

Demand for SAAP assistance 1999–2000

**A report from the SAAP
National Data Collection**

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SAAP NDCA REPORT SERIES 5

Demand for SAAP assistance 1999–2000

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 5 reports on the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) National Data Collection 1999–2000. The series provides information on people who were homeless and people who were at risk of being homeless who accessed the SAAP program in 1999–2000. The current report looks at the demand for SAAP services and the ability of agencies to meet these demands.

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 Data Sub-committee (formerly the SAAP Data and Research Advisory Committee). Valuable support and encouragement have been provided by the SAAP Coordination and Development Committee, which is responsible for the national direction of the SAAP program.

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.

The fact that over 90% of SAAP agencies in Australia provided data for this report is testimony to their collective commitment to, and confidence in, the collection. Statistical adjustments to annual figures have been made to account for agencies' non-participation.

This large and complex project not only has 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.

Enhanced analysis of the level of demand for SAAP assistance has been undertaken for the 1999–2000 data, and the SAAP Data Sub-committee has decided to publish this analysis in a separate volume. In past years some data on demand for SAAP assistance were included in the national, State and Territory annual reports.

Australian Institute of
Health and Welfare

SAAP Coordination and
Development Committee

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The SAAP Data Sub-committee (comprising representatives from the Commonwealth and State and Territory funding agencies and community and expert representatives) and the Commonwealth Department of Family and Community Services provided valuable support and comments throughout the development and drafting of the report. The authors also acknowledge the assistance provided by Amanda Nobbs and Ainsley Morrissey in preparing the report for publication. Chris Pirie undertook final editing with considerable care.

Finally, the Institute acknowledges the vital role played by data providers. This report draws together a large amount of statistical material and could not have been produced without the efforts and cooperation of SAAP service providers and clients, who provided service and client information, and of State and Territory funding departments, which provided administrative data.

Abbreviations and symbols

Abbreviations

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
AIHW	Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
CAP	Crisis Accommodation Program
NDC	National Data Collection
NDCA	National Data Collection Agency
SAAP	Supported Accommodation Assistance Program

Symbols in tables

..	Not applicable
–	Nil or rounded to zero (including null cells)
n.a.	Not available

Glossary

Accompanying child	A person aged under 18 years who receives <i>support</i> or <i>supported accommodation</i> from a SAAP agency and whose parent or guardian is a <i>client</i> of the same agency.
Agency	An organisation or establishment that receives funding through SAAP.
Casual client	<p>A person who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• receives assistance from a SAAP agency for less than 1 hour on a given day; and• does not establish an <i>ongoing support relationship</i> with the SAAP agency. <p>A casual client may receive <i>one-off assistance</i> from a SAAP agency on one or more occasions.</p>
Client	<p>A person aged 18 years or more, or a person of any age not accompanied by their parent or guardian, who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• receives <i>support</i> or assistance from a SAAP agency which entails generally 1 hour or more of a worker's time, either with that <i>client</i> directly or on behalf of that <i>client</i>, on a given day; or• is accommodated by a SAAP agency; or• enters into an <i>ongoing support relationship</i> with a SAAP agency.
Invalid unmet request for assistance	<p>An <i>unmet request for assistance</i> is <i>invalid</i> if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the request is made at an <i>agency</i> of an inappropriate target group; or• the requested service is not one that is provided by the <i>agency</i>; or• proffered assistance is refused. <p>All other unmet requests for assistance are said to be <i>valid</i>.</p>
One-off assistance	Assistance provided to a person who is not a <i>client</i> . It might include the provision of a meal, a shower, transport, money, clothing, telephone advice, information or a <i>referral</i> .
Ongoing support relationship	A relationship between a SAAP agency and a person whereby some assistance has been provided to that person and it is agreed that future contact will occur between the person and the <i>agency</i> for the purpose of providing additional assistance. An invitation to return to the <i>agency</i> if the need arises does not constitute an <i>ongoing support relationship</i> .

This definition is used to establish whether a person is considered a *client* for the purposes of the National Data Collection.

Potential client

A *potential client* is a person aged 18 years or more, or a person of any age not accompanied by a parent or guardian, who requests *support* or *supported accommodation* from a SAAP agency but who is not provided with that assistance.

People are not considered *potential clients* if their only *unmet requests for assistance* are made at an *agency* of an inappropriate target group, or if the requested service (for example, accommodation) is not one that is provided by the *agency*, or if proffered assistance is refused.

Referral

A (formal) *referral* occurs when a SAAP agency contacts another agency (either SAAP or non-SAAP) and that agency accepts the person concerned for an appointment or interview. A *referral* has not been provided if the person is not accepted for an appointment or interview.

Substantial support or assistance

Support or *supported accommodation* provided to a *client* as part of an *ongoing support relationship* between a SAAP agency and the *client*.

Support

Assistance, other than *supported accommodation*, provided to a *client* as part of an *ongoing support relationship* between a SAAP agency and the *client*. *Support* also includes contact with, or work on behalf of, a *client* for generally more than 1 hour on a given day. *Support* may be provided to the *client* individually or in a group.

Support period

An occasion of *support* provided to a SAAP *client*. A *support period* commences when a *client* begins to receive *support* from a SAAP agency. The *support period* is considered to finish when:

- the *client* ends the relationship with the *agency*; or
- the *agency* ends the relationship with the *client*.

If it is not clear whether the *agency* or the *client* has ended the relationship, the *support period* is assumed to have ended if no assistance has been provided to the *client* for 1 month. In such a case, the date the *support period* ended is 1 month after the last contact with the *client*.

Supported accommodation

Accommodation paid for or provided directly by a SAAP agency. The accommodation may be provided at the *agency* or may be purchased using SAAP funds—at a motel, for example.

Unmet request for assistance

An unmet request for assistance occurs when a person requests—but does not receive—*support* or *supported accommodation*. That is, the person wishes to become a *client* of a SAAP agency but is not accepted or the person does not accept the *agency's* offer of *support* or *supported accommodation*.

A person whose request for *support* or *supported accommodation* cannot be fulfilled might be given *one-off assistance*. Such a person would be a *casual client*, but not a *client*, of the *agency*.

**Valid unmet request
for assistance**

An *unmet request for assistance* is *valid* if:

- the request is made at an *agency* of an appropriate target group;
- the requested service is one that is provided by the *agency*; and
- proffered assistance is not refused.

All other unmet requests for assistance are said to be *invalid*.

Highlights

In 1999–2000, 1,207 non-government, community or local government organisations were funded nationally under the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) (Chapter 1). These agencies assisted many people on a daily basis. However, there were times when an agency could not provide the support or accommodation requested by people in crisis.

Substantial support

- In 1999–2000 agencies provided an estimated 90,000 people with accommodation and/or support lasting more than 1 hour. Thirty-five per cent of these people received more than one period of support during the year, leading to a total of 157,600 support periods (Chapter 2).
- In total, clients received at least 804,000 distinct services and were provided with over 126,000 referrals to meet their needs (derived from Table 2.1).
- Accommodation was provided directly to clients in 99,000 support periods, with referrals to SAAP or Crisis Accommodation Program (CAP) accommodation being arranged in 9,000. In addition, assistance to obtain other housing was provided in 38,000 support periods and referrals for such assistance were arranged in 17,000.
- In 1999–2000 nearly 29,000 types of non-accommodation services were provided to children accompanying clients and 8,000 referrals were arranged for these children (Chapter 2).

Meeting the demand

Both existing clients and those not yet receiving ongoing support can have unmet requests for accommodation and/or support.

Existing clients

- For existing clients with support periods that finished between 1 July 1999 and 30 June 2000, 86% of services requested were provided directly by SAAP agencies and an additional 6% were referred on to other appropriate agencies (Section 3.1).
- SAAP or CAP accommodation was provided in 91% of the 94,800 support periods in which it was requested and a referral was arranged in a further 5%, leaving 4% (or 4,200 support periods) with requests for SAAP or CAP accommodation unmet.
- Assistance in obtaining short-term accommodation or independent housing was either provided by the agency or referred on in 82% and 75%, respectively, of support periods in which it was requested.

Potential clients

- During the fortnight 11–24 November 1999, 5,420 valid unmet requests for accommodation and/or support were reported (Table 3.1). These requests were made by an estimated 4,450 people.

- A total of 4,090 people specifically requested assistance with accommodation. Around 1,400 of these potential clients were accompanied by a total of 3,200 children; this included 700 potential clients seeking immediate accommodation with 1,570 children (Section 3.2).

Daily movements

- Among reporting agencies, in November 1999 on average just under 4% of clients left their SAAP or CAP accommodation on any day (Table 3.2).
- An average of 208 clients left their accommodation and 200 clients started their accommodation each day.
- There was a daily average of 219 valid unmet requests for immediate accommodation and an average of 92 referrals for accommodation each day (Table 3.2).
- The number of clients either ending or starting their SAAP accommodation and the number of unmet requests for accommodation and referrals for accommodation were at their lowest on weekends (Figure 3.1).

Total daily assistance

In May 2000 on a daily basis there were around 10 people accessing SAAP services for every 10,000 aged 10 years or more in the general population. This estimate of SAAP support does not include assistance given to children accompanying their parent or guardian.

Substantial assistance

- An average of 17,370 support periods were provided to clients on any day from 18 May to 31 May (Table 4.1).
- In at least 6,350 support periods (about 37%), clients were accommodated; in a further 10,400 support periods, clients received other types of substantial support.
- Numbers of support periods with support only dropped considerably on weekends compared with weekdays (Figure 4.1).

One-off assistance

- On average, 2,290 individuals received some type of one-off assistance (not associated with more substantial support) from SAAP agencies on any day.
- Casual contacts dropped considerably on weekends compared with weekdays (Figure 4.1).
- Agencies specialising in providing casual assistance accounted for 12% of contacts for one-off assistance (Table 4.2).
- On average, 1.8 services were provided during a casual client contact (Table 4.2), with information and meals generally being the most common forms of one-off assistance provided (Table 4.3).
- Information and referrals for accommodation were the most common forms of casual assistance received by people seeking more substantial support (Table 4.4).