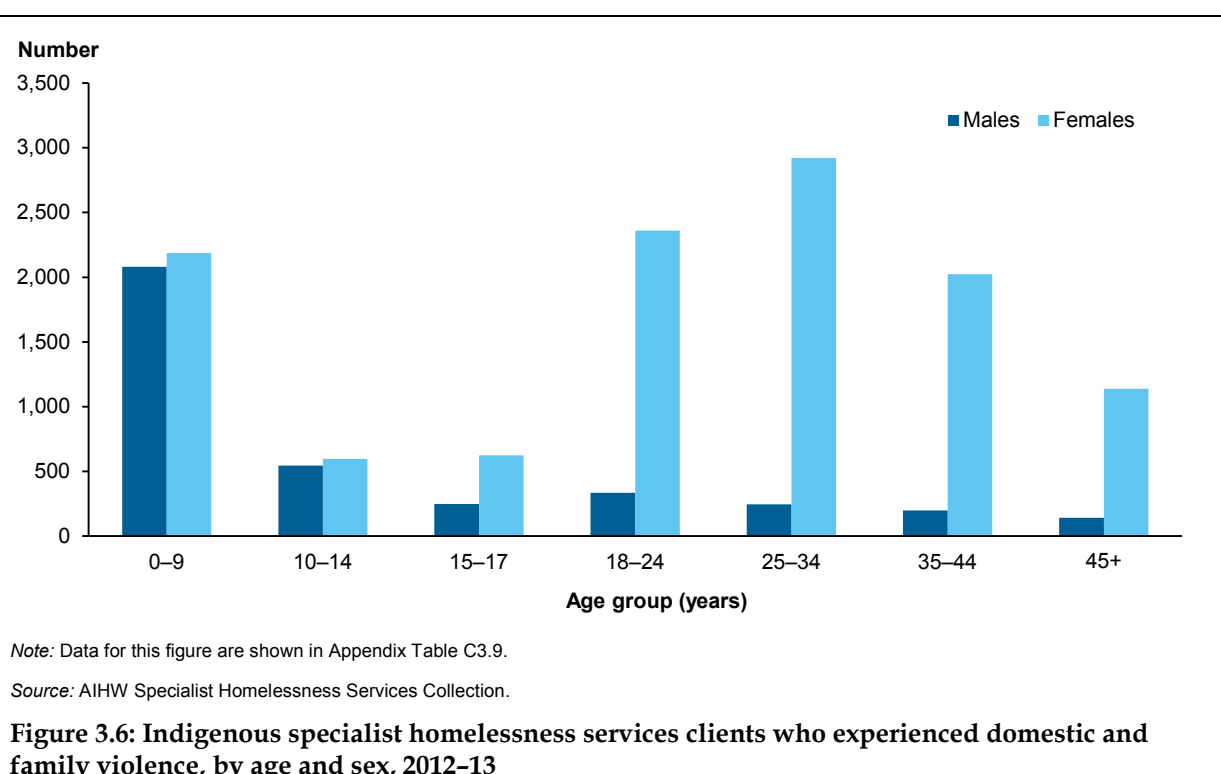
In 2012-13, about 1 in 3 (34%) Indigenous people receiving assistance from specialist homelessness agencies had experienced domestic and family violence, compared with 30% of non-Indigenous clients.

Among Indigenous clients, females accounted for three-quarters (76%) of those who had experienced domestic and family violence. This varied somewhat by age group – similar numbers of male and female Indigenous children (aged 0–9 and 10–14) had experienced domestic and family violence, but the number of female clients in the other age groups was more than double the number of males (Figure 3.6). The situation of younger children who use specialist homelessness services often reflects their parent’s situation. When children aged under 15 are excluded, females accounted for 89% of Indigenous clients who had experienced domestic violence.

Overall, in 2012–13, Indigenous female clients aged 15 and over were nearly 4 times as likely as their male counterparts to have experienced domestic and family violence, at 42% and 11% respectively (Appendix Table C3.9).

Among female Indigenous clients, the proportion who had experienced domestic and family violence was highest among those aged 25–34. Half (50%) of clients in this age group had experienced such violence, as had 47% of those aged 35–44 (Appendix Table C3.9). Among male Indigenous clients, children aged under 10 were most likely to have experienced domestic and family violence (55% of clients in this age group), followed by those aged 10–14 (14%).

Consistent with the pattern for Indigenous clients, similar numbers of non-Indigenous boys and girls aged under 15 had experienced domestic and family violence, while females accounted for a substantially higher number of clients than males in all other age groups (see Appendix Table C3.9). Among non-Indigenous clients aged 15 and over, 42% of females had experienced domestic and family violence, compared with 9% of males.



Services needed

General support and assistance needs

The majority of Indigenous clients who presented to specialist homelessness agencies in 2012–13 were identified as needing general support and/or assistance in at least 1 area (94%). Excluding the basic services of advice and information, and advocacy/liaison, the most common general support and assistance needs recorded for Indigenous clients were material aid/brokerage (38%), transport (37%), meals (33%) and laundry/shower facilities (29%) (Appendix Table C3.10).

Similar proportions of non-Indigenous clients required material aid/brokerage (39%); however, non-Indigenous clients were less likely to require transport (23%), meals (21%) and laundry/shower facilities (17%) (Appendix Table C3.10). The larger number of Indigenous clients requiring these latter services may reflect cultural differences, such as 'public place dwelling' and the need to travel to meet cultural obligations. This is also reflected in higher proportions of Indigenous clients needing culturally-specific services (11% compared with 4% of non-Indigenous clients).

Accommodation and assistance to sustain housing tenure

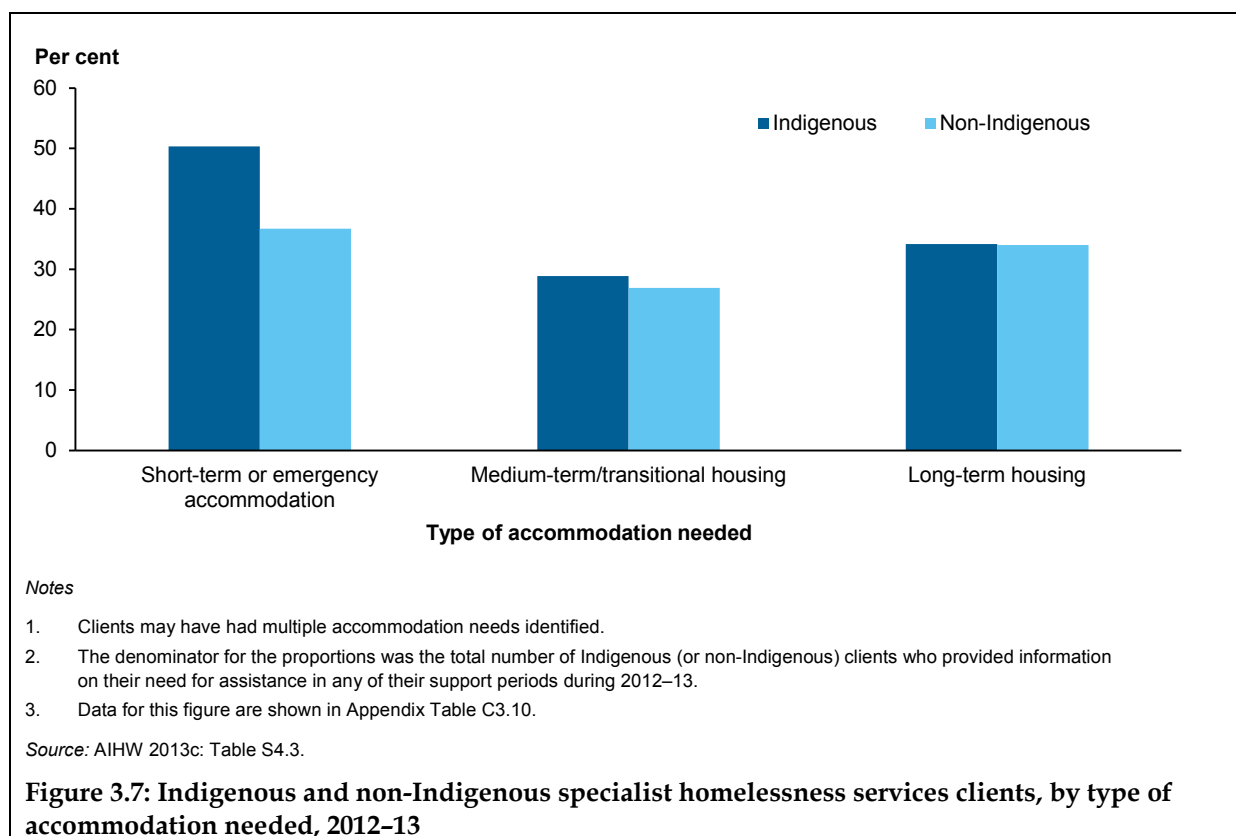
In the SHSC, information is collected about the need for 3 types of accommodation:

- short-term or emergency accommodation – accommodation that is generally provided for up to 3 months
- medium-term/transitional accommodation – accommodation that is generally provided for 3 months or longer and for a fixed term (that is, it not expected to be ongoing)
- long-term accommodation – accommodation that is generally provided for 3 months or longer and with the expectation that it will be ongoing.

In 2012–13, over two-thirds (69%) of Indigenous specialist homelessness services clients were identified as having a need for accommodation at some point during the reporting period, with short-term or emergency accommodation the most commonly needed (50%), followed by long-term housing (34%) and medium-term/transitional housing (29%) (Figure 3.7). Among non-Indigenous clients, a smaller proportion (58%) required accommodation.

Non-Indigenous clients were substantially less likely than Indigenous clients to report needing short-term or emergency accommodation (37% of all non-Indigenous clients compared with 50% of Indigenous clients), while the need for other types of accommodation services were similar.

In addition to providing accommodation, specialist homelessness agencies also play an important role in supporting clients to maintain their existing housing tenure. In 2012–13, about one-quarter (26%) of Indigenous clients needed assistance to sustain a tenancy or prevent tenancy failure or eviction (Appendix Table C3.10). By comparison, 31% of non-Indigenous clients required such assistance.



Specialised services

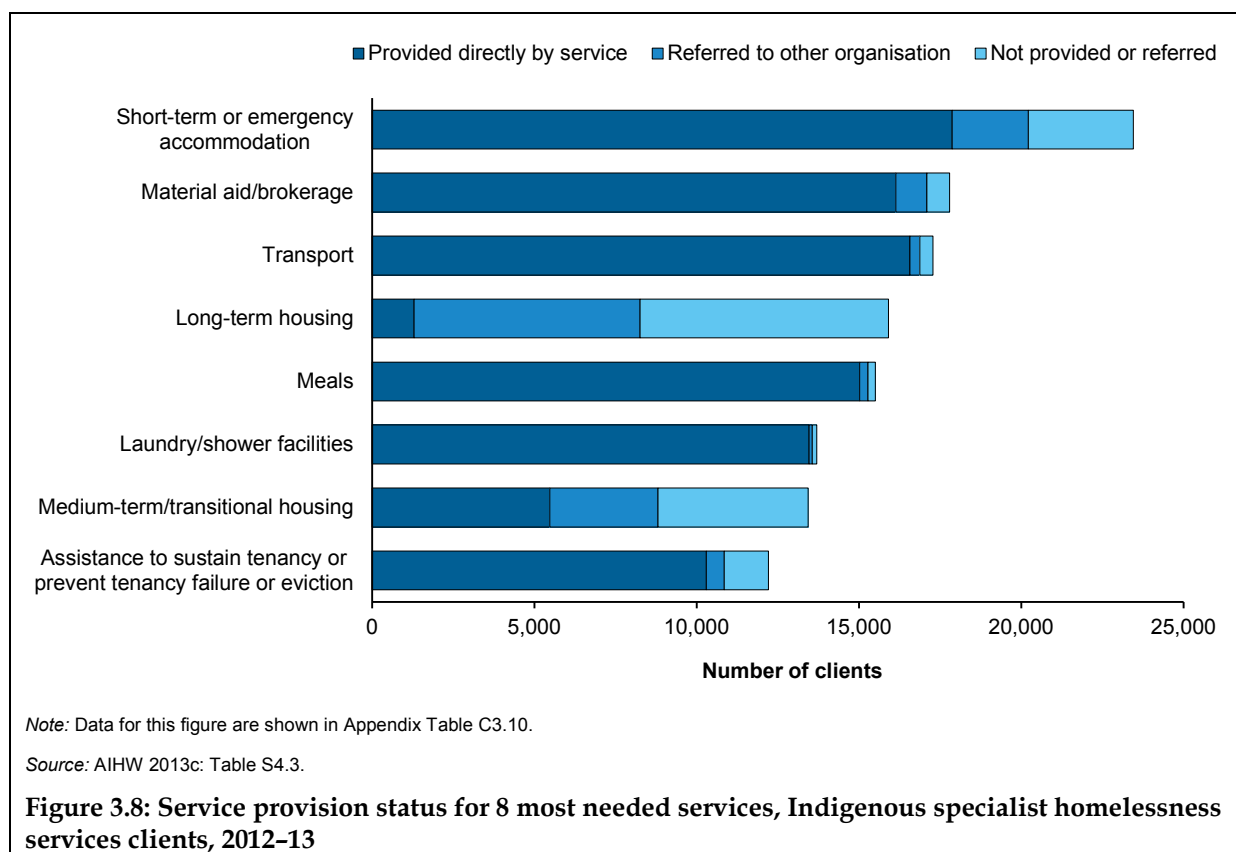
In relation to specific specialised services, Indigenous clients were most likely to have been identified as requiring health/medical services (other than mental health services) (needed by 13% of Indigenous clients), culturally-specific services (11%), assistance to connect culturally (7%), and mental health services (7%). Smaller proportions of non-Indigenous clients required the first 3 of these services (11%, 4% and 2% respectively), but a slightly larger proportion (10%) required mental health services.

Meeting service needs

The need for services by clients can be met by specialist homelessness agencies, either by providing the service directly or by referring the client to other specialist homelessness agencies or other organisations that can provide the required services. In some circumstances, clients' needs are not met since an agency is unable to either directly provide the required services or refer them to another organisation.

Figure 3.8 shows the service provision status for the top 8 most needed services (including both general and specialised needs) for Indigenous clients in 2012–13. With the exception of medium-term and longer-term housing, these services were mostly provided directly by the specialist homelessness agency. For example, direct assistance was provided to:

- over 90% of Indigenous clients who needed laundry/shower facilities, meals, transport, or material aid or brokerage
- 84% of those needing assistance to sustain housing tenancy or prevent eviction
- 76% of Indigenous clients needing short-term or emergency accommodation (Appendix Table C3.10).



In contrast, medium-term/transitional housing was provided directly to less than half (41%) of Indigenous clients who needed it, with one-quarter (25%) of those who needed such assistance referred to other services and 34% not having their needs met in this area. For 8% of Indigenous clients with a long-term housing need, this was provided directly by the agency. A further 44% of those with this need were referred elsewhere, and about half (48%) did not have this need met by specialist homelessness services (Appendix Table C3.10).

These data reflect the primary focus of specialist homelessness services in dealing with immediate needs for emergency and short-term accommodation, alongside assisting clients with other issues that may be posing a barrier to obtaining stable housing. Overall, among Indigenous clients who were provided with accommodation, the average length of such accommodation was 64 days (AIHW 2013c). These data also reflect the high demand and long waiting lists for social housing (AIHW 2013b).

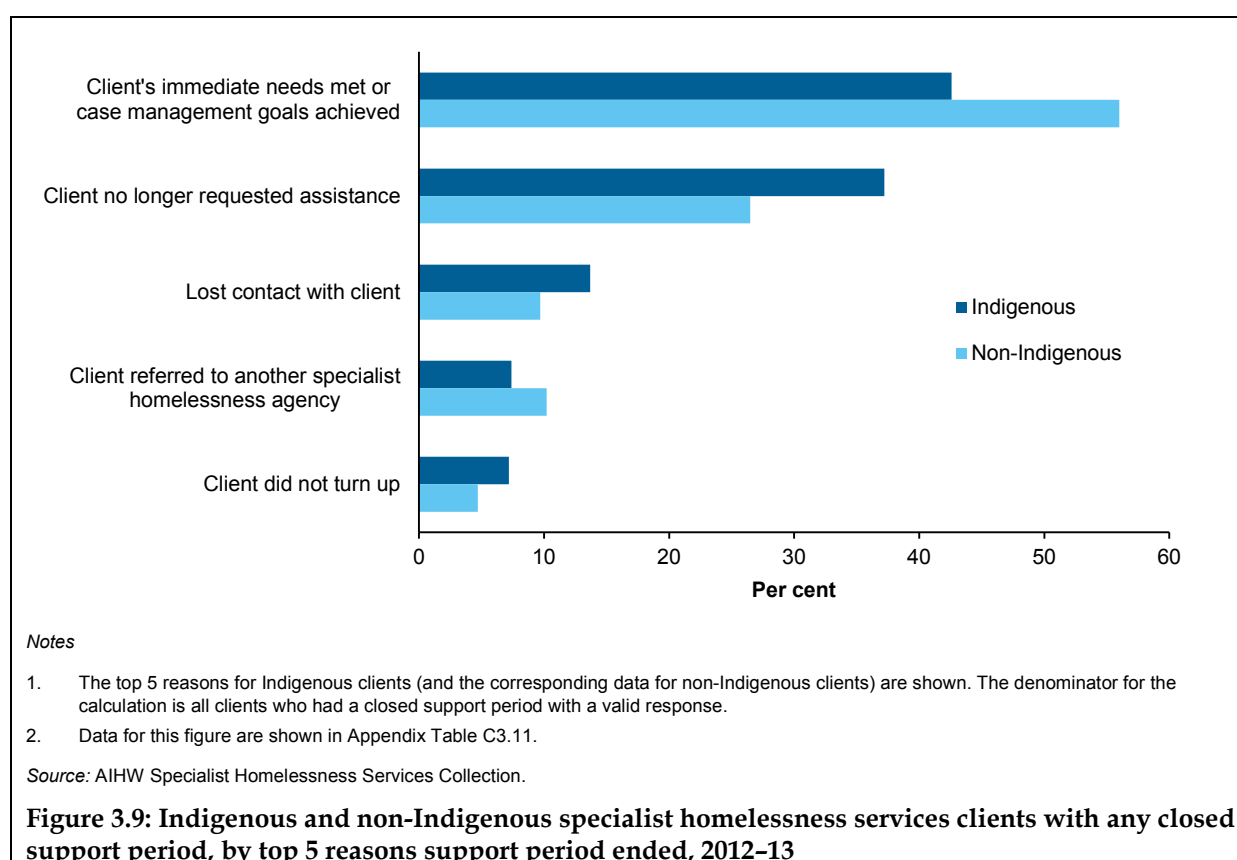
Across services for which at least 10% of Indigenous clients had an identified need, the proportion of Indigenous clients who were directly provided with those services was similar to that of non-Indigenous clients (AIHW 2013c: Table S4.3). An exception is in relation to short-term or emergency accommodation. In 2012–13, 76% of Indigenous clients who needed this type of accommodation were directly provided with it by specialist homelessness services, compared with 69% of non-Indigenous clients (Appendix Table C3.10).

3.4 Reasons support ended

In 2012–13, over 8 in 10 (85%) Indigenous and non-Indigenous specialist homelessness services clients had 1 or more support period end for a reason which was known. For those support periods for Indigenous clients, 43% were closed because the client had their

immediate needs met or were able to achieve their case-management goals (Figure 3.9). The next most common reasons were that the client no longer requested assistance (37%), contact was lost with the client (14%), and the client was referred to another specialist homelessness agency (7%).

Compared with Indigenous clients, support periods for non-Indigenous clients were more likely to have closed because the client's immediate needs had been met or they had achieved their case-management goals (56%), or that they had been referred to another specialist homelessness agency (10%). Support periods for non-Indigenous clients were less likely to have ended because the client no longer requested assistance (27%) or because contact was lost with the client (10%).

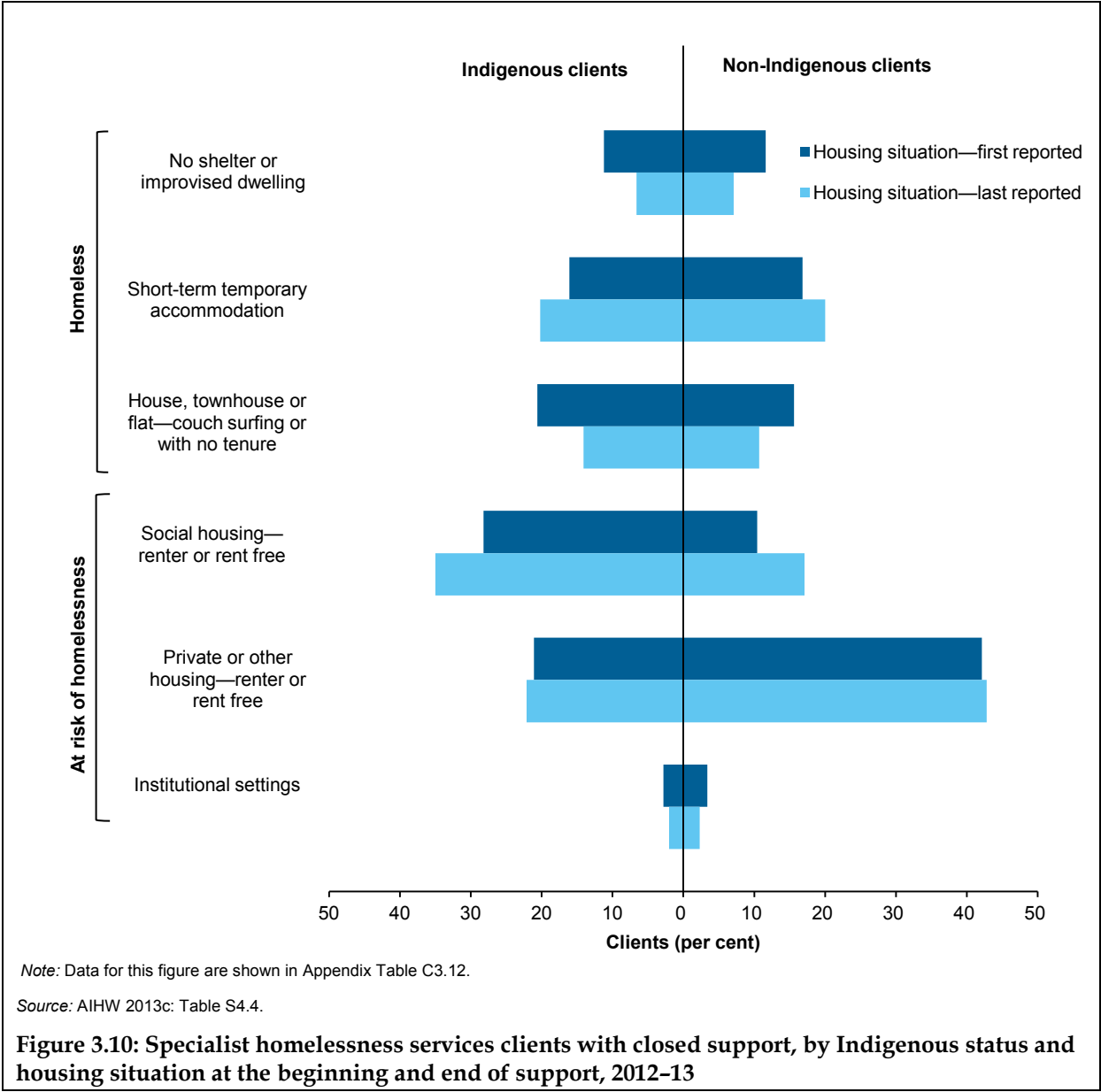


3.5 Housing outcomes for clients

Changes that occur in the housing and other situations of specialist homelessness services clients over the course of support are important in understanding outcomes for clients and the progress towards more stable and sustainable housing. The information in this section is restricted to outcomes for clients who had closed support – that is, clients with a support period that ceased during 2012-13 and who were not being provided with support at the end of the year. Of all clients who received services during the year, 75% of Indigenous clients and 77% of non-Indigenous clients had a support period closed before the end of the year and did not have an ongoing support period in place on 30 June 2013.

In terms of outcomes for Indigenous clients with a closed support period in 2012-13, there was an overall reduction in the proportion of clients staying in housing situations that are classified as being homeless (see Box 3.1). That is, 48% of Indigenous clients were homeless at

the beginning of their first support period in the year while 41% were homeless at the end of support—a reduction of 7 percentage points (Figure 3.10). Similarly, among non-Indigenous clients, 44% were homeless at the beginning of the support period while 38% were homeless at the end of the support period (a drop of 6 percentage points) (Appendix Table C3.12).



Considering specific types of housing situations captured in the SHSC, there was a reduction in the proportion of Indigenous clients who:

- had no shelter or were in an improvised dwelling (from 11% at the beginning of support to 7% at the end of support)
- were ‘couch surfing’ or in housing with no tenure (from 21% to 14%) (Appendix Table C3.12).

In contrast, there were increases in the proportion of Indigenous clients who:

- were in short-term temporary accommodation (16% to 20%)
- were staying in social housing (that is, housing provided by state and territory governments, and by the community sector) (28% to 35%).

The proportions staying in private housing and institutional settings remained broadly similar before and after support (Appendix Table C3.12).

The housing situation of Indigenous clients at both the beginning and the end of the support period differed in a number of respects from that of non-Indigenous clients. Indigenous clients were more likely to be living in social housing, and less likely to be in private housing (Figure 3.10). Indigenous clients were also more likely to be 'couch surfing' or in housing with no tenure. However, the patterns of change in housing circumstances before and after support were broadly similar across the 2 groups.

Using the SHSC data, it is also possible to look at changes in the housing situation of individual clients according to the type of housing situation they were in at the beginning of the support period (Appendix Table C3.13). For example, among Indigenous people who had no shelter or were in an improvised dwelling at the beginning of the support period, half (50%) were still in this setting at the end of support, 19% had moved to short-term temporary accommodation and 6% were couch surfing. The remaining 25% of these clients were no longer classified as being homeless at the end of support.

Considering all Indigenous clients who were homeless at the beginning of support in 2012–13, 29% were no longer considered homeless at the end of support, indicating a transition to more sustainable housing conditions (AIHW analyses of AIHW 2013c: Table S4.4).

Appendix A: Comparing estimates of homeless people

As detailed in the 2011 AIHW paper on homelessness among Indigenous people (AIHW 2011), there were an estimated 9,200 Indigenous homeless people on Census night in 2006 (constituting 9% of all homeless people) (Table A.1). That estimate was based on the cultural definition of homelessness and the methodology developed by Chamberlain and MacKenzie (2008). The 'cultural definition' is based on the degree to which housing needs were met within conventional expectations or community standards. In the Australian context, this was described as having at least 1 room to sleep in and 1 to live in, one's own kitchen and bathroom, and security of tenure. Three levels of homelessness were recognised according to the degree to which these housing needs were unmet:

- primary homelessness (people living without conventional accommodation)
- secondary homelessness (people moving between various forms of temporary shelter)
- tertiary homelessness (people living in single rooms in private boarding houses, without their own bathroom, kitchen or security of tenure).

In 2012, the ABS released a new definition of homelessness for use in its statistical collections. Retrospectively applying the ABS statistical definition and methodology to 2006 Census data, there were an estimated 26,000 Indigenous homeless people in 2006 (31% of all homeless people) – almost 3 times higher than the earlier estimate (Table A.1). In contrast, the estimated number of non-Indigenous people experiencing homelessness in 2006 was lower using the new ABS methodology (57,300) compared with the earlier estimate (94,900).

Table A.1: Estimates of the Indigenous and non-Indigenous homeless populations in 2006 based on different methodologies

	Number	Per cent of total homeless ^(a)	Rate ^(b)
Indigenous			
Based on Chamberlain and MacKenzie methodology	9,248	8.9	191.4
Based on ABS methodology	25,950	31.2	570.6
Non-Indigenous			
Based on Chamberlain and MacKenzie methodology	94,940	91.1	49.1
Based on ABS methodology	57,324	68.8	31.4

(a) People with unknown Indigenous status were excluded before the calculation of proportions.

(b) Per 10,000 population as enumerated in the Census.

Sources: ABS 2012b; AIHW 2011.

Although there are some broad similarities, the cultural and ABS definitions are not directly comparable, and different methods were used to derive estimates of the homeless (see ABS 2011b, 2011d, 2012f, 2012g). In particular, in the ABS definition (but not in the cultural definition) people living in 'severely' crowded dwellings are considered to be homeless because they do not have control of, or access to, space for social relations. The inclusion of this group has a particular effect on the Indigenous homelessness estimates because, as shown earlier, Indigenous people have a much higher rate of severe overcrowding than non-Indigenous people.

As well, using the methodology developed by Chamberlain and MacKenzie (using the cultural definition), people were assumed to be homeless on Census night if they stated having 'no usual address' (ABS 2011b). The question about usual address on the Census was not intended to directly measure homelessness and a review of the Chamberlain and MacKenzie methodology suggested that it was over-reliant on this assumption (ABS 2011b). In developing the new statistical definition of homelessness and the new methodology for estimating the number of homeless from the Census, the ABS used a more rigorous method than that used by Chamberlain and MacKenzie in identifying people who were homeless. The reporting of 'no usual address' was used as a starting point, and then a range of other information was used to determine if, on balance, a person was actually likely to be homeless (ABS 2012g).

Appendix B: Key data sources

Census of Population and Housing

Data sourced from the ABS Census of Population and Housing are used in this paper to estimate the prevalence of homelessness. The Census is conducted by the ABS every 5 years with the most recent Census conducted on 9 August 2011. The objective of the Census is to accurately measure the number and selected characteristics of people who are in Australia on Census night, and the dwellings in which they live (ABS 2011a). Census data are generally collected through self-completion of forms.

Identifying homelessness

Homelessness cannot be directly measured in the Census. Instead, estimates of the homeless are derived indirectly using information on characteristics of Census respondents, and some assumptions about how people may respond to Census questions (ABS 2012g).

The ABS distinguishes between 6 broad groups of homeless people according to the living situation of the person at the time:

- people living in improvised dwellings, tents, or sleeping out
- people in supported accommodation for the homeless
- people staying temporarily with other households
- people living in boarding houses
- people in other temporary lodgings
- people living in 'severely' crowded dwellings.

People in 'severely crowded dwellings' are defined as those living in a dwelling that needs 4 or more extra bedrooms to adequately accommodate the people who usually live there, according to the Canadian National Occupancy Standard. The CNOS is the commonly used standard to assess overcrowding in households that takes into account both household size and composition (see Box B.1).

The methodology used by the ABS to estimate homelessness from the Census uses its new definition of homelessness, although not all aspects of that definition can be captured using Census data (ABS 2012g). As complete data on living and/or accommodation circumstances are not available from the Census, the ABS had to make some assumptions about people in certain circumstances. For example, people in some types of supported accommodation, such as some transitional housing, may not meet the ABS definition of homelessness because they have security of tenure in the dwelling. However, these people were included in the 'People in supported accommodation for the homeless' group in 2011 because the information to classify them more completely in line with the ABS definition was not available.

The ABS attempts to collect data from all people in Australia on Census night and it develops strategies to seek out people who are sleeping rough (that is, sleeping on the street, in a park or motor vehicle, or in the open) or living in improvised dwellings, and people in supported accommodation for the homeless. While the ABS is able to impute data for some groups, there are a number of groups where undercounting of the homeless population is likely to occur due to anomalies in the way in which 'usual address' is recorded. One such group is Indigenous people who may have an understanding of 'usual residence' that leads

to reporting in a way that does not indicate homelessness. Other groups that may be undercounted in the homeless population are young people who are 'couch surfing' and people who have left their usual residence due to domestic and family violence (ABS 2012b). Homeless youth (aged 12–24) are thought to be under-estimated in the Census because young people who are 'couch surfing' can be difficult to distinguish from other young people who are visiting another household on Census night (see ABS 2012c).

Box B.1: Canadian National Occupancy Standard

The CNOS measures the bedroom requirements of a household based on the number, sex, age and relationships of usual residents (ABS 2011c). For a household *not* to be considered as overcrowded, the CNOS specifies that:

- there should be no more than 2 people per bedroom
- children aged less than 5 of different sexes may reasonably share a bedroom
- children aged 5 or over of the opposite sex should have separate bedrooms
- children aged less than 18 of the same sex may reasonably share a bedroom
- single household members aged 18 or over should have a separate bedroom, as should parents or couples
- a lone person household may reasonably occupy a bed sitter.

In line with the ABS, the following cut-offs are used in this paper:

- households that needed 4 or more extra bedrooms to adequately accommodate the usual residents, as defined by the CNOS, are said to be living in 'severely crowded dwellings' (see sections 2.1 and 2.2)
- households that required 3 extra bedrooms are said to be living in 'other crowded dwellings' (see Section 2.3).

Note that in the companion paper *Housing circumstances of Indigenous households* (AIHW 2014b), data about overcrowding are presented; households that required 1 or more extra bedrooms to meet the CNOS are considered to be 'overcrowded'.

Identifying Indigenous people experiencing homelessness

The question on the Census form about Indigenous status is the standard question that asks each person to indicate if they are of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin (ABS 1999; AIHW 2012a). In the 2011 Census, the ABS employed special strategies for counting Indigenous people, including those who were homeless (see ABS 2012e). However, the ABS advises that estimates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander homelessness from the Census should be considered to be an underestimate (ABS 2012g). One reason for this is that Indigenous people were under-enumerated in the Census. The ABS estimates that in the 2011 Census, 17% of the Indigenous population were not counted in the Census. For non-Indigenous people, the undercount was estimated to be 6%. Some of those who were not counted in the Census may have been homeless. There is no way to estimate this number, but it is likely to be larger for Indigenous people given the larger undercount.

Also, in the 2011 Census, 4.9% of people did not provide information on their Indigenous status. Thus the total count of people with information missing about their Indigenous status was almost twice the size of the count of people identifying as Indigenous (2.5% in 2011) (ABS 2012d). Among homeless people, the non-response was higher, with 8.0% not providing information on their Indigenous status.

Another reason that estimates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander homelessness from the Census should be considered to be an underestimate is that 'no usual address' is thought to be under-reported by Indigenous people (Chamberlain & MacKenzie 2008). The western concept of 'no usual address' may not be appropriate in an Indigenous context due to different understandings of 'home' and 'homelessness' (ABS 2013b). For example, due to an understanding of home as family (see Box 1.4), Indigenous people who have had to leave home but are staying with extended family may not report having 'no usual address'. As well, Indigenous people dwelling in public places may not consider themselves homeless. Consequently, some Indigenous people may provide 'incorrect' information in relation to their usual residence. This is thought to impact on estimates of homeless Indigenous people who are living in improvised dwellings, tents or sleeping out, or staying temporarily with friends or relatives.

Comparing data on homelessness over time

In order to allow a comparison of homeless prevalence in 2011 with earlier data, the ABS retrospectively applied the new statistical definition and estimation methodology to both 2001 and 2006 Census data. However, comparable data for the homeless population by Indigenous status are only available for 2006. This is because the 2001 estimates of the number of people living in supported accommodation are sourced from the AIHW SAAP collection, not the Census (ABS 2012b: Explanatory note 77). Disaggregated data by demographic characteristics such as Indigenous status are not available for these estimates, and consequently, 2001 estimates for people living in supported accommodation for the homeless are only available for totals and by state and territory. Although not presented in this paper, the numbers of Indigenous people experiencing the other types of homelessness (that is, other than living in supported accommodation) in 2001 are available (see ABS 2012a).

Since the Indigenous status of a person is collected through self-identification in the Census, any change in identification will affect the count of Indigenous people over time. Since the 1971 Census there has been an upward trend in the counts of Indigenous people enumerated in each Census. Between the 2006 and 2011 Censuses, the count increased by 21% (93,300 people). Factors that have contributed to this most recent increase include demographic changes (for example, births and deaths), and an increased propensity for people to identify themselves (and, if applicable, their children) as Indigenous (ABS 2013d). Other reasons are thought to include the strategies that were employed in the 2011 Census to improve enumeration of Indigenous people, and a decrease in the number of Census records with an unknown Indigenous status. The effect of the upward trends in counts of Indigenous people on homelessness estimates is unknown.

Revised estimates

Following the release of the initial 2011 homelessness estimates (ABS 2012b), the ABS found that 24 duplicate records had been included in the over 105,000 records (ABS 2014b). This paper presents estimates based on the data that exclude the duplicate records; thus, some of the 2011 data may differ from those published in the initial ABS release. Given the small number of duplicate records involved, the revised estimates had no impact on the overall homelessness rates for either Indigenous or non-Indigenous people, and only a minor impact (of no more than 0.1 per 10,000) on a few of the homelessness types.

Technical notes regarding Census data

As noted earlier, 8% of all homeless people on Census night did not provide information on their Indigenous status. These people were excluded before the calculation of proportions shown in this paper.

In this paper, all rates that are based on Census data are crude rates. That is, they indicate the number of homelessness people divided by the size of the relevant population (as enumerated in the Census). They are generally expressed as the number of homeless people per 10,000 population of the usual resident population in the Census, excluding people in external territories, at sea, or in migratory and offshore regions.

Census data were randomly adjusted by the ABS to avoid the release of confidential information; as a result, components of tables may not sum exactly to the totals, and data in any one table may vary slightly from corresponding data presented in other tables and data presented elsewhere.

Further information

Further information about the Census can be found on the Census page of the ABS website (ABS 2014a). Information about estimating homelessness from the Census can be found in a number of ABS publications (ABS 2012a, 2012b, 2012g, 2013a).

Specialist Homelessness Services Collection

The SHSC began on 1 July 2011. Specialist homelessness agencies that are funded under the National Affordable Housing Agreement and the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness are in scope for the collection. Those agencies that are expected to participate in the SHSC are identified by state and territory departments responsible for the delivery of services. Approximately 1,500 specialist homelessness agencies across Australia participate in the SHSC.

All agencies participating in the collection report a standard set of data about the clients they support each month to the AIHW. Data are collected about the characteristics and circumstances of a client, and what assistance is received, and outcomes. The data collected are based on support periods, or episodes of assistance provided to individual clients.

Identifying homelessness versus being at risk of homelessness

As noted in Box 3.1, a distinction is made between clients of specialist homelessness services who are 'homeless' and those who are 'at risk of homelessness' (AIHW 2013c). Clients' homelessness status can be assessed at different points in time based on information about their housing situation. For the purposes of this paper, 'homeless' status is generally derived for a client based on the client's housing circumstances at the beginning of their first support period in 2012–13 (or at the beginning of 2012–13 for clients who were existing clients on 1 July 2012).

The 'homelessness' category aligns as much as possible with the ABS statistical definition of homelessness (see Section 1.3). However, there are some key areas where alignment may not occur. For example, the ABS definition includes people living in severely crowded dwellings. No specific question is asked in the SHSC on crowding, so this group cannot be separately identified. Also, certain decisions are made by the ABS to exclude groups of people from the homeless count where they appear to have accommodation alternatives or there is a clear

choice about the type of accommodation (for example, people who are travelling, people returning from overseas, certain owner builder or hobby farmers, and students living in halls of residence). However, people in these circumstances may become clients of specialist homelessness agencies and thus be counted in the SHSC.

Identifying Indigenous clients

For the analyses presented in this paper, a client is considered to be Indigenous if, at any time in the reporting period (for example, 2012–13), they identified as being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin based on the *National Health Data Dictionary* standard question about Indigenous status (ABS 1999; AIHW 2012a).

Information on Indigenous status is only provided by agencies if clients have given explicit consent for this information to be reported. In 2012–13, Indigenous status was not reported for 15% of clients (or about 36,800 people).

Technical notes regarding SHSC data presented in this paper

In the SHSC, not all agencies submit client data for all months in the reporting period. In 2012–13, of all agencies that were in-scope of the collection for at least 1 month during 2012–13, 90% submitted information for all 12 collection months, and 95% submitted data for at least 1 month. To account for this non-response, the AIHW has developed an imputation strategy (see AIHW 2013c: Appendix B). All data presented in this paper have been adjusted for agency non-response.

Analyses of the 2012–13 SHSC data identified some data quality issues. In particular, the rate of ‘invalid, don’t know and missing’ responses was high for a number of data items, including Indigenous status (see AIHW 2013c: Appendix A). It is expected that rates of missing information will decline as implementation issues for this relatively new data collection are resolved. In this paper, missing data have been excluded before the calculation of proportions shown.

Counts have *not* been adjusted for missing data about Indigenous status in this paper, with the exception of data about the total number of clients and support periods (as shown in Section 3.1). Adjusted counts, which are indicated as being ‘estimated’, were derived by applying the proportion of Indigenous clients among those clients with known Indigenous status data to the total number of clients. For example, the proportion of Indigenous clients among those with known Indigenous status (that is, 46,607/207,347) was applied to the total number of clients (244,176) to derive an ‘estimated’ number of Indigenous clients (54,885) (see Table 3.1).

All rates presented in this paper from SHSC data are crude rates; that is, they indicate the number of SHSC clients divided by the size of the relevant population. They are expressed as the number of SHSC client per 10,000 resident population. For the Indigenous rate calculations, population counts were derived from the ABS experimental projections of Indigenous populations (Series B) (ABS 2009). Non-Indigenous rates were calculated using population counts derived by subtracting the projected Indigenous population from the corresponding Australian population as sourced from *Population projections, Australia, 2006 to 2101* (Series B) (ABS 2008).

Further information

Further information about the SHSC, including the data quality statement, is in the AIHW report *Specialist homelessness services 2012–13* (AIHW 2013c).

Appendix C: Additional tables

Table C2.1: Indigenous and non-Indigenous homeless people, by type of homelessness, 2006 and 2011

Type of homelessness	Number		Per cent		Per cent who were Indigenous ^(a)
	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous	
2006					
In improvised dwellings, tents or sleeping out	2,094	4,799	8.1	8.4	30.4
In supported accommodation for the homeless	2,693	11,747	10.4	20.5	18.6
Staying temporarily with other households	870	16,348	3.4	28.5	5.1
Staying in boarding houses	784	12,451	3.0	21.7	5.9
In other temporary lodging	24	472	0.1	0.8	4.8
Living in 'severely' crowded dwellings ^(b)	19,485	11,507	75.1	20.1	62.9
All homeless people	25,950	57,324	100.0	100.0	31.2
2011					
In improvised dwellings, tents or sleeping out	1,677	4,703	6.3	6.7	26.3
In supported accommodation for the homeless	3,282	14,313	12.3	20.4	18.7
Staying temporarily with other households	1,011	16,002	3.8	22.8	5.9
Staying in boarding houses	678	13,723	2.5	19.6	4.7
In other temporary lodging	41	629	0.2	0.9	6.1
Living in 'severely' crowded dwellings ^(b)	20,054	20,690	75.0	29.5	49.2
All homeless people	26,743	70,060	100.0	100.0	27.6

(a) People for whom information on Indigenous status was missing were excluded before the calculation of proportions.

(b) Includes usual residents in dwellings needing 4 or more extra bedrooms under the CNOS (see Appendix B for information about the CNOS).

Sources: AIHW analyses of ABS 2012a: Table 1 and ABS 2014b: Table 1.

Table C2.2: Indigenous and non-Indigenous homeless people, by sex and age, 2011

Age group (years)	Indigenous			Non-Indigenous		
	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females	Persons
Number						
Under 12	3,927	3,628	7,555	4,775	4,491	9,266
12–18	1,863	1,917	3,780	3,278	3,244	6,522
19–24	1,637	1,875	3,512	5,786	5,009	10,795
25–34	1,981	2,197	4,178	7,835	5,696	13,531
35–44	1,696	1,787	3,483	5,954	3,745	9,699
45–54	1,205	1,186	2,391	5,757	3,126	8,883
55–64	579	576	1,155	4,339	2,271	6,610
65 and over	277	414	691	3,167	1,588	4,755
Total	13,165	13,580	26,745	40,891	29,170	70,061
Per cent						
Under 12	29.8	26.7	28.2	11.7	15.4	13.2
12–18	14.2	14.1	14.1	8.0	11.1	9.3
<i>Under 19</i>	<i>44.0</i>	<i>40.8</i>	<i>42.4</i>	<i>19.7</i>	<i>26.5</i>	<i>22.5</i>
19–24	12.4	13.8	13.1	14.1	17.2	15.4
25–34	15.0	16.2	15.6	19.2	19.5	19.3
35–44	12.9	13.2	13.0	14.6	12.8	13.8
45–54	9.2	8.7	8.9	14.1	10.7	12.7
<i>19–54</i>	<i>49.5</i>	<i>51.9</i>	<i>50.7</i>	<i>62.0</i>	<i>60.3</i>	<i>61.2</i>
55–64	4.4	4.2	4.3	10.6	7.8	9.4
65 and over	2.1	3.0	2.6	7.7	5.4	6.8
<i>55 and over</i>	<i>6.5</i>	<i>7.3</i>	<i>6.9</i>	<i>18.4</i>	<i>13.2</i>	<i>16.2</i>
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: AIHW analyses of unpublished data from the ABS 2011 Census.

Table C2.3: Homeless people, by state and territory, and Indigenous status, 2006 and 2011

	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Australia
2006									
Number									
Indigenous	1,881	639	4,780	3,309	1,260	94	73	13,917	25,950
Non-Indigenous	18,567	14,488	12,804	4,572	3,938	983	811	1,159	57,324
Not stated	1,770	2,286	1,273	395	408	67	66	188	6,454
Total	22,219	17,410	18,856	8,277	5,607	1,145	949	15,265	89,728
Per cent									
Indigenous	7.2	2.5	18.4	12.8	4.9	0.4	0.3	53.6	100.0
Non-Indigenous	32.4	25.3	22.3	8.0	6.9	1.7	1.4	2.0	100.0
Not stated	27.4	35.4	19.7	6.1	6.3	1.0	1.0	2.9	100.0
Total	24.8	19.4	21.0	9.2	6.2	1.3	1.1	17.0	100.0
Rate^(a)									
Indigenous	135.8	212.0	374.7	563.7	493.1	56.1	188.4	2,593.6	570.6
Non-Indigenous	30.8	31.2	36.0	25.8	27.7	22.5	26.6	94.5	31.4
Not stated	45.2	85.9	56.6	31.0	58.9	29.3	43.9	114.0	57.0
Total	33.9	35.3	48.3	42.3	37.0	24.0	29.3	791.7	45.2
2011									
Number									
Indigenous	2,202	835	4,824	3,385	1,090	171	260	13,978	26,745
Non-Indigenous	23,515	19,223	13,485	5,700	4,371	1,313	1,294	1,160	70,061
Not stated	2,474	2,715	1,520	511	521	99	231	338	8,409
Total	28,191	22,773	19,829	9,596	5,982	1,583	1,785	15,476	105,215
Per cent									
Indigenous	8.2	3.1	18.0	12.7	4.1	0.6	1.0	52.3	100.0
Non-Indigenous	33.6	27.4	19.2	8.1	6.2	1.9	1.8	1.7	100.0
Not stated	29.4	32.3	18.1	6.1	6.2	1.2	2.7	4.0	100.0
Total	26.8	21.6	18.8	9.1	5.7	1.5	1.7	14.7	100.0
Rate^(a)									
Indigenous	127.6	219.8	309.6	485.9	358.2	87.2	501.6	2,462.0	488.0
Non-Indigenous	36.7	37.9	34.1	28.0	29.1	28.8	38.3	84.3	35.2
Not stated	72.1	110.0	67.8	39.1	82.8	51.1	164.9	194.5	79.5
Total	40.8	42.5	45.8	42.9	37.5	32.0	50.0	730.6	48.9

(a) Per 10,000 population as enumerated in the Census (see Appendix B for information about the calculation of rates).

Sources: AIHW analyses of ABS 2012b: tables 3 & 5 (for 2006 data) & unpublished data from the ABS 2011 Census (for 2011 data).

Table C2.4: Indigenous and non-Indigenous homeless people, by remoteness, 2006 and 2011

Remoteness ^(a)	Indigenous			Non-Indigenous		
	Number	Per cent	Rate ^(b)	Number	Per cent	Rate ^(b)
2006						
Major cities	2,791	10.8	188.7	39,548	69.0	31.3
Inner regional	1,402	5.4	141.0	9,389	16.4	25.8
Outer regional	2,719	10.5	274.5	6,290	11.0	37.7
Remote	3,761	14.5	951.0	1,258	2.2	54.0
Very remote	15,279	58.9	2,220.3	837	1.5	111.8
Total	25,952	100.0	570.7	57,322	100.0	31.4
2011						
Major cities	3,265	12.2	172.0	51,691	73.8	36.6
Inner regional	1,616	6.0	132.8	10,419	14.9	28.1
Outer regional	2,954	11.0	248.0	5,796	8.3	33.3
Remote	2,774	10.4	694.7	1,281	1.8	54.0
Very remote	16,136	60.3	2,079.7	874	1.2	88.9
Total	26,745	100.0	488.0	70,061	100.0	35.2

(a) Remoteness areas for 2006 are based on the Australian Standard Geographical Classification (ABS 2006), and remoteness areas for 2011 are based on the Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ABS 2013a).

(b) Per 10,000 population as enumerated in the Census (see Appendix B for information about the calculation of rates).

Sources: AIHW analyses of data from the ABS 2006 and 2011 Censuses as published in COAG Reform Council 2013a; 2013b.

Table C2.5: Indigenous and non-Indigenous homeless people, by remoteness^(a) and type of homelessness, 2011

Type of homelessness	Indigenous						Non-Indigenous					
	Major cities	Inner regional	Outer regional	Remote	Very remote	Total	Major cities	Inner regional	Outer regional	Remote	Very remote	Total
Number												
In improvised dwellings, tents or sleeping out	413	177	553	344	191	1,678	2,062	1,289	795	295	261	4,702
In supported accommodation for the homeless	1,431	680	736	314	122	3,283	10,391	2,789	940	134	58	14,312
Staying temporarily with other households	416	245	227	73	49	1,010	9,885	3,363	1,935	465	355	16,003
Staying in boarding houses or other temporary lodging	370	100	147	61	44	722	11,385	1,541	1,139	203	85	14,353
Living in 'severely' crowded dwellings ^(b)	635	414	1,291	1,982	15,730	20,052	17,968	1,437	987	184	115	20,691
All homeless people	3,265	1,616	2,954	2,774	16,136	26,745	51,691	10,419	5,796	1,281	874	70,061
Per cent												
In improvised dwellings, tents or sleeping out	12.6	11.0	18.7	12.4	1.2	6.3	4.0	12.4	13.7	23.0	29.9	6.7
In supported accommodation for the homeless	43.8	42.1	24.9	11.3	0.8	12.3	20.1	26.8	16.2	10.5	6.6	20.4
Staying temporarily with other households	12.7	15.2	7.7	2.6	0.3	3.8	19.1	32.3	33.4	36.3	40.6	22.8
Staying in boarding houses or other temporary lodging	11.3	6.2	5.0	2.2	0.3	2.7	22.0	14.8	19.7	15.8	9.7	20.5
Living in 'severely' crowded dwellings ^(b)	19.4	25.6	43.7	71.4	97.5	75.0	34.8	13.8	17.0	14.4	13.2	29.5
All homeless people	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

(a) Remoteness areas for 2006 are based on the Australian Standard Geographical Classification (ABS 2006), and remoteness areas for 2011 are based on the Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ABS 2013a).

(b) Includes usual residents in dwellings needing 4 or more extra bedrooms under the CNOS (see Appendix B for information about the CNOS).

Source: AIHW analyses of data from the ABS 2011 Census as published in COAG Reform Council 2013b.

Table C2.6: People in selected marginal housing circumstances, by type of marginal housing and Indigenous status, 2006 and 2011

	2006				2011			
	Living in other crowded dwellings ^(a)	Living in other improvised dwellings ^(b)	Marginally housed in caravan parks ^(c)	Total	Living in other crowded dwellings ^(a)	Living in other improvised dwellings ^(b)	Marginally housed in caravan parks ^(c)	Total
Number								
Indigenous	10,711	234	786	11,731	11,862	174	801	12,837
Non-Indigenous	31,331	7,395	10,820	49,546	47,687	4,263	11,420	63,370
Not stated	1,109	95	839	2,043	1,327	67	741	2,135
<i>Total</i>	<i>43,149</i>	<i>7,724</i>	<i>12,444</i>	<i>63,317</i>	<i>60,875</i>	<i>4,504</i>	<i>12,963</i>	<i>78,342</i>
Per cent								
Indigenous	91.3	2.0	6.7	100.0	92.4	1.4	6.2	100.0
Non-Indigenous	63.2	14.9	21.8	100.0	75.3	6.7	18.0	100.0
Not stated	54.3	4.7	41.1	100.0	62.2	3.1	34.7	100.0
<i>Total</i>	<i>68.1</i>	<i>12.2</i>	<i>19.7</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>77.7</i>	<i>5.7</i>	<i>16.5</i>	<i>100.0</i>
Rate^(d)								
Indigenous	235.5	5.1	17.3	258.0	216.4	3.2	14.6	234.2
Non-Indigenous	17.2	4.0	5.9	27.1	24.0	2.1	5.7	31.8
Not stated	9.8	0.8	7.4	18.0	12.5	0.6	7.0	20.2
<i>Total</i>	<i>21.7</i>	<i>3.9</i>	<i>6.3</i>	<i>31.9</i>	<i>28.3</i>	<i>2.1</i>	<i>6.0</i>	<i>36.4</i>

(a) Includes usual residents in dwellings needing 3 extra bedrooms according to the CNOS (see Appendix B for more information about the CNOS).

(b) Includes people who were enumerated on Census night in the dwelling category of an 'improvised dwelling, tent or sleepers out' who reported being either 'at home' on Census night or having no usual address, and are not considered, on balance, to be homeless (see ABS 2012b for further information).

(c) Includes people who reported a usual address in a caravan, cabin or houseboat in a caravan park and are unlikely to have accommodation alternatives (see ABS 2012b for further information).

(d) Per 10,000 population as enumerated in the Census (see Appendix B for information about the calculation of rates).

Sources: AIHW analyses of ABS 2012a: Table 1; ABS 2012b: Table 8.

Table C3.1: Specialist homelessness services clients, by Indigenous status, 2011–12

Indigenous status	Unadjusted ^(a)		Adjusted ^(a)		Per cent ^(c)
	Number	Rate ^(b)	Number	Rate ^(b)	
Indigenous	43,642	749.9	51,368	882.6	21.7
Non-Indigenous	157,227	71.8	185,061	84.5	78.3
Not stated	35,560	..	..	..	..
Total	236,429	105.2	236,429	105.2	100.0

.. not applicable.

(a) Unadjusted/adjusted for missing information about Indigenous status.

(b) Per 10,000 population (see Appendix B for information about the calculation of rates).

(c) People for whom information on Indigenous status was missing were excluded before the calculation of proportions.

Source: AIHW analyses of AIHW 2012b.

Table C3.2: Specialist homelessness services clients, by Indigenous status, sex and age, 2012–13

Indigenous status/ Age group (years)	Males		Females		Total	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
Indigenous						
0–9	5,525	31.3	5,494	19.0	11,019	23.6
10–14	1,552	8.8	1,794	6.2	3,346	7.2
15–17	1,169	6.6	1,922	6.6	3,091	6.6
18–24	2,480	14.1	6,108	21.1	8,587	18.4
25–34	2,364	13.4	5,898	20.4	8,262	17.7
35–44	2,358	13.4	4,331	15.0	6,689	14.4
45–54	1,555	8.8	2,359	8.1	3,915	8.4
55–64	499	2.8	818	2.8	1,317	2.8
65 and over	145	0.8	236	0.8	381	0.8
Total	17,647	100.0	28,960	100.0	46,607	100.0
Non-Indigenous						
0–9	11,327	16.3	10,640	11.7	21,967	13.7
10–14	3,757	5.4	3,860	4.2	7,617	4.7
15–17	3,972	5.7	5,535	6.1	9,507	5.9
18–24	10,682	15.4	16,977	18.6	27,659	17.2
25–34	11,815	17.0	20,132	22.1	31,947	19.9
35–44	12,628	18.1	17,973	19.7	30,601	19.0
45–54	9,037	13.0	9,893	10.9	18,930	11.8
55–64	4,148	6.0	4,007	4.4	8,155	5.1
65 and over	2,210	3.2	2,146	2.4	4,357	2.7
Total	69,575	100.0	91,165	100.0	160,740	100.0
Indigenous status not stated						
0–9	2,472	17.8	2,314	10.1	4,786	13.0
10–14	928	6.7	963	4.2	1,891	5.1
15–17	882	6.3	1,303	5.7	2,185	5.9
18–24	1,985	14.3	3,824	16.7	5,809	15.8
25–34	2,294	16.5	5,196	22.7	7,490	20.3
35–44	2,337	16.8	4,796	20.9	7,133	19.4
45–54	1,759	12.7	2,793	12.2	4,552	12.4
55–64	798	5.7	1,097	4.8	1,895	5.1
65 and over	444	3.2	644	2.8	1,089	3.0
Total	13,899	100.0	22,930	100.0	36,830	100.0
Total clients	101,122	..	143,054	..	244,176	..

.. not applicable.

Source: AIHW 2013c: Table S4.1.

Table C3.3: Use of specialist homelessness services, by Indigenous status, sex and age, 2012–13
(clients per 10,000 population)^(a)

Age group (years)	Indigenous			Non-Indigenous		
	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Total
0–9	776.9	807.8	792.0	81.0	80.1	80.6
10–14	466.8	562.9	513.9	54.7	59.0	56.8
15–17	589.3	1,018.1	798.4	92.7	136.0	113.8
18–24	567.6	1,481.5	1,011.2	97.6	163.4	129.6
25–34	555.7	1,396.4	974.6	74.5	129.5	101.7
35–44	699.5	1,192.8	955.3	81.5	114.9	98.3
45–54	588.2	802.7	701.3	60.4	64.9	62.7
55–64	304.3	448.9	380.4	32.2	30.4	31.3
65 and over	151.9	191.0	73.9	14.5	12.1	13.2
Total	595.1	970.2	783.3	62.9	81.7	72.4

(a) See Appendix B for information about the calculation for rates. Rates in this table are based on data that have not been adjusted for missing information about Indigenous status (see Table 3.1).

Sources: AIHW analyses of ABS 2009 and AIHW 2013c: Table S4.1.

Table C3.4: Specialist homelessness agencies, by remoteness^(a) of agency and number of Indigenous clients, 2012–13

	Major cities	Inner regional	Outer regional	Remote and very remote	Total
Number					
0–9 Indigenous clients	384	103	44	10	541
10–39 Indigenous clients	274	110	58	28	470
40–119 Indigenous clients	126	65	63	42	296
120+ Indigenous clients	40	15	31	15	101
Total	824	293	196	95	1,408
Per cent					
0–9 Indigenous clients	46.6	35.2	22.4	10.5	38.4
10–39 Indigenous clients	33.3	37.5	29.6	29.5	33.4
40–119 Indigenous clients	15.3	22.2	32.1	44.2	21.0
120+ Indigenous clients	4.9	5.1	15.8	15.8	7.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

(a) Remoteness areas of agencies are based on the Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ABS 2013a).

Source: AIHW Specialist Homelessness Services Collection.

Table C3.5: Specialist homelessness services clients, by Indigenous status and remoteness, 2012–13

Remoteness ^(a)	Indigenous		Non-Indigenous	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
Major cities	16,642	35.7	106,302	66.1
Inner regional	10,222	21.9	38,822	24.2
Outer regional	11,200	24.0	13,627	8.5
Remote	5,561	11.9	1,784	1.1
Very remote	2,981	6.4	204	0.1
Total	46,607	100.0	160,739	100.0

(a) Remoteness areas are as defined by the Australian Standard Geographical Classification (ABS 2006).

Source: AIHW 2013c: Table S4.5.

Table C3.6: Specialist homelessness services clients, by Indigenous status, and state and territory, 2012–13

State/territory	Indigenous		Non-Indigenous		Indigenous clients (% of all clients) ^(b)	Indigenous population (% of total population)
	Number	Rate ^(a)	Number	Rate ^(a)		
New South Wales	11,146	639.7	34,091	47.7	24.6	2.4
Victoria	6,658	1,705.4	67,765	121.2	8.9	0.7
Queensland	12,443	725.3	25,882	57.0	32.5	3.6
Western Australia	6,775	848.0	12,522	54.9	35.1	3.4
South Australia	4,316	1,347.3	13,412	81.7	24.3	1.9
Tasmania	791	370.7	4,257	86.5	15.7	4.2
Australian Capital Territory	773	1,545.4	4,080	114.1	15.9	1.4
Northern Territory	4,801	670.0	1,513	92.0	76.0	30.4
Australia^(c)	46,607	783.3	160,740	72.4	22.5	2.6

(a) Per 10,000 population (see Appendix B for information about the calculation of rates). Rates in this table are based on data that have not been adjusted for missing information about Indigenous status (see Table 3.1).

(b) People for whom information on Indigenous status was missing were excluded before the calculation of proportions.

(c) Some people received support in more than 1 jurisdiction over the reporting period and thus the sum of the columns is not equal to the total.

Source: AIHW analyses of AIHW 2013c: Table S4.2.

Table C3.7: Specialist homelessness services clients, selected main reasons for seeking assistance^(a), by Indigenous status, 2012–13

	Indigenous		Non-Indigenous	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
Financial				
Financial difficulties	5,100	13.6	23,080	16.9
Housing affordability stress	1,578	4.2	7,220	5.3
Total ^(a)	6,866	18.3	31,458	23.0
Accommodation				
Housing crises	4,717	12.6	20,604	15.0
Inadequate or inappropriate dwelling conditions	5,424	14.5	14,469	10.6
Previous accommodation ended	1,614	4.3	7,067	5.2
Total ^(a)	11,755	31.3	42,140	30.8
Interpersonal relationships				
Time out from family/other situation	1,418	3.8	2,489	1.8
Relationship/family breakdown	1,786	4.8	8,443	6.2
Domestic and family violence	8,301	22.1	28,223	20.6
Non-family violence	320	0.9	804	0.6
Total ^(a)	11,914	31.8	40,282	29.4
Health				
Mental health issues	294	0.8	2,278	1.7
Medical issues	360	1.0	1,180	0.9
Problematic drug or substance use	305	0.8	1,463	1.1
Problematic alcohol use	313	0.8	858	0.6
Total ^(a)	1,272	3.4	5,778	4.2
Other				
Transition from custodial arrangements	746	2.0	2,508	1.8
Itinerant	981	2.6	2,144	1.6
Unable to return home due to environmental reasons	211	0.6	613	0.4
Disengagement with school or other education and training	338	0.9	362	0.3
Lack of family and/or community support	546	1.5	1,604	1.2
Other	2,548	6.8	9,250	6.8
Total ^(a)	5,713	15.2	17,266	12.6
Total clients^(b)	37,520	100.0	136,924	100.0

(a) Reasons reported by fewer than 200 Indigenous clients as the main reason for seeking assistance are not shown in the table, but are included in the totals.

(b) Excludes clients for whom the main reason for seeking assistance was unknown (9,087 Indigenous clients and 23,813 non-Indigenous clients).

Source: AIHW Specialist Homelessness Services Collection.

Table C3.8: Specialist homelessness services clients, 10 most common reasons for seeking assistance^(a), by Indigenous status, 2012–13

	Indigenous		Non-Indigenous	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
Financial difficulties	14,213	36.4	62,999	44.3
Domestic and family violence	12,350	31.7	39,873	28.0
Inadequate or inappropriate dwelling conditions	11,411	29.2	35,338	24.9
Housing crises	10,214	26.2	42,077	29.6
Relationship/family breakdown	8,439	21.6	33,292	23.4
Housing affordability stress	7,038	18.0	28,429	20.0
Time out from family/other situation	6,578	16.9	16,584	11.7
Previous accommodation ended	6,307	16.2	25,832	18.2
Lack of family and/or community support	6,217	15.9	22,998	16.2
Mental health issues	3,442	8.8	19,967	14.0
Total clients^{(b)(c)}	39,014	100.0	142,178	100.0

(a) The top 10 reasons for Indigenous clients seeking assistance (and the corresponding data for non-Indigenous clients) are shown.

(b) Excludes clients who did not state a reason for seeking assistance in any of their support periods during 2012–13 (7,593 Indigenous clients and 18,561 non-Indigenous clients).

(c) Clients may have had multiple needs identified and thus the sum of the columns is not equal to the total.

Source: AIHW Specialist Homelessness Services Collection.

Table C3.9: Specialist homelessness services clients who experienced domestic and family violence^(a), by Indigenous status, age and sex, 2012-13

Indigenous status/ age group (years)	Males			Females			Total		
	Number	Per cent	DFV clients as % of all clients ^(b)	Number	Per cent	DFV clients as % of all clients ^(b)	Number	Per cent	DFV clients as % of all clients ^(b)
Indigenous									
0–9	2,080	54.9	37.6	2,187	18.5	39.8	4,268	27.3	38.7
10–14	544	14.4	35.1	596	5.0	33.2	1,140	7.3	34.1
<i>Under 15</i>	2,624	69.3	37.1	2,783	23.5	38.2	5,408	34.6	37.6
15–17	248	6.5	21.2	624	5.3	32.5	872	5.6	28.2
18–24	333	8.8	13.4	2,360	19.9	38.6	2,693	17.2	31.4
25–34	244	6.4	10.3	2,922	24.7	49.5	3,166	20.2	38.3
35–44	199	5.3	8.4	2,024	17.1	46.7	2,223	14.2	33.2
45 and over	141	3.7	6.4	1,137	9.6	33.3	1,279	8.2	22.8
<i>15 and over</i>	1,165	30.7	11.0	9,067	76.5	41.8	10,233	65.4	31.7
Total	3,789	100.0	21.5	11,850	100.0	40.9	15,641	100.0	33.6
Non-Indigenous									
0–9	4,501	42.9	39.7	4,350	11.4	40.9	8,851	18.2	40.3
10–14	1,327	12.7	35.3	1,400	3.7	36.3	2,728	5.6	35.8
<i>Under 15</i>	5,828	55.6	38.6	5,750	15.1	39.7	11,579	23.8	39.1
15–17	920	8.8	23.2	1,723	4.5	31.1	2,643	5.4	27.8
18–24	1,212	11.6	11.3	5,931	15.6	34.9	7,143	14.7	25.8
25–34	916	8.7	7.8	10,031	26.3	49.8	10,947	22.5	34.3
35–44	911	8.7	7.2	8,816	23.1	49.1	9,727	20.0	31.8
45 and over	698	6.7	4.5	5,865	15.4	36.6	6,563	13.5	20.9
<i>15 and over</i>	4,657	44.4	8.5	32,366	84.9	42.2	37,023	76.2	28.2
Total	10,485	100.0	15.1	38,116	100.0	41.8	48,602	100.0	30.2

(a) SHSC clients were considered to have experienced domestic and family violence if, in any support period during the reporting period, 'domestic and family violence' was reported as a reason they sought assistance, or they required domestic or family violence assistance.

(b) Number of domestic and family violence (DFV) clients as a proportion of all specialist homelessness services clients in that age group.

Source: AIHW Specialist Homelessness Services Collection.

Table C3.10: Specialist homelessness services clients, by Indigenous status, need for assistance, and whether service was provided or referred, 2012–13 (selected services only)^(a)

	Clients with need identified		Service provision status (as % of need identified)			
Service and assistance type	Number	Per cent	Provided directly	Referred	Not provided or referred	Total
Indigenous clients						
Accommodation	32,341	69.4	70.5	13.9	15.6	100.0
Short-term or emergency accommodation	23,449	50.4	76.2	10.0	13.8	100.0
Medium-term/transitional housing	13,440	28.9	40.8	24.8	34.4	100.0
Long-term housing	15,914	34.2	8.1	43.8	48.1	100.0
Assistance to sustain housing tenure	12,372	26.6	84.1	4.5	11.4	100.0
Assistance to sustain tenancy or prevent tenancy failure or eviction	12,209	26.2	84.4	4.5	11.1	100.0
Assistance to prevent foreclosures or for mortgage arrears	663	1.4	62.7	9.8	27.5	100.0
Mental health	3,308	7.1	49.7	27.6	22.7	100.0
Family	5,473	11.8	68.3	19.3	12.4	100.0
Disability	482	1.0	44.8	25.9	29.5	100.0
Drug/alcohol	2,355	5.1	52.7	21.1	26.2	100.0
Legal/financial services	3,736	8.0	58.1	23.9	18.0	100.0
Immigration/cultural services	5,920	12.7	84.0	10.7	5.3	100.0
Culturally-specific services	5,244	11.3	82.9	12.2	4.9	100.0
Assistance to connect culturally	3,229	6.9	81.2	13.2	5.7	100.0
Other specialist services	10,185	21.9	70.0	22.0	8.0	100.0
Health/medical services	5,870	12.6	60.2	29.0	10.7	100.0
General services	43,755	94.0	98.8	0.6	0.6	100.0
Assertive outreach	9,343	20.1	90.9	4.1	5.0	100.0
Financial information	11,388	24.5	86.0	6.5	7.6	100.0
Material aid/brokerage	17,799	38.2	90.7	5.3	4.0	100.0
Assistance for domestic/family violence	10,523	22.6	91.1	3.3	5.6	100.0
Family/relationship assistance	9,922	21.3	86.4	5.2	8.4	100.0
Living skills/personal development	11,102	23.8	89.6	4.0	6.4	100.0
Advice/information	35,150	75.5	98.7	0.7	0.6	100.0
Advocacy/liaison on behalf of client	25,753	55.3	96.7	1.4	1.9	100.0
Meals	15,511	33.3	96.9	1.6	1.5	100.0
Laundry/shower facilities	13,705	29.4	98.3	0.7	1.0	100.0
Recreation	10,689	23.0	95.8	1.8	2.5	100.0
Transport	17,278	37.1	95.9	1.7	2.3	100.0
Other basic assistance	31,289	67.2	97.7	1.0	1.3	100.0
Total Indigenous clients ^(b)	46,568	100.0	..	..	..	..

(continued)

Table C3.10 (continued): Specialist homelessness services clients, by Indigenous status, need for assistance, and whether service was provided or referred, 2012–13 (selected services only)^(a)

Service and assistance type	Clients with need identified		Service provision status (as % of need identified)			Total
	Number	Per cent	Provided directly	Referred	Not provided or referred	
Non-Indigenous clients						
Accommodation	92,682	57.7	62.1	14.3	23.6	100.0
Short-term or emergency accommodation	58,969	36.7	68.9	9.8	21.4	100.0
Medium-term/transitional housing	43,205	26.9	43.8	19.7	36.5	100.0
Long-term housing	54,626	34.0	8.5	35.2	56.3	100.0
Assistance to sustain housing tenure	50,075	31.2	83.2	4.3	12.5	100.0
Assistance to sustain tenancy or prevent tenancy failure or eviction	49,475	30.8	83.5	4.2	12.3	100.0
Assistance to prevent foreclosures or for mortgage arrears	1,880	1.2	63.0	10.2	26.8	100.0
Mental health	15,441	9.6	51.1	27.2	21.8	100.0
Family	15,028	9.4	70.0	18.0	12.0	100.0
Disability	1,725	1.1	46.3	26.3	27.5	100.0
Drug/alcohol	7,322	4.6	58.6	17.8	23.6	100.0
Legal/financial services	13,933	8.7	57.6	27.6	14.8	100.0
Immigration/cultural services	8,832	5.5	86.0	8.3	5.8	100.0
Culturally-specific services	5,852	3.6	85.3	7.6	7.1	100.0
Assistance to connect culturally	3,834	2.4	78.6	12.9	8.5	100.0
Other specialist services	32,345	20.1	70.4	20.9	8.7	100.0
Health/medical services	18,291	11.4	61.5	25.5	13.0	100.0
General services	148,744	92.6	98.6	0.8	0.6	100.0
Assertive outreach	25,409	15.8	89.8	4.7	5.4	100.0
Financial information	39,977	24.9	86.5	5.6	7.9	100.0
Material aid/brokerage	62,435	38.9	89.0	5.8	5.2	100.0
Assistance for domestic/family violence	36,147	22.5	92.0	3.0	5.0	100.0
Family/relationship assistance	30,360	18.9	85.9	4.2	9.9	100.0
Living skills/personal development	34,978	21.8	91.3	3.6	5.1	100.0
Advice/information	125,814	78.3	98.4	0.9	0.7	100.0
Advocacy/liaison on behalf of client	86,340	53.8	96.2	1.6	2.2	100.0
Meals	34,372	21.4	95.1	3.2	1.6	100.0
Laundry/shower facilities	27,675	17.2	97.2	1.3	1.5	100.0
Recreation	25,445	15.8	94.5	2.6	2.9	100.0
Transport	36,867	23.0	95.2	2.2	2.6	100.0
Other basic assistance	100,511	62.6	97.9	1.1	1.0	100.0
Total non-Indigenous clients ^(b)	160,605	100.0	..	..	..	..

.. not applicable.

(a) Selected service types are shown. For a full list, see Table S4.3 in AIHW 2013c.

(b) Excludes clients who did not provide information on their need for assistance in any of their support periods during 2012–13 (39 Indigenous clients and 135 non-Indigenous clients).

Note: Clients may have had multiple needs identified and thus the sum of the columns is not equal to the total.

Source: AIHW 2013c: Table S4.3.

Table C3.11: Indigenous and non-Indigenous specialist homelessness services clients with any closed support period, by reason support period ended, 2012–13

Reason support period ended	Indigenous		Non-Indigenous	
	Number	Per cent ^(a)	Number	Per cent ^(a)
Client referred to another specialist homelessness agency	2,831	7.2	13,954	10.2
Client referred to a mainstream agency	1,453	3.7	5,864	4.3
Client's immediate needs met or case-management goals achieved	16,796	42.6	76,295	56.0
Maximum service period reached	1,341	3.4	5,733	4.2
Service withdrawn from client and no referral made	1,609	4.1	4,568	3.4
Client no longer requested assistance	14,651	37.2	36,096	26.5
Client did not turn up	2,171	5.5	6,449	4.7
Lost contact with client	5,419	13.7	13,157	9.7
Client institutionalised	113	0.3	398	0.3
Client incarcerated	232	0.6	584	0.4
Client died	77	0.2	172	0.1
Other	2,898	7.4	11,011	8.1
Not stated	2,702	6.6	10,326	7.2

(a) With the exception of 'not stated', the denominator for the calculation of proportions was all clients who had a closed support period with a valid response. This applied to 39,422 Indigenous clients and 136,241 non-Indigenous clients. For support periods with a 'not stated' reason for the ending, the total number of clients with a support period that ended (41,214 Indigenous clients and 142,738 non-Indigenous clients) was used as the denominator.

Source: AIHW Specialist Homelessness Services Collection.

Table C3.12: Specialist homelessness services clients with closed support, by Indigenous status and housing situation at the beginning and end of support, 2012–13 (per cent)

Housing situation	Indigenous		Non-Indigenous	
	Beginning of support	End of support	Beginning of support	End of support
Homeless				
No shelter, or improvised dwelling	11.2	6.6	11.6	7.1
Short-term temporary accommodation	16.1	20.2	16.8	20.0
House, townhouse or flat—couch surfing or with no tenure	20.6	14.1	15.6	10.7
<i>Total</i>	<i>47.8</i>	<i>40.8</i>	<i>44.1</i>	<i>37.8</i>
At risk of homelessness				
Social housing—renter or rent free	28.2	35.0	10.4	17.1
Private or other housing—renter or rent free	21.1	22.1	42.1	42.8
Institutional settings	2.8	2.0	3.4	2.3
<i>Total</i>	<i>52.2</i>	<i>59.2</i>	<i>55.9</i>	<i>62.2</i>
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total at beginning/end of support (number)^(a)	23,383	22,580	85,145	79,415

(a) Excludes people with 'not stated/other' housing situation at the beginning/end of support.

Source: AIHW 2013c: Table S4.4.

Table C3.13: Indigenous clients with closed support, by housing situation at first presentation and at end of support, 2012–13

Housing situation at beginning of support	Housing situation at end of support (per cent)							Total clients at beginning of support ^(a) (per cent)	Total clients at beginning of support ^(a) (number)	Not stated/other housing situation at end of support (number)
	No shelter or improvised inadequate dwelling	Short-term temporary accommodation	House, townhouse or flat—couch surfer or with no tenure	Social housing—renter or rent-free	Private or other housing—renter, rent-free or owner	Institutional settings	Not stated/other			
No shelter or improvised dwelling	50.1	18.7	6.1	13.3	10.3	1.5	..	100.0	2,021	643
Short-term temporary accommodation	2.4	62.1	4.6	18.9	10.8	1.1	..	100.0	3,056	778
House, townhouse or flat—couch surfing or with no tenure	2.4	15.0	53.7	16.7	11.7	0.6	..	100.0	3,941	963
Social housing—renter or rent free	0.5	7.7	3.2	84.5	3.8	0.3	..	100.0	5,675	1,057
Private or other housing—renter or rent free	1.4	9.3	3.9	10.4	74.8	0.3	..	100.0	4,160	879
Institutional settings	3.8	17.6	7.7	14.4	7.8	48.7	..	100.0	510	154
Not stated/other	6.0	24.2	12.9	34.3	19.8	2.8	..	100.0	3,216	7,973
Total clients at end of support (%)	6.6	20.2	14.1	35.0	22.1	2.0	..	100.0	..	..
Total clients at end of support (number)	1,482	4,557	3,178	7,909	4,999	456	..	100.0	22,580	12,447

.. not applicable.

(a) Excludes people with a 'not stated/other' housing situation at the end of support.

Source: AIHW analyses of AIHW 2013c: Table S4.4.

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