19 Homelessness services

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This chapter reports on the performance of specialist homelessness services funded by government under the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) *National Affordable Housing Agreement* (NAHA) and the *National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness* (NPAH).

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

## 19.1 Profile of homelessness services

### Service overview

Government and non‑government specialist homelessness service providers deliver a range of 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.

#### Accessing homelessness services in Australia

Systems for the assessment, intake, referral and ongoing case management of specialist homelessness services clients vary across states and territories, ranging from agency‑based to centralised management models. This variation may affect data for specific performance indicators. Three broad summary categories are identified here — table 19A.35 summarises the intake and referral systems used in each jurisdiction and identifies the category with which they most closely align.

* *Community sector funding and support* — Assessment of client needs and intake into services is managed by individual specialist homelessness service providers in line 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 that links clients to local specialist homelessness service providers. Coordinating services may also make an initial assessment of clients’ needs (but do not provide homelessness services directly).
* *Central information management* — Assessment of client needs, intake and referral is managed by any specialist homelessness service provider using State/Territory central information management tools. The central information management system supports the identification of appropriate services for the client and indicates the availability/vacancy of those services across specialist homelessness service providers. Client information may be shared between providers upon referral (with client consent).
* *Central intake* — 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 be used to share information between central intake agencies and specialist homelessness service providers.

### 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 each State and Territory government. 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 2012, 2015). The NPAH aims to achieve the following outcomes:

* 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 2015).

As part of broader COAG reforms, the NPAH clarified that State 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 $31.90 per person in the population in 2015‑16, though the amount of funding per person varied across jurisdictions (table 19A.4).

Direct expenditure on specialist homelessness services is undertaken by State and Territory governments. Recurrent government expenditure on specialist homelessness services for 2015‑16 was $763.6 million (tables 19A.2‑3) — 97.5 per cent of which was provided to agencies to deliver specialist homelessness services. The remaining 2.5 per cent was attributed to State/Territory government administration costs (table 19A.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 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’ (39 per cent)   
(see section 19.4 for what constitutes ‘severely crowded’). 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.

#### Definition for services

All clients of specialist homelessness services are either homeless or at risk of homelessness. Clients are 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.

Specialist homelessness agencies provide data to the Specialist Homelessness Services Client Collection (SHSC), each month, for support periods or episodes of assistance provided to individual clients. These data provide the service information in this chapter.

Nationally in 2015‑16, specialist homelessness services agencies provided support to an estimated 279 196 people (table 19A.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 90.0 per cent of clients), accommodation (31.3 per cent), assistance to sustain housing (26.9 per cent), and domestic and family violence services (23.9 per cent) (figure 19.1).

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| Figure 19.1 Composition of support provided, all clients, 2015‑16**a** |
| |  | | --- | | Figure 19.1 Composition of support provided, all clients, 2015-16  More details can be found within the text surrounding this image. | |
| a See table 19A.1 for detailed footnotes and caveats. See Definitions of key terms (section 19.4) for further details on the types of specialist homelessness services provided. |
| *Source*: AIHW (unpublished) Specialist Homelessness Services Collection, Australia; table 19A.1. |

## 19.2 Framework of performance indicators

The performance indicator framework is based on shared government objectives for homelessness services delivered under the NAHA (box 19.1). The NAHA covers the areas of housing and homelessness services.

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| Box 19.1 Objectives for government funded specialist homelessness services |
| The specialist homelessness services system aims to support people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness to achieve sustainable housing, social inclusion and greater economic participation, through the delivery of transitional supported accommodation and a range of related support services. Within this aim, the goals are to:   * re‑establish family links where appropriate * re‑establish the capacity of clients to live independently.   Governments seek to achieve these aims through the delivery of services that:   * are accessible * identify and address individuals’ urgent needs at presentation * identify and address individuals’ other needs as appropriate, intervening early to prevent the escalation of needs * are provided seamlessly where more than one service type is required * are of high quality, provided by qualified staff in a safe environment.   Governments aim for specialist homelessness services to meet these objectives in an equitable and efficient manner. |
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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 19.2).

The performance indicator framework shows which data are complete and comparable in the 2017 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. In addition to section 19.1, the Report’s Statistical context chapter (chapter 2) contains data that may assist in interpreting the performance indicators presented in this chapter.

Improvements to performance reporting for specialist homelessness services are ongoing and will include identifying indicators to fill gaps in reporting against key objectives, improving the comparability and completeness of data and reviewing proxy indicators to see if more direct measures can be developed.

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| Figure 19.2 Government funded specialist homelessness services performance indicator framework |
| |  | | --- | | Figure 19.2 Government funded specialist homelessness services performance indicator framework  More details can be found within the text surrounding this image. | |
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## 19.3 Key performance indicator results

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

### 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). 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 provide specialist homelessness services in an equitable manner (box 19.2).

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| Box 19.2 Access of special needs groups to homelessness services |
| ‘Access of special needs groups to homelessness services’ is defined as the proportion of all clients whose need for accommodation, or services other than accommodation, was met and who are in each of three population groups:   * Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people * people born in non‑main English speaking countries (non‑MESC) * people with disability.   Disability is defined for this indicator as people who identify to the service provider as having a long‑term health condition or disability and needing assistance with self‑care, mobility or communication (core activities) – this may underestimate the number of clients with disability who need support to access and maintain housing.  Use by special needs groups is a proxy indicator of equitable access as the relative need among each population group for specialist homelessness accommodation and other services is unknown. In general, usage rates for special needs groups similar to or higher than those for the broader service population are desirable. Several factors need to be considered in interpreting the data — in particular, cultural differences can influence the extent to which each of the three population groups specified access specialist homelessness services.  Data reported for this indicator are:   * comparable (subject to caveats) across jurisdictions and over time * complete for the current reporting period. All required 2015‑16 data are available for all jurisdictions. |
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In 2015‑16, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people had a higher representation amongst all people accessing specialist homelessness services (24.5 per cent) than their representation in the population (3.1 per cent) — 29.7 per cent of clients whose needs for accommodation were met and 16.4 per cent of clients whose needs for services other than accommodation were met (figure 19.3).

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| Figure 19.3 Proportion of clients who were Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients, 2015‑16**a** |
| |  | | --- | | Figure 19.3 Proportion of clients who were Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients, 2015-16  More details can be found within the text surrounding this image. | |
| a See box 19.2 and tables 19A.5 and 19A.8 for detailed definitions, footnotes and caveats. |
| *Source*: AIHW (unpublished) Specialist Homelessness Services Collection; ABS (2014) *Australian Demographic Statistics, June 2015*, 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, 19A.5 and 19A.8. |
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In 2015‑16, people born in non‑main English speaking countries had a lower representation amongst clients of specialist homelessness services (11.0 per cent) than in the population as measured at the last population census (15.1 per cent) (table 19A.8) — and made up 9.7 per cent of clients whose needs for accommodation were met and 9.4 per cent of clients whose needs for services other than accommodation were met. These results varied across jurisdictions (table 19A.6).

In 2015‑16, people with disability had a lower representation amongst clients of specialist homelessness services (4.1 per cent) than in the population (5.8 per cent, table 19A.8) — 4.4 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 (table 19A.7).

### Effectiveness

#### Access — Unmet demand for homelessness services

‘Unmet demand for homelessness services’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to ensure that services are accessible to those who need them (box 19.3).

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| Box 19.3 Unmet demand for homelessness services |
| Unmet demand for homelessness services is defined by the following two measures for each of two broad service types:   * Unmet demand for accommodation, measured by: * the number of average daily unassisted requests for accommodation services * the number of clients with an identified need for short‑term or emergency accommodation or medium‑ or long‑term housing who were not provided with or referred for 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, measured by: * the number of average daily unassisted requests for services other than accommodation * the number of clients with an identified need for at least one service other than accommodation (and no need for accommodation services) who were not provided with or referred for a service other than accommodation, divided by the number of clients who had a need for at least one service other than accommodation (and no need for accommodation services).   Average daily unassisted requests are counted for people who are not specialist homelessness services clients and did not receive an assessment or referral for services elsewhere.  A low or decreasing proportion of clients with unmet demand is desirable.  Jurisdictions with some central intake models may record low unmet demand for the measure unassisted requests for services and high unmet demand for the measure of clients with unmet need for services.  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 2015‑16 data are available for all jurisdictions. |
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Nationally in 2015‑16, 28.7 per cent of clients with an identified need for accommodation did not have this need met (figure 19.4), up from 25.9 per cent in 2014‑15 (table 19A.9). On average in 2015‑16, there were 185.1 unassisted requests for accommodation services a day nationally, a decrease from 221.7 in 2014‑15 (table 19A.10).

Nationally in 2015‑16, clients with unmet demand for services other than accommodation accounted for 2.5 per cent of the total demand for those services (table 19A.9). On average in 2015‑16, there were 77.5 unassisted requests for services other than accommodation a day nationally (table 19A.10).

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| Figure 19.4 Proportion of clients with unmet need for accommodation services**a** |
| |  | | --- | | Figure 19.4 Proportion of clients with unmet need for accommodation services  More details can be found within the text surrounding this image. | |
| a See box 19.3 and table 19A.9 for detailed definitions, footnotes and caveats. |
| *Source*: AIHW (unpublished) Specialist Homelessness Services Collection*;* table 19A.9. |
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#### Appropriateness — Development of a case management plan

‘Development of a case management plan’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to identify and address the needs of individuals (box 19.4).

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| Box 19.4 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.  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).  Data reported for this indicator are:   * comparable (subject to caveats) across jurisdictions and over time * complete for the current reporting period. All required 2015‑16 data are available for all jurisdictions. |
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Nationally in 2015‑16, there was an agreed case management plan for clients in 50.1 per cent of closed support periods (59.1 per cent for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients). These proportions varied across jurisdictions (figure 19.5 and tables 19A.11–12).

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| Figure 19.5 Proportion of closed support periods with an agreed case management plan, all clients**a** |
| |  | | --- | | Figure 19.5 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 19.4 and table 19A.11 for detailed definitions, footnotes and caveats. |
| *Source*:AIHW (unpublished) Specialist Homelessness Services Collection*;* table 19A.11. |
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#### Appropriateness — Match of needs of clients

‘Match of needs of clients’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to address individuals’ needs as appropriate (box 19.5).

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| Box 19.5 Match of needs of clients |
| Match of needs of clients is defined by the following two measures:   * Match of client needs for homelessness services, defined as the proportion of clients with closed support periods who were provided with and/or referred for at least one specialist homelessness service in at least one support period during the reference year. * Match of needs for young clients who needed education and/or training assistance, defined as the proportion of clients aged 12–18 years (with closed support periods) with an identified need for education and/or training assistance 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 the services they needed and/ or 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 of or referral for service is determined by their level of need relative to other clients.  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 2015‑16 data are available for all jurisdictions. |
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##### Match of client needs for homelessness services

Nationally in 2015‑16, over half (116 044, or 52.5 per cent) of all clients with closed support periods who needed homelessness services needed accommodation or accommodation related assistance (table 19A.14). Of these clients, 68.1 per cent were directly provided with and/or referred for a service (38.0 per cent provided with, 14.0 per cent both provided with and referred for and, 16.1 per cent referred only) (figure 19.6). For other support needs, agencies were able to directly provide and/or refer assistance to 83.4 per cent of clients seeking to sustain tenure and 91.2 per cent of clients seeking domestic and family violence related assistance (figure 19.6).

Nationally in 2015‑16, agencies directly provided and/or referred a larger proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients with a need for accommodation or accommodation related assistance (76.3 per cent) to services than all clients (table 19A.15).

Data for clients born in non‑main English speaking countries are in table 19A.16. Time series data from 2011‑12 are included in tables 19A.14–19A.16.

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| Figure 19.6 Match of client needs (closed support periods), 2015‑16**a** |
| |  | | --- | | Figure 19.6 Match of client needs (closed support periods), 2015-16  More details can be found within the text surrounding this image. | |
| Accom: Accommodation/accommodation related assistance. **Sustain:** Assistance to sustain tenure. **FDV**: Family/ Domestic and family violence assistance.  a See box 19.5 and table 19A.14 for detailed definitions, footnotes and caveats. |
| *Source*: AIHW (unpublished) Specialist Homelessness Services Collection; table 19A.14. |
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##### Young clients who needed education and/or training assistance

Nationally in 2015‑16, of young clients who needed assistance to obtain or maintain education and/or training, 70.6 per cent were enrolled in formal study or training after support (figure 19.7), an increase from 66.5 per cent in 2011‑12 (table 19A.17).

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| Figure 19.7 Young clients who needed education and/or training assistance, by educational enrolment status before and after support (closed support periods), 2015‑16**a** |
| |  | | --- | | Figure 19.7 Young clients who needed education and training assistance, by educational status before and after support (closed support periods), 2015-16  More details can be found within the text surrounding this image. | |
| a See box 19.5 and table 19A.17 for detailed definitions, footnotes and caveats. |
| *Source*: AIHW (unpublished) Specialist Homelessness Services Collection*;* table 19A.17. |
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#### Quality — Client satisfaction

‘Client satisfaction’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to provide high quality specialist homelessness services (box 19.6).

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| Box 19.6 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

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 provide specialist homelessness services in an efficient manner (box 19.7).

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| Box 19.7 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 2015‑16 data are available for all jurisdictions. |
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Nationally in 2015‑16, the recurrent cost per completed support period was $1839 — similar in real terms to that in 2011‑12 ($1814) following fluctuation in the interim years (figure 19.8).

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| Figure 19.8 Real recurrent cost per completed support period, 2015‑16 dollars**a** |
| |  | | --- | | Figure 19.8 Real recurrent cost per completed support period in 2015-16 dollars  More details can be found within the text surrounding this image. | |
| a See box 19.7 and table 19A.18 for detailed definitions, footnotes and caveats. |
| *Source*:AIHW (unpublished) Specialist Homelessness Services Collection; Australian, State and Territory governments (unpublished); tables 19A.18 and 19A.34*.* |
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#### Cost per client

‘Cost per client’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to provide specialist homelessness services in an efficient manner (box 19.8).

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| Box 19.8 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 2015‑16 data are available for all jurisdictions. |
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Nationally, the recurrent cost per client accessing homelessness services was $2735 in 2015‑16 — an increase in real terms of 7.2 per cent from 2011‑12 (table 19A.19).

#### Cost per day of support

‘Cost per day of support’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to provide specialist homelessness services in an efficient manner (box 19.9).

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| Box 19.9 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 2015‑16 data are available for all jurisdictions. |
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Nationally, the recurrent cost per day of support for clients averaged $34.37 in 2015‑16 — an increase in real terms of 14.0 per cent from 2012‑13 (figure 19.9).

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| Figure 19.9 Real recurrent cost per day of support for clients, 2015‑16 dollars**a** |
| |  | | --- | | Figure 19.9 Real recurrent cost per day of support for clients in 2015-16 dollars  More details can be found within the text surrounding this image. | |
| a See box 19.9 and table 19A.20 for detailed definitions, footnotes and caveats. |
| *Source*: AIHW (unpublished) Specialist Homelessness Services Collection; Australian, State and Territory governments (unpublished); tables 19A.20 and 19A.34. |
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### Outcomes

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

#### Achievement of employment on exit

‘Achievement of employment on exit’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to re‑establish the capacity of clients to live independently and to achieve social inclusion and greater economic participation (box 19.10).

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| Box 19.10 Achievement of employment on exit |
| ‘Achievement of employment on exit’ is defined by three measures, calculated as the proportion of clients aged 15 years or over (with closed support periods) with labour force status ‘employed’ at the end of support, who on presentation:   * had an identified need for employment and/or training assistance * had an identified need for employment and/or training assistance AND whose labour force status was ‘unemployed’ * had an 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.  This indicator compares clients’ employment status before and after support and relates to relatively short term outcomes — that is, outcomes for clients at the end of 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 2015‑16 data are available for all jurisdictions. |
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Nationally, of those clients who needed assistance to obtain or maintain employment and training when entering homelessness services in 2015‑16, 18.2 per cent were employed at the end of support, compared with 10.6 per cent before support (for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients this was 12.1 per cent and 6.5 per cent, respectively) (table 19A.22).

Amongst those employed after support, 5.7 per cent were employed full‑time and   
11.8 per cent were employed part‑time after support (figure 19.10).

Nationally in 2015‑16, for those clients who were unemployed before support, 13.3 per cent were employed after support, an increase from 11.7 per cent in 2013‑14 (figure 19.11). Of clients who were not in the labour force before support, 9.8 per cent were employed after support (table 19A.23).

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| Figure 19.10 Labour force status before and after support, as a proportion of clients who needed employment and/or training assistance (closed support periods), 2015‑16**a** |
| |  | | --- | | Figure 19.10 Labour force status before and after support, as a proportion of clients who needed employment and/or training assistance (closed support periods), 2015-16  More details can be found within the text surrounding this image. | |
| a See box 19.10 and table 19A.21 for detailed definitions, footnotes and caveats. |
| *Source*: AIHW (unpublished) Specialist Homelessness Services Collection; table 19A.21. |
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| Figure 19.11 Proportion of clients in employment after support, who were unemployed before support (closed support periods), 2015‑16**a, b** |
| |  | | --- | | Figure 19.11 Proportion of clients in employment after support, who were unemployed before support (closed support periods), 2015-16  More details can be found within the text surrounding this image. | |
| a See box 19.10 and table 19A.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 19A.23. |
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#### Achievement of income on exit

‘Achievement of income on exit’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to re‑establish the capacity of clients to live independently and to achieve social inclusion and greater economic participation (box 19.11).

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| Box 19.11 Achievement of income on exit |
| ‘Achievement of income on exit’ is defined as the proportion of clients aged 15 years or over (with closed support periods) with an identified need for income assistance at presentation who had an income source at the end of support.  This indicator compares these clients’ income status before and after they received support, and relates to relatively short term outcomes.  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 2015‑16 data are available for all jurisdictions. |
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Nationally, of clients who needed income assistance when entering homelessness services in 2015‑16, 91.9 per cent had an income source after support, a decrease from 94.5 per cent in 2011‑12 (figure 19.12 and table 19A.24).

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| Figure 19.12 Income status before and after support, as a proportion of clients who needed income assistance (closed support periods), 2015‑16**a** |
| |  | | --- | | Figure 19.12 Income status before and after support, as a proportion of clients who needed income assistance (closed support periods), 2015-16  More details can be found within the text surrounding this image. | |
| a See box 19.11 and table 19A.24 for detailed definitions, footnotes and caveats. |
| *Source*: AIHW (unpublished) Specialist Homelessness Services Collection; table 19A.24. |
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The main sources of income after support were a government pension/allowance (increased from 72.1 per cent before support to 79.9 per cent after support) and employee/business income (increased from 6.1 per cent before support to 7.2 per cent after support) – though these proportions varied across jurisdictions (figure 19.12).

Nationally, of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients who needed income assistance when entering homelessness services in 2015‑16, 93.4 per cent had an income source after support, a decrease from 96.2 per cent in 2011‑12 (table 19A.25).

#### Achievement of independent housing on exit

‘Achievement of independent housing’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to re‑establish the capacity of clients to live independently and to achieve social inclusion and greater economic participation (box 19.12).

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| Box 19.12 Achievement of independent housing on exit |
| ‘Achievement of independent housing on exit’ is defined by two measures:   * 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* * the proportion of clients (with a support period that closed during the financial year, all ages) *with an identified need for assistance to obtain or maintain independent housing* — including a need to obtain long term housing, sustain tenancy or prevent tenancy failure or eviction, or, prevent foreclosures or for mortgage arrears — *who achieved independent housing at the end of support and did not present again during the reference year* with an identified need for any of these services.   Holding other factors constant, a high or increasing proportion of clients who achieved independent housing in closed support periods is desirable.  The reported data are for 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 2015‑16 data are available for all jurisdictions. |
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##### Clients with an identified need for assistance to obtain or maintain independent housing

Nationally in 2015‑16, 64.0 per cent of clients who had an identified need for assistance with obtaining or maintaining independent housing achieved independent housing after support, compared with 61.2 per cent in 2012‑13. This included clients who moved or returned to private rental housing (39.5 per cent) and to public or community rental housing (21.3 per cent) (figure 19.13).

For the 36.0 per cent clients who did not achieve independent housing after support, data by type of tenure is available in table 19A.26.

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| Figure 19.13 Housing tenure type after support, as a proportion of clients who needed assistance to obtain or maintain independent housing (closed support periods)**a, b** |
| |  | | --- | | Figure 19.13 Housing tenure type after support, as a proportion of clients who needed assistance to obtain or maintain independent housing (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 19.12 and table 19A.26 for detailed definitions, footnotes and caveats. b Data are not available for SA in 2011‑12. |
| *Source*:AIHW (unpublished) Specialist Homelessness Services Collection; table 19A.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, 63.3 per cent achieved independent housing in 2015‑16. Compared to all clients, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients had a lower proportion of clients that moved or returned to private rental housing (27.0 per cent), but more clients that moved to or returned to public or community rental housing (33.6 per cent) (table 19A.27).

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

Of those clients who were living in non‑independent housing and who needed assistance to obtain independent housing, 37.2 per cent achieved independent housing in 2015‑16, an increase from 33.0 per cent in 2012‑13 (table 19A.28). This included clients who moved to private rental housing (19.1 per cent), and to public or community rental housing (16.3 per cent) (figure 19.14).

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| Figure 19.14 Independent housing tenure type after support, as a proportion of clients who were living in non‑independent housing before support (closed support periods), 2015‑16**a** |
| |  | | --- | | Figure 19.14 Independent housing tenure type after support, as a proportion of clients who were living in non-independent housing before support (closed support periods), 2015-16  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 19.12 and table 19A.28 for detailed definitions, footnotes and caveats. |
| *Source*: AIHW (unpublished) Specialist Homelessness Services Collection;table 19A.28. |
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##### Clients who achieved independent housing and who did not present again

Nationally in 2015‑16, 88.6 per cent of clients with an identified need for assistance to obtain or maintain independent housing — including a need to obtain long term housing, sustain tenancy or prevent tenancy failure or eviction, or, prevent foreclosures or for mortgage arrears — who achieved independent housing at the end of support did not present again during the reference year with an identified need for any of these services. This proportion was 90.8 per cent in 2011‑12 (figure 19.15).

This proportion mainly comprised clients in private rental (61.0 per cent) or public housing rental (24.6 per cent) after support, although the proportions vary across jurisdictions (table 19A.29).

Data for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients are presented in table 19A.30.

| Figure 19.15 Clients who did not re‑present needing housing/ accommodation assistance, as a proportion of clients who needed assistance to obtain or maintain — and achieved — independent housing**a** |
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| | Figure 19.15 Clients who did not re-present needing housing or accommodation assistance, as a proportion of clients who needed assistance to obtain or maintain (and achieved) independent housing  More details can be found in the text surrounding this image. | | --- | |
| a See box 19.12 and table 19A.29 for detailed definitions, footnotes and caveats. |
| *Source*: AIHW (unpublished) Specialist Homelessness Services Collection*;* table 19A.29. |
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#### Proportion of people experiencing repeat periods of homelessness

‘Proportion of people experiencing repeat periods of homelessness’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to re‑establish the capacity of clients to live independently and achieve sustainable housing’ (box 19.13).

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| Box 19.13 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 are clients of 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.   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 2015‑16 data are available for all jurisdictions. |
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Nationally, of all clients who experienced homelessness in 2015‑16, 5.6 per cent experienced it more than once in the reporting year — following an increase from 4.3 to 5.7 per cent in the period 2012‑13 to 2014‑15 (figure 19.16). For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients, the proportion who experienced repeat homelessness in 2015‑16 was 6.7 per cent (figure 19.16).

Nationally in 2015‑16, capital city clients had lower rates of repeat homelessness (5.4 per cent) than those clients living in the rest of state (5.9 per cent) (table 19A.31).

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| Figure 19.16 Clients who had more than one period of homelessness, all clients and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients**a** |
| |  | | --- | | Figure 19.16 Clients who had more than one period of homelessness, All clients  More details can be found within the text surrounding this image.  Figure 19.16 Clients who had more than one period of homelessness, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients  More details can be found within the text surrounding this image. | |
| a See box 19.13 and tables 19A.31–32 or detailed definitions, footnotes and caveats. |
| *Source*: AIHW (unpublished) Specialist Homelessness Services Collection;tables 19A.31–32. |
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#### Goals achieved on exit from service

‘Goals achieved on exit’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to support clients to achieve sustainable housing, social inclusion and greater economic participation (box 19.14).

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| Box 19.14 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’, ‘more than half but not all goals or ‘all goals’ have been achieved.  This indicator should be interpreted in conjunction with the ‘development of an agreed case management plan’ indicator.  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 2015‑16 data are available for all jurisdictions |
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Nationally in 2015‑16, at least half of all case management goals were achieved at the end of support for 68.4 per cent of closed support periods with individual case management plans — continuing a downward trend from 72.0 per cent in 2013‑14 (figure 19.17).

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| Figure 19.17 Case management goals achieved (closed support periods)**a, b** |
| |  | | --- | | Figure 19.17 Case management goals achieved (closed support periods)  More details can be found within the text surrounding this image. | |
| a See box 19.14 and table 19A.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 19A.33. |
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## 19.4 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.  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** | Specialist homelessness services clients who have identified as having a long‑term health condition or disability and needing assistance with core activities (self‑care, mobility and/or communication).  From July 2013, the specialist homelessness services collection (!) 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 and 2016 National Social Housing Survey. Questions are based on the Census ‘Core Activity Need for Assistance’ concept. |
| **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 speaking countries** | Non‑main English speaking countries (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 (2015‑16=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. |
| **Severely crowded dwelling** | 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). |

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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 specialist homelessness services collection 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 and 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 and does not have an appointment booked with the agency * there is no ongoing relationship. |
| **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. |

## 19.5 References

ABS 2012a, Methodology for Estimating Homelessness from the Census of Population and Housing, Cat. no. 2049.0.55.001.

—— 2012b, Information Paper: A Statistical Definition of Homelessness, Cat. no. 4922.0, Canberra.

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