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# **Problem gambling among those seeking homelessness services**

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#### **Australian Institute of Health and Welfare**

Board Chair

Hon. Peter Collins, AM, QC

Director

Penny Allbon

Any enquiries about or comments on this publication should be directed to:

Manager

SAAP National Data Collection Agency

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare

GPO Box 570

Canberra ACT 2601

Phone: 1800 627 191

Email: [ndca@aihw.gov.au](mailto:ndca@aihw.gov.au)

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# Key findings

- In 2007-08, there were 2,462 Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) support periods reported where the client was identified as having gambling-related issues. A client may have more than one period of support, so the total number of support periods may be greater than the total number of clients.
- This represented 1.2% of the total support periods provided under the program. Among the states and territories, New South Wales had the highest percentage of support periods where the client was identified as having gambling-related issues (2%), followed by the Australian Capital Territory and Queensland (1.3% each), with the lowest in Western Australia (0.3%).
- Compared with all SAAP clients, clients with gambling-related issues were:
  - more likely to be older
  - more likely to be male
  - less likely to be Indigenous
  - more likely to have some source of income, particularly to be in receipt of a government payment before support
  - more likely to be employed full or part time before support.
- Less than 1% of support periods for Indigenous clients were for those with gambling-related problems, compared with 1.5% for non-Indigenous clients.
- The most common type of house/dwelling before support for clients with gambling-related-issues was a house or flat followed by 'living rough'.

# 1 Introduction

The Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) requested that the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) provide analysis of data collected by the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) National Data Collection in relation to clients who presented to a SAAP agency with gambling-related issues.

This report provides demographic information about SAAP clients with gambling-related issues, commentary on SAAP data and contextual information to better understand the link between homelessness and problem gambling. The report also outlines the limitations on conclusions that can be drawn from the SAAP data in relation to problem gambling and homelessness.

## 2 Methodology

### Data source

The data source for this report is the SAAP National Data Collection (SAAP NDC) Client Collection 2007–08. The collection is maintained by SAAP-funded agencies across Australia, in accordance with the definitions listed in the *SAAP NDC collectors manual* (AIHW 2005b) and managed by the National Data Collection Agency (NDCA) (currently residing with the AIHW).

For further information on SAAP and the SAAP National Data Collection please see Appendix A, the Series 13 annual report (2007–08) on the SAAP National Data Collection (NDC) (AIHW 2009) and the *SAAP NDC collectors manual* (AIHW 2005b).

### Defining the gambling subset

The SAAP Client Collection collects information on homeless people, or those at risk of homelessness, who are seeking accommodation and support. For the purpose of these analyses the gambling subset is defined as those clients where gambling is reported as a reason for seeking assistance (main reason or other presenting reason) and/or those identified as needing support or assistance to address a gambling problem (see Table 1a). The SAAP Client Collection contains two questions about reasons for seeking assistance and one question about support given which may be used to infer a client has a gambling problem or a need for assistance to address a gambling problem. These questions are:

- Presenting reasons for seeking assistance (Question 6, AIHW 2005b)
- Main presenting reason for seeking assistance (Question 7, AIHW 2005b)
- Support to client (Question 17, AIHW 2005b).

‘Presenting reasons for seeking assistance’ is a self-identifying question, that is, it is a question answered from the client’s perspective. On first presenting to a SAAP agency, the client lists the reasons they are seeking assistance. Multiple responses are allowed to this item and it requires the consent of the client for the data to be collected.

‘Main presenting reason for seeking assistance’ is also answered from the perspective of the client. It is similar to ‘Presenting reasons for seeking assistance’ (identical response values), but requires the client to nominate their main reason for seeking help and also requires the consent of the client for the data to be collected.

‘Support to client’ is a question requiring the SAAP agency case worker to assess the needs of the client, and record how those needs were met (that is, were those needs provided for by the SAAP agency, were they referred on to another agency or did they remain unmet) (Box 1.1). Multiple responses are allowed to the support to client question – a client may be identified as having multiple needs and, for each identified need, an agency may record the need as having been met internally and/or by referral on for assistance elsewhere.

### **Box 1.1: Recording need and unmet support**

Need is selected if the 'case worker assesses the client as needing this particular support service, whether or not the client agrees to participate in this particular service' (AIHW 2005b).

Where a case worker from an agency does not indicate how the need was met, it is inferred that this need remained unmet.

In relation to the questions 'Presenting reasons for seeking assistance' and 'Main presenting reason for seeking assistance', support periods which contained the response value 20 ('gambling') were taken as indicating a client had gambling-related issues. According to the SAAP NDC Collectors Manual (AIHW 2005b), 'gambling' should be selected if:

The client was homeless or sought assistance because they had insufficient means to cover the cost of living as a consequence of a one-off instance or an ongoing gambling problem.

In relation to the 'Support to client' question, support periods which recorded the response value 36 ('assistance with problem gambling') were taken as indicating a client had gambling-related issues. According to the SAAP NDC Collectors Manual (AIHW 2005b), case workers should record 'assistance with problem gambling' as needed against question 17 in reference to:

Support or assistance provided to clients who have a gambling addiction/habit/problem and need to develop skills to cope with the problem on a day to day basis.

Tables in this report present support periods of SAAP clients in the financial year 2007–08. Support periods relate to occasions of support provided by SAAP agencies to SAAP clients, over a period of time (see Appendix A and AIHW 2009 for further definition). As a client may have more than one period of support, the total number of support periods will be greater than the total number of clients. Analysis in this report relates to support periods only.

## **Issues/caveats**

- Given the specialised nature of SAAP agencies and their clients, the SAAP collection cannot be used as a sample population to represent all of Australia or the entire homeless population. This means that any statistical analysis carried out on the SAAP data cannot be taken to be representative of the entire Australian population, the entire homeless population or the entire gambling population.
- The two self-identifying questions being used ('Presenting reasons for seeking assistance' and 'Main presenting reason for seeking assistance') require consent for the responses to be reported to the NDCA, and so will have lower response rates than the third question ('Support to client') which does not require consent.
- As these two questions require self-identification, an undercount will occur where a client fails to disclose a gambling problem.
- As the 'Support to client' question is collected from the case worker's perspective, it is dependent upon the case worker's ability to correctly assess the issues affecting the

client. While case workers are experienced officers trained to recognise issues leading to homelessness, they may not necessarily be specially trained to identify gambling-related issues or problem gambling. Given that people presenting to SAAP services often present with a range of urgent non-gambling-related needs (primarily an urgent need for accommodation), this may result in the need for 'gambling-related assistance' being underreported and thus undercounted.

- Although combining responses from a self-identifying question ('Presenting reasons for seeking assistance') and a case worker-identified question ('Support to client') will minimise undercounting there are still likely to be cases which were not identified in the responses to either question.



### 3 SAAP clients with gambling-related issues

#### Method of identification and reason

**Table 1a: Support periods, SAAP clients with gambling-related issues, by method of identification, 2007–08**

	Number	Per cent
Self-identified only	1,404	57.0
Identified by case worker only	695	28.2
Both	363	14.7
<b>Total number of support periods of clients with gambling-related issues</b>	<b>2,462</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Total number of support periods of SAAP clients for Australia</b>	<b>202,835</b>	<b>..</b>

Note: .. not applicable

Of SAAP clients with gambling-related issues, 1,404 self-identified only, 695 were identified by the case worker (but not self-identified) and 363 were both self- and case worker-identified.

Self-identification of gambling-related problems was more common than case worker identification, occurring in 71.8% (1,767) of support periods. By contrast, case worker identification occurred in 43.0% (1,058) of support periods. Case workers are not necessarily trained to identify gambling-related issues, which may explain the lower rate of case worker identification.

**Table 1b: Support periods, by main presenting reason for seeking assistance for clients with gambling-related issues, 2007–08**

	Number	Per cent
Gambling	454	18.4
All other reasons	1867	75.8
Consent not given	57	2.3
Not answered	84	3.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>2462</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 1b shows that of the 2,462 support periods for clients with gambling-related issues, 454 (18.4%) support periods related to those who self-identified gambling as their main presenting reason for seeking assistance.

## Consent to report

Table 2: Support periods, by client consent, 2007–08

	Number	Per cent
Yes	179,685	88.6
No	23,150	11.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>202,835</b>	<b>100.0</b>

As explained in the methodology section, consent is needed to report a client's response to questions on presenting reasons and main reason for seeking assistance. Table 2 shows that for all SAAP support periods there was a relatively high rate of consent among clients (89.1%). However, this still leaves 23,150 support periods for which we do not have information relating to client's reasons for seeking assistance.

## State/territory

Table 3a: Support periods of SAAP clients with gambling-related issues compared with all SAAP clients, by state and territory, 2007–08

	Support periods of SAAP clients with gambling-related issues		Support periods of all SAAP clients		Support periods of SAAP clients with gambling-related issues as a percentage of support periods of all SAAP clients
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	
NSW	1,181	48.0	58,891	29.0	2.0
Vic	523	21.2	64,197	31.7	0.8
Qld	376	15.3	29,613	14.6	1.3
WA	53	2.2	16,799	8.3	0.3
SA	220	8.9	19,827	9.8	1.1
Tas	57	2.3	6,710	3.3	0.8
ACT	35	1.4	2,683	1.3	1.3
NT	17	0.7	4,115	2.0	0.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,462</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>202,835</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1.2</b>

**Table 3b: Number of SAAP agencies, by state and territory and primary target group, 2007–08**

	Young people	Single men only	Single women only	Families	Women escaping domestic violence	Cross target/multiple/general	Total
NSW	171	39	18	24	93	53	398
Vic	205	20	18	35	117	124	519
Qld	75	15	5	33	55	57	240
WA	43	*	*	12	52	41	158
SA	24	10	3	13	28	49	127
Tas	10	*	–	–	*	24	38
ACT	15	*	*	8	4	12	43
NT	10	*	*	5	9	9	39
<b>Total</b>	<b>553</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>360</b>	<b>369</b>	<b>1,562</b>

Note: \* indicates that the cell has been suppressed to ensure confidentiality

Of the states and territories, New South Wales had the highest percentage of support periods for SAAP clients with gambling-related issues (2.0%), followed by the Australian Capital Territory and Queensland (1.3% each). The national average of support periods for SAAP clients with gambling-related issues was 1.2%.

It should be noted that these results are not necessarily indicative of a higher prevalence of gambling in New South Wales, but could simply reflect different reporting methods or the different focus of programs in each of the states and territories. As an indication of the different focus of homelessness services, Table 3b shows that New South Wales and Victoria had a higher percentage of SAAP agencies that primarily support young people (43.0% and 39.5% respectively) than the other states and territories, while Western Australia had a much higher percentage of SAAP agencies targeting women escaping domestic violence (32.9%).

There are several factors which may affect the age and sex distribution of support periods for all SAAP clients and those with gambling-related issues. For example, there is a high proportion of SAAP agencies that provide services for young people, and for women who are escaping domestic violence (see Table 3b). This affects the age and sex distribution of all SAAP clients and those with gambling-related issues. This is shown in Figures 1 and 2.

## Age and sex

**Table 4a: Support periods, by age by sex of SAAP clients with gambling-related issues, 2007-08**

Age	Female	Male	Total	Total per cent
Under 15 years	21	6	27	1.1
15 to 19	77	92	169	7.1
20 to 24	61	151	212	8.9
25 to 29	84	191	275	11.6
30 to 34	95	207	302	12.7
35 to 39	84	252	336	14.1
40 to 44	83	243	326	13.7
45 to 49	62	193	255	10.7
50 to 54	43	147	190	8.0
55 to 59	30	110	140	5.9
60 to 64	16	51	67	2.8
65 and over	19	60	79	3.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>675</b>	<b>1,703</b>	<b>2,378</b>	<b>100.0</b>

1. Number excluded due to errors and omissions: 13

2. Number excluded due to non-consent: 71

**Table 4b: Support periods, by age by sex of all SAAP clients, 2007-08**

Age	Female	Male	Total	Total per cent
Under 15 years	2,659	1,544	4,203	2.4
15 to 19	18,889	11,881	30,770	17.6
20 to 24	15,869	8,498	24,367	13.9
25 to 29	14,282	7,857	22,139	12.6
30 to 34	13,807	9,044	22,851	13.0
35 to 39	13,484	9,589	23,073	13.2
40 to 44	9,225	8,163	17,388	9.9
45 to 49	5,996	6,524	12,520	7.1
50 to 54	3,221	4,223	7,444	4.2
55 to 59	1,842	2,790	4,632	2.6
60 to 64	1,159	1,688	2,847	1.6
65 and over	1,288	1,724	3,012	1.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>101,721</b>	<b>73,525</b>	<b>175,246</b>	<b>100.0</b>

1. Number excluded due to errors and omissions: 5,633

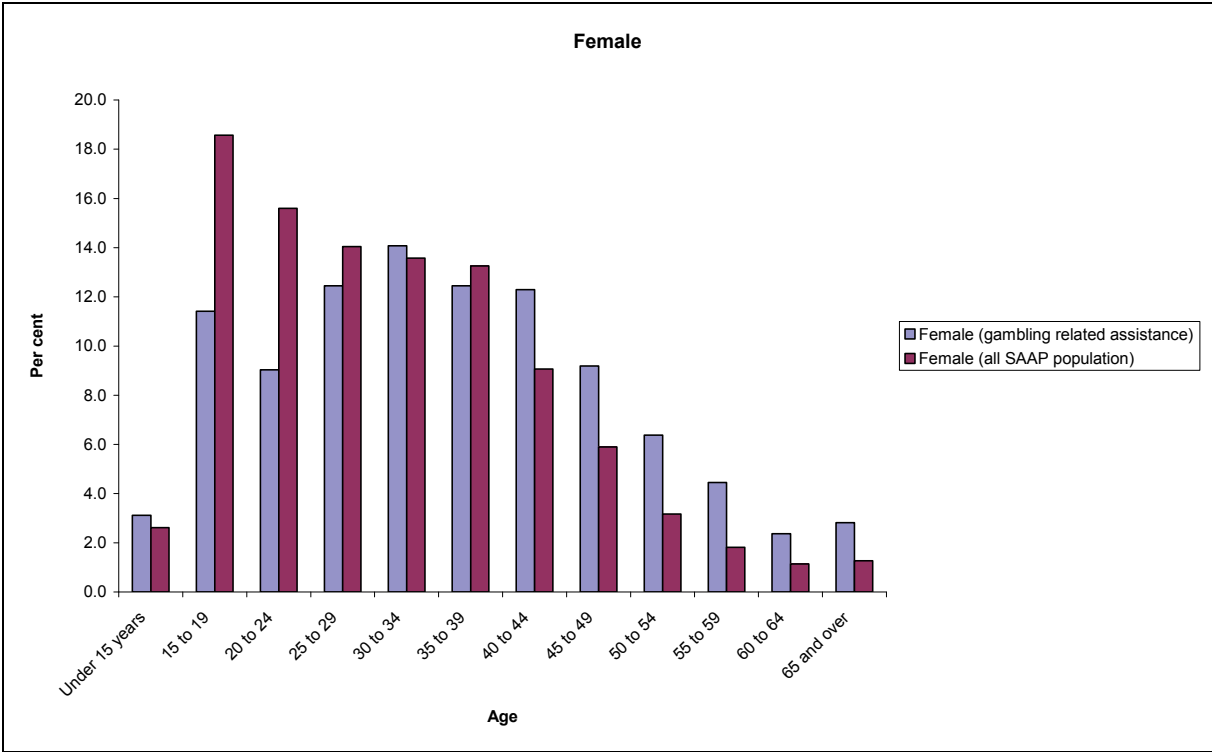
2. Number excluded due to non-consent: 21,956

Table 4a shows that for clients with gambling-related issues 17.2% of support periods were for those aged 24 years and under. This compares with 33.9% of support periods for all

SAAP clients in this age group (Table 4b). In contrast, 82.8% of support periods for clients with gambling-related issues were for clients aged 25 years and over, compared with 65.9% of support periods for all SAAP clients in the same age group. This indicates that gambling-related issues are more prevalent among older SAAP clients than younger SAAP clients.

Of the people in SAAP with gambling-related issues, 71.6% were male, while only 28.4% were female. This forms an interesting contrast with the general profile of the sex of all SAAP clients, as seen in Table 4b, which shows the composition of the SAAP population as 58.0% female and 42.0% male. This indicates that gambling-related issues are considerably more prevalent among males than females in SAAP.

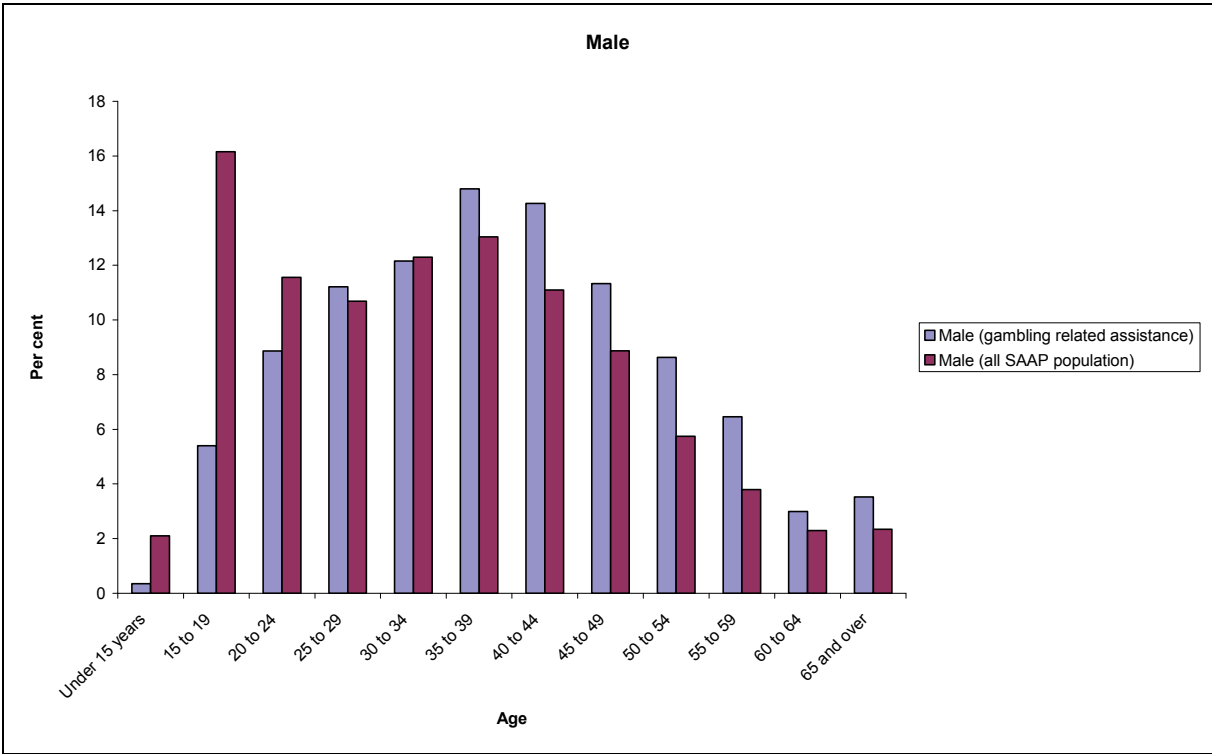
**Figure 1: Distribution of support periods of female SAAP clients with gambling-related issues compared with all female SAAP clients, 2007-08**



Source: Tables 4a and 4b

Figure 1 shows that compared to support periods for the overall female SAAP population aged 15 to 19 years and aged 20 to 24 years, there were fewer support periods for females with gambling-related issues in these age groups. For example, while 18.6% of all support periods for female SAAP clients were aged 15 to 19 years, only 11.4% of support periods for female SAAP clients with gambling-related issues were for clients in this age group. More than half of the support periods for females with gambling-related issues were for clients aged 25 to 44 years.

**Figure 2: Distribution of support periods of male SAAP clients with gambling-related issues compared with all male SAAP clients, 2007-08**



Source: Tables 4a and 4b

Figure 2 shows a similar trend to Figure 1. Although 16.2% of all support periods for male SAAP clients were for those aged 15 to 19 years, only 5.4% of support periods for male SAAP clients with gambling-related issues were for clients in this age group. As with female clients, just over half of the support periods of male clients with gambling-related issues were for clients aged 25 to 44 years.

Figure 1 and Figure 2 both indicate that there is a higher proportion of older SAAP clients with gambling-related issues. This is most apparent for females aged 40 years and over, and for males aged 35 years and over.

## Indigenous status

**Table 5a: Support periods, by Indigenous status of SAAP clients with required gambling-related issues, 2007–08**

	Number	Per cent
<i>Non-Indigenous</i>	2,034	87.9
<i>Indigenous</i>	279	12.1
Aboriginal	263	11.4
Torres Strait Islander	8	0.4
Identified as both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	8	0.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,313</b>	<b>100.0</b>

1. Number excluded due to errors and omissions: 78

2. Table includes only records where client consent is obtained

**Table 5b: Support periods, by Indigenous status of all SAAP clients, 2007–08**

	Number	Per cent
<i>Non-Indigenous</i>	138,328	81.9
<i>Indigenous</i>	30,534	18.1
Aboriginal	28,889	17.1
Torres Strait Islander	887	0.5
Identified as both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	758	0.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>168,862</b>	<b>100.0</b>

1. Number excluded due to errors and omissions: 10,823

2. Table includes only records where client consent is obtained

Overall, 18.1% of support periods were for clients who identified as Indigenous, compared with 12.1% of support periods for SAAP clients with gambling-related issues. Less than 1% (279 of 30,534) of support periods for Indigenous clients were for those with gambling-related problems.

For support periods for the non-Indigenous population (81.9% of support periods), 1.5% (2,034 of 138,328) were for clients with gambling-related issues. This indicates that non-Indigenous SAAP clients were more likely to have gambling-related issues than Indigenous clients.

## Country of birth

**Table 6a: Support periods, by top 5 countries of birth of SAAP clients with gambling-related issues, 2007–08**

	Number
Australia (includes external territories)	1,844
New Zealand	79
England	41
Vietnam	39
China (excludes SARs and Taiwan province)	21

1. Number excluded due to errors and omissions: 58
2. Table includes only records where client consent is obtained
3. For comparison to Table 6b, Sudan had 8 support periods

**Table 6b: Support periods, by top 5 countries of birth of all SAAP clients, 2007–08**

	Number
Australia (includes external territories)	148,027
New Zealand	3,539
Sudan	1,665
England	1,430
Vietnam	1,096

1. Number excluded due to errors and omissions: 8,099
2. Table includes only records where client consent is obtained
3. For comparison to Table 6a, China had 671 support periods

By support period, the top 5 countries of birth recorded for clients with gambling-related issues were Australia (76.7%), New Zealand (3.3%), England (1.7%), Vietnam (1.6%) and China (0.9%) (Table 6a). By comparison for all SAAP support periods the top 5 countries of birth recorded were Australia (86.3%), New Zealand (2.1%), Sudan (1.0%), England (0.8%) and Vietnam (0.6%) (Table 6b).

It is interesting to note that people from Vietnam, England and New Zealand were overrepresented amongst those with gambling-related issues, at 3.6%, 2.9% and 2.2% respectively of the overall SAAP responses for those countries (derived from Tables 6a and 6b). This compares with 1.2% of all SAAP support periods in which clients reported gambling-related issues (Table 3a).



## Income source

**Table 7a: Support periods, by income source (prior to support period) of SAAP clients with gambling-related issues, 2007-08**

	Number	Per cent
No income	176	7.8
Government payment	1,890	83.7
Other income	193	8.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,259</b>	<b>100.0</b>

1. Number excluded due to errors and omissions (including 'Don't know'): 132

2. Table includes only records where client consent is obtained

**Table 7b: Support periods, by income source (prior to support period) of all SAAP clients**

	Number	Per cent
No income	15,043	9.3
Government payment	132,481	82.2
Other income	13,610	8.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>161,134</b>	<b>100.0</b>

1. Number excluded due to errors and omissions (including 'Don't know'): 18,551

2. Table includes only records where client consent is obtained

Tables 7a and 7b show that in a slightly higher proportion (83.7%) of support periods, SAAP clients with gambling-related issues were on some form of government payment compared with the overall SAAP population (82.2%).

## Labour force status

**Table 8a: Support periods, by labour force status (prior to support period) of SAAP clients with gambling-related issues, 2007-08**

	Number	Per cent
Employed full time (35 hours per week or more)	116	4.9
Employed part time (less than 35 hours per week)	168	7.2
Unemployed (looking for work)	555	23.6
Not in labour force	1,429	60.8
Don't know	82	3.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,350</b>	<b>100.0</b>

1. Number excluded due to errors and omissions: 41

2. Number excluded due to no consent: 71

*Note:* 'Not in labour force' includes all persons aged under 15 years and any other person who does not fit into any of the other labour force categories.

**Table 8b: Support periods, by labour force status (prior to support period) of all SAAP clients, 2007–08**

	Number	Per cent
Employed full time (35 hours per week or more)	6,249	3.6
Employed part time (less than 35 hours per week)	10,629	6.1
Unemployed (looking for work)	30,428	17.4
Not in labour force	111,276	63.5
Don't know	16,727	9.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>175,309</b>	<b>100.0</b>

1. Number excluded due to errors and omissions: 5,570

2. Number excluded due to no consent: 21,956

Note: 'Not in labour force' includes all persons aged under 15 years and any other person who does not fit into any of the other labour force categories.

Tables 8a and 8b show that by support period, clients with gambling-related issues were slightly more likely than all SAAP clients to be employed either full time (4.9% compared with 3.6%) or part time (7.2% compared with 6.1%) in the week before seeking support.

## Living arrangements

**Table 9a: Support periods, by type of house/dwelling (prior to support period) of SAAP clients with gambling-related issues, 2007–08**

	Number	Per cent
Improvised dwelling/car/tent/squat	202	8.6
Street/park/in the open	299	12.7
House/flat	1,035	43.9
Caravan	45	1.9
Boarding/rooming house	233	9.9
Hostel/motel/hotel	279	11.8
Hospital	35	1.5
Psychiatric institution	17	0.7
Prison/youth training	29	1.2
Other institutional setting <sup>(a)</sup>	104	4.4
Don't know	80	3.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,358</b>	<b>100.0</b>

1. Number excluded due to errors and omissions: 33

2. Number excluded due to no consent: 71

(a) 'Other institutional setting' includes detention centres, publicly funded boarding schools, detoxification centres, rehabilitation centres and privately funded boarding schools (for more details see Appendix B).

**Table 9b: Support periods, by type of house/dwelling (prior to support period) of all SAAP clients, 2007–08**

	Number	Per cent
Improvised dwelling/car/tent/squat	9,507	5.4
Street/park/in the open	8,813	5.0
House/flat	106,068	60.3
Caravan	3,319	1.9
Boarding/rooming house	13,262	7.5
Hostel/hotel/motel	11,173	6.4
Hospital	1,398	0.8
Psychiatric institution	840	0.5
Prison/youth training	2,361	1.3
Other institutional setting <sup>(a)</sup>	3,691	2.1
Don't know	15,479	8.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>175,911</b>	<b>100.0</b>

1. Number excluded due to errors and omissions: 4,968

2. Number excluded due to no consent: 21,956

(a) 'Other institutional setting' includes detention centres, publicly funded boarding schools, detoxification centres, rehabilitation centres and privately funded boarding schools (for more details see Appendix B).

Table 9a shows that, by support period, the most common type of house/dwelling (prior to the support period) for clients with gambling-related issues was 'House/flat' (43.9%), the next most common responses being 'Street/park/in the open' (12.7%) and 'Hostel/hotel/motel' (11.8%).

Table 9b shows that, by support period, the most common response to this question for the entire SAAP population was also 'House/flat', although the percentage was significantly higher (60.3%) than for those with gambling-related issues. The proportion that responded 'Street/park/in the open' was lower (5.0%) than the response for support periods for clients with gambling-related issues, as was the proportion that responded 'Hostel/hotel/motel' (6.4%).

It is interesting to note that people living immediately before the support period in 'Street/park/in the open' or in an 'Other institutional setting' were overrepresented amongst those with gambling-related issues, at 3.4% and 2.8% respectively of the overall SAAP responses for those type of house/dwelling categories (derived from Tables 9a and 9b). This was also the case for those living in a 'Hospital, hostel/motel/hotel' (2.5%), 'Improvised dwelling/car/tent/squat' (2.5%), 'Psychiatric institution' (2.0%), 'Boarding/rooming house' (1.8%) and 'Caravan' (1.4%). This compares with 1.2% of all SAAP support periods in which clients reported gambling-related issues (Table 3a).

## Sources of referral

**Table 10a: Support periods, by source of referral/information to SAAP for SAAP clients with gambling-related issues, 2007–08**

	Number	Per cent
School/other education institution	10	0.5
Community services department	64	2.9
Psychiatric unit	33	1.5
Telephone/crisis referral agency	215	9.8
SAAP agency/worker	236	10.8
Other government department	81	3.7
Other non-government organisation	145	6.6
Self	1,148	52.4
Family/friends	77	3.5
Police/legal unit/correction institution	67	3.1
Health services	67	3.1
Other	49	2.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,192</b>	<b>100.0</b>

1. Number excluded due to errors and omissions: 270

**Table 10b: Support periods, by source of referral/information to SAAP for all SAAP clients, 2007–08**

	Number	Per cent
School/other education institution	2,112	1.2
Community services department	5,705	3.3
Psychiatric unit	1,339	0.8
Telephone/crisis referral agency	9,540	5.6
SAAP agency/worker	15,843	9.3
Other government department	8,072	4.7
Other non-government organisation	14,412	8.4
Self	85,073	49.7
Family/friends	10,393	6.1
Police/legal unit/correction institution	10,324	6.0
Health services	4,924	2.9
Other	3,473	2.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>171,210</b>	<b>100.0</b>

1. Number excluded due to errors and omissions: 31,625

Table 10a shows that for most support periods, clients with gambling-related issues were self-referred to the SAAP service (52.4%) with the next most common referral source being another SAAP agency or SAAP worker (10.8%). Table 10b shows that the total SAAP

population has a similar profile with clients referring themselves in 49.7% of support periods and being referred by another SAAP agency or SAAP worker in 9.3% of support periods.

Clients referred by a 'Psychiatric unit' or by a 'Telephone/crisis referral agency' were overrepresented amongst those with gambling-related issues, at 2.5% and 2.3% respectively of the overall SAAP responses for those referral sources (derived from Tables 10a and 10b). This compares with 1.2% of SAAP support periods in which clients reported gambling-related issues (Table 3a).

## Accompanying children

**Table 11a: Support periods, by number of accompanying children recorded against support periods for clients with gambling-related issues, 2007–08**

	Number	Per cent
<i>Had no children recorded against support period</i>	2,162	87.8
<i>Had children recorded against support period</i>	300	12.2
One child	120	4.9
Two children	94	3.8
Three children	55	2.2
Four children	20	0.8
Five or more children	11	0.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,462</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table 11b: Support periods, by number of accompanying children recorded against support periods for all SAAP clients, 2007–08**

	Number	Per cent
<i>Had no children recorded against support period</i>	154,092	76.0
<i>Had children recorded against support period</i>	48,743	24.0
One child	21,266	10.5
Two children	14,141	7.0
Three children	7,557	3.7
Four children	3,526	1.7
Five or more children	2,253	1.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>202,835</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Tables 11a and 11b show the number of accompanying children recorded against support periods for clients with gambling-related issues and all SAAP clients respectively. This can be used as a proxy for the number of children in the care of SAAP clients. For clients with gambling-related issues (Table 11a) most had no children (87.8% of support periods), while 12.2% had one or more children. By contrast, no children were recorded against support periods for 76.0% of all SAAP clients. Further only 0.6% (300 of the 48,743) of SAAP support periods that had children recorded against them were for clients with gambling-related issues (derived from Tables 11a and 11b). This compares with 1.2% of SAAP support periods in which clients reported gambling-related issues (Table 3a). This suggests that clients with

gambling-related issues were less likely to have accompanying children than SAAP clients in general.

It should be noted that the number of accompanying children recorded against support periods for clients with gambling-related issues may be affected by the method of recording accompanying children. Where clients present as a couple, accompanying children are recorded against the support period of one parent only, generally the female parent. As most clients with gambling-related issues are male, this may result in an undercount of the number of accompanying children by support period.

# Appendix A

## Background information on SAAP

SAAP (Supported Accommodation and Assistance Program) was a government initiative (refer to Box 1.1) aimed at providing transitional supported accommodation and related support services to help homeless people achieve the maximum possible degree of self-reliance and independence. SAAP provides funds to various community agencies, local government agencies and non-government organisations, who provide accommodation and support services to people who are either homeless or at risk of homelessness.

### Box 2.1: Changes to the SAAP collections

Funding for the SAAP program ceased on the 31 December 2008, when funding for homeless services was continued under the National Affordable Housing Agreement (NAHA). The data collection of services provided to people who are seeking specialist homelessness services is continuing and will be referred to as interim-SAAP until the new collection begins in July 2001

As part of the SAAP Client Collection, SAAP-funded agencies provide data to the NDCA, with agency workers being responsible for the data management. The Client Collection runs continuously, spanning financial years with data being reported after the end of each financial year. The NDCA provides collectors manuals and SAAP training workshops in order to achieve consistency in data management across SAAP agencies.

Once the data have been submitted to the NDCA, annual reports from that year's data (based on the financial year) are compiled and published. Unweighted data in the form of a 6-month and 12-month agency report are also provided to stakeholders and agencies. The most recent publication of the SAAP annual reports (*Homeless people in SAAP: SAAP National Data Collection annual report 2007-08, Australia*) indicated that there were 220,300 (weighted, rounded) support periods, and 125,600 clients (weighted, rounded) nationally. Support periods (defined in more detail in the Appendix A) relate to occasions of support provided by SAAP agencies to SAAP clients, over a period of time.

## Glossary and counting rules

For more information, please refer to the *SAAP NDC collectors manual* (AIHW 2005) and the *Series 13 SAAP annual report* (AIHW 2009).

### Client

A client is a person who is homeless or at imminent risk of homelessness who:

- is accommodated by a SAAP agency
- enters into an ongoing support relationship with a SAAP agency

- receives support or assistance from a SAAP agency which entails generally one hour or more of a worker's time, either with that client directly or on behalf of that client, on a given day. This includes the time taken for the assessment process only if this process leads to other support being offered or to a referral for support.

## **Gambling-related issues**

For purposes of this report, the gambling-related issues subset is defined as support periods where clients self-identified 'gambling' as a reason for seeking assistance (main reason or other presenting reason) combined with those where the case worker identified the client's need for 'assistance with problem gambling'.

## **Homeless**

A person is homeless if he or she does not have access to safe, secure and adequate housing. Hence even if a person has a physical home, they would be considered homeless if:

- they were not safe at home
- they had no legal right to continued occupation of their home (security of tenure)
- the home lacked the amenities or resources necessary for living.

A person is also considered homeless when he or she is accommodated at a SAAP agency or in other emergency accommodation, regardless of whether or not they pay rent. A person staying in prison or in hospital is not homeless unless they feel unsafe.

This definition is taken from the *Supported Accommodation Assistance Act 1994*. This Act also states that people who are 'at imminent risk of homelessness' are eligible for assistance under the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program.

People who are 'at imminent risk of homelessness' assisted by SAAP are also counted in the National Data Collection. People at imminent risk include those who are at risk of losing their housing because of factors that do not pose a threat to their safety, for example, interpersonal conflicts that do not involve violence. A person who requires the support of SAAP workers to maintain their current housing situation and live independently in the community may also be considered to be at imminent risk of becoming homeless.

## **Support period**

A support period is the period of time a client receives ongoing support from a SAAP agency. It relates to the provision of 'support' and/or 'supported accommodation'. It does not relate to 'one-off assistance'.

The support period commences when the client begins to receive support from the SAAP agency – note that the time taken for assessment is not included, unless it leads to other support being offered or a referral for support or supported accommodation.

The support period is considered to finish when the relationship between the client and the agency ends. If, for example, a client at an accommodation agency stops being accommodated but continues to receive outreach support, the support period stays open until the outreach relationship ends.



# Appendix B

## Questions analysed and response categories

### Presenting reasons for seeking assistance

*Time out from family/other situation*

*Relationship/family breakdown*

*Interpersonal conflict*

*Sexual abuse*

*Domestic/family violence*

*Physical/emotional abuse*

*Gambling* should be selected if the client was homeless or sought assistance because they had insufficient means to cover the cost of living as a consequence of a one-off instance or an ongoing gambling problem.

*Budgeting problems* should be selected if the client has adequate financial resources but has difficulties managing these resources.

*Rent too high* should be selected if the client doesn't have the financial resources to meet rental commitments.

*Other financial difficulty* should be selected if the client was homeless or sought assistance because s/he had insufficient money to pay for accommodation, food, bills or other essentials.

*Overcrowding issues*

*Eviction /asked to leave*

*Emergency accommodation ended*

*Previous accommodation ended*

*Mental health issues*

*Problematic drug/alcohol/substance use*

*Psychiatric illness*

*Other health issues*

*Gay/lesbian/transgender issues*

*Recently left institution*

*Recent arrival to area with no means of support*

*Itinerant*

*Other (please specify)*

*Don't know/no information*

## **Support to client**

*SAAP/CAP accommodation (including THMs and other SAAP managed properties)*

*Assistance to obtain/maintain short-term accommodation*

*Assistance to obtain/maintain medium-term accommodation*

*Assistance to obtain/maintain independent housing*

*Assistance to obtain/maintain government allowance*

*Employment and training assistance*

*Financial assistance/material aid* refers to money given to the client for bond/rent/transport, etc. and other non-monetary assistance such as clothing, food vouchers and bus/train tickets. This assistance is not expected to be repaid.

*Financial counselling and support* refers to one-to-one discussion sessions with the client, usually provided on more than one occasion, focused around financial management issues.

*Incest/sexual assault support*

*Domestic/family violence support*

*Family/relationship support*

*Emotional support*

*Assistance with problem gambling* refers to support or assistance provided to clients who have a gambling addiction/habit/problem and need to develop skills to cope with the problem on a day to day basis.

*Living skills/personal development*

*Assistance with legal issues/court support*

*Advice/information*

*Retrieval/storage/removal of personal belongings*

*Advocacy/liaison on behalf of client*

*Psychological services*

*Specialist counselling services*

*Psychiatric services*

*Pregnancy support*

*Family planning support*

*Drug/alcohol support or intervention*

*Physical disability services*

*Intellectual disability services*

*Culturally specific services*

*Interpreter services*

*Assistance with immigration issues*

*Health/medical services*

*Meals*

*Laundry/shower facilities*

*Recreation*

*Transport*

*Other (please specify)*

## **Type of house/dwelling immediately before and after this support period**

'Other institutional setting' includes the following types of institutions:

- 'Other government residential arrangement', which refers to any accommodation not elsewhere included in this classification that is managed and/or provided by federal, state or local government authorities. For example, detention centres or publicly funded boarding schools.
- 'Detoxification unit/rehabilitation centre', which refers to a public or private institution for the care, treatment and/or rehabilitation of patients with drug- or alcohol-related conditions.
- 'Other institutional setting', which refers to any accommodation not elsewhere included in this classification that is managed and/or provided by nongovernment authorities. For example, privately funded boarding schools.

# References

AIHW 2009. Homeless people in SAAP: SAAP National Data Collection annual report 2007-08 Australia. SAAP NDC report series 13. Cat no. HOU 191. Canberra: AIHW

AIHW 2005b: SAAP National Data Collection: Collectors Manual July 2005