15   Protection and support services

Protection and support services aim to assist individuals and families who are in crisis or experiencing difficulties that hinder personal or family functioning. They do this by alleviating the difficulties and reducing the potential for their recurrence.

This chapter reports on:

- *child protection services*: the functions of government that receive and assess allegations of child abuse and neglect, and/or harm to children and young people, provide and refer clients to family support and other relevant services, and intervene to protect children

- *out-of-home care services*: care for children placed away from their parents for protective or other family welfare reasons

- *supported accommodation and assistance services*: services to assist young people, adults and families who are homeless or at imminent risk of becoming homeless.

A profile of child protection and out-of-home care services appears in section 15.1, followed by a brief discussion of recent policy developments in section 15.2. A framework of performance indicators is outlined in section 15.3 and data are discussed in section 15.4. Future directions in performance reporting are outlined in section 15.5.

A profile of accommodation and assistance services funded under the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) appears in section 15.6, followed by a brief discussion of recent policy developments in section 15.7. A framework of performance indicators for these services is outlined in section 15.8 and data are discussed in section 15.9. Future directions in performance reporting are discussed in section 15.10.

Jurisdictions' comments on both child protection and out-of-home care services, and supported accommodation and assistance services are reported in section 15.11. Definitions of data descriptors and indicators are provided in section 15.12.

Supporting tables for chapter 15 are provided on the CD-ROM enclosed with the Report. The files are provided in Microsoft Excel 97 format as \Publications\Reports\2004\Attach15A.xls and in Adobe PDF format as \Publications\Reports\2004\Attach15A.pdf.

Supporting tables are identified in references throughout this chapter by an 'A' suffix (for example, table 15A.3 is table 5 in the electronic files). These files can be found on the Review web page (www.pc.gov.au/gsp). Users without Internet access can contact the Secretariat to obtain these tables (see details on the inside front cover of the Report).

15.1 Profile of child protection and out-of-home care services

Service overview

Child protection services

Child protection services are provided to protect children and/or young people aged 0–17 years who are at risk of harm within their families, or whose families do not have the capacity to protect them. These services include:

- receiving and responding to reports of concern about children or young people, including investigation and assessment where appropriate

- providing support services (directly or through referral) where harm or a risk of significant harm is identified, to strengthen the capacity of families to care safely for children

- initiating intervention where necessary, including applying for a care and protection order through a court and, in some situations, placing children or young people in out-of-home care to secure their safety

- ensuring the ongoing safety of children and young people by working with families to resolve protective concerns

- working with families to reunite children (who were removed for safety reasons) with their parents as soon as possible. (In some jurisdictions, restoration may occur in voluntary placements as well.)

- securing permanent out-of-home/alternative care when it is determined that a child is unable to be returned to the care of his or her parents, and working with

young people to identify alternative supported living arrangements where family reunification is not possible.

Recent research suggests that the children and families who come into contact with the protection and support system often share common social and demographic characteristics. Families with low incomes or reliance on pensions and benefits, those who experienced alcohol and substance abuse, psychiatric disability, or have a family history of domestic violence were over-represented in the families that come into contact with the protection and support system (DHS 2002). The incidence of child abuse and neglect within the Indigenous communities has also been highlighted in recent studies (Gordon Report 2002, box 15.1).

Box 15.1   **Western Australian Gordon Inquiry**

During 2002, the WA State Government received the findings from the Inquiry into Response by Government Agencies to Complaints of Family Violence and Child Abuse in Aboriginal Communities (Gordon Inquiry). The Inquiry examined the circumstances surrounding the death of a 15 year old girl in February 1999 at the Swan Valley Nyungah Community in Lockridge.

The final report of the Gordon Inquiry, released publicly in September 2002, showed that the incidence of violence and child abuse in Aboriginal communities was '*shocking and difficult to comprehend'.* It stated that reported statistics showed that:

- Aboriginal women accounted for 50 per cent of all domestic violence incidents reported to police but represent only three per cent of the population

- Aboriginal communities experienced substantiated child abuse at more than seven times the rate of non-Aboriginal communities

- Aboriginal women living in rural and remote areas were 45 times more likely to be victims of domestic violence than non-Aboriginal women (Gordon Report 2002).

The report also noted that the incidence of child abuse and family violence in Aboriginal communities was significantly under reported. It found there was an urgent need for greater co-ordination between Government agencies, more training for staff, including cross cultural training, and more services and better-resourced services, especially in remote areas. It also found that a lack of trust between Aboriginal communities and Government agencies was a significant barrier to complaints of violence and abuse being made.

(Continued on next page)

Out-of-home care services

Out-of-home care services provide care for children and young people aged 0–17 years who are placed away from their parents or family home for reasons of safety or family crisis. These reasons include abuse, neglect or harm, illness of a parent and the inability of parents to provide adequate care. The placements may be voluntary or in conjunction with care and protection orders.

Out-of-home care services are either home-based care (such as foster care, care with the child's extended family and other home-based arrangements), facility-based care (such as family group homes and community residential care), or independent living (which is often intensively supported) as a transition to full independence or supported placements. Across jurisdictions, there has been a shift away from the use of facility-based (or residential) care towards foster care and other forms of home-based care, including relative/kinship care. Intensive family support services are increasingly seen as an alternative to the removal of the child from his or her home for child protection reasons (box 15.2).

> **Box 15.2   Intensive family support services**
>
> Intensive family support services are specialist services established in each jurisdiction that aim to:
>
> - prevent the imminent separation of children from their primary caregivers as a result of child protection concerns.
>
> - reunify families where separation has already occurred.
>
> In 2002-03, at least 59 intensive family support programs and sub-programs were operating across Australia (two in NSW, 38 in Victoria, four in Queensland, three in WA, nine in SA, one in Tasmania and two in the ACT). The NT does not fund any intensive family support services.
>
> Intensive family support services differ from other types of child protection and family support services referred to in this chapter, in that they:
>
> - are funded or established explicitly to prevent the separation of, or to reunify, families.
>
> - provide a range of services as part of an integrated strategy focusing on improving family functioning and skills, rather than providing a single type of service.
>
> - are intensive in nature, averaging at least four hours of service provision per week for a specified short term period (usually less than six months).
>
> - generally receive referrals from a child protection service.
>
> Intensive family support services may use some or all of the following strategies: assessment and case planning; parent education and skill development; individual and family counselling; anger management; respite and emergency care; practical and financial support; mediation, brokerage and referral services; and problem solving training.
>
> Expenditure data indicate that recurrent expenditure on intensive family support services across all jurisdictions was at least $58.3 million in 2002-03 (table 15A.1). Table 15A.21 provides additional information about families and children who were involved with intensive family support services during 2002-03.
>
> *Source*: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) (unpublished).

Roles and responsibilities

State and Territory governments fund child protection, out-of-home care, family support (including intensive family support) and other relevant services that may be delivered by the government or the non-government sector. State and Territory community services departments are responsible for investigating and assessing reports to the department, referring families to support services and intervening

where necessary (including making court applications when an order is required to protect a child and placing children in out-of-home care).

Other areas of government also have a role in child protection and provide services for children who have come into contact with community services departments for protective reasons. Examples include:

- police services, which investigate serious allegations of child abuse and neglect, particularly criminal matters, and may also work on child protection assessments with State and Territory community services departments.

- courts, which decide whether a child will be placed on an order.

- education and child care services, which provide services for these children and also conduct mandatory reporting and protective behaviours education in some jurisdictions.

- health services, which support the assessment of child protection matters and deliver therapeutic, counselling and other services.

Size and scope

The child protection system

Child protection legislation, policies and practices vary among jurisdictions, but the broad processes in the child protection system are similar (figure 15.1).[1] State and Territory community services departments are advised of concerns about the wellbeing of children through reports to the department. Reports may be made by people mandated to report (such as medical practitioners, police services, and school teachers and principals) or by other members of the community. These reports are then assessed and classified as child protection notifications, child concern reports or matters requiring some other kind of response. The most common sources of notification for finalised investigations in 2002-03 were school personnel, police, parents and guardians, other relatives and friends, and neighbours (AIHW 2003).

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[1] Child protection services, care and protection orders and out-of-home care relate to children aged 0–17 years. Rates of children in notifications, investigations and substantiations, however, are calculated for children aged 0–16 years, given differences in jurisdictions' legislation, policies and practices regarding children aged 17 years.

Figure 15.1 **Child protection system**

Reports of concern about wellbeing of child received and assessed

Other kind of response

Child protection notification recorded and assessed

Dealt with by other means

Child protection investigation conducted

Notification not substantiated

Substantiation

Other service provided (*including out-of-home care*)

Care and protection order given
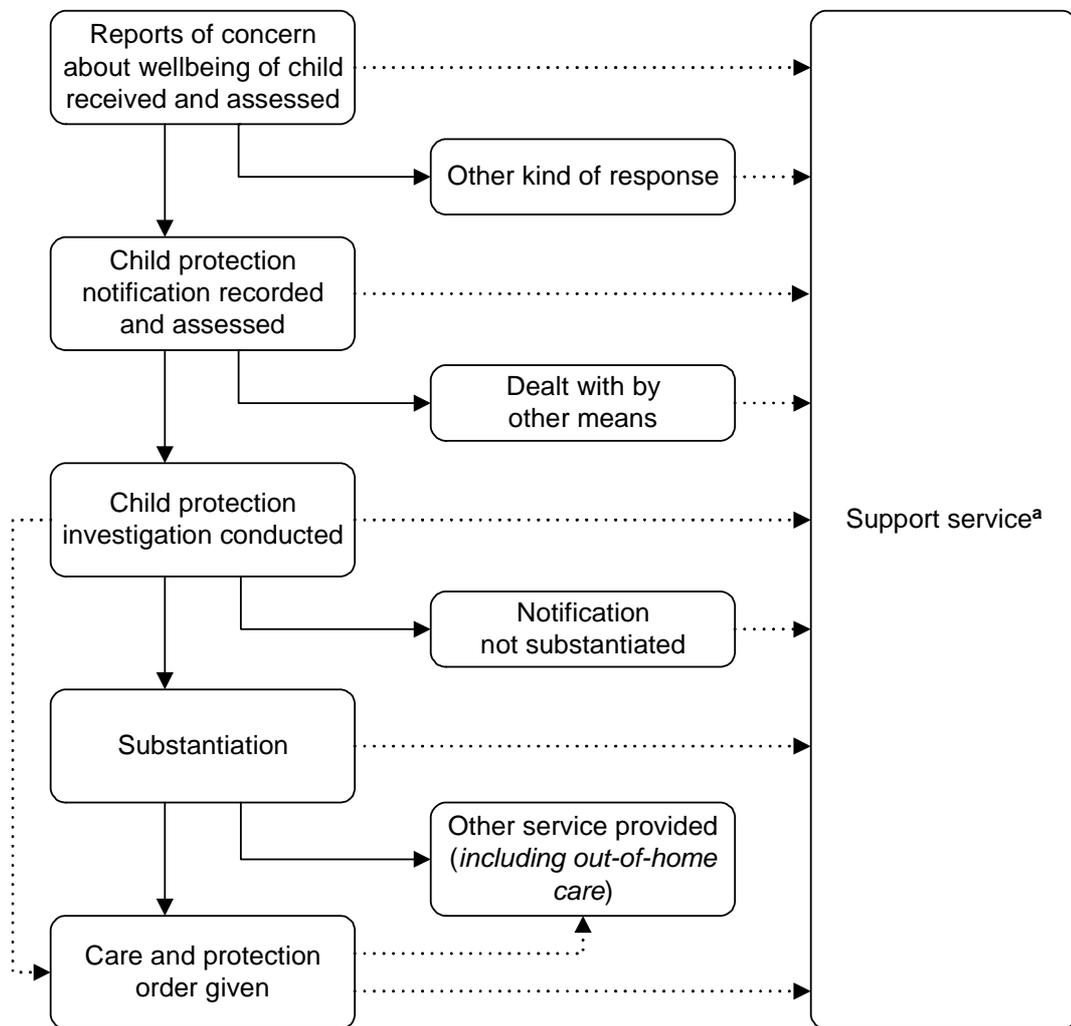
Support service[a]

Note: Dashed lines indicate that clients may or may not receive these services, depending on need.

[a] Support services include family support or family preservation services provided by community service departments and referrals to other agencies.

Jurisdictions count notifications at different points in the response to a report, ranging from the point of initial contact with the source of the report to the end of a screening and decision making process. This means that the number of notifications is not strictly comparable across jurisdictions.

Notification

All jurisdictions, apart from Victoria, the ACT and the NT, screen each incoming report before deciding whether it will be designated and counted as a notification, thus reducing the proportion of reports that become notifications. WA and Tasmania undertake a further screening process designed to differentiate between

reports about harm/maltreatment and child and family concerns. This reduces the number of notifications in that only reports about child harm/ maltreatment are the subject of this report.

In all jurisdictions, notifications are investigated when deemed appropriate, based on the policies and practices in that jurisdiction. Once it has been decided that an investigation is required, the investigation process is similar across jurisdictions. The community services department may obtain further information about the child and his or her family by checking information systems for any previous history, undertaking discussion/case planning with agencies and individuals, interviewing/sighting the child and/or interviewing the caregivers/parents. At a minimum, the child is sighted whenever practicable, and the child's circumstances and needs are assessed. This investigation process determines whether the notification is substantiated or not substantiated (figure 15.1).

Although notifications are defined differently across jurisdictions, around 130 224 children were the subject of child protection notifications in 2002-03. Nationally, the rate of notifications per 1000 children in the population aged 0–16 years was 28.8 in 2002-03. Across jurisdictions, the rate was highest in NSW (43.2) and lowest in WA (4.7) (table 15A.8).

Indigenous children

Nationally, 12 542 Indigenous children and 117 682 non-Indigenous children were the subject of child protection notifications in 2002-03. The rate of notifications per 1000 children in the population aged 0–16 years was 63.1 for Indigenous children and 27.2 for non-Indigenous children (table 15A.8).

Substantiation

The criteria for substantiation vary across jurisdictions. In some jurisdictions, a notification is substantiated when an incident of abuse or neglect has occurred or is likely to occur; in others, it is substantiated when the child has been harmed or is likely to be harmed, or when there is a combination of the two.[2]

If an investigation results in substantiation, then intervention by the relevant community services department may be needed to protect the child. This

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[2] In the past, child protection legislation and policy focused on the identification and investigation of narrowly defined incidents that were broadly grouped as types of abuse or neglect. Across all jurisdictions, the focus is shifting away from the actions of parents and guardians, towards the outcomes for the child, and the identification and investigation of actual harm to the child and the child's needs.

intervention can take a number of forms, including referral to other services, supervision, counselling or recourse to the court, or placement in out-of-home care.

Across Australia, 30 784 children were the subject of a substantiation in 2002-03. The rate of children who were the subject of a substantiation per 1000 children in the population aged 0–16 years was 6.8. Across jurisdictions, this rate ranged from 10.1 per 1000 in Queensland to 1.8 per 1000 in Tasmania (table 15A.8).

Indigenous children

Nationally in 2001-02, 4325 Indigenous children and 26 450 non-Indigenous children were the subject of a substantiation. The rate of children who were the subject of a substantiation per 1000 children in the population aged 0–16 years was 21.8 for Indigenous children and 6.1 for non-Indigenous children (table 15A.8).

Care and protection orders

Although child protection substantiations are often resolved without the need for a court order (which is usually a last resort), recourse to the court may take place at any point in the child protection investigation process (figure 15.1). The types of order available vary across jurisdictions. Across Australia, 22 130 children were on care and protection orders at 30 June 2003. The rate of children on care and protection orders per 1000 children in the population aged 0–17 years was 4.6. Across jurisdictions this rate ranged from 5.6 per 1000 in NSW to 3.0 per 1000 in WA (table 15A.8).

Indigenous children

Nationally, 4803 Indigenous children and 17 327 non-Indigenous children were on care and protection orders at 30 June 2003. The rate of children on care and protection orders per 1000 children in the population aged 0–17 years was 23.1 for Indigenous children and 3.8 for non-Indigenous children (table 15A.8).

Out-of-home care

Out-of-home care is one of a range of services provided to families and children where there is a need to provide safe care for a child. The current emphasis in policy and practice is to maintain the child within the family if possible and to place a child in out-of-home care only if this will improve the outcome for the child. If it is necessary to remove the child from his or her home, then placement with the wider family or community is sought where possible, particularly in the case of

Indigenous children (AIHW 1999). Continued emphasis is being placed on improving case planning and case management processes, to facilitate the safe return home of children in out-of-home care and to maximise case workers' contact time with children and families.

Across Australia, 20 297 children were in out-of-home care at 30 June 2003. The rate of children in out-of-home care per 1000 children in the population aged 0–17 years was 4.2. Across jurisdictions, this ranged from 5.4 per 1000 in NSW to 3.3 per 1000 in WA (table 15A.11).

Indigenous children

Nationally, 4750 Indigenous children and 15 547 non-Indigenous children were in out-of-home care at 30 June 2003. The rate of children in out-of-home care per 1000 children in the population aged 0–17 years was 22.9 for Indigenous children and 3.4 for non-Indigenous children (table 15A.11).

Funding

Recurrent expenditure on child protection and out-of-home care services was at least $899.0 million across Australia in 2002-03 — a real increase of $74.1 million (9.0 per cent) from the 2001-02 expenditure. Nationally, out-of-home care services accounted for the majority (60.4 per cent, or $542.9 million) of this expenditure. Some jurisdictions, however, have difficulty in separating expenditure on child protection from expenditure on out-of-home care services (table 15A.1).

Nationally, real recurrent expenditure per child aged 0–17 years was $187 in 2002-03. This varied across jurisdictions, from $227 in NSW to $120 in SA (figure 15.2). Real recurrent expenditure on child protection and out-of-home care services per child aged 0–17 years increased in all jurisdictions between 2001-02 and 2002-03.

It is an objective of the Review to report comparable estimates of costs. Ideally, the full range of costs to government would be determined on a comparable basis across jurisdictions. Where the full costs cannot be counted, costs should be estimated on a consistent basis across jurisdictions. In the area of child protection, however, there are differences across jurisdictions in the expenditure reported. (Table 15A.4 identifies the level of consistency across jurisdictions for a number of expenditure items.) The scope of child protection systems also varies across jurisdictions, and expenditure on some services may be included for some jurisdictions and not for others (see page 15.6 for a discussion of the child protection system).

Figure 15.2   **Real recurrent expenditure on child protection and out-of-home care services (2002-03 dollars)**
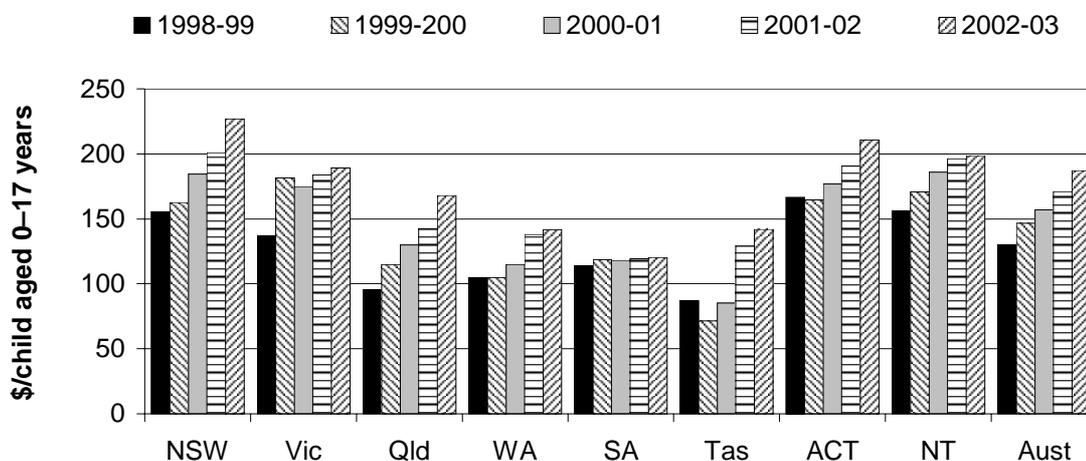
Source: State and Territory governments (unpublished); table 15A.1.

15.2   Policy developments in child protection and out-of-home care services

Most jurisdictions are implementing child protection reforms — including the introduction of new legislation — to enhance the safety of children and ensure children and families receive the types of service most likely to meet their needs.

In NSW, legislation that was partially proclaimed in December 2000 provides staff with greater flexibility in responding to a report of child abuse. It also shifts the focus to the children and young people most at risk, and emphasises a search for early solutions through cooperation between the Government and community agencies. Work has continued on the staged proclamation of the legislation. In December 2002, the NSW Government announced a significant increase in resources for the Department of Community Services over the next five years. This increase included additional funding for the development of prevention and early intervention services models to support the legislative principle of least intrusive intervention into the lives of children, young people and their families, as well as for work with vulnerable families, child protection and out-of-home care.

During 2002-03, Victoria undertook a comprehensive examination of the home-based care system, which resulted in the publication of *Public Parenting — A review of home-based care in Victoria*. Work also commenced on a Department of Human Services flagship project examining local, national and international literature, service reforms and data on the operation of child protection systems. In

June 2003, the Victorian Government announced a review of the *Children and Young Persons Act 1989*.

In June 2002, the Queensland Government announced its cornerstone policy for vulnerable children, young people and their families: *Queensland Families: Future Directions*. A range of initiatives are being trialed with the aim of preventing entry, or further entry, to the statutory child protection system. Trials include an increased range of differential responses to notifications, moving away from a predominantly investigative approach, to allow staff to better tailor responses to the needs of the child and family through a greater emphasis on family support. A *Queensland Government Strategic Framework for Child Protection* and accompanying action plan were developed to provide a foundation for policy and service development across Queensland Government agencies. The Government also gave a range of undertakings to improve social and educational outcomes of children in care, through the *Government Response to Recommendations: Educating Children and Young People in the Care of the State*.

In 2002, the Western Australia Government received the findings of two major reports: the Inquiry into Response by Government Agencies to Complaints of Family Violence and Child Abuse in Aboriginal Communities (Gordon Report) and Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse: Evidence and Options (Harries Report). In response to these reports, new resources were committed and a process of public sector reform was initiated to ensure Government agencies coordinate their efforts in dealing with child abuse and family violence more effectively. A major focus is on developing the capacity of the community to provide for the safety and wellbeing of children, young people and families. Additionally, the Department for Community Development began working with the Department of Education and Training and the CREATE Foundation (WA Branch) on a pilot project to improve education outcomes for children and young people in care.

In SA, a major review of child protection legislation, policies and practices has been undertaken by Robyn Layton, QC. The review's recommendations advocate a whole-of-government approach to the protection of children, with an emphasis on early intervention, improved interagency responses to children and families, and establishing the foundation for improved governance. The recommendations for systems enhancement are currently being considered.

In Tasmania, the implementation of the *Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act 1997* has resulted in greater emphasis on the provision of support and assistance to families in the care and protection of their children in preference to legal intervention. Where legal intervention is necessary, serious consideration is given to preserving and strengthening the relationship between the child and their family, not withdrawing the child from their environment, culture or

neighbourhood, not interrupting the child's education or employment and preserving and enhancing the child's sense of ethnic, religious of cultural identity.

The ACT has had a policy shift — in line with its *Children and Young People Act 1999* — away from substantiating an event or occurrence in a child's life and towards substantiating significant harm to the child. This means that while harm might have occurred, it is necessary before substantiation to establish that the harm has had or will have a significant impact on the development or wellbeing of the child. This approach may also lead to lower numbers of investigations being substantiated. The Act, policies and service delivery models are under review.

15.3 Framework of child protection and out-of-home care services performance indicators

The framework of performance indicators for child protection and out-of-home care services is based on shared government objectives (box 15.3).

Box 15.3 **Objectives for child protection and out-of-home care services**

The aims of child protection services are to:

- protect children and young people at risk of harm within their family or in circumstances in which the family of the child or young person does not have the capacity to protect them.

- assist families to protect children and young people.

The aim of out-of-home care services is to provide quality care for children and young people aged 17 years or under who cannot live with their parents for reasons of safety or family crisis.

Child protection and out-of-home care services should be provided in an efficient and effective manner.

The goal of child protection is to maintain the child within the family wherever this can be safely achieved. In some situations, however, it may be necessary to place the child in out-of-home care. The framework identifies key result areas that indicate the extent to which these broad objectives are met (figure 15.3).

The performance indicator framework and those indicators that are comparable in the 2004 Report are shown in figure 15.3. For data that are not considered strictly comparable, the text includes relevant caveats and supporting commentary. Chapter 1 discusses data comparability from a Report-wide perspective (see section 1.6).

Figure 15.3 **Performance indicators for child protection and out-of-home care services**

Key to indicators

Text	Provided on a comparable basis for this Report
Text	Information not complete or not strictly comparable
Text	Yet to be developed or not collected for this Report
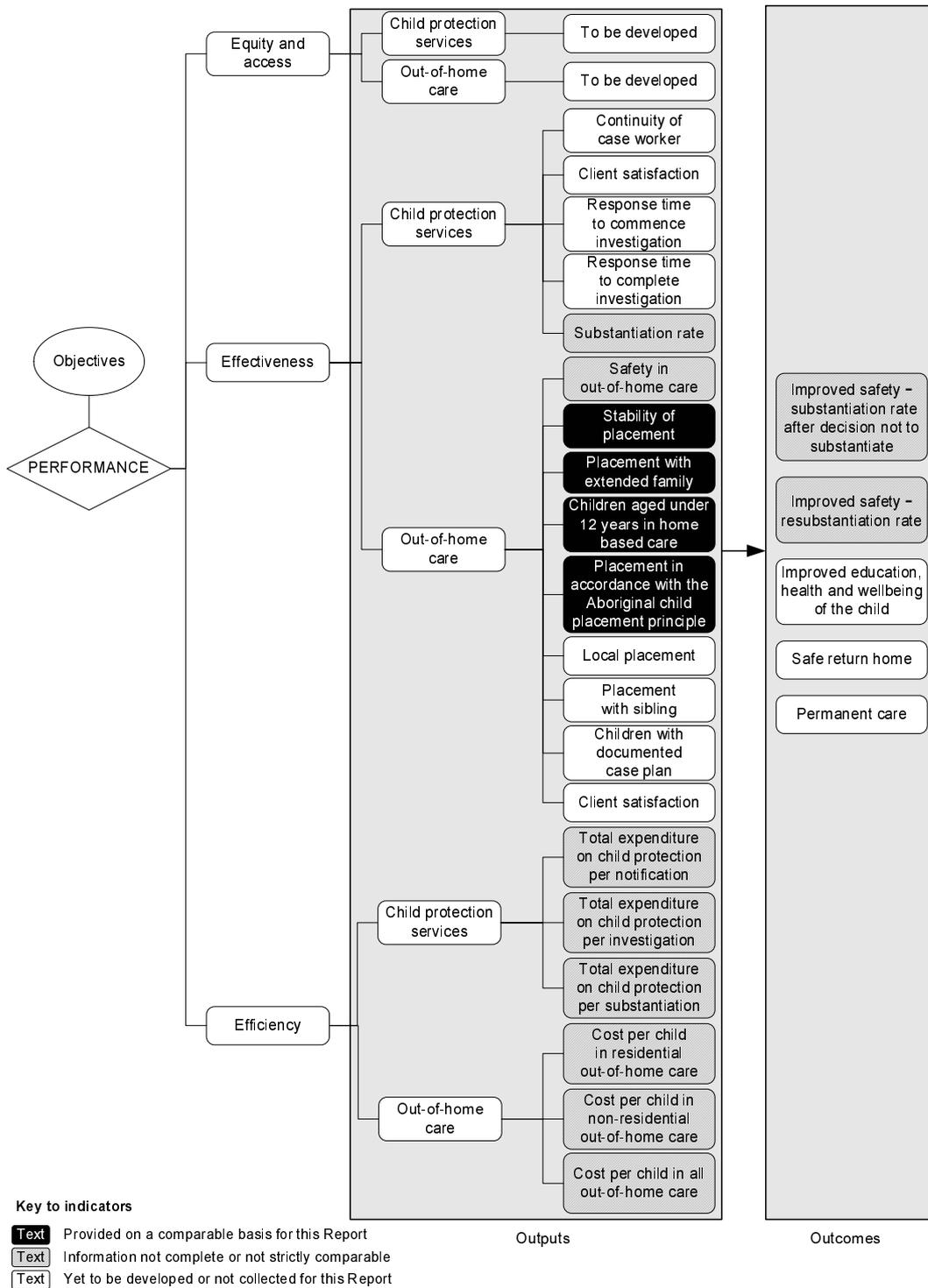
15.4 Key child protection and out-of-home care services performance indicator results

Different delivery contexts, locations and types of client may affect the effectiveness and efficiency of child protection services. Appendix A contains detailed statistics that may assist in interpreting the performance indicators.

For NSW, 2002-03 data for child protection notifications, investigations and substantiations differ significantly from data in previous years. This difference is a direct result of changes to the Department of Community Services client information system which were implemented to reflect amendments to legislation and associated practice changes. For this reason, NSW child protection data for 2002-03 are not comparable with the data for previous years

Outputs

Effectiveness

Child protection services

Substantiation rate

The substantiation rate (targeting) is conceptually difficult to measure. The substantiation rate (the proportion of finalised investigations that result in substantiation) attempts to measure the effectiveness of targeting of investigations, in terms of the human and financial cost of investigation where no harm has occurred. Decisions on targeting must weigh up the investigation costs against the cost of failing to investigate a case where harm has occurred. The substantiation rate provides information on only one aspect of targeting — that is, the proportion of investigations that substantiated harm. It provides no information on cases that were not investigated but for which an investigation would have substantiated harm.

Annual fluctuations in the proportion of finalised investigations that were substantiated within jurisdictions may be due to a number of factors including policy, funding and practice change. For instance, changes in the proportion of substantiations in particular jurisdictions may reflect policy changes such as better targeting of investigative resources, the impact of mandatory reporting or other factors such as increased community awareness and willingness to notify suspected instances of child abuse, neglect or harm. Differences in the substantiation rate across jurisdictions (when comparable data are available) and changes over time

within jurisdictions are best used, therefore, to prompt further analysis, rather than to be considered as definitive performance information.

Data that are comparable across jurisdictions were not available for this indicator because definitions of substantiation vary across jurisdictions, but data are comparable within each jurisdiction over time unless otherwise stated (figure 15.4).

In 2002-03, the proportion of finalised child protection investigations that were substantiated increased in NSW, Queensland and the NT, and declined in all other jurisdictions, compared with 2001-02 (figure 15.4).

Figure 15.4 **Proportion of finalised child protection investigations that were substantiated[a, b]**
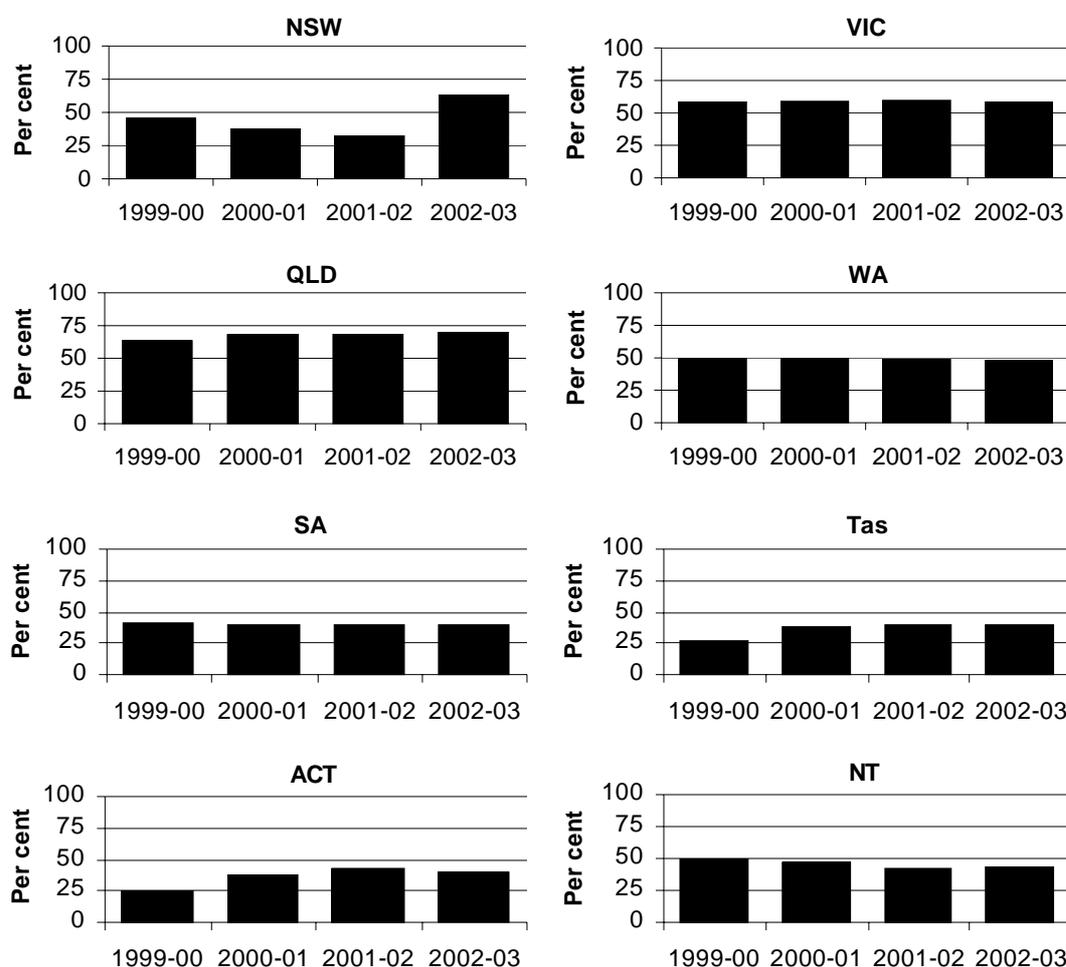
a Data are not comparable across jurisdictions because definitions of substantiation vary significantly. Consequently, rates should not be compared across jurisdictions. **b** For NSW, the data for 2002-03 and previous years cannot be compared. In 2002-03 NSW implemented a modification to the data system to support legislation and associated practice changes which would make any comparison inaccurate.

Sources: AIHW *Child protection notifications, investigations and substantiations, Australia* data collection (unpublished); tables 15A.30, 15A.47, 15A.64, 15A.81, 15A.98, 15A.115, 15A.132 and 15A.149.

Out-of-home care

Safety in out-of-home care

One indicator of the effectiveness of out-of-home care is the safety of clients in care situations. Queensland, WA, Tasmania and the ACT could provide data in 2002-03 on the incidence of child protection substantiations where the person believed responsible for harm or risk to the child was either the carer or another person living in the household. The rate of these substantiations was generally less than 1 per cent, except in Queensland where it was 4.3 per cent (table 15A.20). Data are not comparable across jurisdictions, as a result of differences in policy and recording.

Stability of placement

Stability of placement for children placed away from their family for protective reasons is an important indicator of service quality, particularly for those children who require long term placements. Many children will have more than one placement for good reasons (for example, an initial placement followed by a longer term placement). Data were collected on the number of different placements for children on a care and protection order who exited out-of-home care in 2002-03. Data were grouped according to the length of time in care (less than 12 months and 12 months or more).

In all jurisdictions except SA and the ACT, more than 85 per cent of the children on a care and protection order who exited care after less than 12 months experienced only one or two placements in 2002-03. The proportion of children experiencing only one or two placements ranged from 90.9 per cent in WA to 56.3 per cent in the ACT (figure 15.5). (No 2002-03 data for Tasmania were available.)

Across jurisdictions, children who had been in out-of-home care longer tended to have had more placements. The proportion of children exiting care in 2002-03 after 12 months or more who had experienced one or two placements ranged from 79.0 per cent in NSW to 29.4 per cent in the NT (figure 15.6). (No 2002-03 data for Tasmania were available.)

Figure 15.5   **Children on a care and protection order and exiting care after less than 12 months, by number of different placements, 2002-03**[a, b, c]
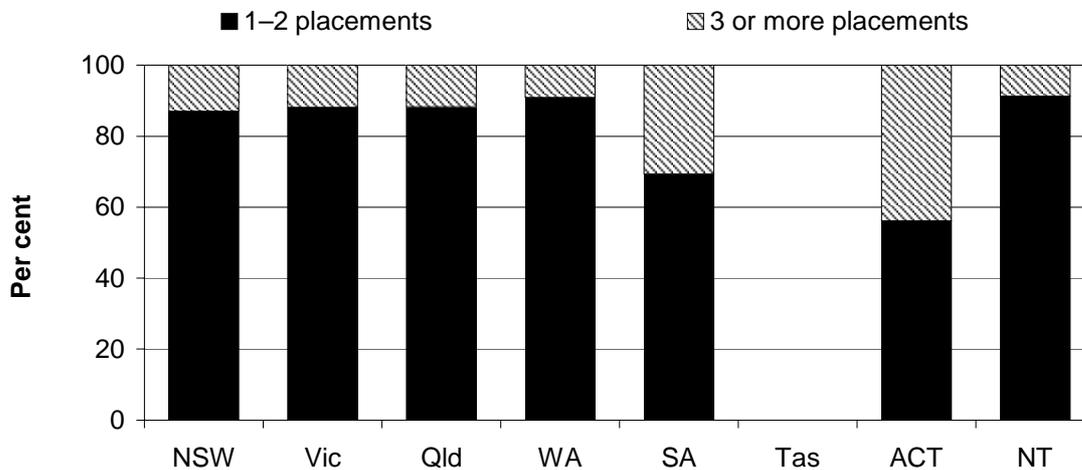
a Data refer to children exiting care in 2002-03. **b** Out-of-home care data are not the same for each State and Territory. Refer to footnotes in the source table for information about what each jurisdiction's data include. **c** Data for Tasmania not available.

Source: AIHW *Children in out-of-home care, Australia* data collection (unpublished); table 15A.19.

Figure 15.6   **Children on a care and protection order and exiting care after 12 months or more, by number of different care placements, 2002-03**[a, b, c]
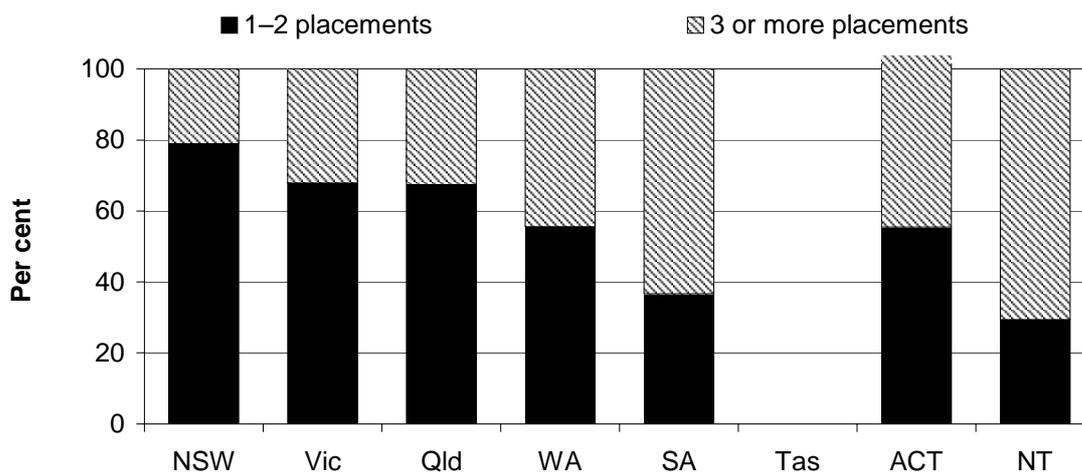

a Data refer to children exiting care in 2002-03. **b** Out-of-home care data are not the same for each State and Territory. Refer to footnotes in the source table for information about what each jurisdiction's data include. **c** Data for Tasmania not available.

Source: AIHW *Children in out-of-home care, Australia* data collection (unpublished); table 15A.19.

Placement with extended family

The type of placement is another indicator of the quality of child placement. Placing children with their relatives or kin is generally preferred for children in out-of-home care. The proportion of children placed with relatives or kin at 30 June 2003 ranged from 57.1 per cent in NSW to 13.9 per cent in SA. The proportion of children placed with relatives or kin in 2002-03 was greater for Indigenous children than for non-Indigenous children in all jurisdictions except Tasmania (figure 15.7).

Figure 15.7 **Proportion of children in out-of-home care placed with relatives/kin, by Indigenous status, 30 June[a]**
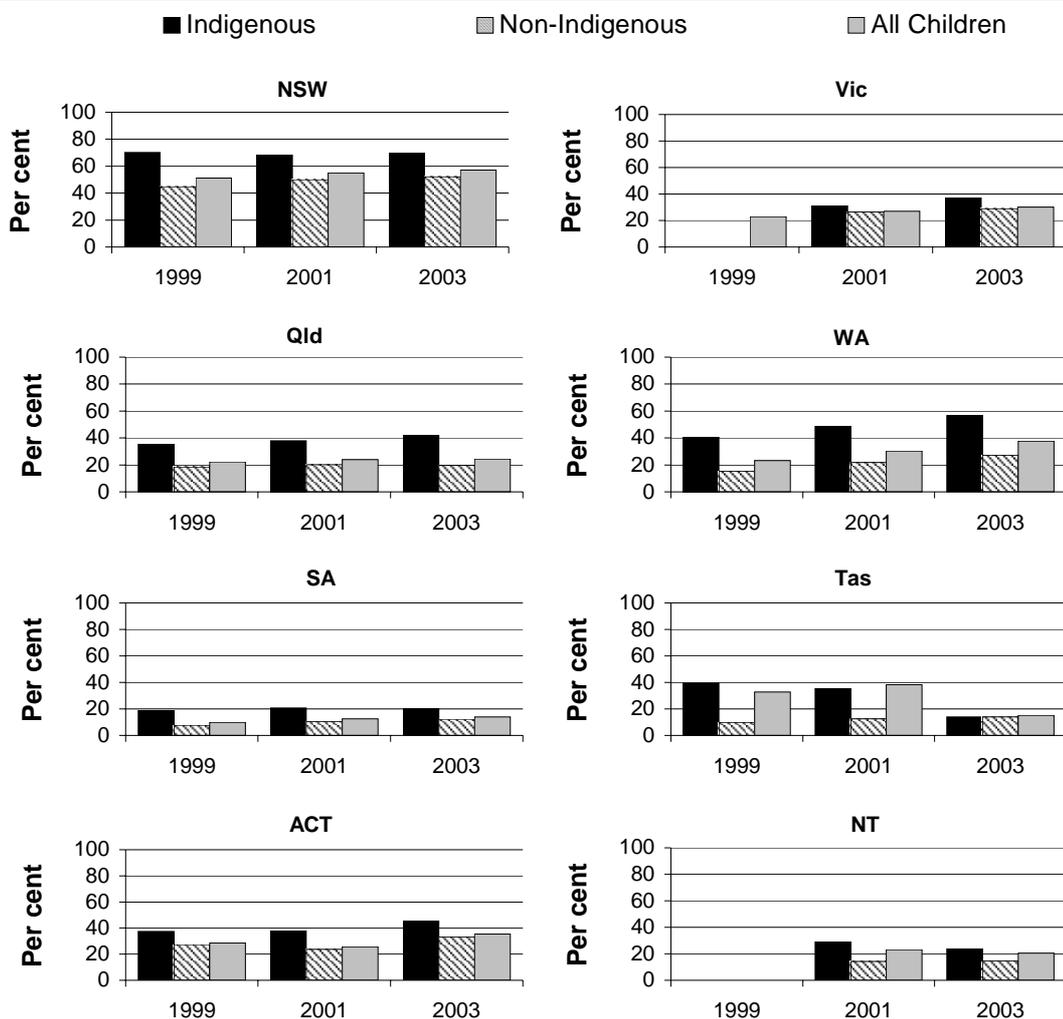

a Victoria could not provide data by Indigenous status before 2001.

Sources: AIHW *Children in out-of-home care, Australia* data collection (unpublished); tables 15A.36, 15A.53, 15A.70, 15A.87, 15A.104, 15A.121, 15A.138 and 15A.155.

Children aged under 12 years in home-based care

Placing children in home-based care is generally considered to be in their best interests, particularly for younger children. The proportion of children aged under 12 years who were placed in home-based care at 30 June 2003 ranged from 99.4 per cent in Queensland to 73.3 per cent in Tasmania. In all jurisdictions except Tasmania and the NT, the proportion of children aged under 12 years who were placed in home-based care was broadly similar to that of non-Indigenous children. In Tasmania, a greater proportion of non-Indigenous children were placed in home-based care. In the NT, a greater proportion of Indigenous children were placed in home-based care (figure 15.8).

Figure 15.8 **Proportion of children aged under 12 years in out-of-home care and in a home based placement, by Indigenous status, 30 June 2003**
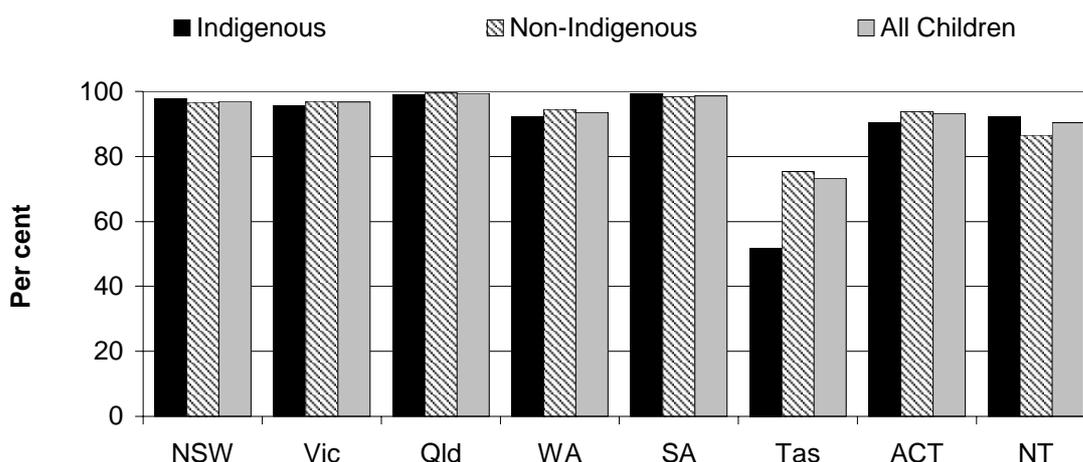
Source: AIHW *Children in out-of-home care, Australia* data collection (unpublished); table 15A.18.

Placement in accordance with the Aboriginal Child Placement Principle

According to the Aboriginal Child Placement Principle (NLRC 1997), the following hierarchy or placement preference should be pursued for Indigenous children:

• placement with the child's extended family (which includes Indigenous and non-Indigenous relatives/kin)

• placement within the child's Indigenous community

• placement with other Indigenous people.

All jurisdictions have adopted this principle, either in legislation or policy. The proportion of Indigenous children in out-of-home care at 30 June 2003 placed in

accordance with the principle ranged from 86.7 per cent in NSW to 16.7 per cent in Tasmania (figure 15.9).

The preferred placement option outlined under the Aboriginal Child Placement Principle is placement with the child's extended family. The proportion of Indigenous children in out-of-home care placed with extended family at 30 June 2003 ranged from 70.5 per cent in NSW to 14.3 per cent in Tasmania. Placement with other Indigenous care providers (the child's Indigenous community or other Indigenous people) also complies with the principle. The proportion placed with other Indigenous care providers at 30 June 2003 ranged from 44.8 per cent in SA to 2.4 per cent in Tasmania (table 15A.17).

Figure 15.9 **Placement of Indigenous children in out-of-home care, 30 June 2003[a, b, c]**
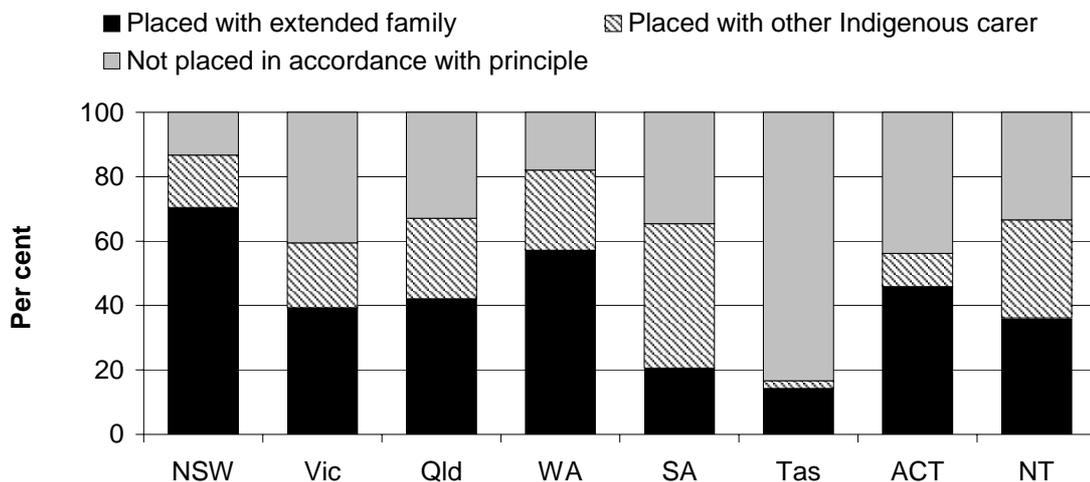
a Excludes Indigenous children living independently and those whose living arrangements were unknown. **b** 'Placed with another Indigenous carer' includes those living in Indigenous residential care. **c** Note that data for Tasmania and the ACT relate to a small number of Indigenous children (43 and 48 respectively) in care at 30 June 2003.

Source: AIHW *Children in out-of-home care, Australia* data collection (unpublished); table 15A.17.

Efficiency

Understanding the efficiency of the child protection systems that they administer helps State and Territory governments to identify the key cost drivers of their systems and to weigh the efficacy of options for addressing child protection issues.

Challenges in reporting efficiency for child protection systems

Reporting comparable and meaningful efficiency data for child protection services is problematic for a number of reasons, including:

- *different systems and priorities across jurisdictions*: Child protection systems in Australia have evolved independently under the auspices of State and Territory governments (section 15.1). This has resulted in variations in the processes and emphasis placed on different service delivery paradigms (the different approaches to diversionary options, for example, see figure 15.1).

- *limitations of current information systems*: In most jurisdictions, it is not easy to explicitly identify resources expended on child protection services, out-of-home care services and other support services for families. This is partly due to the historic structure of information systems and the embedding of the government agencies responsible for child protection issues within larger community services departments. (Table 15A.4 identifies the level of consistency in expenditure data across jurisdictions.)

In response to these difficulties, in April 2002 the Review initiated a project to develop a method for annual reporting of efficiency data for a national framework of protection and support pathways (box 15.4). Although the framework was endorsed by all jurisdictions, refinement of counting rules and changes to information systems will be necessary before full reporting is possible for all jurisdictions. Partial reporting against the framework is anticipated for the 2005 Report.

Box 15.4   **The pathways project — outcomes**

The pathways project developed and tested a model which will ultimately allow jurisdictions to calculate more meaningful, comparable and robust efficiency measures (the 'pathways method'). The model is based on a 'top down' application of the activity-based costing method. A set of eight national pathways has been developed as a high level representation of the services that a protection and support client could receive in any jurisdiction. Each pathway consists of a number of common activity groups for which an operational and non-operational resource allocation can be made. These activity groups act as the 'building blocks' for each of the pathways. The aggregate cost of each activity group within the pathway will allow for the unit cost of an individual pathway to be determined. The activity groups are:

- receipt and assessment of initial information about a potential protection and support issue

- provision of initial family support services

- provision of intensive family support services

- secondary information gathering and assessment

- provision of short-term protective intervention and coordination services

- seeking a court order

- provision of longer-term protective intervention, support and coordination services

- provision of out-of-home care services.

Before reporting against the activity groups can be undertaken with confidence, further refinement of activity group definitions and counting rules is required. Over the coming 12 months, the Review's Protection and Support Working Group will continue its development work in these areas. Implementation of the model has the potential to significantly improve the quality of national reporting of protection and support services efficiency measures.

Source: SCRCSSP (2003)

Limitations of reported indicators

A preferred efficiency indicator would relate expenditure on particular child protection activities to a measure of output of those activities. As discussed above, the pathways method is expected to deliver these data for future reports. In the interim, this Report includes broad proxy indicators for child protection and out-of-home care efficiency.

Issues with child protection efficiency indicators

Existing information systems prevent most jurisdictions from reporting data for child protection activities separately. Expenditure on activities associated with

notification, for example, cannot be easily disaggregated from total expenditure on child protection. As an interim measure, three broad (and imperfect) indicators of child protection efficiency are reported as proxies for child protection efficiency until implementation of the pathways method allows better reporting. These indicators were calculated by dividing total expenditure on child protection by the numbers of notifications, investigations and substantiations. They do not reflect expenditure per notification, expenditure per investigation or expenditure per substantiation, so need to be interpreted with care. The three different indicators are:

- total expenditure on child protection per notification

- total expenditure on child protection per investigation

- total expenditure on child protection per substantiation.

While these indicators may provide some insight into the differing approaches across jurisdictions, they do not represent unit costs and cannot be added together.

Issues with out-of-home care efficiency indicators

While some jurisdictions could report expenditure on residential and non-residential care separately, most were not able to provide comparable data on the total weeks/days of residential and non-residential care provided over the year. The number of children in care at 30 June is used as a proxy for the number weeks/days of residential and non-residential care provided until better data are available. This allows for the following three proxy efficiency indicators for out-of-home care:

- annual expenditure on residential out-of-home care per child in residential care at 30 June

- annual expenditure on non-residential out-of-home care per child in non-residential care at 30 June

- annual expenditure on all out-of-home care per child in all types of out-of-home care at 30 June.

Although more robust than the child protection indicators, these indicators still need to be treated with caution. Specifically, they do not represent the cost of providing a week/day of out-of-home care, or of providing out-of-home care to an individual child. Basing expenditure per child on the number of children in care at 30 June overstates the cost per child, because significantly more children are in care during a year than at a point in time. In addition, some children may have longer periods in care than others have, which may lead to a significant overstatement of the actual cost of providing out-of-home care to an individual child.

Child protection efficiency indicator results

Although data were available for all jurisdictions, care needs to be taken when interpreting results. Tasmania's relatively high expenditure is attributed to the fact that the number of notifications, investigations and substantiations counted for this Report represent child harm/maltreatment activity data, which is only one component of child protection activity. The ACT's relatively high expenditure may relate to the fixed costs associated with maintaining a child protection system and the economies of scale available to other jurisdictions.

Total expenditure on child protection per notification

Total expenditure on child protection per notification in 2002-03 ranged from $4760 in WA to $1326 in NSW (excluding Tasmania and the ACT) (figure 15.10a).

Total expenditure on child protection per investigation

Total expenditure on child protection per investigation in 2002-03 ranged from $7061 in Victoria to $2767 in Queensland (excluding Tasmania and the ACT) (figure 15.10b).

Total expenditure on child protection per substantiation

Total expenditure on child protection per substantiation in 2002-03 ranged from $17 899 in the NT to $5938 in Queensland (excluding Tasmania and the ACT) (figure 15.10c).

Figure 15.10 **Child protection efficiency indicators (2002-03 dollars)a, b c**

■ 1998-99   ▨ 1999-2000   ▢ 2000-01   ▤ 2001-02   ▨ 2002-03

(a) Annual real recurrent expenditure on all child protection activities per notification

(b) Annual real recurrent expenditure on all child protection activities per investigation

(c) Annual real recurrent expenditure on all child protection activities per substantiation
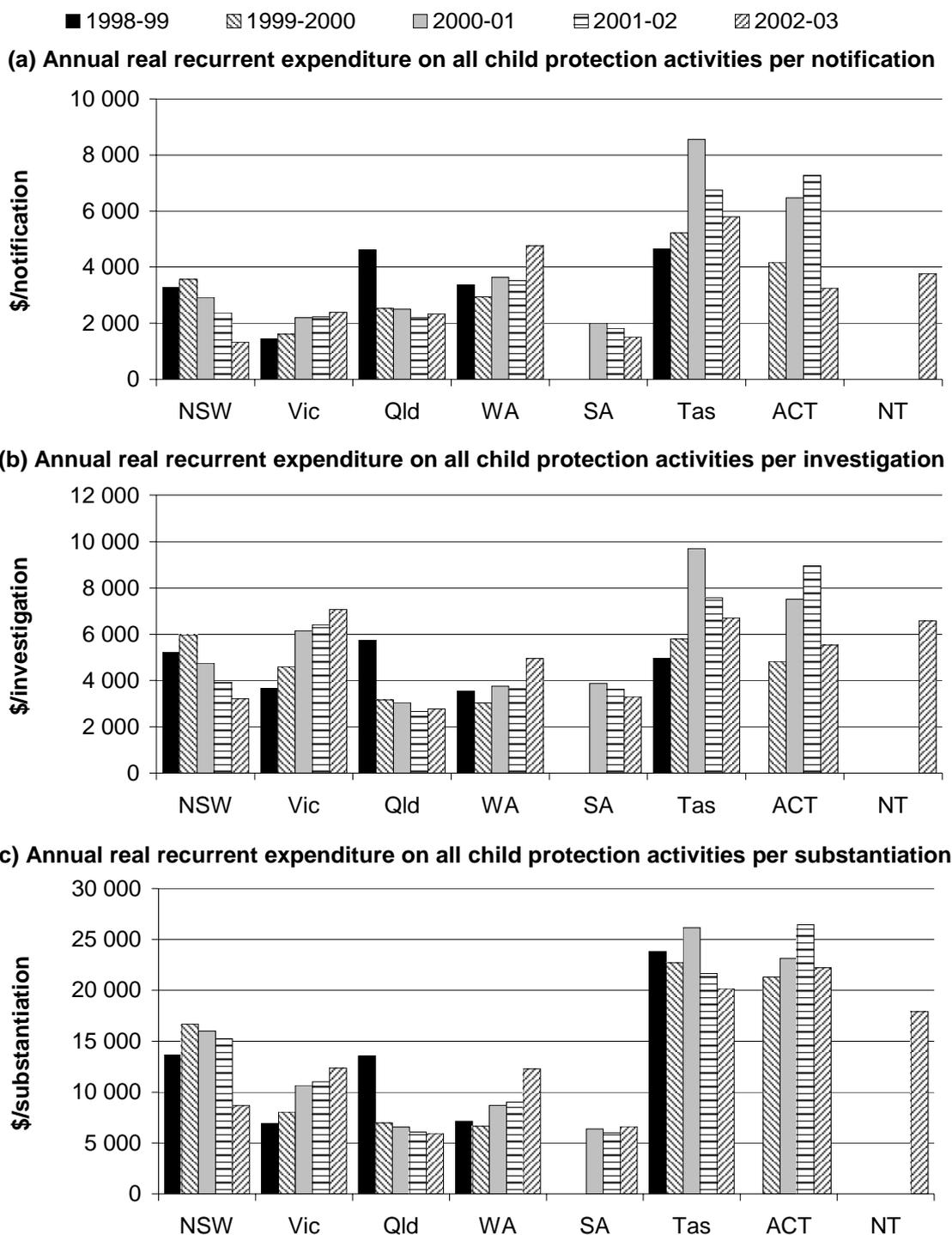
a Real expenditure based on ABS GDP price deflator 2002-03 = 100 (table A.26). **b** These data cannot be interpreted as the 'expenditure per notification', 'expenditure per investigation' or 'expenditure per substantiation' because each is based on the total expenditure of all child protection activities. Differences across jurisdictions reflect the quantity of the three activities rather than a difference in unit costs. **c** NSW data for 2002-03 and previous years cannot be compared. NSW implemented a modification to the data system to support legislation and associated practice changes during 2002-03 which would make any comparison inaccurate.

Source: State and Territory governments (unpublished); table 15A.2.

Out-of-home care efficiency indicator results

Expenditure per child in residential out-of-home care

Victoria, WA, SA and the ACT could separate expenditure on out-of-home care into residential care and non-residential care. For those jurisdictions that provided data, expenditure on residential care at 30 June 2003 ranged from $148 625 per child in residential care in WA to $51 324 per child in residential care in the ACT at 30 June 2003 (figure 15.11a). (WA expenditure may be overstated because it includes corporate and policy costs, and funding to the non-government agencies).

Expenditure per child in non-residential out-of-home care

For those jurisdictions that provided data on non-residential care, expenditure ranged from $32 536 per child in non-residential care in the ACT to $15 512 per child in non-residential care in SA at 30 June 2003 (figure 15.11b).

Expenditure per child in all out-of-home care

All jurisdictions provided data for total expenditure on out-of-home care per child in care at 30 June 2003, which ranged from $35 759 in the WA to $17 517 in SA (figure 15.11c).

Figure 15.11 **Out-of-home care efficiency indicators (2002-03 dollars)[a, b, c]**

■ 1998-99   ▨ 1999-2000   ▧ 2000-01   ⊟ 2001-02   ▨ 2002-03

(a) Annual real expenditure on residential out-of-home care per child in residential out-of-home care at 30 June

(b) Annual real expenditure on non-residential out-of-home care per child in non-residential out-of-home care at 30 June

(c) Annual real expenditure on all out-of-home care per child in out-of-home care at 30 June
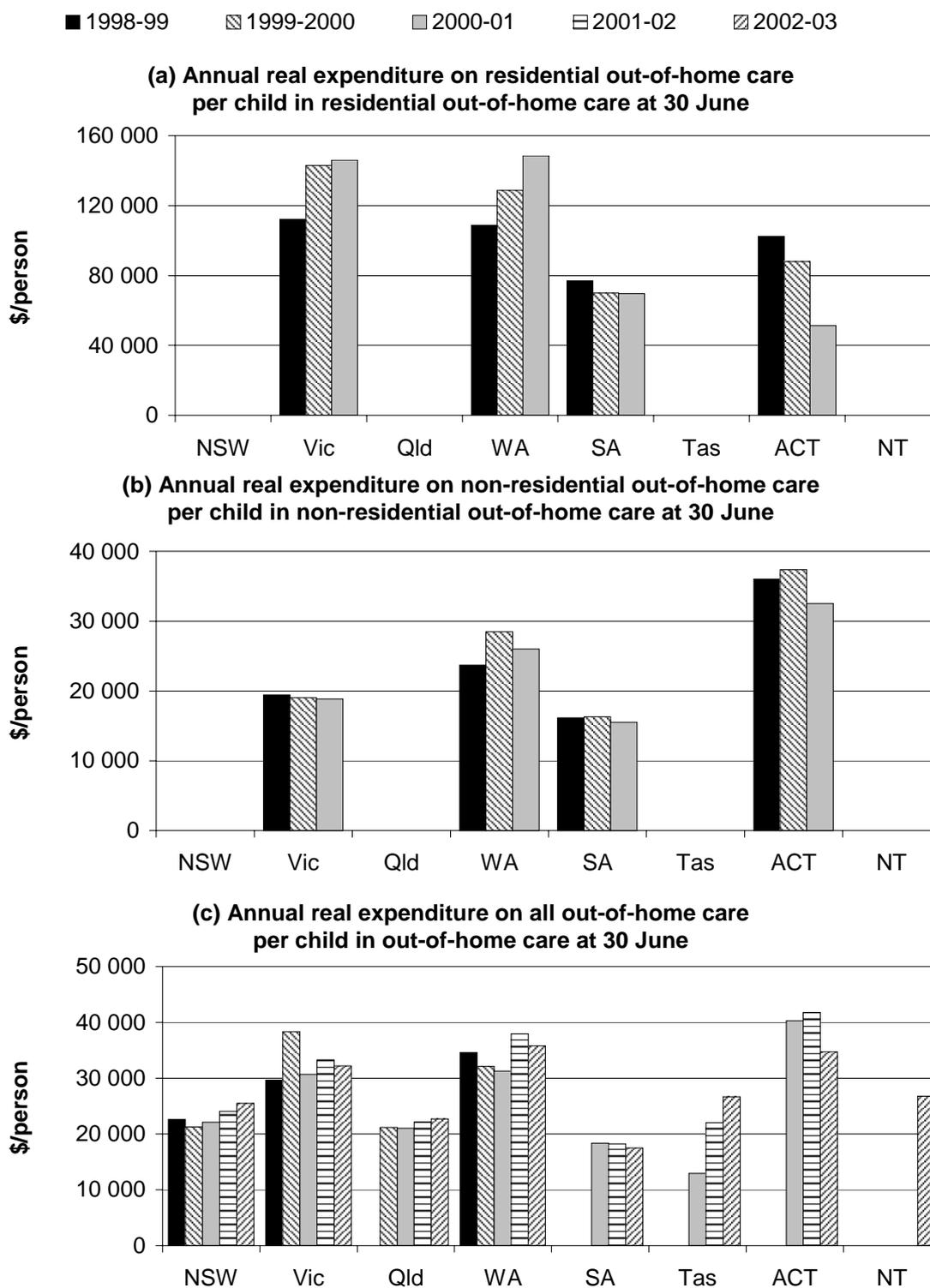
a Real expenditure based on ABS GDP price deflator 2002-03 = 100 (table A.26). **b** Using the number of children in care at 30 June rather than the total number of children in care during the year leads to a significant overestimation of costs for WA. **c** ACT data are affected by the higher subsidy levels for carers, higher award costs in the ACT due to a more recently negotiated agreement, and the effect of a small number of children in care with special high support needs.

*Source*: State and Territory governments (unpublished); table 15A.3.

Outcomes

Improved safety — substantiation rate after a decision not to substantiate

This indicator measures the proportion of children who were the subject of an investigation in the previous financial year that led to a decision not to substantiate, and who were subsequently the subject of a substantiation within three and 12 months of the initial decision not to substantiate. This indicator is important because it partly reveals the extent to which an investigation has not succeeded in identifying the risk of harm to a child who is subsequently the subject of substantiated harm. It may be the case, however, that a demonstrable risk of harm might not have existed in the first instance. As such, reported results may be affected by factors that are beyond the control of child protection services and circumstances may have changed after the initial decision not to substantiate was made.

Data that are comparable across jurisdictions were not available for this indicator, but data are comparable within each jurisdiction over time (figure 15.12).

In all jurisdictions except NSW, Victoria, Queensland and the ACT, the proportion of children who were the subject of an investigation within three months after a decision not to substantiate declined in 2001-02 compared with the previous year. The proportion of children who were the subject of an investigation within 12 months after a decision not to substantiate declined in 2001-02 compared with the previous year in all jurisdictions except NSW, Victoria, Queensland, WA and SA.

Figure 15.12 **Improved safety — substantiation rate after a decision not to substantiate[a]**
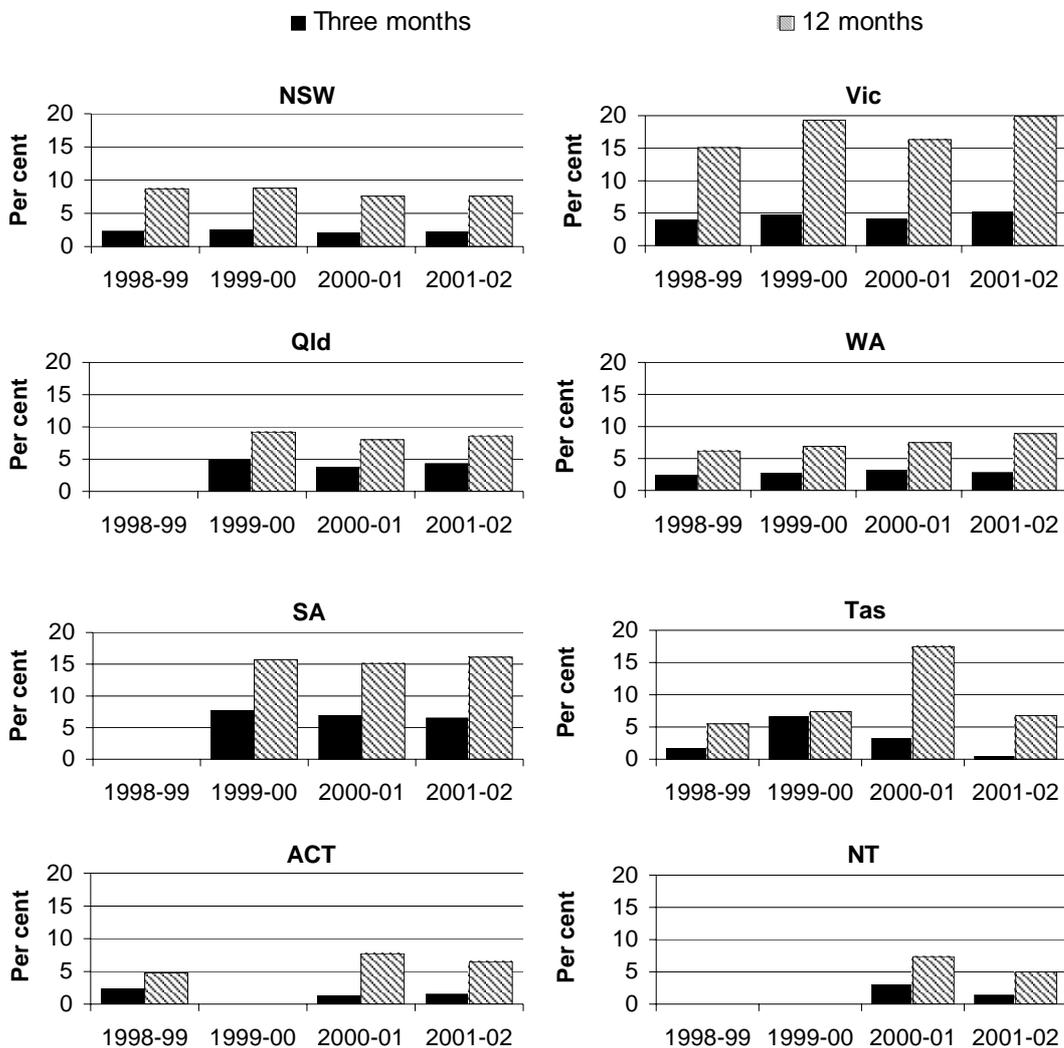
■ Three months   ▨ 12 months

NSW

Vic

Qld

WA

SA

Tas

ACT

NT

a Data are not comparable across jurisdictions because definitions of substantiation vary significantly. Consequently, rates can not be compared across jurisdictions.

Source: AIHW *Child protection notifications, investigations and substantiations, Australia* data collection (unpublished); tables 15A.28, 15A.45, 15A.62, 15A.79, 15A.96, 15A.113, 15A.130 and 15A.147.

Improved safety — resubstantiation rate

Child protection services aim to prevent the recurrence of abuse and neglect or harm to children. One way of observing whether this is achieved is to measure the number of children who were the subject of a resubstantiation. This indicator of service outcomes is important because it partly reveals the extent to which intervention by child protection services has succeeded in preventing further harm. Reported results, however, may be affected by factors that are beyond the control of child protection services, such as changes in the family situation (for example,

illness, unemployment, or a new partner). Resubstantiation is measured by counting the proportion of children who were the subject of a substantiation in the previous financial year (2001-02 for this Report) and who were subsequently the subject of a further substantiation within the following three and/or 12 months.

Data that are comparable across jurisdictions were not available for this indicator, but data are comparable within each jurisdiction over time (figure 15.13).

In all jurisdictions except NSW, Victoria, Queensland and WA, the proportion of children who were the subject of a resubstantiation within three months after an initial substantiation declined in 2001-02 compared with the previous year. The proportion of children who were the subject of a resubstantiation within twelve months after an initial substantiation increased in 2001-02 compared with the previous year in all jurisdictions except SA, Tasmania and the ACT.

15.5 Future directions in child protection and out-of-home care services performance reporting

Client satisfaction

Client views can be used to report on service delivery and to learn important information about how to improve services. Although the use of client surveys in child protection services is not yet common, the Victorian Department of Human Services has measured customer satisfaction in the past. This survey assessed customer satisfaction with client involvement, levels of care, services offered and links to other services, along with perceptions of child protection workers. The survey outcomes revealed specific, strengths as well as areas for improvement in service delivery. The Department anticipates undertaking a similar survey in the near future.

Figure 15.13 **Improved safety — resubstantiation rate[a]**
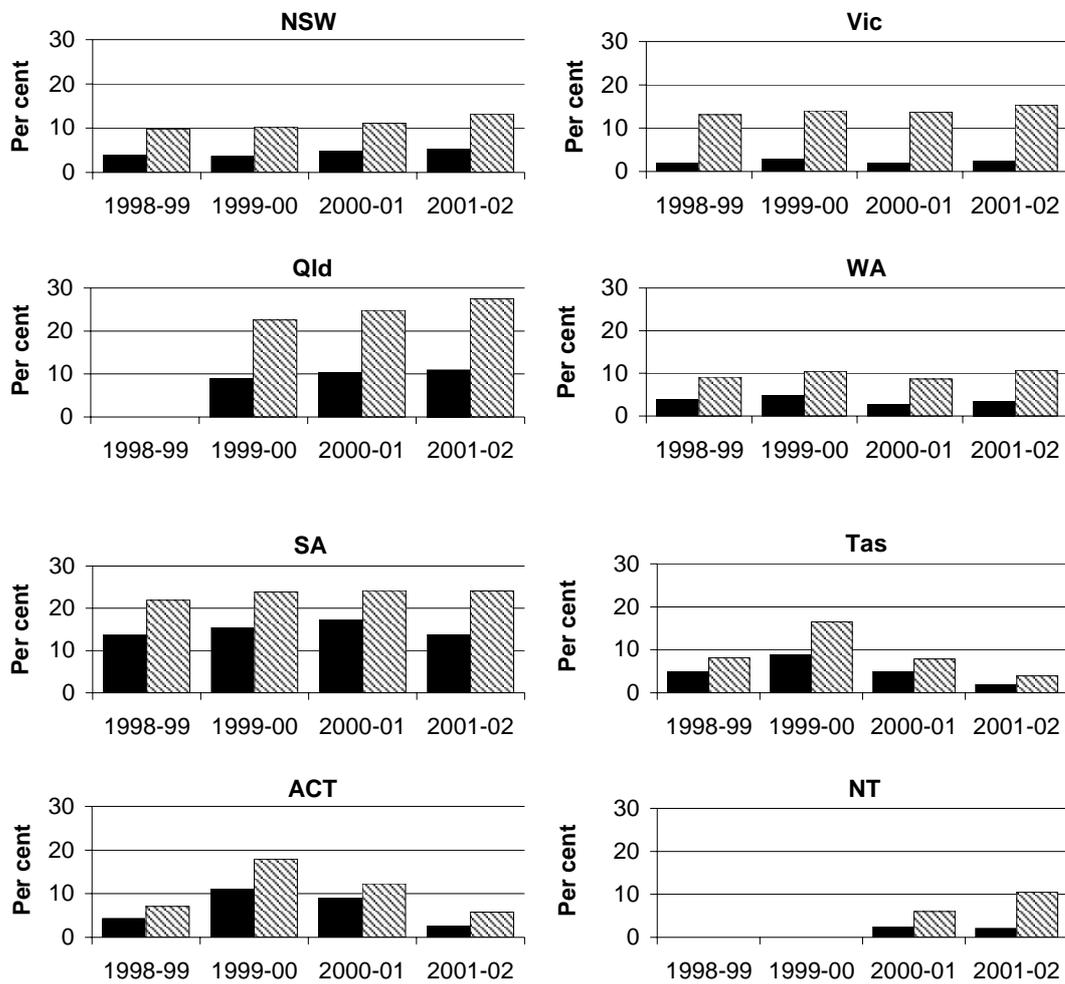
a Data are not comparable across jurisdictions because definitions of substantiation vary significantly. Consequently, rates cannot be compared across jurisdictions.

Source: AIHW *Child protection notifications, investigations and substantiations, Australia* data collection (unpublished); tables 15A.29, 15A.46, 15A.63, 15A.80, 15A.97, 15A.114, 15A.131 and 15A.148.

Improving national child protection data

Between 2000 and 2003, the National Child Protection and Support Services Data Working Group under the auspice of the National Community Services Information Management Group reviewed the reporting framework used to collect the national child protection data. The review aimed to establish the feasibility of updating the national reporting framework so the national data:

- more accurately reflect the current responses of States and Territories to child protection and child concern reports

- present a more comprehensive data set

- increase the consistency and comparability of the data reported.

The review resulted in the development of a broader framework to count responses to calls received by community services departments in relation to the safety and wellbeing of children. The responses include those that occur outside the formal child protection system. The new framework incorporates data elements such as the provision of advice and information, the assessment of needs, and the provision of general and intensive family support services. Subject to data availability and jurisdictional sign-off, national reporting will be aligned to this framework over the next few years. As part of this process, the scope of the intensive family support services data collection (described in box 15.2) will be reviewed.

Some performance indicator data items outlined in the review have been tested, and data on continuity of case workers may be available for future reports.

## 15.6 Profile of supported accommodation and assistance

Service overview

Supported accommodation and assistance services aim to assist people who are homeless or at imminent risk of becoming homeless as a result of a crisis, including women and children escaping domestic violence. Sections 15.6–15.10 report on services provided under the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP). Data descriptors, indicators and terms are defined in section 15.12.

The primary focus of SAAP is to use a case management approach to support homeless people, and adults and children escaping domestic violence. Through this process, clients are offered a range of services, including supported accommodation; counselling; advocacy; links to housing, health, education and

employment services; outreach support; brokerage; and meals services. Housing and accommodation services were provided in 70.5 per cent of support periods in 2002-03. General support and advocacy (provided in 69.2 per cent of support periods), counselling (48.2 per cent), financial and employment assistance (38.0 per cent) and specialist services (27.0 per cent) were also commonly provided (figure 15.14).

Figure 15.14 **Services received during a SAAP support period[a]**
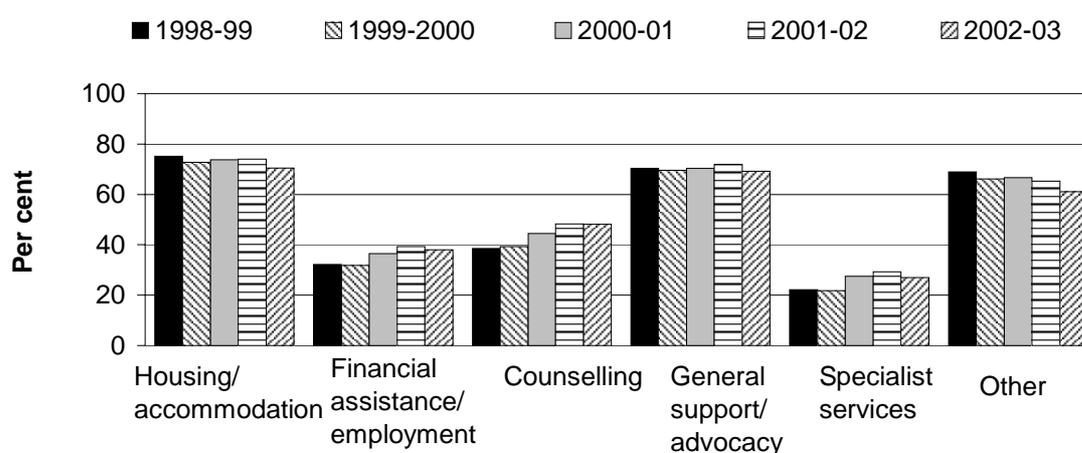
a Agencies may provide more than one type of service as a part of a single support period, so services provided during a period do not sum to 100 per cent.

Source: SAAP National Data Collection Agency (NDCA) — *Administrative Data and Client Collections* (unpublished); table 15A.160.

Size and scope

Support services funded by SAAP are provided by agencies to a range of groups, such as homeless families, single men, single women, young people, and adults and children escaping domestic violence. At least 1283 agencies are funded under the SAAP program and most target principally one client group. Services were delivered in 2002-03 by agencies targeting:

- young people (36.8 per cent of agencies)
- women escaping domestic violence (22.3 per cent)
- families (9.3 per cent)
- single men (7.4 per cent)
- single women (3.7 per cent).

Agencies targeting multiple client groups or providing general support accounted for 20.6 per cent of service providers in 2002-03 (table 15A.161).

Agencies also vary in their service delivery model. The most common models in 2002-03 were the provision of medium term to long term supported accommodation (35.9 per cent of agencies) and the provision of crisis or short term supported accommodation (35.4 per cent). Agencies also provided services other than accommodation, such as outreach support (5.3 per cent of agencies), day support (2.0 per cent), and telephone information and referral (1.2 per cent). A further 13.3 per cent of agencies provided multiple services and 2.0 per cent provided agency support (table 15A.162).

Roles and responsibilities

Non-government agencies, with some local government participation, deliver most SAAP services. The Australian, State and Territory governments jointly fund SAAP, which was established in 1985 to consolidate a number of existing programs. The State and Territory governments have responsibility for the day-to-day management of SAAP, including distributing funding to SAAP funded agencies. Research, strategy, and other planning and development activities are coordinated at the national level by the SAAP National Coordination and Development Committee (which includes representatives of the Australian Government and each State and Territory government).

Funding

Recurrent funding of SAAP services was $296.9 million in 2002-03, of which the Australian Government contributed 56.4 per cent and the States and Territories contributed 43.6 per cent (table 15A.162). Recurrent SAAP funding per person in the total population was $15.07 nationally in 2002-03. It ranged from $39 in the NT to $12 in Victoria (figure 15.15).

Combined Australian, State and Territory government funding per person for the period 1998-99 to 2002-03 increased (in real terms) in all jurisdictions except Victoria (which remained steady). The largest increase was experienced in the NT which rose from $32 to $39 over the period (table 15A.165).

Figure 15.15 **Real recurrent SAAP funding per person in the residential population (2002-03 dollars)[a, b, c, d]**
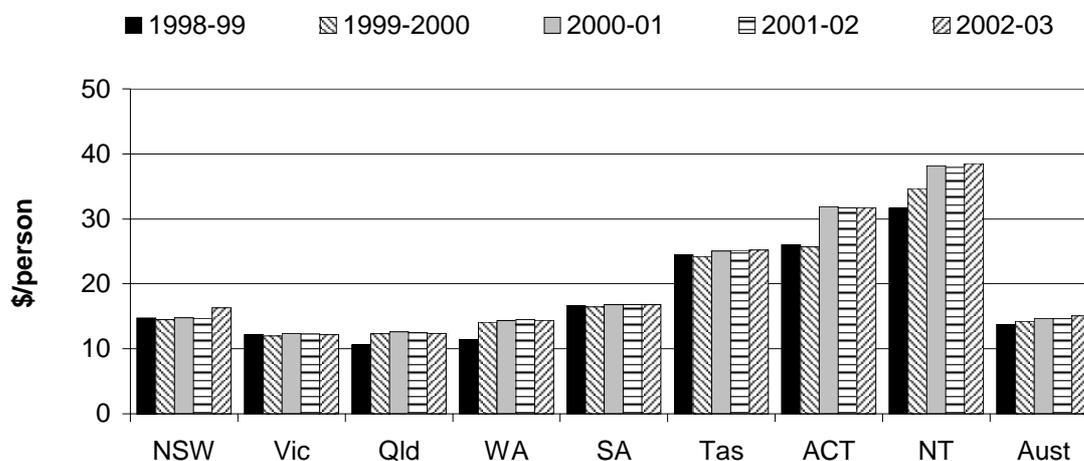
a Includes total recurrent allocations (including State and Territory level allocations for program administration). **b** The total population figure is not indicative of the demand for these services. **c** In the NT, funding has increased as a result of the provision of additional award related funding **d** Real expenditure, based on the ABS GDP price deflator 2002-03 = 100 (table A.26).

Source: Australian Government Department of Family and Community Services (unpublished); table 15A.165.

15.7 Policy developments in supported accommodation and assistance

The SAAP IV Agreement between the Australian, State and Territory governments commenced on 1 July 2000 and will conclude on 30 June 2005. The agreement is underpinned by:

- the *Supported Accommodation Assistance Act 1994*

- a memorandum of understanding, which sets out high level principles, strategic themes, a commitment to develop outcomes and measures of outcomes, roles and responsibilities, and arrangements for implementation. (All signatories endorsed this memorandum on 8 April 1999.)

- bilateral agreements between the Australian Government and each State and Territory government, establishing State and Territory priorities within a multilateral policy and administrative framework, and setting outcomes for funding. (All jurisdictions have signed bilateral agreements with the Australian Government.)

A national strategic plan for SAAP IV has been developed, approved and widely distributed. This plan is based on the memorandum of understanding and the

bilateral agreements, and represents the basis for national reporting on SAAP IV (box 15.5). The plan will be reflected in State and Territory planning, which will also respond to the needs and priorities of individual jurisdictions.

Box 15.5 **Evaluation and reporting under SAAP IV**

The memorandum of understanding requires the development of a national strategic plan, which identifies the key principles, priorities, strategies, data, research and other project commitments of SAAP IV. The plan sets out a national evaluation and reporting framework that will comprise:

- an annual national program report that provides:
    - an analysis of achievements, including analysis against program outcomes and performance indicators
    - a commentary on, and identification of, areas for further development and attention in subsequent years
- a mid-term review
- a final evaluation report to be completed 12 months before the end of the SAAP IV Agreement.

Outcomes and performance indicators form the accountability framework in bilateral agreements and are the basis for review, evaluation and national annual reporting. An evaluation framework has been cooperatively developed as part of the national strategic plan and focuses on:

- client outcomes, particularly the extent to which SAAP demonstrates capacity to:
    - resolve crises
    - re-establish family links where appropriate
    - re-establish clients' capacity to live independently of SAAP
- client satisfaction with aspects of service delivery, including quality, accessibility, appropriateness and achievement of outcomes
- the extent to which the strategic themes, directions and administrative framework for SAAP IV are addressed and implemented
- measures of performance in relation to appropriateness, efficiency and effectiveness.

Source: SAAP IV memorandum of understanding.

15.8 Framework of supported accommodation and assistance performance indicators

The framework of performance indicators is based on SAAP objectives (box 15.6).

The performance indicator reporting framework for SAAP is shown in figure 15.16. (Ongoing work to provide a more comprehensive set of performance indicators and to improve existing indicators and the data is discussed in section 15.10.) The framework shows which data are comparable in the 2003 Report. For data that are not considered strictly comparable, the text includes relevant caveats and supporting commentary. Chapter 1 discusses data comparability from a Report-wide perspective (see section 1.6).

Figure 15.16 Performance indicators for SAAP services
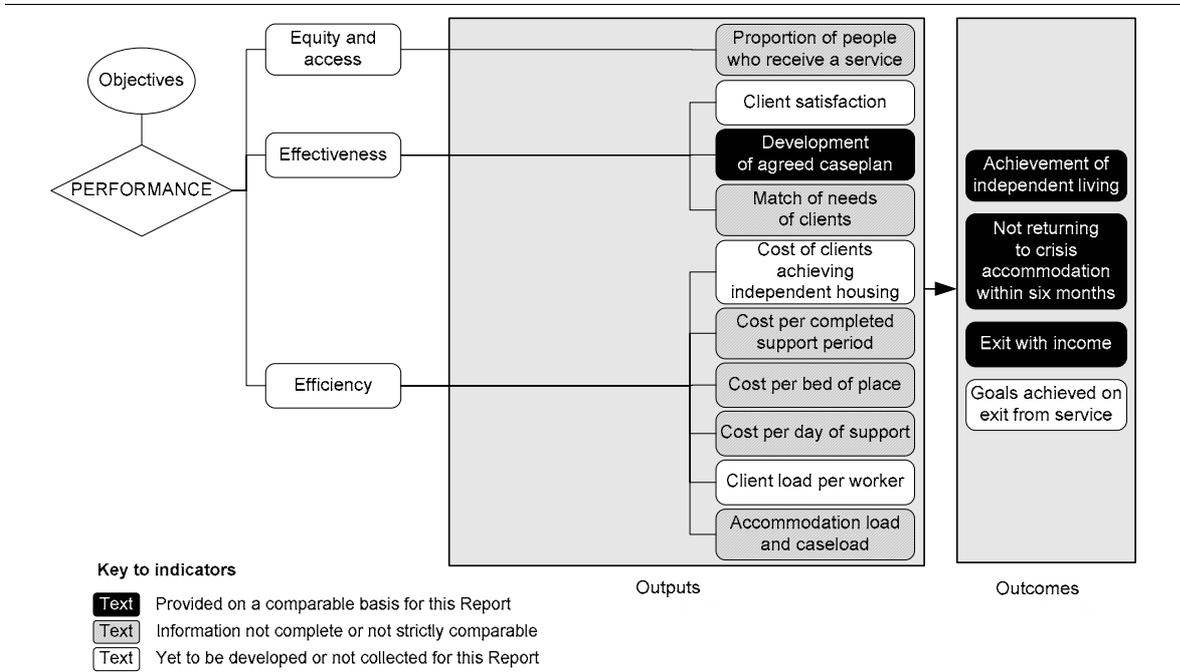
15.9 Key supported accommodation and assistance performance indicator results

Outputs

Equity and access

Proportion of people who receive a service

Supported accommodation and assistance services target homeless people in general, but access by special needs groups (such as Indigenous people and people from non-English speaking backgrounds) is particularly important. Data for assessing access to SAAP services are available from the data collection on unmet demand and the data on clients. Data for 2002-03 were based on surveys conducted in December 2002 and May 2003.

Unmet demand is where a homeless person seeking supported accommodation or support cannot be provided with that assistance (although one-off assistance may be provided).

Assessing the experience of target groups using data from the unmet demand collection is problematic. The client data and unmet demand data are not strictly comparable: the former count clients and each client's cultural status, whereas the latter are based on valid requests for services and record the cultural status of everyone in the group, making no distinction between adults and accompanying children. Also, the two week sample period over which data are collected may not be representative of the eventual success of clients accessing SAAP services over the full year (see notes to tables 15A.178–15A.179).

Requests for SAAP services were not met for a number of reasons in 2002-03, including a lack of available accommodation (the main reason that 66.5 per cent of potential clients were not provided with services), no vacancies at the referral agency (20.8 per cent), and insufficient staff (2.0 per cent) (table 15A.178). The available data suggest around 85.8 per cent of requests for SAAP services were provided with the assistance requested in the data collection period in 2002-03. The proportion of services requests that were fulfilled ranged from 90.3 per cent in the NT to 74.1 per cent in the ACT (figure 15.17).

Figure 15.17 **Proportion of requests for SAAP services that were provided with the requested support, December 2002 and May 2003[a, b]**
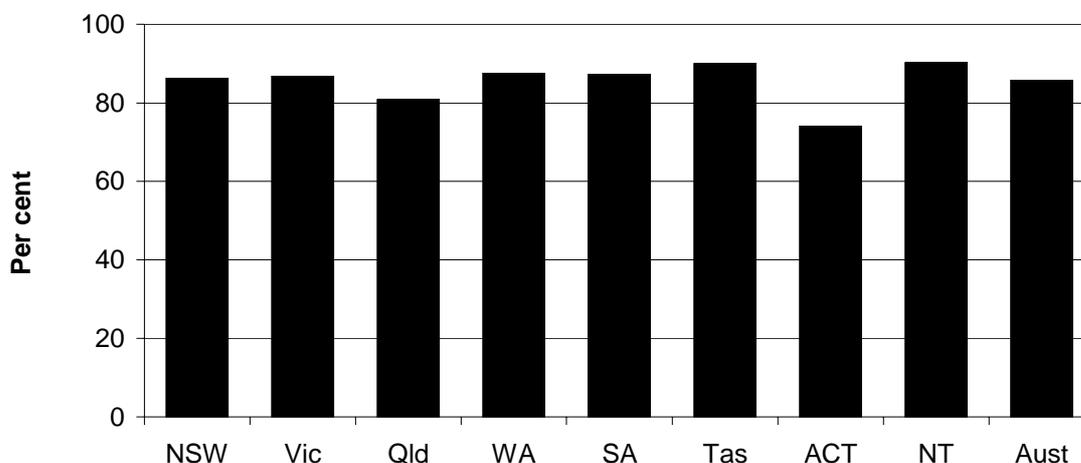

a See table 15A.179 for an explanation of how the number of SAAP clients was estimated and for the definition of unmet demand. **b** Data on unmet demand need to be interpreted with care for several reasons. First, a person can make a request on more than one occasion and to more than one SAAP agency on the same day. While double counting has been limited through the exclusion of those requests where the person had made a similar request to a SAAP agency within the collection period, this information might not always have been available to record; therefore, the total numbers of requests do not represent numbers of people making requests. Second, a number of people may receive ongoing support or accommodation from a SAAP agency at a later time, quite possibly soon after their initial request. As a result, estimates may overstate the actual level of unmet demand. Third, a number of potential clients have their needs met by other means and do not return to a SAAP agency. Many factors influence the capacity of individual SAAP agencies to meet day-to-day demand for their services; it is not possible to identify a one week period on two separate occasions per year that represents a typical week for all SAAP agencies.

Source: SAAP NDCA *Demand for Accommodation Collection* (unpublished); table 15A.179.

Nationally, 17.7 per cent of SAAP service requests by Indigenous people in the data collection period in 2002-03 did not result in the assistance requested in 2002-03, which was the same as the representation of Indigenous clients among SAAP clients. In all jurisdictions except Victoria, Queensland and Tasmania, the proportion of requests by Indigenous people that did not result in the provision of a service was higher than the representation of Indigenous people among clients (figure 15.18).

Nationally, 6.0 per cent of SAAP service requests by people from non-English speaking backgrounds did not result in the assistance requested in 2002-03. In all jurisdictions except the ACT, the proportion of requests from people from non-English speaking backgrounds that did not result in the assistance requested was lower than the representation of people from non-English speaking backgrounds among clients (figure 15.19).

Figure 15.18 **Indigenous people among SAAP clients, and the proportion of requests for SAAP service from Indigenous people that did not result in the assistance requested, 2002-03[a, b]**
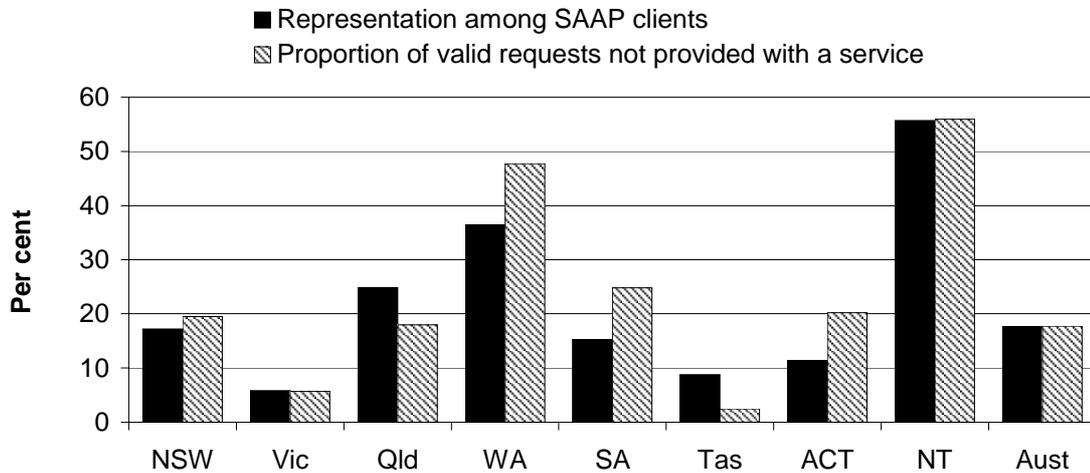
a The number of people unable to be provided with a SAAP service was the 'unmet demand'. See notes to table 15A.180 for more detail. **b** Excludes people who refused offered assistance; those who made a similar request at a SAAP funded agency within the collection period (to limit double counting); and those whose request was not met because either the referral was inappropriate (wrong target group) or the agency did not provide the type of service requested.

Source: SAAP NDCA *Demand for Accommodation Collection* (unpublished); table 15A.180.

Figure 15.19 **People from non-English speaking backgrounds among SAAP clients, and the proportion of requests for SAAP service from people from non-English speaking backgrounds that did not result in the assistance requested, 2002-03[a, b]**
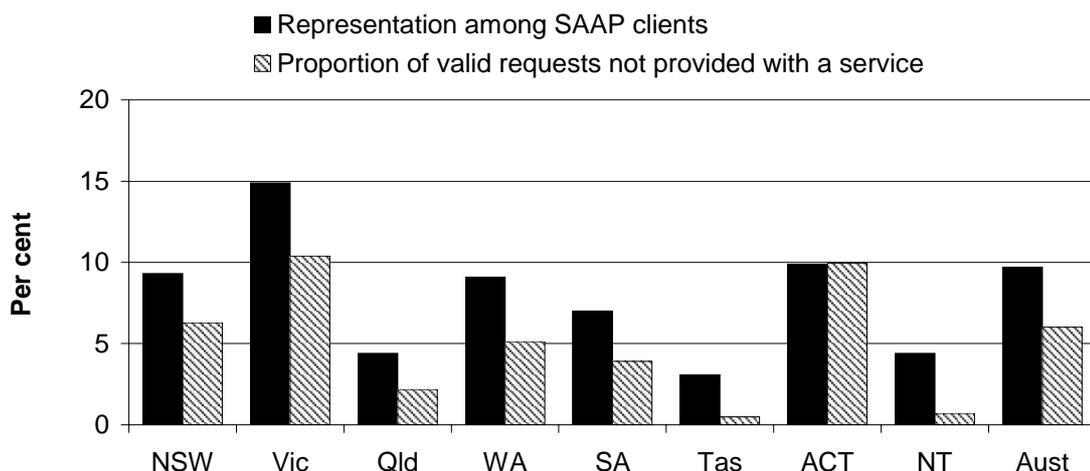
a The number of people unable to be provided with a SAAP service was the 'unmet demand'. See notes to table 15A.181 for more detail. **b** Excludes people who refused offered assistance; those who made a similar request at a SAAP funded agency within the collection period (to limit double counting); and those whose request was not met because either the referral was inappropriate (wrong target group) or the agency did not provide the type of service requested.

Source: SAAP NDCA *Demand for Accommodation Collection* (unpublished); table 15A.181.

Effectiveness

Development of agreed support plan

The existence of an agreed support plan is an indicator of service quality and quality in service delivery, but it may be judged to be inappropriate for some support periods (such as when a support period is short term). Nationally, there was an agreed support plan for 61.3 per cent of support periods in 2002-03 (59.3 per cent of support periods for Indigenous clients) (figure 15.20). Across jurisdictions, the proportion for all clients ranged from 81.6 per cent in the ACT to 49.3 per cent in WA in 2002-03. For Indigenous clients during the same period, the proportion ranged from 83.1 per cent in the ACT to 46.8 per cent in WA (figure 15.20).

Figure 15.20 **Support periods, by the existence of a support plan, 2002-03[a, b]**
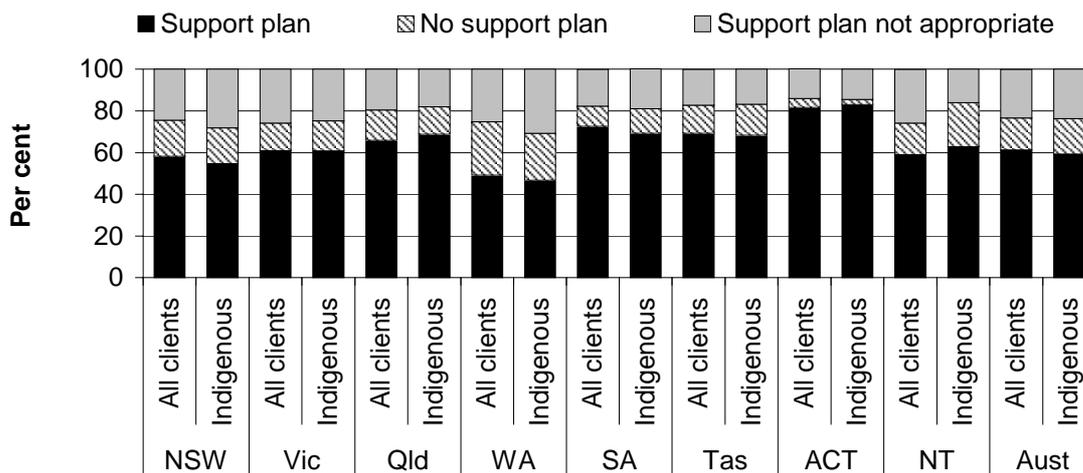
NESB = Non-English speaking background

a Excludes high volume records because not all items are included on high volume forms. **b** See notes to table 15A.176 for more detail.

Source: SAAP NDCA *Administrative Data and Client Collections* (unpublished); tables 15A.176 and 15A.177

Match of needs of clients

The proportion of clients receiving services that they need is an indicator of appropriateness. Data are collected on which services are needed by clients and whether these services are provided or the clients are referred to another agency. The range of needed services is broad (ranging from meals to laundry facilities to long term accommodation), so the effect of not providing these services varies. Nationally, the proportion of clients who received needed services or were referred to another agency for needed services was 93.1 per cent in 2002-03. Across

jurisdictions, the proportion ranged from 96.8 per cent in WA to 88.6 per cent in Queensland (figure 15.21).

Figure 15.21 **SAAP clients, by met and unmet support needs**
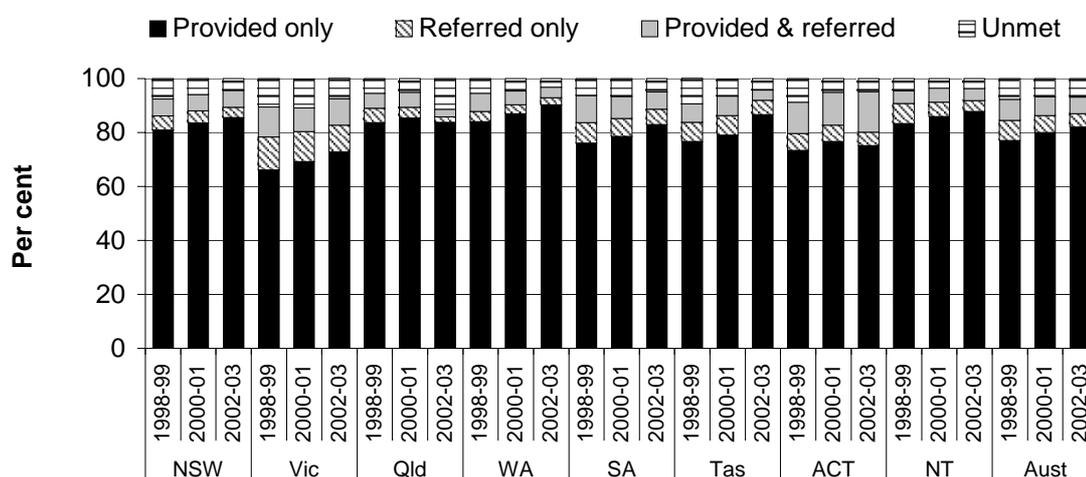
Source: SAAP NDCA *Administrative Data and Client Collections* (unpublished); table 15A.182.

Nationally, 89.3 per cent of Indigenous clients either received needed SAAP services or were referred to another agency for these services in 2002-03 — 3.8 percentage points lower than the proportion for all clients. Across jurisdictions, the proportion ranged from 97.2 per cent in the WA to 84.0 per cent in Queensland (figure 15.22). Nationally, 94.5 per cent of clients from a non-English speaking background either received needed services or were referred to another agency in 2002-03. Across jurisdictions, the proportion ranged from 96.8 per cent in Tasmania to 92.9 per cent in Victoria (figure 15.23).

Efficiency

A proxy indicator of efficiency is the level of government inputs per unit of output (unit cost). Across jurisdictions, there are varying treatments of expenditure items (for example, superannuation) and different counting and reporting rules in generating financial data. Efficiency indicator results may reflect these differences.

The unit cost analysis includes only expenditure by service delivery providers. Conceptually, unit cost indicators should include some of the administration costs borne by State and Territory departments in administering these services, but this is not yet possible. Unit cost data do not contain capital costs because capital funding for SAAP is provided under the Commonwealth State Housing Agreement through a special purpose program (the Crisis Accommodation Program).

Figure 15.22 **Indigenous clients, by met and unmet support needs, 2002-03**
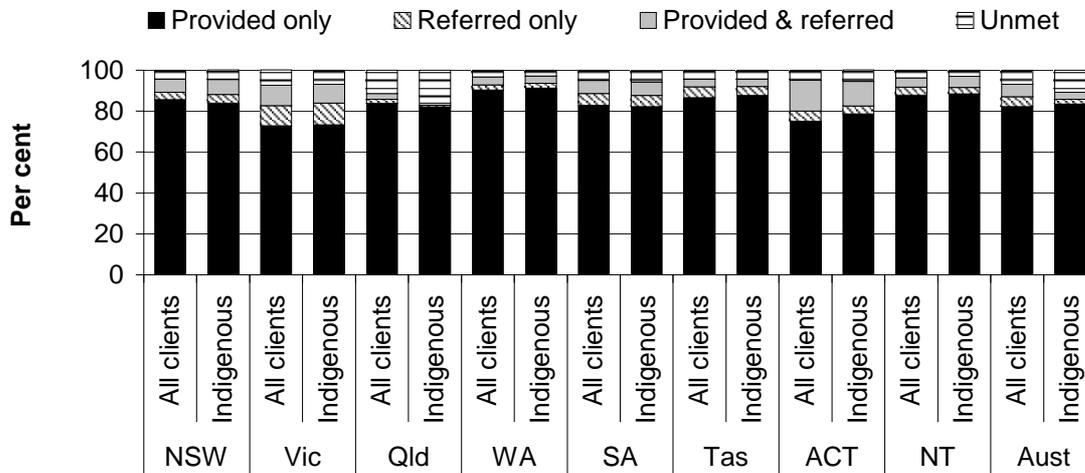
Source: SAAP NDCA *Administrative Data and Client Collections* (unpublished); tables 15A.182 and 15A.183.

Figure 15.23 **Clients from non-English speaking backgrounds, by met and unmet support needs, 2002-03**
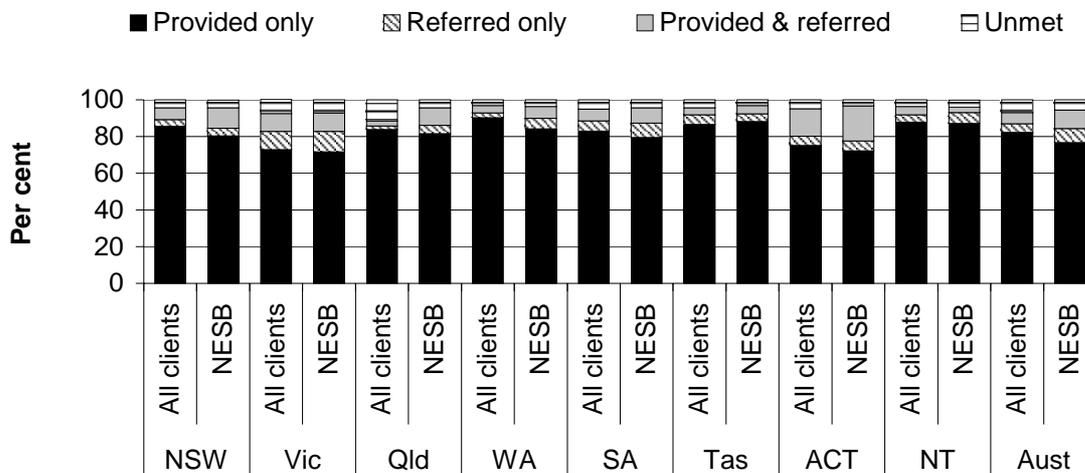
Source: SAAP NDCA *Administrative Data and Client Collections* (unpublished); tables 15A.182 and 15A.184.

Cost per completed support period

The recurrent cost per completed support period (excluding casual and potential clients, and accompanying children who received services as clients in their own right) averaged $1890 in 2002-03. Across jurisdictions, this cost ranged from $4710 in the ACT to $1340 in Queensland (figure 15.24).

Figure 15.24 **Real recurrent cost per completed support period (2002-03 dollars)[a]**
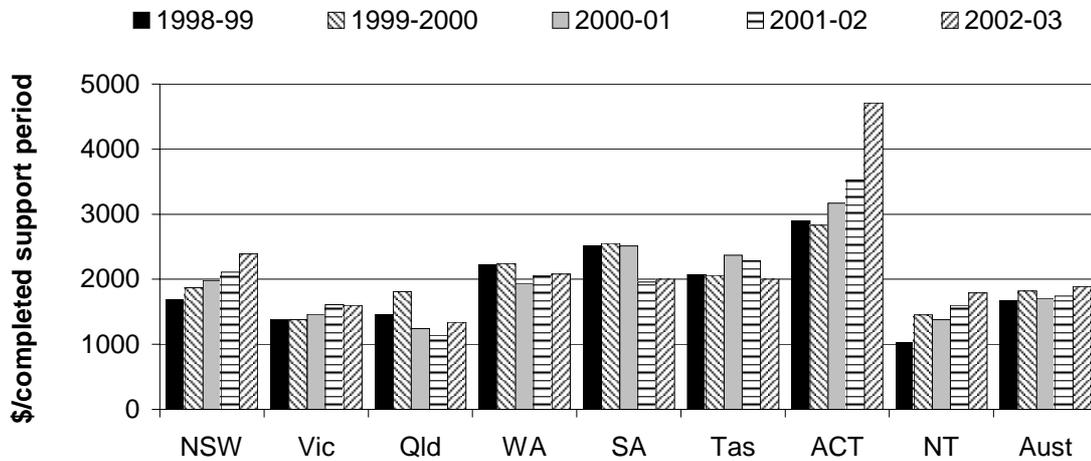
a See notes to table 15A.186 for a description of the analysis.

Source: SAAP NDCA *Administrative Data and Client Collections* (unpublished); table 15A.186.

Cost per bed or place

Nationally, the recurrent cost per client accessing SAAP services was $3040 in 2002-03. This figure varied across jurisdictions, from $6190 in the ACT to $2300 in Victoria (figure 15.25).

Figure 15.25 **Real recurrent cost per client accessing SAAP services (2002-03 dollars)[a]**
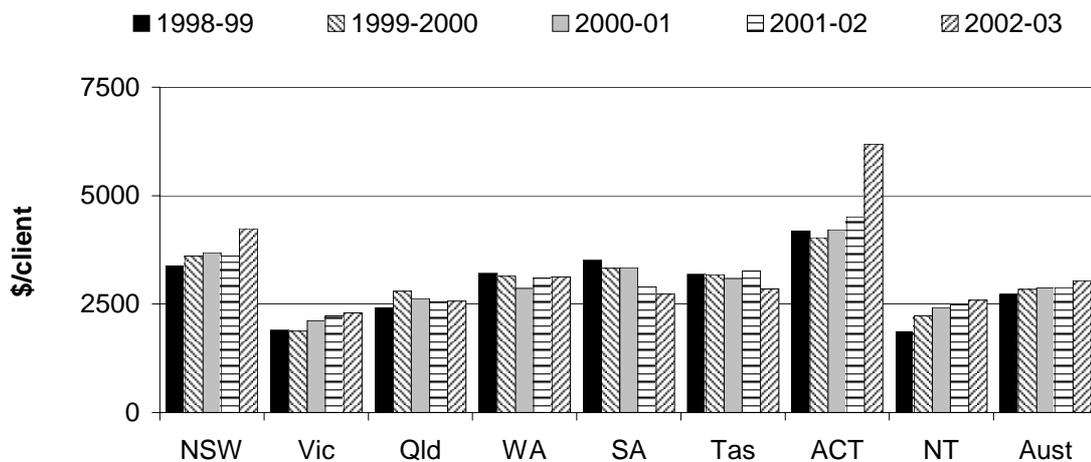
a Jurisdiction client numbers refer to the jurisdiction in which they were first supported, as some clients were supported in more than one jurisdiction during 2002-03. This could under or over estimate the actual number of clients assisted in a particular jurisdiction. See notes to table 15A.186 for a description of the analysis.

*Source*: SAAP NDCA *Administrative Data and Client Collections* (unpublished); table 15A.187.

Cost per day of support

The recurrent cost per day of support for SAAP clients receiving support and/or supported accommodation (excluding casual and potential clients, and accompanying children who receive services as clients in their own right) averaged $41 in 2002-03. Across jurisdictions, this cost ranged from $66 in the NT to $25 in Victoria (figure 15.26).

Figure 15.26 **Real recurrent cost per day of support for homeless clients (2002-03 dollars)ᵃ**
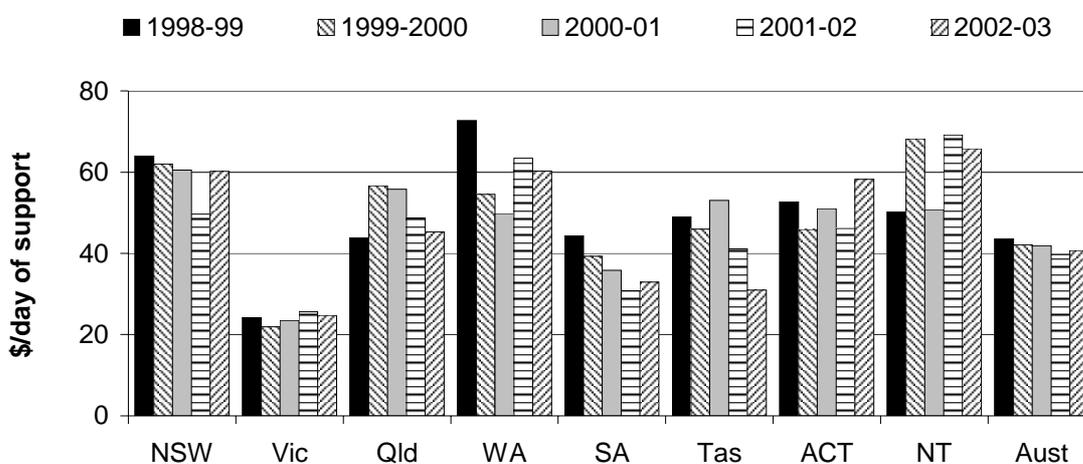

a See notes to table 15A.185 for a description of the analysis.

Source: SAAP NDCA *Administrative Data and Client Collections* (unpublished); table 15A.185.

Accommodation load and caseload

The average accommodation load is an indicator of the average number of people accommodated per day per agency. Nationally, the average accommodation load was 7.8 in 2002-03. Across jurisdictions it ranged from 11.7 in SA to 5.1 in the NT (figure 15.27). The average caseload is an indicator of the average number of people being supported per day per agency. The average caseload in 2002-03 was 17.0 nationally and ranged from 28.2 in Tasmania to 10.0 in the NT (figure 15.27). Differences in the average accommodation load and caseload may reflect differences in the average size of agencies across jurisdictions.

Figure 15.27 **Average accommodation load and caseload per day, 2002-03ᵃ**
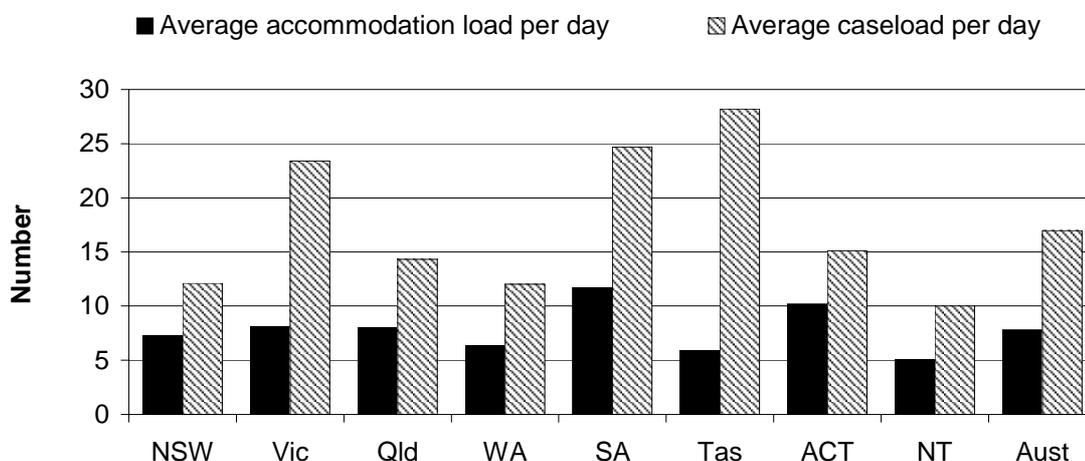
a See notes to table 15A.188 for a description of how accommodation and caseload were estimated.

Source: table SAAP NDCA *Administrative Data and Client Collections* (unpublished); table 15A.188.

Outcomes

An important outcome is clients' achievement of self-reliance and independence. Characteristics that may indicate whether clients can live independently include their income, housing status and workforce status. These characteristics are recorded at the end of a client's support period.

Achievement of independent living — housing

The proportion of clients achieving independent housing at the end of a support period indicates the independence of clients after program support. Nationally, 72.4 per cent of clients achieved independent housing at the end of a support period in 2002-03. Across jurisdictions, the proportion ranged from 79.9 per cent in Tasmania to 62.8 per cent in the ACT. Data are available for only one third of completed support periods, so may not represent the total SAAP population. Nationally, the proportion of Indigenous clients achieving independent housing at the end of a support period was 71.9 per cent in 2002-03 (figure 15.28).

By type of independent housing on exiting from SAAP, 39.1 per cent of all clients in 2002-03 moved to private rental housing (27.5 per cent of Indigenous clients), 16.5 per cent entered public housing (28.2 per cent of Indigenous clients) and 3.7 per cent moved to owner-occupied housing (0.6 per cent of Indigenous clients). The proportion of all clients moving to private rental housing was highest in Tasmania (48.3 per cent) and lowest in the ACT (19.3 per cent). The proportion

moving to public housing ranged from 27.9 per cent in the NT to 10.9 per cent in Queensland (figure 15.28).

By type of non-independent housing, 14.6 per cent of all clients in 2002-03 continued to live in SAAP accommodation (9.4 per cent of Indigenous clients), 9.5 per cent continued in crisis or short term accommodation (7.0 per cent of Indigenous clients) and 5.1 per cent continued in medium term to short term accommodation (2.4 per cent of Indigenous clients). The proportion of all clients remaining in SAAP accommodation was highest in the ACT (23.6 per cent) and lowest in the NT (6.1 per cent) (figure 15.28).

Achievement of independent living — employment

Employment is another indicator of clients' achievement of self-reliance and independence. Nationally, 9.2 per cent of support periods in 2002-03 involved clients who were employed before support, while 32.0 per cent involved clients who were previously unemployed (table 15A.169). Of the clients who were unemployed when entering SAAP, about 7.3 per cent were employed at the end of the support period (2.5 per cent full time, 1.6 per cent part time and 3.2 per cent on a casual basis), 81.7 per cent remained unemployed and 10.9 per cent were not in the labour force (figure 15.29). Across jurisdictions, the proportion of clients who were unemployed and who achieved employment at the end of the support period ranged from 11.7 per cent in the NT to 3.5 per cent in Tasmania (Table 15A.170).

For Indigenous clients who were unemployed when entering SAAP in 2002-03, about 4.6 per cent were employed at the end of the support period (1.3 per cent full time, 1.2 per cent part time and 2.1 per cent on a casual basis), 83.1 per cent remained unemployed and 12.3 per cent were not in the labour force (table 15A.172).

The performance information above relates to relatively short term outcomes — that is, outcomes for clients immediately after their support period. Longer term outcomes are important, but there are challenges in collecting information on these outcomes. The data collection for SAAP allows for the measurement of the number of clients and of the number and types of service provided to clients (box 15.7).

Figure 15.28 **Accommodation type on exit from SAAP support, 2002-03[a, b]**

All SAAP clients

Independent housing

Non-independent housing

Indigenous SAAP clients

Independent housing

Non-independent housing
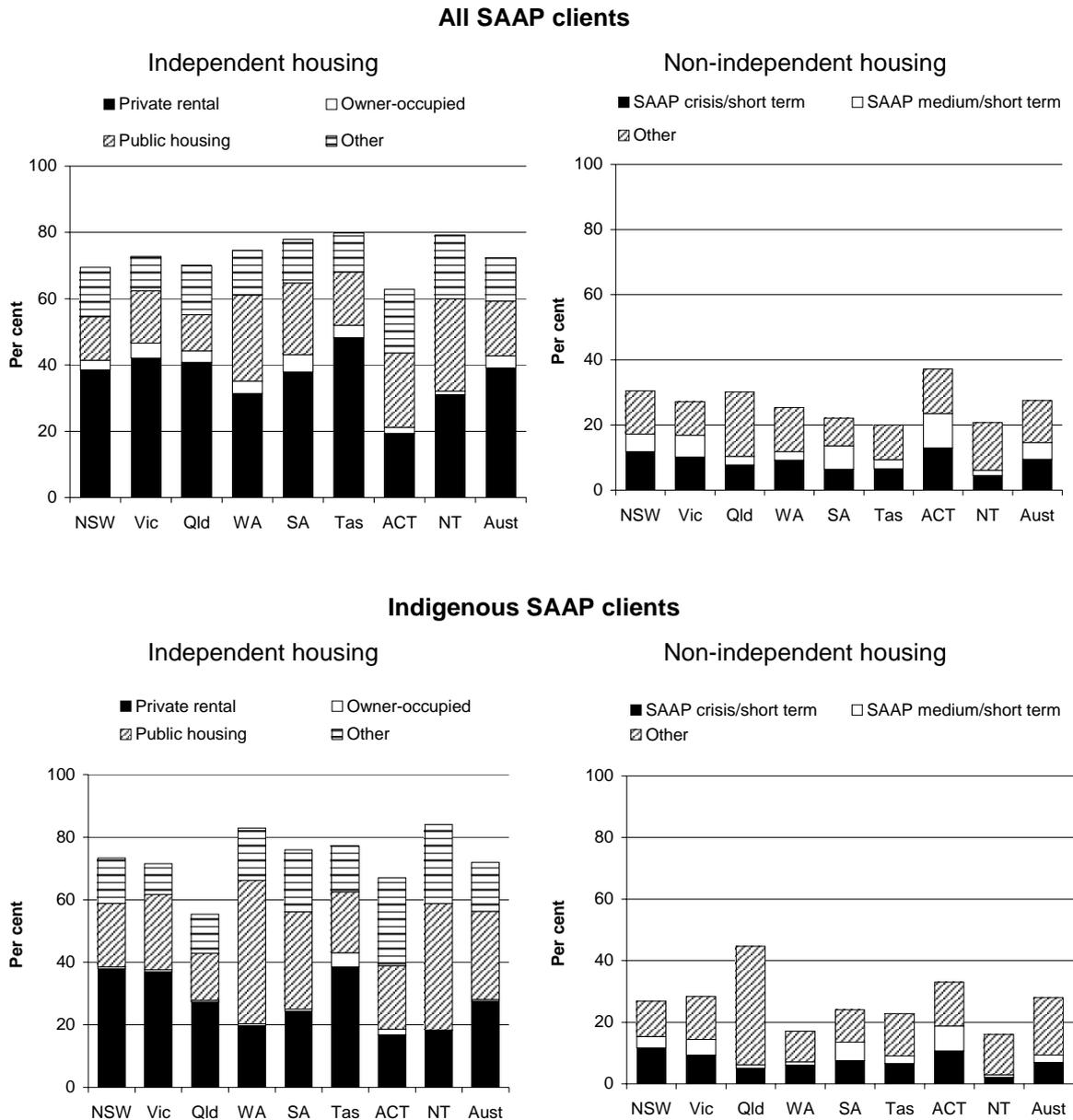
a Excludes high volume records because not all items are included in high volume forms. **b** 'Other' independent housing may include living rent free in a house or flat. 'Other' non-independent housing may include: SAAP funded accommodation at hostels, hotels or community placements; non-SAAP emergency accommodation; car, tent or squat; and an institutional setting.

Source: SAAP NDCA *Administrative Data and Client Collections* (unpublished); tables 15A.168 and 15A.169.

Figure 15.29 **Unemployed SAAP clients — labour force status after SAAP support, 2002-03[a, b]**
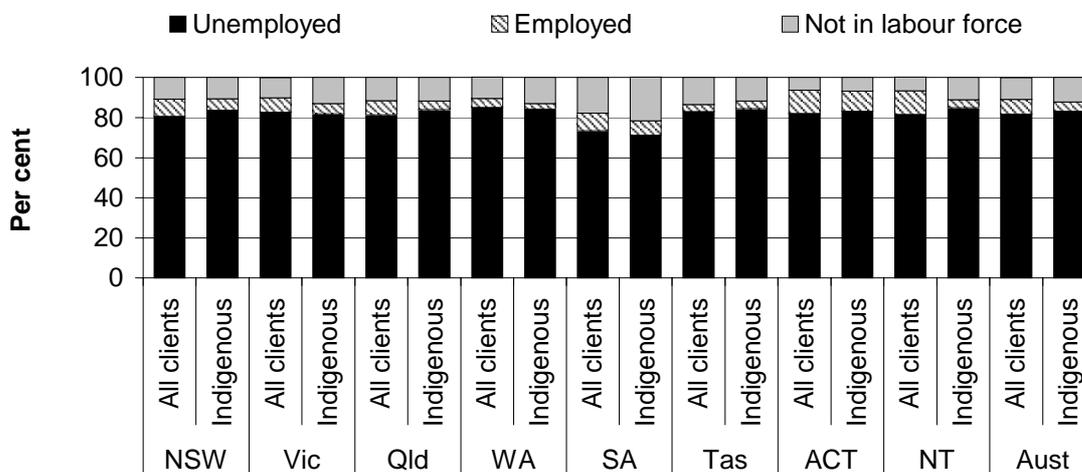
a Data are for people who were unemployed when entering SAAP services. **b** Excludes high volume records because not all items are included on high volume forms.

Source: SAAP NDCA *Administrative Data and Client Collections* (unpublished); tables 15A.171and 15A.172.

Box 15.7   Issues when analysing SAAP data

The following four important issues need to be considered when analysing SAAP data.

- Informed consent is an essential component of the integrity of the data. The principle of client/consumer rights (which underpins informed consent) recognises that clients do not receive services under a mandatory order. They have the right to accept or reject the services offered, as they have the right to provide or not provide information while receiving SAAP services.

- Comprehensive information cannot be collected for all clients, such as casual clients and clients of high volume agencies (those accommodating 50 or more clients per night, telephone referral agencies, day centres, and information and referral centres).

- Clients consented to provide personal details for the SAAP client collection for 85 per cent of support periods in 2002-03. A weighting system has been developed to adjust for agency non participation (95 per cent of agencies participated in the client collection) and non consent.

- Caution needs to be taken when comparing client data from 2001-02 onwards, with data for previous years, as these data are based on estimated support periods per client rather than observed support periods per client.

Not returning to crisis accommodation within six months

An important longer term indicator of whether clients are achieving self-reliance and independence is whether a client has needed to return to SAAP services. If a client received two or more support periods over the year, then they must have returned to the program (but not necessarily to the same agency) for a period of support during the year. It may be appropriate, however, for some clients to receive more than one support period (moving from crisis to medium term accommodation, for example). One group that makes multiple use of SAAP are adults and children escaping domestic violence. A number of SAAP clients with long term problems also access SAAP services a number of times before being able to address their issues.

Nationally, 25.9 per cent of clients (28.5 per cent of Indigenous clients) returned to SAAP services during 2002-03 after having exited the program less than 12 months earlier (table 15A.173, table 15A.174). Across jurisdictions, the proportion ranged from 27.6 per cent in WA to 19.3 per cent in the ACT (figure 15.30). For Indigenous clients, the proportion ranged from 31.2 per cent in WA to 20.0 per cent in the ACT (table 15A.174).

A further medium term indicator of the achievement of self-reliance and independence is when the client exits to independent housing and does not return to SAAP within a specified period (in this case, six months). Given the data issues discussed in box 15.7, current estimates may not represent all clients; for example, nationally only 50.3 per cent of clients provided information on their accommodation after exiting at least one support period in 2002-03 (table 15.1). Given the potential for data bias, these estimates need to be interpreted with care.

Figure 15.30 **Clients who returned to a SAAP service after having exited the program less than 12 months earlier[a]**

Legend: ■ 1998-99 ▨ 1999-2000 ▨ 2000-01 ▤ 2001-02 ▨ 2002-03

Y-axis: **Per cent** (0 to 40)

X-axis categories: NSW, Vic, Qld, WA, SA, Tas, ACT, NT, Aust
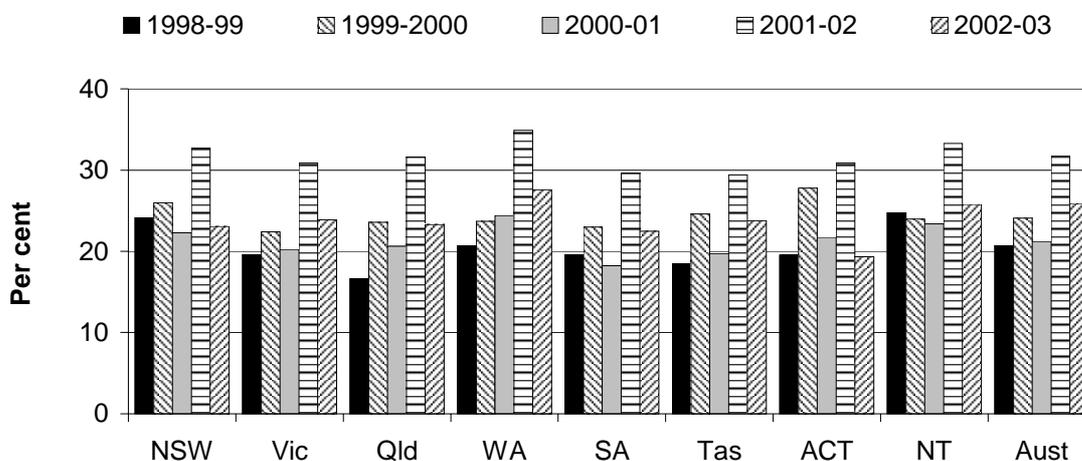
a Data from 2001-02 are based on estimated support periods per client rather than on observed support periods per client as reported in previous years.

Source: SAAP NDCA *Administrative Data and Client Collections* (unpublished); table 15A.173.

Table 15.1 **Indicative estimates of clients who exited SAAP to independent housing and did not return within six months, 2002-03[a, b]**

	Unit	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Aust
Clients who provided information on accommodation after exit from support										
	no.	10 800	17 500	7 300	5 200	3 500	2 000	1 000	1 800	49 100
As a proportion of total clients[c]										
	%	44.6	59.3	41.0	59.1	39.8	50.0	62.5	62.1	50.3
Clients recorded as exiting to independent accommodation and not returning within six months										
	no.	4 900	7 700	3 200	2 200	1 500	1 000	400	800	21 700
Indicative estimates of clients exiting to independent housing and not returning within six months[d]										
	%	45.4	44.0	43.8	42.3	42.9	50.0	40.0	44.4	44.2

a See notes to table 15A.175 for details of how the estimates were calculated. **b** Preliminary data. **c** Based on estimated total number of clients for 2002-03. **d** Clients recorded as exiting to independent accommodation and not returning within six months as a proportion of clients who provided information on accommodation on exit from support.

*Source*: SAAP NDCA *Administrative Data and Client Collections* (unpublished); table 15A.175.

It is important to have data that represent all SAAP clients. Strategies are being implemented to improve the data quality progressively, including improving client consent rates and the collection of exit information. It is hoped that the data will be robust enough eventually to allow comparative performance assessment.

Exit with income

Client independence is enhanced when the client moves from having no income before entering SAAP services to obtaining some income (including wages and/or benefits) on exit from SAAP services. The proportion of all clients in 2002-03 who had no substantive change in income source ranged from about 93.7 per cent in WA to 83.8 per cent in the ACT (figure 15.31).

Figure 15.31 **Proportion of clients who had no substantive change in income source after SAAP support, by Indigenous status, 2002-03ᵃ**
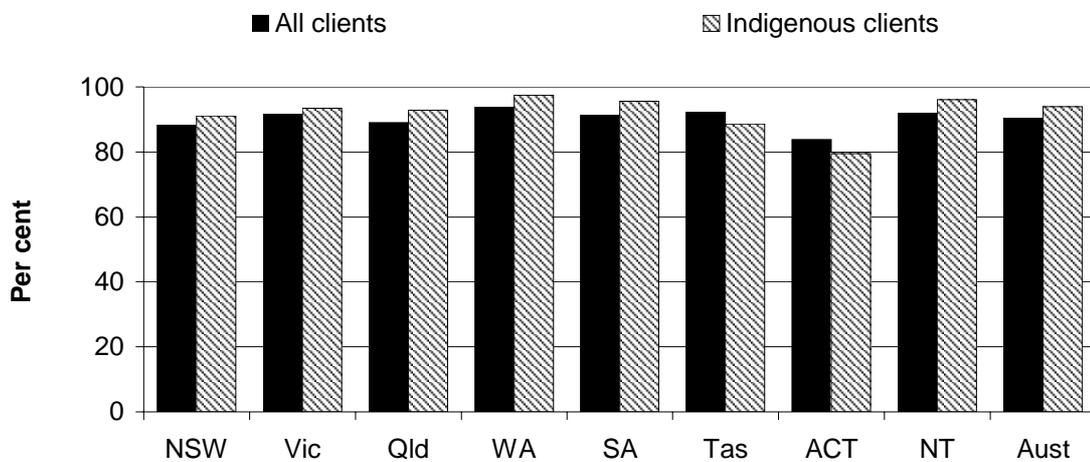
ᵃ Excludes clients of high volume agencies (those accommodating 50 or more clients per night, telephone referral agencies, day centres, and information and referral centres) because data on income source after support were not collected.

Source: SAAP NDCA *Administrative Data and Client Collections* (unpublished); tables 15A.166 and 15A.167.

The proportion of clients who moved from having no income support to obtaining some income in 2002-03 ranged from 4.5 per cent in the ACT to 1.6 per cent in Tasmania. The proportion who obtained their own benefit or a wage ranged from 2.3 per cent in the NT to 0.7 per cent in Tasmania. The proportion who had no income before or after support ranged from 9.2 per cent in the ACT to 2.5 per cent in the NT. Nationally, 0.9 per cent of clients exiting SAAP moved from having a wage to receiving a government payment, or from having some income to having no income (table 15A.166).

The proportion of Indigenous clients who moved from having no income support to obtaining some income ranged from 3.8 per cent in the ACT to 0.5 per cent in WA. The proportion of those who obtained their own benefit or a wage ranged from 1.0 per cent in the ACT to 0.2 per cent in WA. The proportion who had no income before or after support ranged from 15.1 per cent in the ACT to 1.6 per cent in the NT. Nationally, 0.4 per cent of Indigenous clients exiting SAAP moved from

having a wage to receiving a government payment, or from having some income to having no income (table 15A.167). The proportion who had no substantive change in income source ranged from about 97.4 per cent in WA to 79.5 per cent in the ACT.

15.10 Future directions in supported accommodation and assistance performance reporting

Measuring client satisfaction, client outcomes and clients with high and complex needs

Client satisfaction is an important indicator of quality. Work on developing measures of client satisfaction within the SAAP population is being undertaken through a two stage consultancy, which commenced in September 2001. The consultancy has involved widespread consultations and developmental work supported by limited trials of measures that are considered to be appropriate for SAAP clients. The final report on the first stage was received in June 2003 and, following an assessment of the conclusions and findings on the different methods that were tested, a project brief for the second stage was developed. A select tender process led to the selection of a consultant in September 2003. The second stage, which is attempting to measure client satisfaction across a large sample of SAAP agencies using a single method, is due for completion in January 2004.

Projects on the measurement of client outcomes and on clients with high and complex needs are also underway. These projects are developing and testing client outcome measures, and developing a method for collecting meaningful information on clients with high and complex needs. Both projects are expected to report by the end of 2003.

Improving data and information collection

An Information Management Plan (IMP) for SAAP IV was adopted in 2001 by the SAAP National Coordination and Development Committee. The committee has approved the guiding principles of the IMP and work is underway. The first stage of the implementation process involves defining the information needs of all stakeholders more precisely and then determining the best way in which to collect and use this information. This work led to a review of the scope of the national data collection, which resulted in a redefinition and trialing of a new core data set during 2003. If further trials are successful then the new core data set collection is to be implemented from 1 July 2004.

The implementation of the IMP will:

- place increased emphasis on electronic data capture

- require increased support processes for SAAP agencies (including training and a help line) to increase data quality and maximise use of the data.

Electronic data capture within SAAP agencies currently occurs through the use of specially developed software (the SAAP Management and Reporting Tool — SMART), provided free to SAAP agencies and supported through specially developed training and documentation, and the provision of a hot line. Agencies are encouraged to submit their data via SMART rather than via paper forms.

The number of SAAP agencies using SMART has steadily increased over the years. The increased take-up is probably due to the provision of additional training, increased publicity and information about the benefits of SMART, and a broader understanding that the automatic encryption process incorporated into SMART provides significantly better security than that of paper forms. A further benefit in using SMART is that data quality is enhanced because the software's prompts and processes aid the user.

During the implementation of the IMP process, SMART will be maintained, enhanced and supported with increased training (Version 4, containing further enhancements, was released in June 2003). The progressive move to an information management paradigm within SAAP may require new data capture processes (including new software), which may eventually involve the electronic transfer of information.

Review of SAAP performance reporting and framework

A mid-term review of the SAAP bilateral performance reporting and performance framework was conducted in the first half of 2003. The review assessed the national performance framework (including the national performance indicators) and the bilateral reporting process used by the jurisdictions to report performance to the Australian Government. As a result of the review findings a number of changes have been adopted to streamline the bilateral reporting, and some enhancements and other changes will be made to the national performance indicators.

15.11 Jurisdictions' comments

This section provides comments from each jurisdiction on the services covered in this chapter. Appendix A contains data that may assist in interpreting the performance indicators presented in this chapter. These data cover a range of demographic and geographic characteristics, including age profile, geographic distribution of the population, income levels, education levels, tenure of dwellings and cultural heritage (including Indigenous and ethnic status).

Australian Government comments

" 2002-03 was the third year of the five year Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) Agreement between the Australian Government and the States and Territories. This is the fourth set of SAAP Agreements (SAAP IV).

The Australian Government is providing over $800 million for SAAP IV. This represents an increase of over $260 million or some 30 per cent over total Australian Government funding for the SAAP III Agreement.

Work has continued during the year on implementation of an Information Management Plan for SAAP. The emphasis in the plan has been to strengthen the capacity of SAAP funded agencies to collect and use information. A new research program launched in 2002 led to the funding of 12 projects involving SAAP agencies. This has provided agencies with the opportunity to undertake local level research in collaboration with networks and research institutions. The program was considered very successful and as a result further projects are being funded in 2003. The second *SAAP National Performance Report* was published in early 2003.

The Australian Government has progressed a number of new activities and increased support for existing activities, which are designed to support homeless people. The Reconnect Program has been extended with the provision of $82.2 million over four years. Reconnect assists homeless young people and their families. The 2003 Budget provided an additional $1.3 million for the Job Placement, Employment and Training program; to assist young disadvantaged and homeless people gain training and employment support. New early intervention and support strategies were introduced with the establishment of the Transition to Independent Living Allowance and the Personal Support Program (to operate through 640 outlets).

A new CSHA multilateral agreement was successfully concluded with all States and Territories, with effect from July 2003 for five years and providing $4.75 billion in Australian Government funds over that period. Homeless people will be a priority target under the new CSHA.

The National Homelessness Strategy has been progressed on a number of fronts. The Australian Government provided $9.6 million over five years to fund a number of innovative demonstration projects and activities. Funds were provided to support the National Homelessness Conference and the National Indigenous Homelessness Forum. The Family Homelessness Prevention Pilots, designed to assist families at risk, were commenced in eight locations and assisted approximately 225 families in 2002-03. "

New South Wales Government comments

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Child protection and supported placements

Since the proclamation of the new legislation and the opening of the HelpLine there has been a substantial increase in workload and complexity of cases for Department of Community Services (DoCs). The 'Kibble Committee' — a joint DoCs, Central Agency and Public Service Association of NSW working party — reviewed the impact of this increase in demand for DoCS services. The subsequent Kibble Report recommended the appointment of additional child protection and out of home care staff and for DoCS to pursue all efficiencies available in the Child Protection System in order to increase capacity to deal with both current caseloads and growth in demand.

On 18 December 2002, the NSW Government announced a major boost to funding for DoCS, including a budget for an additional 875 Caseworkers and their support needs, and additional funding for National Government Organisations for early intervention family services and Out of Home Care services, over the next five years. This funding begins with an initial increase of 150 Caseworkers in 2003-04. This is in addition to the extra 130 Caseworkers announced for 2002-03.

DoCS also continues to pursue increased efficiencies through improved demand management through separate projects on demand modelling, demand sampling and review of work processes. Longer-term solutions will channel resources into services that identify children, young people and families at risk and provide the necessary services before problems become entrenched. The new funding will make it possible to boost the capacity of prevention and early intervention services in 2003-04.

Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP)

The key efficiency indicators for NSW all showed increases in unit costs, particularly in costs per day of support. Increases also occurred in cost per completed support period and cost per client accessing services. These increases are directly attributable to the $10.5 million addition funding added to the program base by the NSW Government to implement the new Social and Community Employees State Award (SACS). The additional resources could not be made conditional on productivity improvements.

Although NSW achieved a slight increase in the number of support periods provided, there was a reduction in the number of clients serviced. This was attributable to the significant reconfiguration of service delivery models in many services to be more flexible and client responsive, in line with SAAP IV reform. The transition process often resulted in some temporary reduction in service capacity in some agencies.

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Victorian Government comments

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Child protection and supported placements

In the 2003-04 Budget, an additional $44 million was committed to child protection and placement services. Victoria has continued its significant reform agenda during 2002-03, focussing on prevention and early intervention, and strengthening the child protection system. The reform agenda has been underpinned by comprehensive analyses of the Child Protection and Placement system.

Various initiatives have shown promising signs. For example, eight Family Support Innovation Projects, two Indigenous specific, have been established in areas where child protection notifications are high, to provide more integrated, community based services to families. Within nine months, notifications have reduced across the project areas by 7.5 per cent. More broadly across the State, notification rates have levelled out for the first time in seven years.

In recognition of specific cultural issues effecting the Aboriginal population, the Aboriginal Child Specialist Advice and Support Service has been implemented statewide. This service ensures that a member of the Aboriginal community is involved in child protection investigations regarding Aboriginal children.

A number of initiatives have commenced to support children in out of home care. Looking After Children involves training for 3000 staff to guide best practice and better planning for children and young people in out of home care.

In her Ministerial Statement of June 2003, Minister Garbutt announced the establishment of an Advocate for Children in Care position, and a range of quality assurance initiatives for out of home care, a package worth $1.6million. The Minister also announced a review of the Children and Young Persons Act 1989 to ensure the child protection system has a modern legislative base.

Supported Accommodation and Assistance Program (SAAP)

The report of the Victorian Homelessness Strategy (VHS) *Directions for Change* released in February 2002, provides the framework for ongoing development of homelessness assistance.

During 2002-03, the key emphasis of the VHS has been on initiatives to pilot new approaches to address homelessness. These initiatives include:

- Assistance to older people in tenuous private rental
- Support to at-risk tenancies in public and Indigenous housing
- Housing options for women experiencing family violence
- Preventing people with a mental illness being discharged into homelessness
- Provision of Housing assistance for young people leaving care

A Youth Homelessness review has commenced to provide a continuous improvement framework to meet the needs of young people, who comprise 40 per cent of service users.

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Queensland Government comments

Child protection and supported placements

The Queensland Government released *Queensland Families: Future Directions*, its cornerstone policy for vulnerable children and families. Additional State Budget funding of $148 million over four years was also announced, building on the previously announced $100 million over four years committed as a result of the *Commission of Inquiry into Abuse of Children in Queensland Institutions* (Forde Inquiry). The key future direction is prevention and early intervention to prevent children and young people entering, or further entering, the child protection system. *Future Directions* initiatives include trialing family support centres in Cape York, early intervention service models, first years prevention projects for children early in their school life, responsive placement options for young people unable to live in family-based care, respite care for children in family-based care and increased support and payments for foster and relative carers.

Other major policy statements related to educating children and young people in the care of the state; long term, stable and secure caring environments; and a *Queensland Government Strategic Framework for Child Protection* and accompanying action plan.

Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP)

Queensland continued reform activities aimed at improving the integration of SAAP agencies with other service systems and enhancing the responsiveness of funded services to diverse client needs. Departmental regions implemented action plans to reform the SAAP domestic and family violence services. This reform process aimed to improve the flexibility and diversity of service models and address access and equity issues. Sub-regional service integration projects were continued in three regions, resulting in the development of clear points of entry to the service system, common client assessment tools and protocols with social housing providers.

The Queensland Government implemented action plans to address homelessness among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in three North Queensland locations. These have involved the establishment of community patrols, reviews of individual services (including SAAP services), and exploration of the feasibility of developing 'safe places' in these communities.

Legislation was introduced to implement standards and accreditation processes for boarding houses and supported housing providers, and to improve fire safety in these facilities. These measures will provide significant benefits in terms of quality of accommodation and security of tenure for people in these forms of housing. A whole-of-Government protocol has been developed to re-house residents displaced by closures of facilities resulting from these measures. SAAP agencies form an important part of the infrastructure available to support the rehousing of residents.

Western Australian Government comments

Child protection and supported placements

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In response to the Gordon Inquiry report into *The Response by Government Agencies to Complaints of Family Violence and Child Abuse in Aboriginal Communities*, the Government of Western Australia implemented its across government *Action Plan for Addressing Family Violence and Child Abuse in Aboriginal Communities.* An essential principle in the implementation of this plan has been the honoring of the Government's *Statement of Commitment* with ATSIC in planning and implementing the resources stemming from the Government's action plan. The action plan was for $75 million of new initiatives over four years that included additional resources to child protection, community policing, family strengthening and community capacity building.

Three new Leaving and Aftercare services were funded for young people aged 14 to 25 years who are in care or who have recently left care and are moving to independent living as part of the Government's response to the State Homelessness Strategy. Specifications for a new Tertiary Family Preservation Service for Indigenous families and a Professional Foster Care Service for children who display extremely high risk or difficult behaviours and for large sibling groups were developed and the tendering process commenced. Work commenced on a Memorandum of Understanding between the Departments for Community Development, Education and Training and Health and the Disability Services Commission to support children who are wards or at risk of becoming wards, and required medical technology to maintain respiratory function.

The Children and Young People in Care Advisory Committee (CYPCAC) commenced consultation on the development of a Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Child Placement Principle.

Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP)

Implementation of the State Homelessness Strategy progressed during 2002-03 and implementation updates were placed on the Strategy website: www.homeless.dhw.wa.gov.au.

A new crisis accommodation service for young people in Fremantle commenced in January 2003. Two Aboriginal organisations received additional funding to provide transitional supported accommodation services to Aboriginal people in the north eastern and south eastern metropolitan suburbs.

SAAP Protocols were completed with the Western Australian Police Service and protocols with the Department of Education and Training were progressed. Implementation workshops for the Police protocols were held in the Perth metropolitan area with SAAP services, mental health services and community drug service teams.

Through a joint Commonwealth and State initiative family safety services have been developed in six Aboriginal communities.

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South Australian Government comments

Child protection and supported placements

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During 2002-03, the Robyn Layton Review of South Australia's Child Protection System was conducted. The report, *Our Best Investment — a State Plan to Protect and Advance the Interests of Children* was delivered to the State Government in March, 2003. Recommendations have whole-of-government application. The government's interim response to the Review included the provision of additional funds to improve the capacity in prevention approaches and tertiary responses. This included:

- Extending universal home visiting across the State, complemented with targeted service responses for at-risk families.
- Increasing the number of school counsellors in State schools.
- Establishing a prison-based sex offender treatment program.
- Increasing support payments for foster carers and increasing the funds available to ensure that young people with high and complex needs are appropriately supported.

The government's response to the Layton Review is focussed on ensuring children and young people are protected from harm and families and communities are supported to safely care for children.

Implementation of the Semple Review into Alternative Care has progressed with the establishment of the Ministerial Committee on Alternative Care, and the preparation for the next round of Alternative Care contracts.

A Review of the placement of Aboriginal children into non-Aboriginal care has delivered a number of recommendations for system and practice changes to improve alternative care service provision for Aboriginal children.

A concerted focus is also being placed on the recruitment, assessment and support of relative carers in order to increase the number of children who are able to remain within the care of their extended family.

Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP)

In South Australia a number of initiatives responding to the needs of homeless people have been developed these include:

- The establishment of a stabilisation facility to assist homeless people overcome substance abuse in a sustained manner
- The relocation and refurbishment of the Inner City Men's service to reflect higher standards of care and privacy
- The commencement of a metropolitan service for Aboriginal families who become homeless
- A single telephone referral and assessment service for homeless families, young people and women escaping domestic violence.

A research study was also undertaken by the University of SA into the demand for services in the Inner City by vulnerable adults.

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Tasmanian Government comments

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Child protection and supported placements

During 2003, the Department of Health and Human Services established the Child Protection Advice and Referral Service. As of 1 July 2003 it replaced the intake function previously provided in two locations and now receives all notifications about children at risk of abuse and neglect. This change will provide greater consistency in (i) assessment of risk; (ii) referrals for further assessment; (iii) training, professional development and supervision of staff; (iv) data collection and (v) referrals to appropriate services.

The Department has also implemented the Tasmanian Risk Framework, a model adapted from the Victorian Risk Framework, to support professional decision-making. The tools and guides it incorporates provide a strong evidence base for the information gathering, analysis and judgement needed to assess the risk of abuse or neglect to children. Significant work has also been undertaken on the introduction of new funding arrangements for out of home care in 2004 that will increase the reimbursement to carers for their costs. Progress was also made towards the introduction of Looking After Children. Its implementation will be supported by the Looking After Children Electronic System to improve the quality of reporting on outcomes for children in care.

Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP)

The completed restructure of SAAP services in Tasmania provided an opportunity to create an integrated service system with the following features: equitable funding base using input unit cost methodology; clearly defined operational types; Brokerage funding for the purchase of services and resources to achieve client outcomes; a 24-hour toll free phone service; and. an emphasis on early intervention and assessment including the implementation of a statewide Common Assessment Tool.

Following the restructure Tasmania commenced an evaluation process to assess outcomes of the reforms. Early indicators reveal the restructure of SAAP services increased service capacity, enhanced the ability of services to respond flexibly to diverse client needs and increased consistency and integration across the sector. The restructure also increased service accountability and enabled improved program management.

In addition to evaluating the restructure of the SAAP service system, Tasmania has scoped a service excellence framework, increased training opportunities for SAAP workers, reviewed Sexual Assault Services, and identified fourteen projects for implementation over the next year. These projects include: strategies to enhance responses for clients with complex needs and Indigenous clients; early intervention responses for young people; a review of domestic violence services; and strategies to enhance collaboration with other government departments.

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Australian Capital Territory Government comments

Child protection and supported placements

The significant increase in 2002-03 in the number of reports received and recorded by Family Services and the number of reports going to appraisal reflects national trends. 2002-03 ACT initiatives included work towards the establishment of a Centralised Intake Service. The new unit will provide a single contact point for the public in relation to child protection matters in the ACT. Strategies introduced in 2002-03 to improve recording and feedback to reporters included the adoption of a revised form for recording reports, the provision of a feedback form to mandated reporters, the development and implementation of Multiple Review Report mechanisms and the development of a revised Special Appraisals policy for abuse in care matters.

Family Services continues to focus on the recruitment and retention of staff. In addition, the roles and responsibilities of Family Services have been developed collaboratively with the Out-Of-Home Care sector to provide greater clarity for the sector.

The new ACT Children's Plan has been subject to wide consultation and is being developed. The plan will play a significant role in guiding early intervention and support to keep children out of the child protection system.

Supported Accommodation and Assistance (SAAP)

The territory has faced significant private housing stock shortages, and consequently more pressures on public housing availability, over the past year slowing transition to independent housing and leading to relatively high client service provision costs. Notwithstanding these difficulties, the ACT has worked closely with services providers to maintain quality service standards to facilitate quality outcomes for clients. A commitment to quality service provision is evidenced in the territory having the highest national (both non-Indigenous and Indigenous) levels of agreed support plans and the highest national proportion of clients (both non-Indigenous and Indigenous) gaining access to some form of income following a period of support.

The ACT is developing a whole-of-community approach to addressing issues of homelessness through the ACT Homelessness Strategy which will be launched by the Government in April 2004. This strategy will bring together government, community and the business sectors to develop sustainable and meaningful strategies to respond to homelessness.

The capacity to respond to homelessness in the ACT has been significantly enhanced with additional territorial funding of $13.4 million over the next four years providing additional supported accommodation services for couples, families, single men and women and increase the capacity of the ACT homelessness sector. Transition of the Territory's largest SAAP funded service (200 places) is continuing with the department working closely with residents in the development of a smaller targeted SAAP service and a range of community and social housing options.

Northern Territory Government comments

Child protection and supported placements

The Family and Children's Services Program (FACS) of the Department of Health and Community Services (DHCS) is responsible for child protection and out of home care services, and the administration of the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program.

The Community Welfare (Cross Border) Amendment Act came into effect in December 2002. The Act enables:

- the transfer of children on orders or the subject of in need of care proceedings between all States and internal Territories of Australia, and New Zealand
- action to apprehend children on orders who are unlawfully removed interstate, or abscond
- modifies the requirement for social workers to visit children in care at least every two months so that it only applies when children are resident inside the Territory, and
- updates penalties for offences under the Community Welfare Act.

Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP)

The SAAP sector in Darwin and DHCS has had significant input into the Northern Territory's 'Itinerants Project'; lead agency for the project is the Department of Community Development, Sport and Cultural Affairs. The NT government has invested ($5.25 million) in a range of strategies including return home, drug and alcohol programs, accommodation options, day facilities, early intervention patrols, traditional owner patrols, elders strategies and the development of cultural protocols and education and communication strategies.

Several new initiatives under SAAP IV with an Indigenous focus include an outreach service for itinerant indigenous people in the Darwin region; an early intervention service to provide case management for children accompanying parents, a domestic violence outreach service for women and a children's case worker in the remote Barkly region. A Transitional Housing Program in Alice Springs for people exiting rehabilitation and health services, for example, drug and alcohol, mental health and renal.

A highlight of the year was more than 30 SAAP service providers being able to attend the Australian Federation of Homelessness Organisations (AFHO) 3rd National Homelessness Conference, *Beyond the Divide,* made possible by DHCS, Territory Housing and the Northern Territory Council of Social Services (NTCOSS) working in partnership to assist with the professional development of the SAAP sector.

15.12 Definitions

Child protection services

Table 15.2 **Terms**

Term	Definition
Care and protection orders	Legal orders or administrative/voluntary arrangements involving the community services department, issued in respect of an individual child who is deemed to be in need of care and/or protection. Community services department involvement may include:
	• total responsibility for the welfare of the child (for example, guardianship)
	• responsibility to oversee the actions of the person or authority caring for the child
	• responsibility to provide or arrange accommodation, or to report or give consideration to the child's welfare.
	The order may have been from a court, children's panel, minister of the Crown, authorised community services department officer or similar tribunal or officer.
	Care and protection orders are categorised as:
	• finalised guardianship and finalised custody orders sought through a court
	• finalised supervision and other finalised court orders that give the department some responsibility for the child's welfare (excluding interim orders)
	• interim and temporary orders (including orders that are not finalised)
	• administrative or voluntary arrangements with the community services department, for the purpose of child protection.
	Children are counted only once, even if they are on more than one care and protection order.
Child	A person aged 0–17 years.
Child at risk	A child for whom no abuse or neglect can be substantiated but where there are reasonable grounds to suspect the possibility of prior or future abuse or neglect, and for whom it is considered that continued departmental involvement is warranted.
Child concern reports	Reports to community services departments regarding concerns about a child, as distinct from notifications of child abuse and neglect. The distinction between the two differs across and within jurisdictions.
Indigenous person	Person of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent, who identifies as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander and is accepted as such by the community with which they are associated.
Investigation	An investigation of child abuse and neglect that involves identifying harm or risk of harm to the child, determining an outcome and assessing protective needs. It includes the interviewing or sighting of the subject child where it is practicable to do so.

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Table 15.2 (Continued)

Term	Definition
Investigation finalised	Where an investigation is completed and an outcome is recorded by 31 August.
Investigation not finalised	Where an investigation is commenced but an outcome is not recorded by 31 August.
Notification	Contact with an authorised department by persons or other bodies making allegations of child abuse or neglect or harm to a child.
Substantiation	Notification for which an investigation concludes that there is reasonable cause to believe that the child had been, was being or is likely to be abused, neglected or otherwise harmed. It does not necessarily require sufficient evidence for a successful prosecution and does not imply that treatment or case management is, or is to be, provided.

Out-of-home care

Table 15.3   **Terms**

Term	Definition
Child	A person aged 0–17 years.
Exited out-of-home care	Where a child does not return to care within two months.
Family based care	Home-based care (*see* placement types).
Family group homes	Residential child care single dwelling establishments that have as their main purpose the provision of substitute care to children. They are typically run like family homes, with a limited number of children who eat together as a family group and are cared for around the clock by resident substitute parents.
Foster care	Care of a child who is living apart from their natural or adoptive parents in a private household, by one or more adults who act as 'foster parents' and are paid a regular allowance for the child's support by a government authority or non-government organisation. The authorised department or non-government organisation provides continuing supervision or support while the child remains in the care of foster parents.
Foster parent	Any person who is being paid a foster allowance (or such a person's spouse) by a government or non-government organisation for the care of a child (excluding children in family group homes).
Guardian	Any person who has the legal and ongoing care and responsibility for the protection of a child.
Indigenous person	Person of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent, who identifies as being an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and is accepted as such by the community with which they are associated. If Indigenous status is unknown, then a person is considered to be non-Indigenous.

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Table 15.3 (Continued)

Term	Definition
Non-respite care	Out-of-home care for children for child protection reasons.
Other relative	Grandparent, aunt, uncle or cousin, whether the relationship is half, full, step or through adoption and can be traced through or to a person whose parents were not married to each other at the time of the child's birth. This category includes members of Aboriginal communities who are accepted by that community as being related to the child.
Out-of-home care	Overnight care, including placement with relatives (other than parents) where the government makes a financial payment. Includes care of children in legal and voluntary placements (that is, children on and not on a legal order) but excludes placements made in disability services, psychiatric services, juvenile justice facilities or overnight child care services.
Placement types	Four main categories:
	• facility-based care (placement in a residential building where the purpose is to provide placement for children and where there are paid staff, including placements in family group homes)
	• home-based care (placement in the home of a carer who is reimbursed for expenses for the care of the child). The three subcategories of home-based care are foster care/community care, relative/kinship care and other
	• independent living (including private board)
	• other (including unknown).
Relatives/kin	Family members other than parents, or a person well known to the child and/or family (based on an existing relationship).
Respite care	Out-of-home care on a temporary basis for reasons other than child protection — for example, when parents are ill. Excludes emergency care provided to children who are removed from their homes for protective reasons.

Table 15.4 Descriptors

Descriptor	Definition
Children in out-of-home care during the year	The total number of children who are in at least one out-of-home care placement at any time during the year. A child who is in more than one placement is counted only once.
Length of time in continuous out-of-home care	The length of time for which a child is in out-of-home care on a continuous basis. A return home of less than seven days is not considered to break the continuity of placement.
Safety in out-of-home care	The proportion of children in out-of-home care who are the subject of a child protection substantiation and the person believed responsible is living in the household (or was a worker in a residential care facility).

Table 15.5　**Out-of-home care effectiveness indicators**

Indicator	Definition
Stability of placement	Number of placements for children who have exited out-of-home care and do not return within two months. Placements do not include respite or temporary placements lasting less than seven days. Placements are counted separately where there is:
	• a change in the placement type — for example, from a home-based to a facility-based placement
	• within placement type, a change in venue or a change from one home-based placement to a different home-based placement.
	A particular placement is counted only once, so a return to a previous placement is another placement.

Supported accommodation and assistance

Table 15.6　**Terms**

Term	Definition
Accommodation	Crisis or short term accommodation, medium term to long term accommodation, and other SAAP funded accommodation (which comprises accommodation at hostels, motels and hotels, accommodation in caravans, community placements and other SAAP funded arrangements).
Agency	The body or establishment with which the State or Territory government or its representative agrees to provide a SAAP service. The legal entity has to be incorporated. Funding from the State or Territory government could be allocated directly (that is, from the government department) or indirectly (that is, from the auspice of the agency). The SAAP service could be provided at the agency's location or through an outlet at a different location.
Casual client	A person who is in contact with a SAAP agency and receives one-off assistance for a period of generally not more than one hour, and who does not establish an ongoing relationship with an agency.
Client	A person who receives supported accommodation or support
Crisis or short term supported accommodation	Supported accommodation for periods of generally not more than three months (short term) and for persons needing immediate short term accommodation (crisis).
Cross-target/multiple/ general services	SAAP services targeted at more than one primary client group category — for example, SAAP services for single persons regardless of their gender.
Day support	Support only on a walk-in basis — for example, an agency that provides a drop-in centre, showering facilities and a meals service at the location of the SAAP agency.

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Table 15.6 (Continued)

Term	Definition
Homeless person	A person who does not have access to safe, secure and adequate housing. A person is considered to not have access to such housing if the only housing to which the person has access: • is damaged, or is likely to damage, the person's health • threatens the person's safety • marginalises the person through failing to provide access to adequate personal amenities or the economic and social supports that a home normally affords • places the person in circumstances that threaten or adversely affect the adequacy, safety, security and affordability of that housing • is of unsecured tenure. A person is also considered homeless if they are living in accommodation provided by a SAAP agency or some other form of emergency accommodation.
Indigenous person	A person who is of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Island descent, who identifies as being an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, and who is accepted as such by the community with which they are associated.
Medium term to long term supported accommodation	Supported accommodation for periods over three months. Medium term is around three to six months and long term is longer than six months.
Multiple service delivery model	SAAP agencies that use more than one service delivery model to provide SAAP services — for example, crisis or short term accommodation and support, as well as day support (that is, the provision of meals).
Non-english speaking background services	Services that are targeted at persons whose first language is not English.
Non-recurrent funds	SAAP funds received for non recurrent purposes, such as funds for research, a special one-off project or replacement of capital items (for example, furniture and motor vehicles).
Non-saap accommodation places	Accommodation places in the form of permanent beds (owned or managed by the agency) that use funds other than SAAP funds.
One-off assistance	Assistance provided to a person who is not a client, such as the provision of a meal, a shower, transport, money, clothing, telephone advice, information or a referral.
Ongoing support period	A support period for which, at the end of the reporting period, no support end date and no after-support information are provided.
Other special characteristics	Primary or secondary characteristics that are not included in those of a service's primary client or group, or in other categories of the secondary client group — for example, a service specifically targeted at homeless persons with a disability.
Outlet	A premise owned/managed/leased by an agency at which SAAP services are delivered. Excludes accommodation purchased using SAAP funds (for example, at a motel).

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Table 15.6 (Continued)

Term	Definition
Outreach support services	Services that exist to provide support and other related assistance specifically to homeless people. These clients may be isolated and able to receive services and support from a range of options that enhance their flexibility (for example, advocacy, life skills and counselling). Generalist support and accommodation services may also provide outreach support in the form of follow-up to clients where they are housed. In this context, support is provided 'off site'.
Providers	Agencies that supply support and accommodation services
Real expenditure	Actual expenditure adjusted for changes in prices. Adjustments are made using the GDP(E) price deflator and expressed in terms of final year prices.
Recurrent funding	Funding provided by the Australian, State and Territory governments to cover operating costs, salaries and rent.
Referral	When a SAAP agency contacts another agency and that agency accepts the person concerned for an appointment or interview. A referral is not provided if the person is not accepted for an appointment or interview.
SAAP service	Supported accommodation, support or one-off assistance that is provided by a SAAP agency and intended to be used by homeless persons.
Service delivery model	The mode or manner in which a service is provided through an agency. The modes of service delivery could be described as crisis or short term accommodation and support; medium term to long term accommodation and support; day support; outreach support; telephone information; and referral or agency support. An agency may deliver its services through one or more of these means of delivery.
Service provider	A worker or volunteer employed and/or engaged by a SAAP agency, who either directly provides a SAAP service or in some way contributes to the provision of a SAAP service. Includes persons such as administrative staff of an agency, whether paid or not paid.
Single men services	Services provided for males who present to the SAAP agency without a partner or children.
Single women services	Services provided for females who present to the SAAP agency without a partner or children.
Support	SAAP services, other than supported accommodation, that are provided to assist homeless people or persons at imminent risk of becoming homeless to achieve the maximum possible degree of self-reliance and independence. Support is ongoing and provided as part of a client relationship between the SAAP agency and the homeless person.
Support period	The period that commences when a SAAP client establishes or re-establishes (after the cessation of a previous support period) an ongoing relationship with a SAAP agency. The support period ends when: • support ceases because the SAAP client terminates the relationship with the SAAP agency • support ceases because the SAAP agency terminates the relationship with the SAAP client

Table 15.6   (Continued)

Term	Definition
	• no support is provided to the SAAP client for a period of three months.
	A support period is relevant to the provision of supported accommodation or support, not the provision of one-off assistance.
Supported accommodation	Accommodation provided by a SAAP agency in conjunction with support. The accommodation component of supported accommodation is provided in the form of beds in particular locations or accommodation purchased using SAAP funds (for example, at a motel). Agencies that provide accommodation without providing support are considered to provide supported accommodation.
Telephone information and referral	Support delivered via telephone without face-to-face contact. Support provided may include information and/or referral.
Total funding	Funding for allocation to agencies (not available at the individual client group level) for training, equipment and other administration costs.
Unmet demand	A homeless person who seeks supported accommodation or support, but is not provided with that supported accommodation or support. The person may receive one-off assistance.
Women escaping domestic violence services	Services specifically designed to assist women and women accompanied by their children, who are homeless or at imminent risk of becoming homeless as a result of violence and/or abuse.
Youth/young people services	Services provided for persons who are independent and above the school leaving age for the State or Territory concerned, and who present to the SAAP agency unaccompanied by a parent/guardian.

Table 15.7   **Indicators**

Indicator	Definition
Accommodation load (of agencies)	The number of accommodation days divided by the number of days for which the agency is operational during the reporting period, where the number of accommodation days equals the sum of accommodation days for all clients of an agency who are supported during the reporting period. The average accommodation load is the mean value of all agencies' accommodation loads. Support periods without valid accommodation dates are assigned the inter quartile modal duration of accommodation for agencies of the same service delivery model in the same jurisdiction.
Caseload (of agencies)	The number of support days divided by the number of days for which the agency is operational during the reporting period, where the number of support days equals the sum of support days for all clients of the agency who are supported during the reporting period. The average caseload is the mean value of all agencies' caseloads. Support periods without valid support dates are assigned the inter quartile modal duration of support for agencies of the same service delivery model in the same jurisdiction.

15.13 References

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