# 18 Homelessness services

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| Attachment tables |
| Attachment tables are identified in references throughout this Indigenous Compendium by an ‘A’ prefix (for example, in this chapter, table 18A.1). As the data are directly sourced from the 2015 Report, the Compendium also notes where the original table, figure or text in the 2015 Report can be found. For example, where the Compendium refers to ‘2015 Report, p. 18.1’, this is page 1 of chapter 18 of the 2015 Report, and ‘2015 Report, table 18A.1’ is table 1 of attachment 18A of the 2015 Report. A list of attachment tables referred to in the Compendium is provided at the end of this chapter, and the full attachment tables are available from the Review website at www.pc.gov.au/research/recurring/report-on-government-services. |
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The Homelessness services chapter (chapter 18) in the *Report on Government   
Services 2015* (2015 Report) reports on Homelessness services in Australia. Data are reported for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians for a subset of the performance indicators reported in that chapter — those data are compiled and presented here.

Homelessness has multiple causes. Some of the social and personal factors associated with homelessness include a shortage of affordable housing, family and relationship breakdown, unemployment and financial hardship, mental health problems, and drug and alcohol abuse (COAG Reform Council 2010).

Australian, State and Territory governments fund services to assist people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

Between 1985 and 2009, the Australian Government and State and Territory governments funded the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) to alleviate the difficulties of people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness and reduce the potential for their recurrence.

The *National Affordable Housing Agreement* (NAHA) commenced on 1 January 2009 as part of the Intergovernmental Agreement on Federal Financial Relations. The NAHA is associated with the National Affordable Housing Specific Purpose Payment (NAHSPP), which is an indexed ongoing payment by the Australian Government to the states and territories to be spent in the housing and homelessness sector. To support the NAHA, the *National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness* (NPAH) commenced on 1 July 2009. Government funding for specialist homelessness services is provided through the NAHSPP.

The NAHA and NPAH provide the framework for Australian Government and State and Territory governments to work together to reduce homelessness and improve housing outcomes for Australians.

Under the NAHA, governments have committed to undertake reforms in the housing sector to improve integration between homelessness services and mainstream services, and reduce the rate of homelessness. The NAHA outcomes include:

* people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness achieve sustainable housing and social inclusion
* people are able to rent housing that meets their needs
* people can purchase affordable housing
* people have access to housing through an efficient and responsible housing market
* Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have the same housing opportunities (in relation to homelessness services, housing rental, housing purchase and access to housing through an efficient and responsive housing market) as other Australians
* Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have improved housing amenity and reduced overcrowding, particularly in remote areas and discrete communities.

The NPAH contributes to the NAHA outcome to help “people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness achieve sustainable housing and social inclusion”. 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.

The 2009–13 NPAH reflected a major reform of the way the Australian Government and State and Territory governments worked together to tackle homelessness. As part of wider Council of Australian Governments (COAG) reforms, the NPAH clarified that States and Territories were responsible for day to day delivery of services, as they are best placed to consider local context. One of the critical features of the new COAG approach was that the achievement of outcomes would not be narrowly defined, but focused on improving the delivery of services to prevent and respond to homelessness.

Under the initial NPAH ($1.1 billion over four years), which concluded on 30 June 2013, more than 180 initiatives provided housing and support services for people who would otherwise have been homeless.

Following a one–year transitional NPAH 2013–14, a further one-year Agreement was implemented for 2014–15 in which the Australian Government provides $115 million in funding. States and territories are required to match this funding, and some may exceed this requirement.

This chapter presents data on government–funded specialist homelessness services and the people accessing these services. Homelessness services that do not receive government funding and other non–specialist homelessness services are not included in this Report.

Data from the Specialist Homelessness Services data collection (SHSC) commenced in 2011–12 and are included in this Report. The SHSC replaced the SAAP National Data Collection which concluded in 2010–11. SAAP data were last published in the   
2013 Report.

### Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander data in the Homelessness services chapter

The Homelessness services chapter in the 2015 Report and its corresponding attachment tables contain the following data on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians:

* proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients among all clients whose needs for accommodation and services other than accommodation were met
* proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients, non-MESC clients and clients with disability represented in specialist homelessness services, and in the population
* closed support periods, proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients with a case management plan
* support needs of clients, summary, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients
* closed support periods, support needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients
* closed support periods, proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients who needed employment and/or training assistance, and who were employed after support
* closed support periods, proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients who needed income assistance and who had an income source after support
* closed support periods, proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients who needed assistance to obtain or maintain independent housing and who obtained or maintained independent housing after support
* closed support periods, 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
* proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients experiencing homelessness who had repeat periods of homelessness.

### Profile of homelessness services

#### Services to assist people who are homeless or at imminent risk of becoming homeless

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.

Some of the main developments of SAAP that have influenced the current service environment include:

* expansion of target groups and increasing specialisation of services
* the provision of non–accommodation support services
* responding to the individual needs of clients through an emphasis on case management and an integrated service response — a form of service delivery that involves an assessment process to identify the specific needs of clients and to connect them with appropriate services (AIHW 2011).

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.

#### Homelessness services and the link with other services

Close links exist between homelessness services and other forms of housing assistance reported in the Housing chapter of this Report (chapter 17). Some individuals and families 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.[[1]](#footnote-1). Some community housing organisations provide short-term and transitional accommodation and some specialist homelessness agencies provide long-term accommodation. The Housing and homelessness sector overview provides some information on the interconnections between these and other services.

### Framework of performance indicators for government funded specialist homelessness services

The Homelessness services performance indicator framework outlined in figure 18.1 identifies the principal homelessness services activity areas considered in the 2015 Report. Data for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians are reported for a subset of the performance indicators and are presented here. It is important to interpret these data in the context of the broader performance indicator framework. The framework shows which data are comparable. For data that are not considered directly comparable, the text includes relevant caveats and supporting commentary.

Indicator boxes presented throughout the chapter provide information about the reported indicators. As these are sourced directly from the 2015 Report, they may include references to data not reported for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians and therefore not included in this Compendium.

The performance indicator framework for government funded specialist homelessness services is based on shared government objectives for homelessness services delivered under the NAHA (box 18.1).

COAG agreed six National Agreements to enhance accountability to the public for the outcomes achieved or outputs delivered by a range of government services, (see chapter 1 for more detail on reforms to federal financial relations).

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 18.1 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. |
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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 18.1). The performance indicator framework shows which data are comparable in the 2015 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 (see 2015 Report, section 1.6).

Different delivery contexts and locations influence the equity, effectiveness and efficiency of homelessness services. 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, including age profile, geographic distribution of the population, income levels, education levels, tenure of dwellings and cultural background (including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and cultural status) (chapter 2).

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| Figure 18.1 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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*Source*: 2015 Report, figure 18.2, p. 18.8.

#### Equity — access

Equity and access indicators are indicators of governments’ objective to ensure that all clients have fair and equitable access to services on the basis of relative need and available resources.

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

‘Access of special needs groups to homelessness services’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to ensure all Australians have equitable access to accommodation services on the basis of relative need (box 18.2).

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| Box 18.2 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).  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 2013–14 data are available for all jurisdictions.   Data quality information for people with disability is at www.pc.gov.au/research/recurring/report-on-government-services. |
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##### Access of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to homelessness services

Nationally, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people made up 26.3 per cent of all clients whose needs for accommodation were met, and 14.4 per cent of all clients whose needs for services other than accommodation were met in 2013–14. These results varied across jurisdictions (figure 18.2).

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| Figure 18.2 Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients, among all clients, whose needs for accommodation and services other than accommodation were met, 2013–14 |
| Figure 18.3 Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients, among all clients, whose needs for accommodation and services other than accommodation were met, 2013–14  More details can be found within the text surrounding this image. |
| *Source*: AIHW (unpublished) *Specialist Homelessness Services Collection*, Australia; table 18A.5;  2015 Report, figure 18.3, p. 18.10. |
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Nationally in 2013–14, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people had a higher representation amongst all people accessing specialist homelessness services   
(22.9 per cent) than their representation in the population (3.0 per cent) (table 18.1).

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| Table 18.1 Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people represented in specialist homelessness services, and in the population**a** |
| |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | |  | NSW | Vic | Qld | WA | SA | Tas | ACT | NT | Aust | | In specialist homelessness services, 2013–14 | 25.2 | 8.8 | 33.3 | 38.0 | 25.9 | 15.2 | 16.4 | 78.4 | 22.9 | | In the population, 2013 | 2.9 | 0.9 | 4.3 | 3.7 | 2.3 | 4.9 | 1.7 | 29.7 | 3.0 | |
| a See notes to table 18A.8 for more details. |
| *Source*: AIHW (unpublished) *Specialist Homelessness Services Collection*; ABS (2013) *Australian Demographic Statistics, June 2013*, Cat. no. 3101.0, Canberra; ABS (2014) *Estimates and Projections, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, 2001 to 2026*, Cat. no. 3238.0, table 18A.8, table 2A.14 and 2015 Report, table 2A.1, 2015 Report, table 18.1 p. 18.11. |
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#### Effectiveness — appropriateness

Effectiveness indicators measure how well the outputs of a service reflect the stated objectives of that service. The reporting framework groups effectiveness indicators according to characteristics that are considered important to the service. These characteristics may include access, appropriateness and/or quality.

##### 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 18.3).

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| Box 18.3 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 such as Victoria and the ACT, where the client’s needs have been assessed and they are waiting for a service to be available that will further address their needs). In South Australia, 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 2013–14 data are available for all jurisdictions.   The basis on which this indicator is enumerated has changed since the 2014 Report from clients to closed support periods. Data for 2012–13 and 2011–12 have been revised to reflect this change.  Data quality information for this indicator is under development. |
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Nationally, there was an agreed case management plan for clients in 48.2 per cent of closed support periods in 2013–14 (compared with 57.1 per cent of closed support periods for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients). These proportions varied across jurisdictions (2015 Report, figure 18.7, table 18A.12 and 2015 Report, table 18A.11).

##### 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 18.4).

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| Box 18.4 Match of needs of clients |
| ‘Match of needs of clients’ is defined by five measures:   * number of clients with closed support periods who needed homelessness services and who were provided with at least one service in at least one support period during the reference year by the agency visited, and not referred, divided by the total number of clients with closed support periods who needed homelessness services * number of clients with closed support periods who needed homelessness services and who were referred to another agency, divided by the total number of clients with closed support periods who needed homelessness services * number of clients with closed support periods who needed homelessness services and who were provided with those services by that agency and referred to another agency, divided by the total number of clients with closed support periods who needed homelessness services * number of clients with closed support periods who needed homelessness services and who were not provided with those services or referred to another agency, divided by the total number of clients with closed support periods who needed homelessness services * number of clients (12–18 years) with closed support periods who needed education and/or training assistance and who were enrolled in formal study or training at the end of support, divided by the total number of closed support periods for clients (aged 12–18 years) who needed education and/or training assistance.   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.  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 such as Victoria and the ACT 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. A client is generally only referred to a provider when a suitable service is secured for them by the central intake service.  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 2013–14 data are available for all jurisdictions.   Data quality information for this indicator is under development. |
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Nationally in 2013–14, 56.2 per cent of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients were identified as needing accommodation or accommodation–related assistance. Agencies were able to directly provide or directly provide and refer these services to most of the clients seeking this type of service (69.2 per cent). A further 12.2 per cent of these clients were referred to other organisations for this assistance (2015 Report, figure 18.8 and   
table 18A.15). Specialist homelessness agencies were able to directly provide or directly provide and refer assistance to sustain tenure to most clients seeking this type of service (82.8 per cent) and directly provide or directly provide and refer domestic and family violence–related assistance to 91.9 per cent of clients seeking this type of service   
(figure 18.3).

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| Figure 18.3 Closed support periods — support needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients, 2013–14 |
| |  | | --- | | Figure 18.9 Closed support periods — support needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients, 2013–14  More details can be found within the text surrounding this image. | |
| *Source*: AIHW (unpublished) *Specialist Homelessness Services Collection*; table 18A.15; 2015 Report,  figure 18.9, p. 18.20. |
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A summary of support needs of clients is presented in table 18A.13.

#### Outcomes

Outcomes are the impact of services on the status of an individual or group (while outputs are the actual services delivered) (see 2015 Report, 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 their income, housing status and workforce status. These characteristics are recorded at the end of a client’s support period.

##### 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 18.5).

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| Box 18.5 Achievement of employment on exit |
| ‘Achievement of employment on exit’ is defined by three measures:   * number of clients, with closed support periods only, with an identified need for employment and/or training assistance and whose labour force status was ‘employed full–time’ or ‘employed part–time’ at the end of support, divided by the number of clients, with closed support periods only, with an identified need for employment and/or training assistance * number of clients, with closed support periods only, with an identified need for employment and/or training assistance whose labour force status was unemployed at presentation; and whose labour force status was ‘employed full–time’ or ‘employed part–time’ at the end of support, divided by the number of clients, with closed support periods only, with an identified need for employment and/or training assistance who were unemployed at presentation * number of clients, with closed support periods only, with an identified need for employment and/or training assistance whose labour force status was ‘not in the labour force’ at presentation; and whose labour force status was ‘employed full–time’ or ‘employed part‑time’ at the end of support, divided by the number of clients, with closed support periods only, with an identified need for employment and/or training assistance who were not in the labour force at presentation.   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 2013–14 data are available for all jurisdictions.   Data quality information for this indicator is under development. |
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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   
2013–14, 12.6 per cent were employed either part time or full time after support, compared with 8.0 per cent before support. Amongst the 12.6 per cent employed after support, 4.5 per cent were employed full time and 8.0 per cent were employed part time after support. These proportions varied across jurisdictions (table 18A.22).

##### 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 18.6).

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| Box 18.6 Achievement of income on exit |
| ‘Achievement of income on exit’ is defined as the number of clients with closed support periods only, who needed income assistance and exited homelessness services with an income source, divided by the total number of clients with closed support periods only, who needed income assistance.  Holding other factors constant, a high or increasing proportion of clients who needed income assistance and exited homelessness services with an income source is desirable.  This indicator compares these clients’ income status before and after they received support. It is assumed that a client’s independence and self–reliance is enhanced when the client experiences a positive change in income source (for example, from having no income support to obtaining some income, including wages and/or benefits) on exit from services.  Data are reported for all clients, and separately for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients.  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 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients who needed income assistance when entering homelessness services in 2013–14, 94.9 per cent had an income source after support, compared with 95.2 per cent in 2012–13 (table 18A.25). Amongst the   
94.9 per cent, the proportion whose reported source of income was a government pension/allowance increased from 83.6 per cent before support to 88.4 per cent after support. The proportion of clients whose reported source of income was employee/business income increased from 2.8 per cent before support to 3.8 per cent after support. Proportions varied across jurisdictions (figure 18.4).

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| Figure 18.4 Closed support periods — proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients who needed income assistance and who had an income source after support, by income source, 2013–14**a** | |
| |  | | --- | | Figure 18.17 Closed support periods — proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients who needed income assistance and who had an income source after support, by income source, 2013–14  More details can be found within the text surrounding this image. | | |
| a ‘Awaiting benefit’ after support is nil or rounded to zero for SA. | |
| *Source*: AIHW (unpublished) *Specialist Homelessness Services Collection;* table 18A.25; 2015 Report,  figure 18.17, p. 18.33. | |
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##### 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 18.7).

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| Box 18.7 Achievement of independent housing on exit |
| ‘Achievement of independent housing’ is defined by three measures:   * number of clients with closed support periods only, who had an identified need for assistance for ‘long term housing’; or ‘sustain tenancy or prevent tenancy failure or eviction’; or ‘prevent foreclosures or for mortgage arrears’, and had achieved independent housing at the end of support, divided by the number of clients with closed support periods only, who had an identified a need for assistance to obtain ‘long term housing’ or ‘sustain tenancy or prevent tenancy failure or eviction’, or ‘prevent foreclosures or for mortgage arrears’ * number of clients with closed support periods only, who on presentation, were living in  non–independent housing and achieved independent housing at the end of support, divided by the number of clients with closed support periods only, who at presentation were living in  non–independent/supported housing * number of clients with closed support periods only, who achieved independent housing at the end of support, and who did not present again with an identified need for short–term, medium–term, long–term housing, assistance to sustain tenancy or prevent tenancy failure or eviction or assistance to prevent foreclosures or for mortgage arrears again during the reference year, divided by the number of clients with closed support periods only, who had an identified need for assistance with obtaining or maintaining independent/non–supported housing, and who had independent/non–supported housing at the end of 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 who achieved independent housing in closed support periods is desirable.  This indicator compares the proportion of clients with closed support periods who were in independent housing before and after they received support from homelessness services. It relates to relatively short term outcomes — that is, outcomes for clients immediately after their support period. 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 2013–14 data are available for all jurisdictions.   Data quality information for this indicator is under development. |
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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 60.2 per cent achieved independent housing in 2013–14, compared with 58.0 per cent in 2012–13 (figure 18.5). This included clients who moved or returned to private rental housing (26.3 per cent), and to public or community rental housing (31.1 per cent) (table 18A.27).

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| Figure 18.5 Closed support periods — proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients, among all clients, who needed assistance to obtain or maintain independent housing who obtained or maintained independent housing after support**a, b** |
| |  | | --- | | Figure 18.19 Closed support periods — proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients, among all clients, who needed assistance to obtain or maintain independent housing who obtained or maintained independent housing after support  More details can be found within the text surrounding this image. | |
| a SA collection methodology for 2011–12 does not allow for this type of analysis. b See notes to table 18A.27 for more information. |
| *Source*: AIHW (unpublished) *Specialist Homelessness Services Collection*; table 18A.27; 2015 Report,  figure 18.19, p. 18.35. |
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Data for 2012–13 and 2011–12 are included in table 18A.27.

Table 18A.30 provides data on 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.

##### 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 18.8).

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| Box 18.8 Clients experiencing repeat periods of homelessness |
| ‘Clients experiencing repeat periods of homelessness’ is defined as the number of SHS clients who change status from ‘homeless’ to ‘not homeless’ and back to ‘homeless’ in the reporting period, divided by the number of SHS clients who experienced homelessness at least once 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 more than once required housing or accommodation support specifically 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 2013–14 data are available for all jurisdictions.   The basis on which this indicator is enumerated has changed since the 2014 Report. Data for 2012–13 and 2011–12 have been revised to reflect this change.  Data quality information for this indicator is at www.pc.gov.au/research/recurring/report-on-government-services. |
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Nationally, 5.0 per cent of all clients who experienced homelessness at some time in   
2013–14, had more than one period of homelessness in 2013–14 compared with   
4.3 per cent in 2012–13 (figure 18.6). The proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients who experienced homelessness at some time in 2013–14 and who had more than one period of homelessness in 2013–14 increased from 5.5 per cent in 2012–13 to 5.7 per cent in 2013–14. These proportions varied across jurisdictions (figure 18.6).

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| Figure 18.6 Clients who had more than one period of homelessness, all clients and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients**a** |
| |  | | --- | | Figure 18.22 Clients who had more than one period of homelessness, all clients and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients  More details can be found within the text surrounding this image. | |
| a See notes to tables 18A.31–32 for more information.  *Source*: AIHW (unpublished) *Specialist Homelessness Services Collection*; table 18A.32 and 2015 Report, table 18A.31; 2015 Report, figure 18.22, p. 18.40. |
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### Definitions of key terms

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| ***Based on the SHS client collection*** | |
| **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―children are also clients if they receive a service from a specialist homelessness agency.  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 — 30 June 2014. |
| **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 |
| **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:  self-care—the client needs help/supervision with self-care (e.g. showering or bathing, dressing or undressing, using the toilet or eating food)  mobility—the client needs help/supervision with mobility (e.g. moving around the house, moving around outside the home, or getting into or out of a chair)  communication—the client needs help/supervision with communication (e.g. understanding or being understood by other people, including people they know).  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’ concept first used in the 2006 Census to identify people with a 'profound or severe core activity limitation', using similar criteria to the ABS’s Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers (SDAC). |

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| **Labour force status** | Reported data excludes clients aged under 15. |
| **Non–main English speaking countries** | Non–main English speaking countries are all countries except Australia, United Kingdom, Republic of Ireland, New Zealand, Canada, United States of America and South Africa. |
| **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. |
| **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. |
| **Reporting period** | For the purposes of this report the reporting period is the  financial year–to–date (FYTD):1 July 2013 to 30 June 2014. |
| **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  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.  *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.  *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. |
| 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. A support period 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 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. |

### List of attachment tables

Attachment tables for data within this chapter are contained in the attachment to the Compendium. These tables are identified in references throughout this chapter by a ‘18A’ prefix (for example, table 18A.1 is table 1 in the Homelessness services attachment). Attachment tables are on the Review website (www.pc.gov.au/research/recurring/report-on-government-services).

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| **Table 18A.5** | Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients among all clients whose needs for accommodation and services other than accommodation were met |
| **Table 18A.8** | Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients, non-MESC clients and clients with disability represented in specialist homelessness services, and in the population |
| **Table 18A.12** | Closed support periods, proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients with a case management plan |
| **Table 18A.13** | Support needs of clients, summary |
| **Table 18A.15** | Closed support periods, support needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients |
| **Table 18A.22** | Closed support periods, proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients who needed employment and/or training assistance, and who were employed after support |
| **Table 18A.25** | Closed support periods, proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients who needed income assistance and who had an income source after support |
| **Table 18A.27** | Closed support periods, proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients who needed assistance to obtain or maintain independent housing and who obtained or maintained independent housing after support |
| **Table 18A.30** | Closed support periods, 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 |
| **Table 18A.32** | Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients experiencing homelessness who had repeat periods of homelessness |

### References

AIHW (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare) 2011, *Australia’s welfare 2011. Australia’s welfare series no. 10*, Cat. no. AUS 142, Canberra: AIHW).

COAG Reform Council 2010, *National Affordable Housing Agreement: Baseline  
 performance report for 2008–09*, www.coagreformcouncil.gov.au/reports/housing.cfm (accessed 1 October 2010).

1. Social housing includes public and community housing. For further information on these forms of housing assistance, see chapter 17 (box 17.1). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)