18 Homelessness services

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| Attachment tables |
| Attachment tables are identified in references throughout this chapter by a ‘18A’ prefix (for example, table 18A.1). A full list of attachment tables is provided at the end of this chapter, and the attachment tables are available from the website at www.pc.gov.au/rogs/2016. |
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This chapter presents data on government‑funded specialist homelessness services and the people accessing these services. The chapter focuses on those services funded under the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) *National Affordable Housing Agreement* (NAHA) and the *National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness* (NPAH). Homelessness services that do not receive government funding and other non‑specialist homelessness services are not included in this Report.

Improvements to the reporting of homelessness services in this edition include explanatory material on intake and access to specialist homelessness services and how different service delivery models can affect performance measurement in this area.

All abbreviations used in the Report are available in a complete list in volume A: Approach to performance reporting.

## 18.1 Profile of homelessness services

### Service overview

Specialist homelessness services aim to provide support to people who are homeless or at imminent risk of becoming homeless as a result of a crisis, including women and children escaping domestic and family violence.

Government and non‑government service providers (including community organisations) deliver a variety of homelessness services to clients, including supported accommodation, counselling, advocacy, links to housing, health, education and employment services, outreach support, brokerage and meals services, and financial and employment assistance.

Much of the data provided in this Report have been sourced from specialist homelessness service providers through the Specialist homelessness services collection (SHSC), which commenced in 2011‑12 and is conducted by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) (box 18.1).

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| Box 18.1 Specialist homelessness services collection (SHSC) | |
| SHSC data are collected by specialist homelessness agencies for all clients, and reported each month to the AIHW.  The data collected by agencies are based on support periods or episodes of assistance provided to individual clients. Data are collected about the characteristics and circumstances of a client when they first present at an agency, and on the assistance they receive, their circumstances at the end of each month and at the end of the support period. Data are also collected about people who request assistance from a specialist homelessness agency but do not receive an assessment of their needs, direct services or a referral to another service.  The scope of the collection is specialist homelessness agencies that are funded under the NAHA and the NPAH. Those agencies that are expected to participate in the SHSC are identified by State and Territory departments responsible for the delivery of services. | |
| *Source*: AIHW (2015a). |
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#### Accessing homelessness services in Australia

Each State and Territory manages their own system for the assessment, intake, referral and ongoing case management of specialist homelessness services clients. These systems can be summarised into three broad categories.

* *Community sector funding and support* — The assessment of client needs and intake into services is managed by individual specialist homelessness service providers, consistent with State or Territory policies. Referral to other service providers is made if clients’ needs are not able to be met by the initial provider. These systems may be supported by a coordinating service. The coordinating service acts to link clients to local specialist homelessness service providers and may make an initial assessment of a client’s needs (but they do not provide homelessness services directly).
* *Central information management* — The assessment of client needs, intake and referral is managed by any specialist homelessness service provider, via State and Territory central information management tools. The central information management system assists in the identification of appropriate services and indicates the availability/vacancy for services at all specialist homelessness service providers. Client information may be shared between providers upon referral (with client consent).
* *Central intake* — The assessment of client needs, intake and referral is managed by one or more ‘central intake’ agencies. Central intake agencies prioritise access to services and only refer clients as services and/or vacancies are available. Central information management tools may exist to share information between specialist homelessness service providers and central intake agencies.

Although presented as three distinct categories, these systems are representative of a spectrum of approaches jurisdictions may adopt to coordinate entry into specialist homelessness services. Table 18.1 summarises the intake and referral systems used by each jurisdiction, with an indication of which category they would most closely align.

These different service delivery models may affect measurement of specific performance indicators (box 18.3).

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| Table 18.1 Jurisdictional homelessness intake and referral systems |
| |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | |  | System name | Description | Categorya | | NSW | No Wrong Door | Assessment and referral for homelessness services may be conducted by: 1) any specialist homelessness service provider; 2) the Link2home information and referral service; or 3) the NSW Domestic Violence Line.  It is supported by a centralised service directory and vacancy management system. | Central information | | Vic | Opening doors framework | An integrated assessment and referral system with a limited number of designated access points. | Central intake | | Qld | Queensland Homelessness Information Platform | Assessment and referral for homelessness services is conducted by any specialist homelessness service provider.  The information platform provides a consistent assessment, referral and prioritisation process. | Central information | | WA | Entrypoint Perth | Provides information, assessment, and referral to specialist homelessness service providers in the metropolitan area. | Community sector funding and support | | SA | Homeless 2 Home | Provides client assessment, intake, referral and ongoing case management system accessible to specialist homelessness service providers. | Central information | | Tas | Housing connect | Client intake and referral is managed using a ‘front door’ model by two organisations at seven offices across the State and clients receive housing and/or homelessness assistance and are connected to support from five organisations for the duration of need. Referrals to and from crisis accommodation are made so that ‘no wrong door’ access is available to all people seeking housing and/or homelessness assistance. A shared information system streamlines the integrated Housing Connect model. | Central intake | | ACT | First point | First point is the single intake and referral provider for the ACT. | Central intake | | NT | Shelter me | ShelterMe is a directory of services for homeless Territorians. | Community sector funding and support | |
| a The category provided is the most closely aligned to the jurisdictions intake and referral system. Each State and Territory’s intake and referral system has its own characteristics. |
| *Source*: State and Territory governments. |
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#### Links between housing and homelessness services

Close links exist between homelessness services and other forms of housing assistance. The Housing and homelessness services sector overview (sector overview G) provides some information on the interconnections between these and other housing services. Interconnections between housing and homelessness services include:

* individuals and families may access both homelessness and housing services, as people can move from homelessness to social housing, or might be in receipt of homelessness services and accommodated in social housing. AIHW data linkage found that in NSW and WA, 18 688 public housing tenants sought support from specialist homelessness services in the two years to 30 June 2013 (AIHW 2015b)
* community housing organisations may provide short-term and transitional accommodation and some specialist homelessness agencies provide long-term accommodation.

Information on housing services in Australia is reported in Housing (chapter 17).

### Roles and responsibilities

The NAHA commenced on 1 January 2009 as part of the Intergovernmental Agreement on Federal Financial Relations. To support the NAHA, a series of one- to three‑year NPAHs have been negotiated between the Australian Government and State and Territory governments. The NPAH contributes to the NAHA outcome to help ‘people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness achieve sustainable housing and social inclusion’ (COAG 2014). The NPAH outcomes are:

* fewer people will become homeless and fewer of these people will sleep rough
* fewer people will become homeless more than once
* people at risk of or experiencing homelessness will maintain or improve connections with their families and communities, and maintain or improve their education, training or employment participation
* people at risk of or experiencing homelessness will be supported by quality services, with improved access to sustainable housing (COAG 2014).

As part of broader COAG reforms, the NPAH clarified that States and Territory governments are responsible for day to day delivery of services. It also established an agreed set of desired outcomes for homelessness services, focused on improving the delivery of services to prevent and respond to homelessness.

### Funding

Government funded specialist homelessness services are jointly funded by the Australian Government and State and Territory governments, via the National Affordable Housing Specific Purpose Payment (for housing and homelessness services) and the NPAH (for housing and support services for people that are homeless or at risk of homelessness — matched equally between the Australian Government and State and Territory governments). Nationally, real recurrent funding was $29.93 per person in the population in 2014‑15, though the amount of funding per person varied across jurisdictions (table 18A.4).

Direct expenditure on specialist homelessness services is undertaken by State and Territory governments. Recurrent government expenditure on specialist homelessness services for 2014‑15 was $707 million (table 18A.3). Most of this expenditure (97.6 per cent) was funding provided to agencies to deliver services for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, while the remaining expenditure (2.4 per cent) was attributed to State and Territory governments’ administration costs (table 18A.2).

### Size and scope

#### Definition for population

Data on the prevalence of homelessness are sourced from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) (ABS 2012a). The ABS definition states that when a person does not have suitable accommodation alternatives they are considered homeless if their current living arrangement:

* is in a dwelling that is inadequate; or
* has no tenure, or if their initial tenure is short and not extendable; or
* does not allow them to have control of, and access to space for, social relations (ABS 2012b).

In 2011, 105 237 people were estimated to be homeless on Census night (ABS 2012c). Under the ABS definition for homelessness, people living in in supported accommodation (as provided by specialist homelessness service providers) are counted as homeless — approximately 20 per cent of the homeless population in 2011.

The majority of homeless people in 2011 were ‘persons living in severely crowded dwellings’[[1]](#footnote-1) (39 per cent). Similar proportions of homeless people were staying temporarily in other households (17 per cent) and in boarding houses (17 per cent). Only 6 per cent of homeless people were in improvised dwellings, tents or sleepers out and 1 per cent were in other temporary lodgings on Census night.

Estimates of homelessness from the Census provide a point‑in‑time prevalence measure of homelessness and the characteristics of those who were likely to have been homeless. However, estimates of people who are homeless on Census night may be over‑ or under‑estimated if the data collected about a person are not sufficient to be certain about whether or not they were homeless on Census night, or under‑enumerated (not counted in the Census at all). Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are more likely to be both under‑enumerated and overrepresented in the homeless population (ABS 2012c).[[2]](#footnote-2)

#### Definition for services

All clients of specialist homelessness services are either homeless or at risk of homelessness. Homeless status in the SHSC is determined by aligning as closely as possible with the ABS’s statistical definition of homelessness (ABS 2012c). For 2014‑15, ‘homeless’ status is derived for a client based on the client’s housing circumstances at the beginning of their first support period in 2014‑15 (or at the beginning of 2014‑15 for clients who were existing clients on 1 July 2014). All other clients not meeting these criteria are considered to be at risk of homelessness (excluding clients who did not provide sufficient information to make this assessment).

A client in the SHSC is considered ‘homeless’ if their housing situation was any of the following:

* improvised dwelling, or no shelter
* short-term temporary accommodation
* ‘couch surfing’ in a house, townhouse or flat with no tenure.

Nationally in 2014‑15, specialist homelessness services agencies provided support to an estimated 255 657 people (table 18A.1). Specialist homelessness agencies can provide a number of services to clients in a single support period — across a range of support areas — including general services (provided to 90.7 per cent of clients), accommodation (33.3 per cent), assistance to sustain housing (27.8 per cent), and domestic violence services (23.1 per cent) (figure 18.1).

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| Figure 18.1 Composition of support provided, all clients, 2014‑15**a** |
| |  | | --- | | Figure 18.1 Composition of support provided, all clients, 2014 15  More details can be found within the text surrounding this image. | |
| a See table 18A.1 for detailed footnotes and caveats. See Definitions of key terms (section 18.5) for further details on the types of specialist homelessness services provided. |
| *Source*: AIHW (unpublished) Specialist Homelessness Services Collection, Australia; table 18A.1. |
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## 18.2 Framework of performance indicators

The performance indicator framework for government funded specialist homelessness services is based on shared government objectives for homelessness services delivered under the NAHA (box 18.2). The NAHA covers the areas of housing and homelessness services. Performance indicators reported in this chapter are aligned with homelessness services performance indicators in the most recent version of the NAHA, where relevant.

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| Box 18.2 Objectives for government funded specialist homelessness services |
| The overall aim of specialist homelessness services is to provide transitional supported accommodation and a range of related support services, to help people who are homeless or at imminent risk of homelessness to achieve the maximum possible degree of self‑reliance and independence. Within this aim, the goals are to:   * resolve crises * re‑establish family links where appropriate * re‑establish the capacity of clients to live independently, achieve sustainable housing and social inclusion * provide homelessness services in an equitable and efficient manner. |
| *Source*: COAG (2012a). |
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The performance indicator framework provides information on equity, efficiency and effectiveness, and distinguishes the outputs and outcomes of homelessness services (figure 18.2). The performance indicator framework shows which data are comparable in the 2016 Report. For data that are not considered directly comparable, text includes relevant caveats and supporting commentary. Chapter 1 discusses data comparability and completeness from a Report‑wide perspective (section 1.6).

In addition to section 18.1, the Report’s Statistical context chapter contains data that may assist in interpreting the performance indicators presented in this chapter. These data cover a range of demographic and geographic characteristics (chapter 2).

For specialist homelessness services, the impact of the different service delivery models operating across jurisdictions also impacts selected performance measures (box 18.3).

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| Figure 18.2 Government funded specialist homelessness services performance indicator framework |
| |  | | --- | | Figure 18.2 Government funded specialist homelessness services performance indicator framework  More details can be found within the text surrounding this image. | |
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| Box 18.3 Model of service delivery and performance measurement |
| Specialist homelessness service providers across all jurisdictions provide information to the AIHW about all people and cases where assistance has been sought. The AIHW manages the collection to ensure that data are collected according to common definitions. However, the model of specialised homelessness service delivery operating within each jurisdiction can affect how and when particular activities are counted, which in turn affects measures of performance.  In particular, client intake and referral systems (see table 18.1 for a summary of the system operating in each jurisdiction) affect the following indicators:   * unmet demand for homelessness services (see box 18.5) * development of an agreed case management plan (box 18.6) * match of needs of clients(box 18.7).   Other service delivery approaches may also affect performance measurement. For example, the provision of short‑term homelessness services (less than 24 hours) can affect measurement of the indicator: development of an agreed case management plan (box 18.6). |
| *Source*: State and Territory governments. |
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## 18.3 Key performance indicator results

Different delivery contexts, locations and types of clients can affect the equity, effectiveness and efficiency of homelessness services.

Data quality information (DQI) is included where available for performance indicators in this Report. The purpose of DQI is to provide structured and consistent information about quality aspects of data used to report on performance indicators, in addition to material in the chapter or sector overview and attachment tables. All DQI for the 2016 Report can be found at www.pc.gov.au/rogs/2016.

### Outputs

Outputs are the actual services delivered (while outcomes are the impact of these services on the status of an individual or group) (see chapter 1, section 1.5). Output information is also critical for equitable, efficient and effective management of government services.

### Equity

#### Access of special needs groups to homelessness services

‘Access of special needs groups to homelessness services’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to ensure that services are provided in an equitable manner to all special needs groups in the community, on the basis of relative need (box 18.4).

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| Box 18.4 Access of special needs groups to homelessness services |
| ‘Access of special needs groups to homelessness services’ is the comparison between the representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people born in non‑main English speaking countries (non‑MESC) and people with disability among all people whose needs for accommodation and other services were met, and the representation of these groups in the population. |
| Disability for this indicator is defined as people who have identified as having a long-term health condition or disability and who need assistance with core activities (including needing assistance with self-care, mobility or communication). Data do not measure the total number of people with disability accessing specialist homelessness services and the measure may underestimate the number of clients with disability who need support to access and maintain housing.  This indicator includes three measures:   * the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, non‑MESC clients and people with disability whose demand for accommodation was met divided by the total number of clients whose demand for accommodation was met * the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, non‑MESC clients and people with disability whose demand for services other than accommodation was met divided by the total number of clients whose demand for services other than accommodation was met * the representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, non‑MESC clients and people with disability in specialist homelessness services compared with their representation in the population.   Use by special needs groups is a proxy indicator of equitable access. In general, usage rates for special needs groups similar or higher to those for the broader service population are desirable. Several factors need to be considered in interpreting the results for this set of measures. In particular, cultural differences can influence the extent to which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, non‑MESC clients and people with disability use different types of services.  Data reported for these measures are:   * comparable (subject to caveats) across jurisdictions and over time * complete for the current reporting period. All required 2014‑15 data are available for all jurisdictions.   Data quality information for people with disability is at www.pc.gov.au/rogs/2016. |
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##### Access of special needs groups to homelessness services: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

In 2014‑15, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people had a higher representation amongst all people accessing specialist homelessness services (23.5 per cent) than their representation in the population (3.0 per cent) (figure 18.3).

Nationally, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people made up 28.1 per cent of all clients whose needs for accommodation were met, and 15.4 per cent of all clients whose needs for services other than accommodation were met in 2014‑15. These results varied across jurisdictions (figure 18.3).

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| Figure 18.3 Proportion of clients who were Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients, 2014‑15**a** |
| |  | | --- | | Figure 18.3 Proportion of clients who were Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients, 2014-15  More details can be found within the text surrounding this image. | |
| a See box 18.4 and tables 18A.5 and 18A.8 for detailed definitions, footnotes and caveats. |
| *Source*: AIHW (unpublished) Specialist Homelessness Services Collection; ABS (2014) *Australian Demographic Statistics, June 2014*, Cat. no. 3101.0; ABS (2014) *Estimates and Projections, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, 2001 to 2026*, Cat. no. 3238.0; tables 2A.1, 2A.14, 18A.5 and 18A.8. |
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##### Access of special needs groups to homelessness services: people born in non‑main English speaking countries

In 2014-15, people born in non‑main English speaking countries had a lower representation amongst all people accessing specialist homelessness services (11.5 per cent) than this group’s representation in the population at the last population census (15.1 per cent) (figure 18.4).

Nationally, people born in non‑main English speaking countries made up 10.5 per cent of all clients whose needs for accommodation were met, and 9.8 per cent of all clients whose needs for services other than accommodation were met in 2014‑15. These results varied across jurisdictions (figure 18.4).

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| Figure 18.4 Proportion of clients who were people born in non‑main English speaking countries, 2014‑15**a,** |
| |  | | --- | | Figure 18.4 Proportion of clients who were people born in non main English speaking countries, 2014-15  More details can be found within the text surrounding this image. | |
| a See box 18.4 and tables 18A.6 and 18A.8 for detailed definitions, footnotes and caveats. |
| *Source*: AIHW (unpublished) Specialist Homelessness Services Collection, Australia; ABS (2012), *2011 Census of Population and Housing, Australia, States and Territories, Basic Community Profile, Table B09 — Country of birth of person by sex*, Cat. no. 2001.0; tables 2A.8, 18A.6 and 18A.8. |
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##### Access of special needs groups to homelessness services: people with disability

In 2014-15, people with disability had a lower representation amongst all people accessing specialist homelessness services (4.1 per cent) than their representation in the population (as measured in the ABS 2012 Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers) (6.1 per cent) (figure 18.5).

Nationally, people with disability made up 4.1 per cent of all clients whose needs for accommodation were met, and 3.0 per cent of all clients whose needs for services other than accommodation were met in 2014‑15. These results varied across jurisdictions (figure 18.5).

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| Figure 18.5 Proportion of clients who were people with disability,  2014‑15**a** |
| |  | | --- | | Figure 18.5 Proportion of clients who were people with disability,  2014-15   More details can be found within the text surrounding this image. | |
| a See box 18.4 and tables 18A.7 and 18A.8 for detailed definitions, footnotes and caveats. |
| *Source*:AIHW (unpublished) Specialist Homelessness Services Collection; ABS (2013) *Disability, Ageing and Carers, Australia: Summary of Findings, 2012,* Cat. no. 4430.0; table 18A.7 and 18A.8. |
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### Effectiveness

#### Access — Unmet demand for homelessness services

‘Unmet demand for homelessness services’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to ensure all Australians have access to homelessness services (box 18.5).

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| Box 18.5 Unmet demand for homelessness services |
| Unmet demand for homelessness services occurs when a homeless person (or a person at risk of homelessness) seeks assistance from a specialist homelessness services provider, but cannot be provided with that assistance. It excludes: clients who received an assessment or a referral (unassisted requests for services), and; clients who received some form of assistance. Unmet demand is measured in reference to two broad service types:   * Unmet demand for accommodation * the number of average daily unassisted requests with a need for accommodation * the number of clients who requested short-term or emergency accommodation or medium- or long-term housing who were not provided with or referred to these services (although they may have received other types of services), divided by the number of clients who had a need for short‑term or emergency accommodation or medium- or long-term housing. * Unmet demand for services other than accommodation * the number of average daily unassisted requests without a need for accommodation but with a need for other services * the number of clients who did not request accommodation but did request another type of service who were not provided with or referred to any of these services, divided by the number of clients who had a need for a service other than accommodation.   A low or decreasing proportion of clients with unmet demand is desirable.  Jurisdictions with some central intake models may record a low number of unassisted requests for services and a high number of clients with unmet need for services (see table 18.1 and box 18.3 for details). Data for these jurisdictions may not be directly comparable to data for other jurisdictions.  Data reported for these measures are:   * comparable (subject to caveats) within jurisdictions over time but are not comparable across jurisdictions * complete for the current reporting period. All required 2014‑15 data are available for all jurisdictions.   Data quality information for this indicator is under development. |
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Nationally in 2014‑15, clients with unmet need for accommodation accounted for 25.9 per cent of the total demand for accommodation (figure 18.6), compared with 24.0 per cent in 2013‑14 (table 18A.10). On average in 2014‑15, there were 221.7 unassisted requests for accommodation services a day nationally, a decrease from 291.7 in 2013–14 (table 18A.9).

Nationally, clients with unmet demand for services other than accommodation accounted for 1.8 per cent of the total demand for services other than accommodation in 2014‑15 (figure 18.6). On average in 2014‑15, there were 90.3 unassisted requests for services other than accommodation a day nationally (table 18A.9).

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| Figure 18.6 Proportion of clients with unmet need for accommodation and services other than accommodation, 2014‑15**a, b** |
| |  | | --- | | Figure 18.6 Proportion of clients with unmet need for accommodation and services other than accommodation, 2014-15  Accommodation services  More details can be found within the text surrounding this image.  Figure 18.6 Proportion of clients with unmet need for accommodation and services other than accommodation, 2014-15  Services other than accommodation  More details can be found within the text surrounding this image. | |
| a See box 18.5 and table 18A.10 for detailed definitions, footnotes and caveats. bData for ‘services other than accommodation’ for SA are nil or rounded to zero. |
| *Source*: AIHW (unpublished) Specialist Homelessness Services Collection*;* table 18A.10. |
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#### Appropriateness — Development of a case management plan

‘Development of a case management plan’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to provide high quality services that are appropriately targeted to the needs of clients (box 18.6).

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| Box 18.6 Development of a case management plan |
| ‘Development of a case management plan’ is defined as the number of closed support periods with an agreed case management plan divided by the total number of closed support periods. Data are reported for all clients, and separately for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients.  A high or increasing proportion of support periods where clients have an agreed case management plan is desirable. However, in some instances, a support plan may be judged to be inappropriate (such as when a support period is short term, for example 24 hours, or in the case of jurisdictions with central intake agencies [see table 18.1 and box 18.3 for details]). In SA, the integrated sector approach to service delivery often sees multiple agencies reporting individual support periods in relation to common clients under coordinated case management, but only the one reported by the agency who leads the case management can be recorded as having a case management plan.  Data reported for this indicator are:   * comparable (subject to caveats) across jurisdictions and over time * complete for the current reporting period. All required 2014‑15 data are available for all jurisdictions.   Data quality information for this indicator is under development. |
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Nationally in 2014-15, there was an agreed case management plan for clients in 49.3 per cent of closed support periods (compared with 58.9 per cent of closed support periods for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients). These proportions varied across jurisdictions (figure 18.7 and tables 18A.11-12).

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| Figure 18.7 Proportion of closed support periods with an agreed case management plan, all clients**a** |
| |  | | --- | | Figure 18.7 Proportion of closed support periods with an agreed case management plan, all clients  More details can be found within the text surrounding this image. | |
| a See box 18.6 and table 18A.11 for detailed definitions, footnotes and caveats. |
| *Source*:AIHW (unpublished) Specialist Homelessness Services Collection*;* table 18A.11. |
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#### Appropriateness — Match of needs of clients

‘Match of needs of clients’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to ensure that services meet clients’ individual needs (box 18.7).

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| Box 18.7 Match of needs of clients |
| Clients who needed homelessness services  For all clients with closed support periods who needed homelessness services, match of needs of clients’ is defined by the proportion of clients who were:   * provided with at least one homelessness service by the agency visited (and not referred) in at least one support period during the reference year * provided with at least one homelessness service by the agency visited AND referred to another agency * referred to another agency * the proportion of clients who were not provided with homelessness services NOR were referred to another agency.   The range of services needed by clients is broad (ranging from meals to laundry facilities to long term accommodation), so the effect of not providing these services varies.  Young clients who needed education and/or training assistance  For young clients (aged 12–18 years) with closed support periods who needed education and/or training assistance, match of needs of clients’ is defined by the proportion of clients who were:   * enrolled in formal study or training at the end of support.   Holding other factors constant, a high or increasing proportion of clients who received services they needed, or who were referred to another agency, is desirable.  Jurisdictions with some central intake models may record a relatively high number of clients with unmet need for services because all eligible clients receive an assessment but the provision or referral of service is determined by their level of need relative to other clients. See table 18.1 and box 18.3 for further details.  Data reported for these two measures are:   * comparable (subject to caveats) within jurisdictions over time but are not comparable across jurisdictions * complete for the current reporting period. All required 2014‑15 data are available for all jurisdictions.   Data quality information for this indicator is under development. |
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##### Clients who needed homelessness services

Nationally in 2014‑15, the majority of clients with closed support periods needed accommodation or accommodation‑related assistance (52.2 per cent) (table 18A.14). For clients seeking accommodation or accommodation‑related assistance, agencies:

* directly provided, or directly provided and referred, 56.0 per cent of clients with a service
* referred to other organisations 15.2 per cent of clients
* did not provide or refer assistance to 28.8 per cent of clients (figure 18.8).

For other support needs, specialist homelessness agencies were able to directly provide assistance, or directly provide and refer assistance, to:

* 82.0 per cent of clients seeking to sustain tenure
* 89.7 per cent of clients seeking domestic and family violence‑related assistance (figure 18.8).

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| Figure 18.8 Support needs of all clients (closed support periods), 2014‑15**a** |
| |  | | --- | | Figure 18.8 Support needs of all clients (closed support periods), 2014-15  More details can be found within the text surrounding this image. | |
| Accom: Accommodation/accommodation related assistance. **Sustain:** Assistance to sustain tenure. **FDV**: Family/Domestic Violence assistance.  a See box 18.7 and table 18A.14 for detailed definitions, footnotes and caveats. |
| *Source*: AIHW (unpublished) Specialist Homelessness Services Collection; table 18A.14. |
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Nationally in 2014‑15, agencies were able to directly provide (or directly provide and refer) a greater proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients with accommodation or accommodation‑related assistance (67.5 per cent) compared to all clients (56.0 per cent) (table 18A.15).

Data for clients born in non‑main English speaking countries are in table 18A.16. Data from 2011‑12 on the support needs of specialist homelessness service clients are included in tables 18A.13–16.

##### Young clients who needed education and/or training assistance

Nationally in 2014-15, of young clients who needed assistance to obtain or maintain education and/or training, 70.9 per cent were enrolled in formal study or training after support (figure 18.9), an increase of 4.4 percentage points from 66.5 per cent in 2011‑12 (table 18A.17). Of the young clients who needed education or training assistance, the proportion who were enrolled in:

* vocational education/training increased from 6.5 per cent before support to 10.2 per cent after support
* secondary school decreased from 54.1 per cent before support to 49.4 per cent after support. These proportions varied across jurisdictions (figure 18.9).

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| Figure 18.9 Young clients who needed education and/or training assistance, by educational enrolment status before and after support (closed support periods), 2014‑15**a** |
| |  | | --- | | Figure 18.9 Young clients who needed education and/or training assistance, by educational enrolment status before and after support (closed support periods), 2014-15  More details can be found within the text surrounding this image. | |
| a See box 18.7 and table 18A.17 for detailed definitions, footnotes and caveats. |
| *Source*: AIHW (unpublished) Specialist Homelessness Services Collection*;* table 18A.17. |
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#### Quality — Client satisfaction

‘Client satisfaction’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to provide high quality services that meet the needs of clients (box 18.8).

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| Box 18.8 Client satisfaction |
| ‘Client satisfaction’ is defined as the extent to which clients find homelessness services and programs to be helpful and of a high standard.  This indicator and associated measures are under development. |
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### Efficiency

Expenditure data for these indicators are provided by State and Territory governments, while data on the number of support periods, support days and clients are drawn from the SHSC.

Across jurisdictions, there may be varying treatments of expenditure items (for example, superannuation) and different counting and reporting rules for generating financial data. Differences in expenditure data across jurisdictions may reflect to some extent differences in the way these data are compiled rather than variations in costs.

#### Cost per completed support period

‘Cost per completed support period’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to maximise the availability and quality of services through the efficient use of public resources (box 18.9).

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| Box 18.9 Cost per completed support period |
| ‘Cost per completed support period’ is defined as total recurrent expenditure on homelessness services divided by the number of completed support periods.  A low or decreasing cost per completed support period may represent an improvement in efficiency, but may also indicate lower service quality, shorter support periods, service delivery across more agencies or changes in client need.  Data reported for this indicator are:   * comparable within jurisdictions over time but are not comparable across jurisdictions * complete for the current reporting period. All required 2014‑15 data are available for all jurisdictions.   Data quality information for this indicator is under development. |
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Nationally, the recurrent cost per completed support period was $1864 in 2014‑15 — an increase of 4.7 per cent from 2011‑12 (figure 18.10).

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| Figure 18.10 Real recurrent cost per completed support period, 2014‑15 dollars**a** |
| |  | | --- | | Figure 18.10 Real recurrent cost per completed support period, 2014-15 dollars  More details can be found within the text surrounding this image. | |
| a See box 18.9 and table 18A.18 for detailed definitions, footnotes and caveats. |
| *Source*:AIHW (unpublished) Specialist Homelessness Services Collection; Australian, State and Territory governments (unpublished); tables 18A.18 and 18A.34*.* |
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#### Cost per client

‘Cost per client’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to maximise the availability and quality of services through the efficient use of public resources (box 18.10).

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| Box 18.10 Cost per client |
| ‘Cost per client’ is defined as total recurrent expenditure on homelessness services divided by the number of clients provided with a service.  A low or decreasing cost per client may represent an improvement in efficiency, but may also indicate lower service quality or less complex client needs.  Data reported for this indicator are:   * comparable within jurisdictions over time but are not comparable across jurisdictions * complete for the current reporting period. All required 2014‑15 data are available for all jurisdictions.   Data quality information for this indicator is under development. |
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Nationally, the recurrent cost per client accessing homelessness services was $2766 in 2014‑15 — an increase of 10.4 per cent from 2011‑12 (figure 18.11).

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| Figure 18.11 Real recurrent cost per client accessing homelessness services, 2014‑15 dollars**a** |
| |  | | --- | | Figure 18.11 Real recurrent cost per client accessing homelessness services, 2014-15 dollars  More details can be found within the text surrounding this image. | |
| a See box 18.10 and table 18A.19 for detailed definitions, footnotes and caveats. |
| *Source*: AIHW (unpublished) Specialist Homelessness Services Collection*;* Australian, State and Territory governments (unpublished); tables 18A.19 and 18A.34. |
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#### Cost per day of support

‘Cost per day of support’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to maximise the availability and quality of services through the efficient use of public resources (box 18.11).

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| Box 18.11 Cost per day of support |
| ‘Cost per day of support’ is defined as total recurrent expenditure on homelessness services divided by the number of days of support for clients receiving support and/or supported accommodation.  A low or decreasing cost per day of support may represent an improvement in efficiency, but may also indicate lower service quality, less complex client needs or longer waiting times for services.  Data reported for this indicator are:   * comparable within jurisdictions for the current reporting period but are not comparable across jurisdictions * complete for the current reporting period. All required 2014‑15 data are available for all jurisdictions.   Data quality information for this indicator is under development. |
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Nationally, the recurrent cost per day of support for clients averaged $35.95 in 2014‑15, compared with $29.16 in 2012‑13, an increase of 23.3 per cent (figure 18.12).

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| Figure 18.12 Real recurrent cost per day of support for clients, 2014‑15 dollars**a** |
| |  | | --- | | Figure 18.12 Real recurrent cost per day of support for clients, 2014-15 dollars  More details can be found within the text surrounding this image. | |
| a See box 18.11 and table 18A.20 for detailed definitions, footnotes and caveats. |
| *Source*: AIHW (unpublished) Specialist Homelessness Services Collection; Australian, State and Territory governments (unpublished); tables 18A.20 and 18A.34. |
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### Outcomes

Outcomes are the impact of services on the status of an individual or group (see chapter 1, section 1.5).

An important outcome of homelessness services is clients’ achievement of self‑reliance and independence. Characteristics that may indicate whether clients can live independently include the:

* achievement of employment (workforce status)
* achievement of an income
* achievement of independent housing (housing status).

#### Achievement of employment on exit

‘Achievement of employment on exit’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to enable clients to participate as productive and self‑reliant members of the community at the end of their support period (box 18.12).

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| Box 18.12 Achievement of employment on exit |
| ‘Achievement of employment on exit’ is defined by three measures, calculated as the proportion of clients (with closed support periods, aged 15 years and over) whose labour force status was ‘employed’ (full- or part-time) at the end of support, of those clients who on presentation had an:   * identified need for employment and/or training assistance * identified need for employment and/or training assistance AND whose labour force status was ‘unemployed’ * identified need for employment and/or training assistance AND whose labour force status was ‘not in the labour force’.   Holding other factors constant, a high or increasing proportion of clients achieving employment after support is desirable.  Data are reported for all clients, and separately for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients.  This indicator compares clients’ employment status before and after support and relates to relatively short term outcomes — that is, outcomes for clients immediately after their support period. Longer term outcomes are important, but more difficult to measure.  Data reported for these measures are:   * comparable (subject to caveats) across jurisdictions and over time * complete for the current reporting period. All required 2014‑15 data are available for all jurisdictions.   Data quality information for this indicator is under development. |
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##### Total clients with identified need for employment and/or training assistance at presentation

Nationally, of those clients who needed assistance to obtain or maintain employment and training when entering homelessness services in 2014‑15, 19.1 per cent were employed either part‑time or full‑time after support, compared with 10.9 per cent before support. Amongst those employed after support, 6.0 per cent were employed full‑time and 12.3 per cent were employed part‑time after support (figure 18.13).

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| Figure 18.13 Proportion of clients who needed employment and/or training assistance, by full/part-time employment status before and after support (closed support periods), 2014‑15**a, b** |
| |  | | --- | | Figure 18.13 Proportion of clients who needed employment and/or training assistance, by full/part-time employment status before and after support (closed support periods), 2014-15  More details can be found within the text surrounding this image. | |
| a See box 18.12 and table 18A.21 for detailed definitions, footnotes and caveats. bData for ‘employed full‑time before support’ for Tasmania are nil or rounded to zero. |
| *Source*: AIHW (unpublished) Specialist Homelessness Services Collection; table 18A.21. |
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Nationally, of those Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients who needed assistance to obtain or maintain employment and training when entering homelessness services in 2014‑15, 12.5 per cent were employed either part‑time or full‑time after support, compared with 5.7 per cent before support. Amongst those employed after support, 4.7 per cent were employed full‑time and 7.3 per cent were employed part‑time after support (table 18A.22).

##### Clients with an identified need for employment and/or training assistance and were unemployed or not in the labour force at presentation

Nationally in 2014‑15, for those clients who were unemployed before support, 14.0 per cent were employed after support (5.1 per cent employed full‑time and 8.9 per cent employed part‑time), an increase from 11.7 per cent in 2013-14 (figure 18.14). Whilst for those clients who were not in the labour force before support, 9.9 per cent were employed after support (2.4 per cent employed full‑time and 7.5 per cent employed part‑time) (table 18A.23).

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| Figure 18.14 Proportion of clients in employment after support, who were unemployed before support (closed support periods),  2014-15**a, b** |
| |  | | --- | | Figure 18.14 Proportion of clients in employment after support, who were unemployed before support (closed support periods),  2014-15  More details can be found within the text surrounding this image. | |
| a See box 18.12 and table 18A.23 for detailed definitions, footnotes and caveats. bData are nil or rounded to zero for SA in 2011-12 and Tasmania for 2012-13 |
| *Source*: AIHW (unpublished) Specialist Homelessness Services Collection*;* table 18A.23. |
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#### Achievement of income on exit

‘Achievement of income on exit’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to enable clients to participate independently in the community at the end of their support period (box 18.13).

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| Box 18.13 Achievement of income on exit |
| ‘Achievement of income on exit’ is defined as the proportion of clients (with closed support periods aged, aged 15 years and over) who had an income source at the end of support, of those clients who had an identified need for income assistance at presentation.  This indicator compares these clients’ income status before and after they received support.  Data are reported for all clients, and separately for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients.  Holding other factors constant, a high or increasing proportion of clients that have achieved an income on exit from homelessness services is desirable.  Data reported for these measures are:   * comparable (subject to caveats) across jurisdictions and over time * complete for the current reporting period. All required 2013‑14 data are available for all jurisdictions   Data quality information for this indicator is under development. |
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Nationally, of clients who needed income assistance when entering homelessness services in 2014‑15, 92.9 per cent had an income source after support, compared with 93.6 per cent in 2013‑14 (table 18A.24). The main sources of income after support were:

* a government pension/allowance — which increased from 73.7 per cent before support to 81.3 per cent after support
* employee/business income — which increased from 5.9 per cent before support to 7.2 per cent after support. Proportions varied across jurisdictions (figure 18.15).

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| Figure 18.15 Proportion of clients who needed income assistance, who had an income source after support (closed support periods), by income source, 2014‑15**a** |
| |  | | --- | | Figure 18.15 Proportion of clients who needed income assistance, who had an income source after support (closed support periods), by income source, 2014-15  More details can be found within the text surrounding this image. | |
| a See box 18.13 and table 18A.24 for detailed definitions, footnotes and caveats. |
| *Source*: AIHW (unpublished) Specialist Homelessness Services Collection*;* table 18A.24. |
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Nationally, of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients who needed income assistance when entering homelessness services in 2014‑15, 93.6 per cent had an income source after support, compared with 94.9 per cent in 2013‑14 (table 18A.25). The main sources of income after support were:

* a government pension/allowance — which increased from 81.3 per cent before support to 87.3 per cent after support
* employee/business income — which increased from 3.6 per cent before support to 3.8 per cent after support (table 18A.25).

#### Achievement of independent housing on exit

‘Achievement of independent housing’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to enable clients to participate as productive and self‑reliant members of society at the end of their support period (box 18.14).

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| Box 18.14 Achievement of independent housing on exit |
| ‘Achievement of independent housing on exit’ is defined by:   * the proportion of clients (with closed support periods, all ages) who achieved independent housing at the end of support, who on presentation were: * *clients with an identified need for assistance to obtain or maintain independent housing*, including to: obtain long term housing; sustain tenancy or prevent tenancy failure or eviction, or; prevent foreclosures or for mortgage arrears * *clients living in non‑independent/supported housing prior to presenting*. * the proportion of *clients who achieved independent housing and who did not present again*, calculated as: * the proportion of clients (with a support period that closed during the financial year, all ages) who achieved independent housing at the end of support AND who did not present again during the financial year for ‘short-term or emergency accommodation’, who on presentation were: * clients with an identified need for assistance to obtain or maintain independent housing (as defined above).   Data are reported for all clients, and separately for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients.  Holding other factors constant, a high or increasing proportion of clients who achieved independent housing in closed support periods is desirable.  This indicator uses three measures to assess the achievement of independent housing at the end of support. It relates to relatively short term outcomes achieved within a financial year. Longer term outcomes are also important, but more difficult to measure.  Data reported for these measures are:   * comparable (subject to caveats) across jurisdictions and over time * complete for the current reporting period. All required 2014‑15 data are available for all jurisdictions.   Data quality information for this indicator is under development. |
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##### Clients with an identified need for assistance to obtain or maintain independent housing

Nationally in 2014-15, 63.5 per cent of clients who had an identified need for assistance with obtaining or maintaining independent housing achieved independent housing on exit, compared with 63.0 per cent in 2013‑14. This included clients who moved or returned to private rental housing (39.6 per cent) and to public or community rental housing (20.8 per cent) (figure 18.16).

For the 36.5 per cent clients who did not achieve independent housing in 2014-15, housing tenure after support included those who moved to, or continued to live in, short to medium term accommodation provided by homelessness services and other forms of non‑independent accommodation (tables 18A.26).

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| Figure 18.16 Proportion of clients who needed assistance to obtain or maintain independent housing, who achieved independent housing after support (closed support periods)**a, b** |
| |  | | --- | | Figure 18.16 Proportion of clients who needed assistance to obtain or maintain independent housing, who achieved independent housing after support (closed support periods)  More details can be found within the text surrounding this image. | |
| Other independent housing includes: ‘Purchasing/purchased own home’ and ‘Other rental’.  a See box 18.14 and table 18A.26 for detailed definitions, footnotes and caveats. b Data not available for SA in 2011‑12. |
| *Source*:AIHW (unpublished) Specialist Homelessness Services Collection; table 18A.26. |
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Nationally, of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients who had an identified need for assistance with obtaining or maintaining independent housing 61.1 per cent achieved independent housing in 2014‑15. Compared to all clients, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients had a lower proportion of clients that moved or returned to private rental housing (25.6 per cent), but more clients that moved to or returned to public or community rental housing (32.7 per cent) (table 18A.27).

##### Clients living in non‑independent housing prior to presenting

Nationally in 2014-15, amongst clients who were living in non‑independent housing prior to assistance, the most common types of tenure clients were living in before support included:

* boarding/rooming house (21.3 per cent of clients)
* improvised dwelling/sleeping rough (17.7 per cent)
* crisis accommodation (13.0 per cent)
* institutional setting (such as hospitals, correctional facilities, and aged care facilities) (6.5 per cent).

Of those clients who were living in non‑independent housing and who needed assistance to obtain independent housing, 35.9 per cent achieved independent housing in 2014‑15, compared with 34.2 per cent in 2013‑14 (table 18A.28). This included clients who moved to private rental housing (17.9 per cent), and to public or community rental housing (16.2 per cent) (figure 18.17).

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| Figure 18.17 Proportion of clients living in non‑independent housing before support, who obtained independent housing after support, by tenure type (closed support periods), 2014‑15**a** |
| |  | | --- | | Figure 18.17 Proportion of clients living in non independent housing before support, who obtained independent housing after support, by tenure type (closed support periods), 2014-15  More details can be found within the text surrounding this image. | |
| Other independent housing includes: ‘Purchasing/purchased own home’ and ‘Other rental’.  a See box 18.14 and table 18A.28 for detailed definitions, footnotes and caveats. |
| *Source*: AIHW (unpublished) Specialist Homelessness Services Collection*;* table 18A.28. |
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##### Clients who achieved independent housing and who did not present again

Nationally in 2014-15, 88.9 per cent of clients who achieved independent housing after support (who needed assistance to obtain independent housing before support) did not present again with a need accommodation services in 2014‑15.

This proportion mainly comprised clients in private rental (54.2 per cent) or public housing rental (21.8 per cent) after support, although the proportions vary across jurisdictions (figure 18.18).

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| Figure 18.18 Proportion of clients who needed assistance to obtain or maintain independent housing, who achieved independent housing after support and did not present again with a need for accommodation, by tenure type (closed support periods) 2014‑15**a** |
| |  | | --- | | Figure 18.18 Proportion of clients who needed assistance to obtain or maintain independent housing, who achieved independent housing after support and did not present again with a need for accommodation, by tenure type (closed support periods) 2014-15  More details can be found within the text surrounding this image. | |
| Other independent housing includes: ‘Purchasing/purchased own home’ and ‘Other rental’.  a See box 18.14 and table 18A.29 for detailed definitions, footnotes and caveats. |
| *Source*: AIHW (unpublished) Specialist Homelessness Services Collection*;* table 18A.29. |
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Historical data are included in table 18A.29. Data for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients are included in table 18A.30.

#### Proportion of people experiencing repeat periods of homelessness

‘Proportion of people experiencing repeat periods of homelessness’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to enable clients to participate independently in society at the end of their support period (box 18.15).

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| Box 18.15 Clients experiencing repeat periods of homelessness |
| ‘Clients experiencing repeat periods of homelessness’ is defined as the number of specialist homelessness service clients who change status from ‘homeless’ to ‘not homeless’ and back to ‘homeless’ in the reporting period, divided by the number of clients who experienced homelessness at any time in the reporting period.  This is a proxy measure as it only captures homelessness people who access specialist homelessness services rather than all those in the population who experience homelessness.  A client is defined as being homeless in each month where at least one of the following describes their housing situation:   * *dwelling type* is caravan, tent, cabin, boat, improvised building/dwelling, no dwelling/street/park/in the open, motor vehicle, boarding/rooming house, emergency accommodation, hotel/motel/bed and breakfast * *tenure type* is renting or living rent free in any of transitional housing, caravan park, boarding/rooming house, or emergency accommodation/night shelter/women’s refuge/youth shelter; OR if the client has no tenure * *conditions of occupancy* is couch surfer.   A client is defined as being ‘not homeless’ in each month where they have provided a response and none of the above conditions are met.  Regardless of tenure or conditions of occupancy, a client is not considered to be homeless if the dwelling type is reported as ‘Institution’ in one of these categories:   |  |  | | --- | --- | | * hospital (excluding psychiatric) * psychiatric hospital/unit * disability support * rehabilitation * adult correctional facility | * youth/juvenile justice correctional centre * boarding school/residential college * aged care facility * immigration detention centre. |   Holding other factors constant, a low or decreasing proportion of clients who required housing or accommodation support more than once is desirable.  Data reported for this indicator are:   * comparable (subject to caveats) across jurisdictions and over time * complete for the current reporting period. All required 2014‑15 data are available for all jurisdictions.   Data quality information for this indicator is at www.pc.gov.au/rogs/2016. |
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Nationally in 2014-15, of all clients who experienced homelessness 5.7 per cent had experienced more than one period of homelessness in the reporting year — compared with 5.0 per cent in 2013‑14 (figure 18.19). The proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients who experienced homelessness and who had more than one period of homelessness increased from 5.7 per cent in 2013‑14 to 6.3 per cent in 2014‑15 (figure 18.19).

Nationally in 2014‑15, capital city clients had lower rates of repeat homelessness (5.5 per cent) than those clients living in the rest of state (5.9 per cent) (table 18A.31).

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| Figure 18.19 Clients who had more than one period of homelessness, all clients and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients**a** |
| |  | | --- | | Figure 18.19 Clients who had more than one period of homelessness, all clients and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients  All clients  More details can be found within the text surrounding this image.  Figure 18.19 Clients who had more than one period of homelessness, all clients and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients  Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients  More details can be found within the text surrounding this image. | |
| a See box 18.15 and tables 18A.31-32 or detailed definitions, footnotes and caveats. |
| *Source*: AIHW (unpublished) Specialist Homelessness Services Collection*;* tables 18A.31-32. |
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#### Goals achieved on exit from service

‘Goals achieved on exit’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to ensure homelessness services meet the needs and expectations of clients (box 18.16).

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| Box 18.16 Goals achieved on exit from service |
| ‘Goals achieved on exit from service’ is defined as the proportion of closed support periods with an individual case management plan where ‘no goals’, up to half the goals’, ‘half or more of the goals’ or ‘all goals’ have been achieved.  This indicator should be interpreted in conjunction with the ‘development of an agreed case management plan’ indicator which identifies the proportion of case management plans developed.  Holding other factors constant, a high or increasing proportion of achieved goals is desirable.  Data reported for these measures are:   * comparable (subject to caveats) across jurisdictions and over time * complete for the current reporting period. All required 2014‑15 data are available for all jurisdictions   Data quality information for this indicator is under development. |
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Nationally in 2014-15, at least half of all case management goals were achieved at the end of support for 70.7 per cent of closed support periods with individual case management plans — an of increase of 9.2 percentage points from 61.5 per cent in 2011-12 (figure 18.20).

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| Figure 18.20 Case management goals achieved (closed support periods)**a, b** |
| |  | | --- | | Figure 18.20 Case management goals achieved (closed support periods)  More details can be found within the text surrounding this image. | |
| a See box 18.14 and table 18A.33 for detailed definitions, footnotes and caveats. b SA 2013-14 case management goals achieved data are not available. |
| *Source*: AIHW (unpublished) Specialist Homelessness Services Collection*;* table 18A.33. |
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## 18.4 Future directions in performance reporting

The Steering Committee will continue to improve the appropriateness and completeness of the performance indicator framework. For homelessness services, the Steering Committee will investigate the impact of central intake services on data comparability across homelessness performance indicators and consider options to improve reporting for affected indicators.

## 18.5 Definitions of key terms

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| **Age** | Age is calculated as age of the client on the start date of their first support period of the reporting period or the first date of the reporting period, whichever of the two is the later date. |
| **Client** | A person who receives a specialist homelessness service. A client can be of any age.  To be a client, the person must directly receive a service and not just be a beneficiary of a service. Children who present with a parent or guardian and receive a service are considered to be a client. This includes a service that they share with their parent or guardian such as meals or accommodation.  Children who present with a parent or guardian but do not directly receive a service are not considered to be clients. This includes situations where the parent or guardian receives assistance to prevent tenancy failure or eviction. |
|  | Clients can be counted differently according to the data item that is being reported:   * Clients (demographic)—For clients with multiple support periods, reported data is determined based on the information at the start date of the client’s first support period in the reporting period or the first date of the reporting period, whichever is later * Clients (counted by support periods)—For each data item, clients are counted based on support periods with distinct client information. The same client can be counted more than once if they have multiple support periods with a different response for the data item. The result is that percentages do not add up to 100 * Clients (outcomes) – Clients are counted based on closed support periods where a valid response is recorded both when presenting to an agency and at the end of support. |
| **Closed support period** | A support period that had finished on or before the end of the reporting period. |
| **Comparability** | Data are considered comparable if (subject to caveats) they can be used to inform an assessment of comparative performance. Typically, data are considered comparable when they are collected in the same way and in accordance with the same definitions. For comparable indicators or measures, significant differences in reported results allow an assessment of differences in performance, rather than being the result of anomalies in the data. |
| **Completeness** | Data are considered complete if all required data are available for all jurisdictions that provide the service |

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| **Disability** | SHS clients who have identified as having a long-term health condition or disability who need assistance with core activities (including needing assistance with self-care, mobility or communication).  From July 2013, the SHSC collects information on whether, and to what extent, a long-term health condition or disability restricts clients’ everyday activities across the following three life areas and they need help/supervision with these tasks:   * self-care * mobility * communication.   The information is consistent with data collected in the 2011 Census and the 2014 National Social Housing Survey. Questions are based on the ‘Core Activity Need for Assistance’. |
| **No tenure** | A type of housing tenure recorded for clients who are sleeping rough or do not have a legal right to occupy a dwelling and may be asked to leave at any time. It includes couch surfing, living in an institutional setting, living on the streets, sleeping in parks, squatting, using cars or railway carriages, improvised dwellings or living in long grass. |
| **Non‑ conventional accommodation** | Non‑conventional accommodation is defined as:   |  |  | | --- | --- | | * living on the streets * sleeping in parks * squatting | * staying in cars or railway carriages * living in improvised dwellings * living in long grass. | |
| **Non-main English speak countries (non‑MESC)** | Non‑MESC are all countries except Australia, United Kingdom, Republic of Ireland, New Zealand, Canada, United States of America and South Africa. |
| **Ongoing support period** | A support period is considered ongoing at the end of the reporting period if each of the following conditions is met:   * no support end‑date is provided * no after‑support information is provided * corresponding client data was received in the month following the end of the reporting period. |
| **Real expenditure** | Actual expenditure adjusted for changes in prices. Adjustments are made using the General Government Final Consumption Expenditure (GGFCE) chain price deflator (2014‑15=100). |
| **Referral** | When an 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. |

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| **Short‑term or emergency accommodation** | Short‑term or emergency accommodation includes: refuges; crisis shelter; couch surfing; living temporarily with friends and relatives; insecure accommodation on a short‑term basis; and, emergency accommodation arranged by a specialist homelessness agency (e.g. in hotels, motels etc.).  The following short‑term accommodation options are not included:   * hotels, motels, caravan parks and other temporary accommodation used when a person is on holiday or travelling * custodial and care arrangements, such as prisons and hospitals * temporary accommodation used by a person while renovating usual residence or building a new residence (e.g. weekenders, caravans). | |
| **Specialist homelessness agency** | | An organisation that receives government funding to deliver specialist homelessness services. Assistance is provided to clients aimed at responding to or preventing homelessness. Agencies may also receive funding from other sources.  Inclusion of agencies in the SHSC is determined by the state and territory departments responsible for administering the government response to homelessness. Not all funded agencies are required to participate in data collection. |
| **Specialist homelessness service(s)** | | Assistance provided by a specialist homelessness agency to a client aimed at responding to or preventing homelessness. The specialist homelessness services that are in scope for this collection and that may be provided during a support period are:  *Housing/accommodation services*:   * short‑term or emergency accommodation * medium‑term/transitional housing * long‑term housing * assistance to sustain tenancy or prevent tenancy failure or eviction * assistance to prevent foreclosures or for mortgage arrears.   *Specialised services*:   |  |  | | --- | --- | | * child protection services * parenting skills education * child‑specific specialist counselling services * psychological services * psychiatric services * mental health services * pregnancy assistance * family planning support * physical disability services * intellectual disability services * health/medical services | * professional legal services * financial advice and counselling * counselling for problem gambling * drug/alcohol counselling * specialist counselling services * interpreter services * assistance with immigration services * culturally specific services * assistance to connect culturally * other specialised services. | |
| Specialist homelessness service(s) — continued | | *General assistance and support services:*   |  |  | | --- | --- | | * assertive outreach * assistance to obtain/maintain government allowance * employment assistance * training assistance * educational assistance * financial information * material aid/brokerage * assistance for incest/sexual * assistance for domestic/family violence * family/relationship assistance * assistance for trauma * assistance with challenging social/behavioural problems * living skills/personal development * legal information | * court support * advice/information * retrieval/storage/removal of personal belongings * advocacy/liaison on behalf of client * school liaison * child care * structured play/skills development * child contact and residence arrangements * meals * laundry/shower facilities * recreation * transport * other basic assistance. | |
| **Support period** | | The period of time a client receives services from an agency is referred to as a support period. A support period starts on the day the client first receives a service from an agency and ends when:   * the relationship between the client and the agency ends * the client has reached their maximum amount of support the agency can offer * a client has not received any services from the agency for a whole calendar month * there is no ongoing relationship. |
|  | | Where a client has an appointment with the agency which is more than a calendar month in the future, then it is not necessary to close the support period. This is because it is expected that there is an ongoing relationship with the client. The end of the support period is the day the client last received services from an agency. |
| **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. |

## 18.6 List of attachment tables

Attachment tables are identified in references throughout this chapter by an ‘18A’ prefix (for example, table 18A.1 is table 1). Attachment tables are provided on the website (www.pc.gov.au/rogs/2016).

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| --- | --- |
| **Table 18A.1** | Composition of support provided, all clients |
| **Table 18A.2** | Nominal expenditure on homelessness services |
| **Table 18A.3** | Total recurrent expenditure on homelessness services, 2014-15 dollars |
| **Table 18A.4** | Real recurrent homelessness expenditure per person in the residential population, 2014-15 dollars |
| **Table 18A.5** | Proportion of clients — with accommodation and services other than accommodation needs that were met — who were Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients |
| **Table 18A.6** | Proportion of clients — with accommodation and services other than accommodation needs that were met — who were people born in non–main English speaking countries (non–MESC) |
| **Table 18A.7** | Proportion of clients — with accommodation and services other than accommodation needs that were met — who were people with disability |
| **Table 18A.8** | Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people born in non–main English speaking countries (MESC) and people with disability, as a proportion of all clients who accessed specialist homelessness services and in the population |
| **Table 18A.9** | Average daily unassisted requests for accommodation and services other than accommodation |
| **Table 18A.10** | Proportion of clients with unmet needs for accommodation and services other than accommodation |
| **Table 18A.11** | Proportion of clients with a case management plan (closed support periods) |
| **Table 18A.12** | Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients with a case management plan (closed support periods) |
| **Table 18A.13** | Support needs of clients, summary |
| **Table 18A.14** | Support needs of clients by service assistance type, all clients (closed support periods) |
| **Table 18A.15** | Support needs of clients, by service assistance type, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients (closed support periods) |
| **Table 18A.16** | Support needs of clients, by service assistance type, clients born in non–main English speaking countries (closed support periods) |
| **Table 18A.17** | Proportion of clients aged 12 to 18 years who needed education and/or training assistance who were enrolled in formal study or training after support, status before and after support (closed support periods) |
| **Table 18A.18** | Recurrent cost per completed support period, 2014-15 dollars |
| **Table 18A.19** | Recurrent cost per client accessing homelessness services, 2014-15 dollars |
| **Table 18A.20** | Recurrent cost per day of support for clients, 2014-15 dollars |
| **Table 18A.21** | Labour force status of clients who needed employment and/or training assistance before support, before and after support (closed support periods) |
| **Table 18A.22** | Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients who needed employment and/or training assistance and who were employed after support (closed support periods) |
| **Table 18A.23** | Proportion of clients who needed employment and/or training assistance and who were unemployed or not in the labour force before support, who were employed after support (closed support periods), by labour force status |
| **Table 18A.24** | Proportion of clients who needed income assistance and who had an income source after support (closed support periods) |
| **Table 18A.25** | Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients who needed income assistance and who had an income source after support (closed support periods) |
| **Table 18A.26** | Proportion of clients who needed assistance to obtain or maintain independent housing, type of tenure before and after support (closed support periods) |
| **Table 18A.27** | Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients who needed assistance to obtain or maintain independent housing (closed support periods), type of tenure before and after support |
| **Table 18A.28** | Proportion of clients who were living in non–independent housing before support who obtained independent housing after support (closed support periods) |
| **Table 18A.29** | Proportion of clients who needed assistance to obtain or maintain independent housing and who achieved independent housing after support, and did not present again with a need for accommodation within the reporting period, by tenure type after support (closed support periods) |
| **Table 18A.30** | Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients who needed assistance to obtain or maintain independent housing and who achieved independent housing after support, and did not present again with a need for accommodation within the reporting period, by tenure type after support (closed support periods) |
| **Table 18A.31** | Proportion of clients experiencing homelessness who had repeat periods of homelessness |
| **Table 18A.32** | Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients experiencing homelessness who had repeat periods of homelessness |
| **Table 18A.33** | Case management goals achieved after support (closed support periods) |
| **Table 18A.34** | General Government Final Consumption Expenditure Price Deflator, Chain price Index (GGFCE) |

## 18.7 References

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1. The ABS categorises a dwelling as severely crowded if it requires four or more extra bedrooms to accommodate the number of people who usually live there, based on the Canadian National Occupancy Standard (ABS 2012b). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. The Post Enumeration Survey is used to estimate for the under‑enumeration of the Australian population in the Census. They survey only covers people in private dwellings at the time of the survey and so cannot be used to estimate under–enumeration of the homeless population in the Census (ABS 2012c). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)