

SAAP NDCA REPORT SERIES 11

Homeless people in SAAP

**SAAP National Data Collection
annual report
2005–06**

Australia

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Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
Canberra

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Preface

This is the Series 11 (2005–06) annual report on the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) National Data Collection. The first report, containing 1996–97 data, was published in December 1997. The reports provide information on people who are homeless or at risk of being homeless.

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.

This partnership has been built on shared goals and mutual trust. The key has been 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 93% of agencies in Australia provided data in 2005–06 is testimony to their collective commitment to, and confidence in, the collection. A 93% participation rate was also recorded in 2004–05. The proportion of SAAP clients who consented to the provision of their personal data to the National Data Collection Agency decreased slightly from 89% in 2004–05 to 87% in 2005–06.

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.

Under the Coordination and Development Committee's direction, a SAAP National Research Program has been established to undertake and fund studies on homeless people, often using data from the National Data Collection. Each year, the National Data Collection Agency receives many requests for data used for research purposes.

Penny Allbon

Australian Institute of
Health and Welfare

SAAP Coordination and
Development Committee

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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, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaCSIA) and 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
DV	Domestic violence
FaCSIA	Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs
NDC	National Data Collection
NDCA	National Data Collection Agency
SAAP	Supported Accommodation Assistance Program
SMART	SAAP Management and Reporting Tool

Symbols in tables

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

Summary

This report provides an overview of assistance given to clients and their accompanying children by the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) during the financial year 2005–06. This national report is accompanied by state and territory supplements.

It is important to note that a Core Data Set was introduced in 2005–06, including refined definitions and a new statistical linkage key. The changes constitute a break in the series and therefore comparisons between this and previous years are not strictly possible (see Chapter 9 and Appendix 2 for more details).

Funding

In 2005–06, the total recurrent allocation to SAAP was \$348.8m. In real terms, this was 20% more than the total funding provided in 1996–97.

Recurrent funding directly to the 1,300 SAAP agencies was \$333.4m. In real terms, this was 26% more than the funding provided to agencies in 1996–97.

How many people were supported?

It is estimated that 1 in every 126 Australians, or 161,200 people, received substantial SAAP support at some time during 2005–06. Of this, 106,500 were clients and 54,700 were accompanying children. The majority of clients and accompanying children had only one period of support during the year. In general, repeat use was higher for older male clients.

Who was supported?

The majority of people supported by SAAP were female. In particular, young females aged 15–19 years were the most likely group to become a SAAP client (176 per 10,000). Accompanying children aged 0–4 years also reported a high rate of use (175 per 10,000).

Most clients and accompanying children were born in Australia and did not identify as being Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders were, however, overrepresented when compared with the general Australian population.

How long were clients supported for?

The median length of support was 6 days. The median length of accommodation was 10 days. The majority of support periods did not include a period of accommodation.

Were support needs met?

Overall, SAAP agencies were able to directly meet the needs of clients and accompanying children in the majority of cases. The broad type of service provided most often was basic support services, such as meals and shower facilities. The least likely broad group of services to be provided were specialist services, such as specialist counselling services and health or medical services.

What were their outcomes?

This report covers client outcomes for income, employment, education, type of house or dwelling, type of tenure, and living situation. Generally, the circumstances of clients improved following support, particularly for those supported for longer periods.

The majority of SAAP clients had a case management plan in place before the end of their support. In most cases, at least some of the goals specified in the plans were achieved.