

Demand for SAAP accommodation by homeless people 2006–07

A report from the SAAP National Data Collection

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare is Australia's national health and welfare statistics and information agency. The Institute's mission is *better information and statistics for better health and wellbeing*.

Please note that as with all statistical reports there is the potential for minor revisions of data in this report over its life. Please refer to the online version at <www.aihw.gov.au>.

SAAP NDCA REPORT SERIES 12

Demand for SAAP accommodation by homeless people 2006–07

A report from the SAAP National Data Collection

October 2008

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
Canberra

Cat. no. HOU 186

© Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2008

This work is copyright. Apart from any use as permitted under the *Copyright Act 1968*, no part may be reproduced without prior written permission from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. Requests and enquiries concerning reproduction and rights should be directed to the Head, Media and Communications Unit, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, GPO Box 570, Canberra ACT 2601.

A complete list of the Institute's publications is available from the Institute's website <www.aihw.gov.au>.

ISBN 978 1 74024 834 1

Suggested citation

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) 2008. 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.

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: (02) 6244 1206

Email: ndca@aihw.gov.au

Published by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare

Contents

- Preface.....vii
- Acknowledgments..... viii
- Abbreviations and symbols..... ix
- Summaryx
- 1 Introduction.....1**
 - 1.1 The Supported Accommodation Assistance Program.....1
 - 1.2 The SAAP National Data Collection1
 - 1.3 Relationships between the SAAP collections.....2
 - 1.4 Chapter contents3
- 2 An overview of homelessness and SAAP.....5**
 - 2.1 Estimating the number of homeless people5
- 3 Meeting the accommodation needs of clients and accompanying children8**
 - 3.1 Clients8
 - 3.2 Accompanying children10
 - 3.3 Tables12
- 4 Unmet requests for SAAP accommodation.....15**
 - 4.1 Invalid unmet requests.....15
 - 4.2 Valid unmet requests.....15
 - 4.3 One-off assistance offered.....19
 - 4.4 Referrals for accommodation19
 - 4.5 Tables21
- 5 People making a valid unmet request for SAAP accommodation.....28**
 - 5.1 Adults and unaccompanied children.....29
 - 5.2 Accompanying children.....31
 - 5.3 Total people32
 - 5.4 Tables35
- 6 Estimating the number of people turned away without receiving SAAP accommodation.....41**
 - 6.1 Data issues.....41
- 7 Adults and unaccompanied children turned away without receiving SAAP accommodation.....43**
 - 7.1 Turn-away as a per cent of people requiring new SAAP accommodation.....43
 - 7.2 Turn-away as a per cent of total expressed demand for SAAP accommodation44
 - 7.3 Tables46

8	Accompanying children turned away without receiving SAAP accommodation	50
8.1	Turn-away as a per cent of people requiring new SAAP accommodation.....	50
8.2	Turn-away as a per cent of total expressed demand for SAAP accommodation	51
8.3	Tables	53
9	Total people turned away without receiving SAAP accommodation	57
9.1	Turn-away as a per cent of people requiring new SAAP accommodation.....	57
9.2	Turn-away as a per cent of total expressed demand for SAAP accommodation	58
9.3	Tables	60
10	Meeting the demand for SAAP accommodation.....	64
10.1	Is there sufficient accommodation available?	64
10.2	Estimating capacity	65
10.3	Supply and demand.....	67
10.4	Hidden need for accommodation	67
10.5	Conclusion.....	68
10.6	Tables	69
	Appendix 1 Demand for SAAP accommodation summary diagram.....	71
	Appendix 2 The data.....	73
	A2.1 The Client Collection	73
	A2.2 The Demand for Accommodation Collection	77
	A2.3 Interpretation of tables	83
	A2.4 Counting rules and glossary.....	84
	Appendix 3 Collection forms	93
	References	103
	List of tables	104
	List of figures	107

Preface

This publication is one of the Series 12 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 2006–07. 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 Subcommittee. 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

Acknowledgments

This report was prepared by Felicity Murdoch of the SAAP National Data Collection Agency (NDCA) at the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW). All staff at the NDCA have contributed to this report – without the efforts of Simon Edwards, Joseph Hogan, Anne Aisbett, Richard Tuttle, Ian Oyston, Dina Saad, Stirling Lewis, Neil Angel, Lynda Carney, Phil Denman, Melita Kunstelj, Michael Navaratnam, Dianne Oglesby, Toni Stepniak, Valdis Thomann, Tom Watson, Katrina Williams, Nick Mann, Sean Ackland, Andrew Powierski, Hugh Webb, Joan Reid and Anne Giovanetti who collected and processed the data this report would not have been possible.

Justin Griffin, Heather Logie and the SAAP Information Subcommittee provided helpful comments on the draft report. Cecilia Burke and Peter Nolan provided assistance in preparing the report for publication.

Finally, the authors acknowledge 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 the Australian Government Department of Families, Housing Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) and state and territory funding departments, which provided administrative data.

Abbreviations and symbols

Abbreviations

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ACT	Australian Capital Territory
AIHW	Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
CAP	Crisis Accommodation Program
DV	domestic violence
FaCSIA	Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs
FaHCSIA	Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (formerly known as FaCSIA)
I & I	Innovation and Investment Fund
NDC	National Data Collection
NDCA	National Data Collection Agency
No.	number
NSW	New South Wales
NT	Northern Territory
Qld	Queensland
SA	South Australia
SAAP	Supported Accommodation Assistance Program
SLK	statistical linkage key
SMART	SAAP Management and Reporting Tool
Tas	Tasmania
Vic	Victoria
WA	Western Australia

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 2006–07 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 8% of cases and remained unmet in just under 4% of cases.

Overall, SAAP or CAP accommodation was able to be provided directly to accompanying children in the majority of cases (in 88% 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 9% 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 (2–8 August 2006 and 16–22 May 2007), 9,460 requests for SAAP accommodation were received.¹ Of these, 7,080 (75%) were said to be valid and 2,380 (25%) were said to be invalid. When this is converted to a daily average number, an estimated 506 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 (82%), 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%).

¹ Note that only data from agencies that participated in both the Client and Demand for Accommodation Collections are included. Consequently the figures understate the level of activity in SAAP agencies.

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

On an average daily basis, 725 people (448 adults and unaccompanied children and 277 accompanying children) made a valid unmet request for accommodation. Note that some of these people received accommodation later on the same day.

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 (54%). Forty-six 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 368 people (consisting of 236 adults and unaccompanied children and 132 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, 57%, or just over 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)

Couples with children, couples without children and individual(s) with children appear to experience particular difficulty in obtaining SAAP accommodation. Please see chapters 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 for more detail.

