



Demand for SAAP accommodation by homeless people 2006–07: summary

Introduction

The Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) is a major part of Australia’s overall response to homelessness and represents a broader social safety net designed to help people in crisis. In 2006–07, 1,539 non-government, community and local government organisations were funded nationally under SAAP to provide support and/or accommodation to people who were homeless or at risk of homelessness (AIHW 2008a: Table 2.3). These organisations ranged from small stand-alone agencies with single outlets to larger bodies with multiple outlets. Each agency was focused mainly on supporting a particular client group, such as young people, single men, single women, women and children escaping domestic violence, families, or a combination of client groups.

Although SAAP agencies support and accommodate large numbers of people every day, they cannot always meet all requests for SAAP accommodation. This bulletin presents key data on the people turned away from SAAP accommodation in 2006–07 and is a companion to the more detailed *Demand for SAAP accommodation by homeless people 2006–07* report (AIHW 2008b). More information about this topic, the components of the SAAP National Data Collection, a glossary and the counting rules governing the data used in this bulletin are contained in the full report.

bulletin 64

Contents

Introduction	1
How many people were turned away?	2
Who was turned away?	4
What types of agencies were they turned away from?	6
Why were they turned away?	6
Conclusion	6
References	6

How many people were turned away?

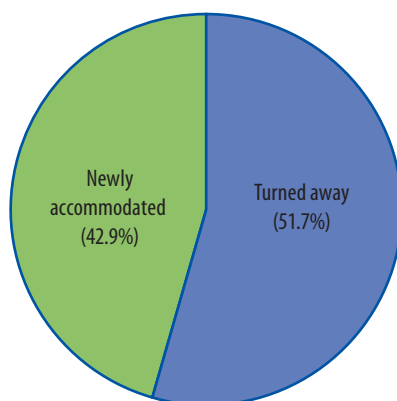
On an average day during the collection period, an estimated 644 people (432 adults and unaccompanied children and 212 accompanying children) required new and immediate accommodation in SAAP (AIHW 2008b:tables 7.1, 8.1 and 9.1). Some of these people found accommodation later the same day as making a request. When this is taken into account, 368 people (236 adults and unaccompanied children and 132 accompanying children) were turned away without receiving SAAP accommodation.

Turn-away as a per cent of people requiring new accommodation

When considered as a per cent of people requiring new and immediate SAAP accommodation (excluding those continuing their accommodation) on an average day (644):

- 55% of adults and unaccompanied children or just over 1 in 2 were turned away (AIHW 2008b:Table 7.1).
- 62% of accompanying children or just under 2 in 3 were turned away (AIHW 2008b:Table 8.1).
- 57% of all people or over 1 in 2 were turned away (Figure 1).

This measure provides an indication of a person's likelihood of obtaining SAAP accommodation.



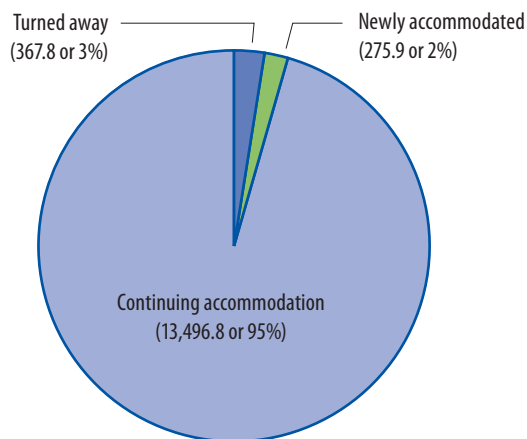
Source: AIHW 2008b:Table 9.1.

Figure 1: Turn-away for people who required immediate accommodation, Australia, 2–8 August 2006 and 16–22 May 2007 (per cent daily average number of people requiring new accommodation)

Turn-away as a per cent of total expressed demand for SAAP accommodation

It is important to note that people requiring new and immediate accommodation made up only 5% (644) of the total demand for SAAP accommodation (14,140, including those continuing their accommodation) on an average day (derived from Figure 2). When considered in this light, 2% (276) of all people who had a demand for SAAP accommodation were newly accommodated and 3% (368) were turned away. The case was similar when broken down for adults and unaccompanied children (3%) and accompanying children (2%).

This measure provides an indication of the ability of SAAP to meet the total expressed demand for SAAP accommodation. The small number of people not accommodated relative to the total expressed demand for SAAP accommodation suggests that a small increase in the number of places available on an average day could have a significant impact on the level of unmet demand. However, there is sufficient evidence to suggest that this is not the case (see AIHW 2008b:Chapter 10 for more detail).



Source: AIHW 2008b:Figure 9.2.

Figure 2: Demand for immediate SAAP accommodation for total people, Australia, 2–8 August 2006 and 16–22 May 2007 (daily average number and per cent of total demand for accommodation)

Who was turned away?

It becomes obvious that some groups have more difficulty obtaining SAAP accommodation than others.

It must be noted that measures of 'turn-away' cannot be calculated for sex, age, country of birth and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status. This is because the Demand for Accommodation Collection does not allow estimates of turn-away to be calculated according to demographic characteristics (AIHW 2008b:Chapter 6). Data referring to these demographics relate to people with a valid unmet request for immediate SAAP accommodation, some of whom were accommodated later that same day.

Requesting group

The most likely requesting groups to be turned away were family groups. When considered as a per cent of all people requiring new accommodation, 72% of couples without children, 69% of couples with children and 64% of individual(s) with children requiring new and immediate SAAP accommodation were turned away, compared with 49% of individual(s) without children (Figure 3). In addition, individual(s) without children were the only group more likely to be accommodated than not.

When considered as a proportion of the total expressed demand for SAAP accommodation, SAAP was least likely to be able to meet the demand for accommodation from couples without children. Four per cent of couples without children who either required new accommodation or who were continuing their accommodation were not able to be accommodated, compared with between 2% and 3% for the other groups. This group, however, represented the smallest number of people requiring accommodation.

Sex

Over half (55%) of all people with a valid unmet request for immediate accommodation were female, 45% were male (derived from AIHW 2008b:Table 5.4).

Age

Over half (57%) of all people with a valid unmet request for immediate SAAP accommodation were under 20 years of age (derived from AIHW 2008b:Table 5.5).

Country of birth

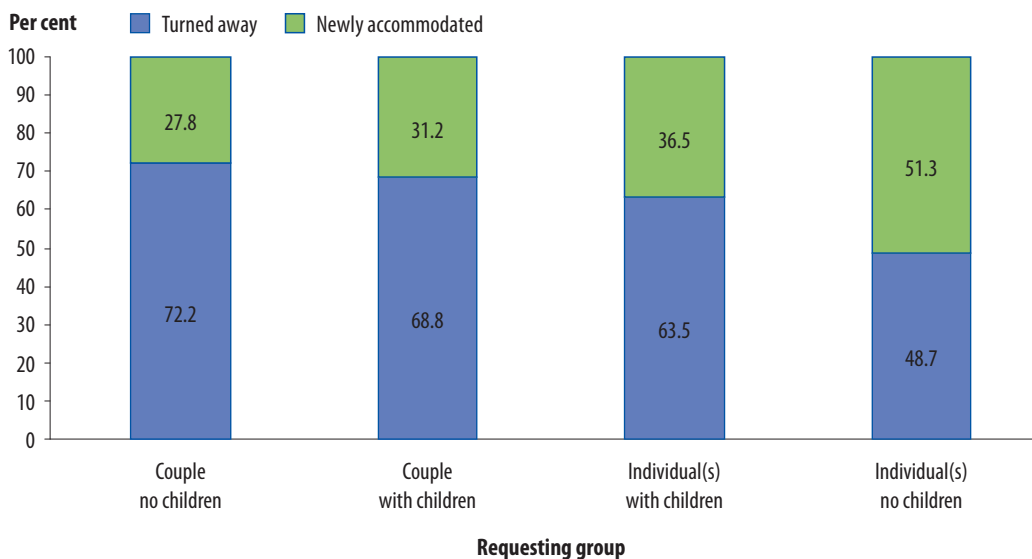
The vast majority of all people with a valid unmet request for immediate SAAP accommodation were born in Australia (92%)(derived from AIHW 2008b:Table 5.6).

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people were more likely to request immediate accommodation than 'other Australians' (58% with a valid unmet request for accommodation, compared with 48%) (Table 5.7).

Over one third (34%) of all people with a valid unmet request for immediate SAAP accommodation were Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples (derived from AIHW 2008b:Table 5.7).

Note, however, that there was a high proportion of missing or unknown data in response to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status question (AIHW 2008b:Chapter 5).



Source: AIHW 2008b:Figure 9.1.

Figure 3: Turn-away for people who required immediate accommodation, by requesting group, Australia, 2–8 August 2006 and 16–22 May 2007 (per cent daily average number of people requiring new accommodation)

What types of agencies were they turned away from?

People were most likely to be turned away from agencies that were primarily targeted at families, cross-targeted agencies and youth agencies. People were least likely to be turned away from agencies primarily aimed at supporting single men.

Why were they turned away?

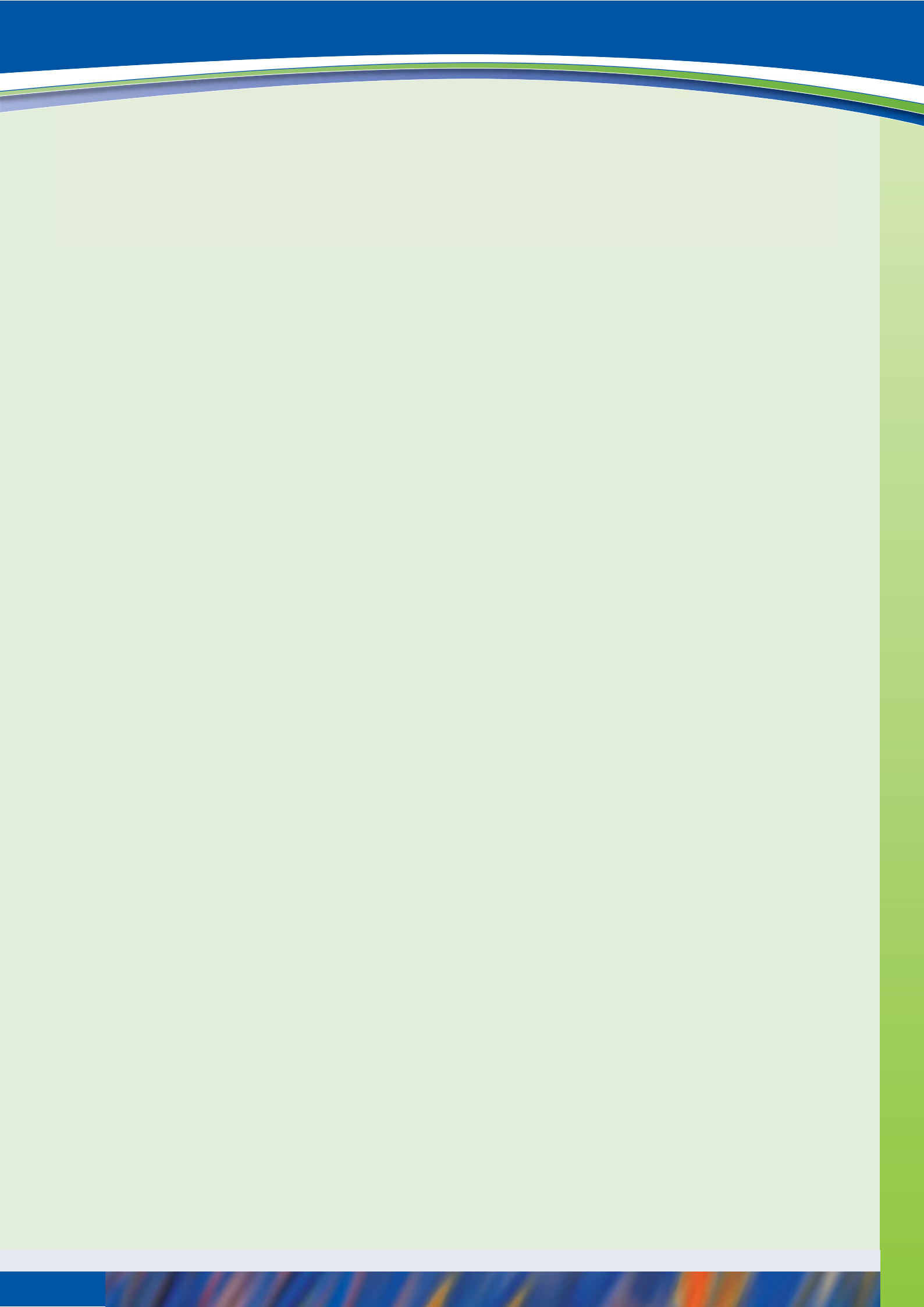
The most common reason that individuals or groups were turned away was because of a lack of accommodation (in 82% of valid unmet requests) (AIHW 2008b:Chapter 4). This was either because insufficient accommodation was available at the agency itself (60%) or because a referral agency was unable to refer the group on because they had no vacancies on their books (22%).

Conclusion

SAAP agencies appear to be operating to capacity, with the demand for SAAP accommodation unable to be completely met. Some groups experience more difficulty than others in obtaining SAAP accommodation. For more information about this and meeting the demand for SAAP accommodation, please see the full report (AIHW 2008b).

References

- AIHW (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare) 2008a. Homeless people in SAAP: SAAP National Data Collection annual report 2006–07 Australia. SAAP NDCA report series 12. Cat. no. HOU 185. Canberra: AIHW.
- AIHW 2008b. Demand for SAAP accommodation by homeless people 2006–07: a report from the SAAP National Data Collection. SAAP NDCA report series 12. Cat. no. HOU 186. Canberra: AIHW.



bulletin 64

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