

Demand for SAAP accommodation by homeless people 2005–06

A report from the SAAP National Data Collection

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SAAP NDCA REPORT SERIES 11

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A report from the SAAP National Data Collection

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
Canberra

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Preface

This publication is one of the Series 11 reports on the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) National Data Collection. The series provides information on people who were homeless and people who were at risk of being homeless who accessed SAAP in 2005–06. This report looks at the demand for SAAP accommodation and the ability of agencies to meet this demand.

A productive and cooperative partnership has continued between the SAAP National Data Collection Agency (managed by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare), SAAP agencies and the SAAP Information Sub committee. Valuable support and encouragement have been provided by the SAAP Coordination and Development Committee, which is responsible for the national direction of SAAP.

The partnership is built on shared goals and mutual trust. The key is agencies' willingness to collect and provide data to the National Data Collection Agency, knowing that any personal information provided by clients is protected by the extremely strict confidentiality provisions of the *Australian Institute of Health and Welfare Act 1987*. The fact that SAAP agencies in Australia continue to provide data for this report is testimony to their collective commitment to, and confidence in, the collection.

This large and complex project has not only a high level of support but also a high level of accuracy. We are confident that we can further improve the quality of the information provided to help policy makers and the community better understand and provide for the needs of people who are homeless or at risk of being so.

Penny Allbon

Australian Institute of
Health and Welfare

SAAP Coordination and
Development Committee

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Abbreviations and symbols

Abbreviations

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
AIHW	Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
CAP	Crisis Accommodation Program
DV	domestic violence
FaCSIA	Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs
NDC	National Data Collection
NDCA	National Data Collection Agency
No.	number
SAAP	Supported Accommodation Assistance Program
SLK	statistical linkage key
SMART	SAAP Management and Reporting Tool

Symbols

..	not applicable
–	nil or rounded to zero
n.a.	not available

Summary

This report presents an overview of the demand for Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) accommodation in 2005–06 by drawing together data from the Client and Demand for Accommodation Collections (see Appendix 2). While SAAP does provide non-accommodation related services, this report focuses on the demand for accommodation, as the provision of accommodation is one of the core activities of SAAP.

Does SAAP meet the accommodation needs of existing clients and accompanying children? (Chapter 3)

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

Overall, SAAP or Crisis Accommodation Program (CAP) accommodation was able to be provided directly to clients in the majority of cases (in 89% of closed support periods where it was required). When it could not be provided directly, it was referred on to other organisations in 7% of cases and remained unmet in 4% of cases.

Overall, SAAP or CAP accommodation was able to be provided directly to accompanying children in the majority of cases (in 90% of closed accompanying child support periods where it was required). When it could not be provided directly, it was referred on to other organisations in 7% of cases and remained unmet in 3%.

How many requests for accommodation were received? (Chapter 4)

In addition to the data collected in the Client Collection, requests made by people who wish to receive SAAP accommodation but do not are collected in the Demand for Accommodation Collection. In the Demand for Accommodation Collection period (7–13 December 2005 and 17–23 May 2006), 9,510 request for SAAP accommodation were received. Of these, 6,960 (73%) were said to be valid and 2,550 (27%) were said to be invalid. When this is converted to a daily average number, an estimated 497 valid unmet requests for accommodation were made on an average day during the Demand for Accommodation Collection period.

What was the main reason accommodation could not be offered? (Chapter 4)

The majority of valid unmet requests occurred because there was a lack of accommodation (80%), either because insufficient accommodation was available at the agency itself (59%) or because a referral agency was unable to refer the group on because they had no vacancies on their books (21%).

How many people made a valid unmet request for accommodation? (Chapter 5)

On an average daily basis, 690 people (429 adults and unaccompanied children and 261 accompanying children) made a valid unmet request for accommodation. Note that some of these people received accommodation later on the same day as making a valid unmet request.

When did they require this accommodation? (Chapter 5)

The majority of people with a valid unmet request for accommodation required immediate accommodation, that is, accommodation within 24 hours (57%). Forty-three per cent required accommodation after 24 hours.

How many people were turned away from SAAP accommodation? (chapters 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9)

As noted above, some of the people with a valid unmet request for accommodation received accommodation later on the same day. In addition, estimates of turn-away can only be calculated for people who required immediate accommodation. Considering this, it is estimated that 356 people (consisting of just over 225 adults and unaccompanied children and 130 accompanying children) who required immediate accommodation were turned away on an average day.

This report presents two measures of turn-away. As a per cent of people requiring new and immediate accommodation, 58%, or 1 in 2 people, approaching a SAAP agency were turned away. However, SAAP accommodates a large number of people each night and, taking this into account, as a per cent of the total demand for accommodation (including those already accommodated in SAAP), 3% were turned away.

Who was turned away? (chapters 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9)

Some groups appear to experience difficulty in obtaining SAAP accommodation. Please refer to chapters 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 for more detail.

