# G Housing and homelessness services sector overview

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| Attachment tables |
| Attachment tables are identified in references throughout this Indigenous Compendium by an ‘A’ prefix (for example, in this sector overview, table GA.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. G.1’, this is page 1 of the Housing and homelessness services sector overview of the  2015 Report, and ‘2015 Report, table GA.1’ is table 1 of attachment GA 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 Housing and homelessness services sector overview in the *Report on Government Services 2015* (2015 Report) provides an introduction to the Housing (chapter 17) and Homelessness services (chapter 18) chapters. It provides an overview of the housing and homelessness sector, presenting both contextual information and high level performance information. 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.

This sector overview also includes descriptive information on Commonwealth Rent Assistance (CRA).

Major improvements in reporting on housing and homelessness this year are identified in each of the service-specific housing and homelessness chapters.

### Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander data in the Housing and homelessness services sector overview

The Housing and homelessness sector overview in the 2015 Report contains the following data on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians:

1. Australian Government nominal expenditure relating to the National Affordable Housing Agreement (NAHA)
2. Housing and homelessness services sector, descriptive statistics
3. social housing descriptive statistics
4. households living in overcrowded conditions
5. households living in houses of an acceptable standard
6. income units receiving CRA, by payment type, special needs and geographic location
7. income units receiving CRA, by geographic location
8. proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander income units receiving CRA, paying more than 30 per cent of income on rent, with and without CRA, by geographic location
9. number and proportion of income units receiving CRA with more than   
   50 per cent of income spent on rent, with and without CRA, by special needs and geographic location.

### Sector scope

This Report includes detailed information on two specific services: social housing and homelessness services. Social housing broadly encompasses public housing, State owned and managed Indigenous housing (SOMIH), community housing and Indigenous community housing (ICH), and is reported in chapter 17 (box G.1).

Homelessness services in this Report encompass government funded specialist homelessness services, and are reported in chapter 18 (box G.2).

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| Box G.1 Scope of social housing |
| Social housing is rental housing provided by not–for–profit, non–government or government organisations to assist people who are unable to access suitable accommodation in the private rental market. The forms of social housing included in this Report are:   * *Public housing*: dwellings owned (or leased) and managed by State and Territory housing authorities. * *State owned and managed Indigenous housing (SOMIH)*: dwellings owned and managed by State housing authorities that are allocated only to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households. * *Community housing*: rental housing provided to low–to–moderate income and/or special needs households, managed by community-based organisations that lease properties from government or have received a capital or recurrent subsidy from government. Community housing models vary across jurisdictions. Community housing organisations typically receive some form of government assistance, such as direct funding or the provision of land and property, but a number of community housing organisations are entirely self–funded. * *Indigenous community housing (ICH):* dwellings owned or leased and managed by ICH organisations and community councils in major cities, regional and remote areas. ICH models vary across jurisdictions and can also include dwellings funded or registered by government. ICH organisations include community organisations such as resource agencies and land councils.   *Crisis and transitional housing* is an additional form of social housing, but it is not separately identified in this Report. Crisis and transitional housing might be indirectly reported through the other forms of social housing described above. |
| *Source*: 2015 Report, Chapter 17. |
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| Box G.2 Scope of homelessness services |
| 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. Government funded specialist homelessness services provide assistance to individuals and families who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.  Data reported in Chapter 18 of this Report are for government funded specialist homelessness services delivered under the NAHA and the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness (NPAH). Data are sourced from the Specialist Homelessness Services Collection (SHSC), which collects information about clients of agencies funded by state and territory governments to respond to or prevent homelessness, their needs for assistance, the services they received and the outcomes of this assistance. It also collects information about people who sought assistance but did not receive any services from these agencies.  Definition of homelessness  Definitions of homelessness range from objective measures in which homelessness means having ‘no roof’, to broader, more subjective definitions founded on culturally and historically determined ideas of 'home'.  Australian Bureau of Statistics definition  The ABS definition of homelessness is informed by a broader understanding of homelessness as ‘home’lessness, not ‘roof’lessness. Data on homelessness from the 2011, 2006 and 2001 censuses are based on the ABS methodology (ABS 2012a) and a statistical definition of homelessness (ABS 2012b), which were both developed following consultation with the homelessness sector.  Data on homeless people are categorised by the ABS (2012b) according to their living situation. 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.   Specialist Homelessness Services collection (SHSC) definition  All clients of specialist homelessness services are either homeless or at risk of homelessness. ‘Homeless’ status is derived for a client based on the client’s housing circumstances at the beginning of their first support period or at the beginning of the reference year. Clients are considered to be homeless if they report having no shelter or living in an improvised dwelling, short–term accommodation, or a house, townhouse or flat where tenure type is couch surfing or with no tenure. All other clients not meeting these criteria are considered to be at risk of homelessness (excluding clients who did not provide sufficient information to make this assessment). These criteria are aligned with the ABS statistical definition of homelessness where possible. |
| *Source*: ABS (2012b); 2015 Report, Chapter 18. |
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### Profile of the housing and homelessness sector

Detailed profiles for the services within the housing and homelessness services sector are reported in chapters 17 and 18, and cover:

* size and scope of the individual service types
* roles and responsibilities of each level of government and non–government organisations
* funding and expenditure.

### Government funding and expenditure

Most Australian Government funding for housing and homelessness services is provided through the National Affordable Housing Specific Purpose Payment (NAHSPP). This funding is based on outcomes rather than tied to programs, so it is not possible to identify NAH SPP funding used for specific programs.

In 2013–14, the Australian Government provided $2.0 billion to State and Territory governments for housing and homelessness services through the National Partnership Agreements (NPAs) in support of the NAHA (table GA.1). In addition, the Australian Government provided a further $3.9 billion for CRA in 2013–14 (2015 Report,   
table GA.12).

Australian, State and Territory governments’ total expenditure on housing and homelessness services was $3.9 billion in 2012–13 (table G.1). Other descriptive data for social housing and homelessness services for 2012–13 are presented in table G.1, and data for each jurisdiction are reported in table GA.3 and 2015 Report, table GA.4.

Further information, including 2012–13 and 2013–14 financial data for public housing, SOMIH and homelessness services, is presented in chapters 17 and 18.

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| Table G.1 Housing and homelessness services sector, selected descriptive statistics, Australia, 2012–13**a** |
| |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | |  | | Net recurrent expenditure | Dwellingsb | Households | |  | | *$m* | *No.* | *No.* | | *Social housing* | |  |  |  | |  | Public housing | 2 543.4 | 328 340 | 321 213 | |  | SOMIH | 102.4 | 10 084 | 9 820 | |  | Community housing | 614.2 | 65 865 | 65 632 | |  | Indigenous community housing | 103.5 | na | .. | |  | **Total** | **3 363.5** | **404 289** | **396 665** | |  |  |  |  |  | |  |  |  | *Clients (‘000)* |  | | *Homelessness services* | | 583.1 | 244.2 | .. | | **Total** | | **3 946.6** | **..** | **na** | |
| a Data may not be comparable across jurisdictions or service areas and comparisons could be misleading. Chapters 17 and 18 provide further information. b The total number of dwellings at 30 June.  **na** Not available. .. Not applicable. |
| *Source*: 2015 Report, Chapters 17 and 18; table GA.2; 2015 Report, table G.1, p. G.6 |
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### Commonwealth Rent Assistance

CRA is an Australian Government non–taxable income supplement, paid to income support recipients or people who receive more than the base rate of the Family Tax Benefit Part A, and who rent in the private market. CRA may be payable to people living in SOMIH (in NSW only), community housing or ICH but it is not payable to people renting housing from State or Territory housing authorities (that is, people living in public housing, or SOMIH [other than NSW]), as housing authorities separately subsidise rent for eligible tenants.

Tables GA.12–34 in the 2015 Report, present a range of detailed data on CRA, including Australian Government expenditure; CRA recipients, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recipients andthose with special needs; and the amount of rent paid and the proportion of income spent on rent by CRA recipients.

### Social and economic factors affecting demand for services

Research shows the pathways to homelessness are varied and complex. Longitudinal factors (for example, influences from early childhood) can compound with situational factors, leading to homelessness. For young people, factors such as family conflict or abuse, drug use, unstable employment, participating in education and training, combining work and study, and financial pressure (for example, tension between paying for rent, food and utility costs) can potentially lead to unstable housing and increase the risk of homelessness (Memmott and Chambers 2010; CHP 2005).

### Service–sector objectives

The overarching service sector objectives in box G.3 draw together the objectives from each of the specific services (described in chapters 17 and 18), as well as reflecting the objectives set out in the NAHA.

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| Box G.3 Objectives for housing and homelessness services |
| The overarching objective of housing and homelessness services is that all Australians have access to affordable, safe and sustainable housing that contributes to social and economic participation. Further, government services are to be provided in a collaborative, equitable and efficient manner.  The specific objectives of the services that comprise the housing and homelessness services sector are summarised below:  *Social housing* aims to assist people unable to access alternative suitable housing options, through the delivery of affordable, appropriate, flexible and diverse social housing. Some forms of social housing specifically aim to contribute to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community wellbeing, by improving housing outcomes, especially for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in remote communities (chapter 17).  *Government funded specialist homelessness services* aim 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 stable and long term independent housing (chapter 18). |
| *Source*: COAG (2008); 2015 Report, Chapters 17 and 18. |
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### Sector performance indicator framework

This sector overview is based on a sector performance indicator framework (figure G.1). This framework is made up of the following elements:

* Sector objectives — three sector objectives are a précis of the key objectives of housing and homelessness services and reflect the outcomes in the NAHA (box G.3).
* Sector–wide indicators — three sector–wide indicators relate to the overarching service sector objectives.
* Information from the service–specific performance indicator frameworks that relate to housing and homelessness services. Discussed in more detail in chapters 17 and 18, the service–specific frameworks provide comprehensive information on the equity, effectiveness and efficiency of these services.

This sector overview provides an overview of relevant performance information.   
Chapters 17 and 18 and their associated attachment tables provide more detailed information.

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| Figure G.1 Housing and homelessness services sector performance indicator framework |
| Figure G. 1 Housing and homelessness services sector performance indicator framework   More details can be found within the text surrounding this image. |
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*Source*: 2015 Report, figure G.1, p. G.10.

This section includes high level indicators of housing and homelessness outcomes. Many factors are likely to influence these outcomes — not solely the performance of government services. However, these outcomes inform the development of appropriate policies and the delivery of government services.

#### Appropriateness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander housing

‘Appropriateness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander housing’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to ensure all Australians have access to affordable, safe, appropriate and sustainable housing (box G.4). Governments have a specific interest in improving amenity and reducing overcrowding for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, particularly those living in remote and discrete communities (COAG 2008).

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| Box G.4 Appropriateness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander housing |
| ‘Appropriateness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander housing’ is an indicator of the effectiveness and quality of Indigenous housing. Two measures are reported:   * proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households living in overcrowded conditions * proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households living in dwellings of an acceptable standard.   Overcrowding is defined and measured using the Canadian National Occupancy Standard (CNOS) under which overcrowding is deemed to have occurred if one or more additional bedrooms are required to meet the standard.  For all housing tenures, acceptable standard is defined as a dwelling with four working facilities (for washing people, for washing clothes/bedding, for storing/preparing food, and sewerage) and not more than two major structural problems.  A low proportion of households living in overcrowded conditions is desirable. A high proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households living in dwellings of an acceptable standard is desirable.  Data comparability and completeness vary for this indicator. Data reported are:  Overcrowding:   * for public housing and SOMIH, comparable (subject to caveats) across jurisdictions but a break in series means that data for 2009–10 onward are not comparable to data for earlier years * not comparable across public housing, SOMIH, community housing and Indigenous community housing * complete for public housing and SOMIH for the current reporting period (subject to caveats). All required 2013–14 data are available for all jurisdictions providing the service * incomplete for community housing. All required data were not available for Qld and the NT * incomplete for Indigenous community housing. All required 2014 data were not available for NSW, SA, Tasmania, the ACT, the NT and Australia.   Dwellings of an acceptable standard   * comparable (subject to caveats) across jurisdictions for the current reporting period * incomplete for community housing. All required 2014 data were not available for the NT.   Related information on the appropriateness of social housing is presented for the outcome indicators ‘match of dwelling to household size’ and ‘amenity/location’ in chapter 17.  Data quality information for this indicator is at www.pc.gov.au/research/recurring/report-on-government-services. |
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#### Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households living in overcrowded conditions

Overcrowding is deemed to occur if one or more bedrooms are required to meet the CNOS (see chapter 17 for more detail). Overcrowding is a significant issue for many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

The proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households living in overcrowded conditions varied across jurisdictions in 2014 (figure G.2).

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| Figure G.2 Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households living in overcrowded conditions, at  30 June 2014**a, b, c** |
| |  | | --- | | Figure G.3 Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households living in overcrowded conditions, at  30 June 2014  More details can be found within the text surrounding this image. | |
| a There are no SOMIH data reported for Victoria, WA, the ACT or the NT as the SOMIH program does not exist in these jurisdictions. b Community housing data are not available for Queensland and the Northern Territory. cCommunity housing data for Tasmania and the ACT is nil or rounded to zero. |
| *Source*: AIHW (unpublished) *National Housing Assistance Data Repository*; table GA.6; 2015 Report, figure G.3, p. G.14. |
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Data for Indigenous community housing are presented in table GA.6.

#### Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households living in dwellings of an acceptable standard

Data for this measure are sourced from the National Social Housing Survey (NSHS) for public housing, SOMIH and community housing. To date, Indigenous community housing tenants have not been surveyed in the NSHS.

Nationally in 2014, the NSHS found that:

* for public housing, 65.9 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households were living in dwellings of an acceptable standard
* for SOMIH, 70.1 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households were living in dwellings of an acceptable standard
* for community housing, 83.0 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households were living in dwellings of an acceptable standard (figure G.3).

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| Figure G.3 Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households living in dwellings of an acceptable standard, 2014**a, b, c, d** |
| |  | | --- | | Figure G.4 Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households living in dwellings of an acceptable standard, 2014  More details can be found within the text surrounding this image. | |
| a Error bars represent the 95 per cent confidence intervals associated with each point estimate. bThere are no SOMIH data reported for Victoria, WA, the ACT or the NT as the SOMIH program does not exist in these jurisdictions. c Community housing data are not published for SA. d Community housing data are not available for the NT. |
| *Source*: AIHW (unpublished) *National Social Housing Survey* 2014; table GA.7; 2014 Report, figure G.4,  p. G.15. |
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### List of attachment tables

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

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| **Table GA.1** | Australian Government nominal expenditure relating to the National Affordable Housing Agreement (NAHA) ($million) |
| **Table GA.2** | Housing and homelessness services sector, descriptive statistics, Australia, 2011–12 |
| **Table GA.3** | Social housing descriptive statistics, 2012–13 |
| **Table GA.6** | Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households living in overcrowded conditions |
| **Table GA.7** | Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households living in dwellings of an acceptable standard, 2014 |
| **Table GA.17** | Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander income units receiving CRA, 2014 |
| **Table GA.19** | Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander CRA recipients, by payment type, 2014 |
| **Table GA.21** | Income units receiving CRA, by special needs and geographic location, 2014 |
| **Table GA.26** | Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander income units receiving CRA, paying more than 30 per cent of income on rent, with and without CRA, by geographic location, 2010 to 2014 (per cent) |
| **Table GA.27** | Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander income units receiving CRA, paying more than 30 per cent of income on rent, with and without CRA, 2010 to 2014 (per cent) |
| **Table GA.34** | Number and proportion of income units receiving CRA with more than 50 per cent of income spent on rent, with and without CRA, by special needs and geographic location, 2014 (per cent) |

### Definitions of key terms

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| **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander household** | A household with at least one resident who has been identified as being of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin. Other residents of the household may have been identified as being of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin, non-Indigenous, or have Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander status unknown. |
| **Affordability** | Affordability (without CRA) is calculated for all income units receiving CRA by dividing Rent by Total Income from all sources. The CRA entitlement for the reference fortnight in June is included in Total Income from all sources for the calculation of affordability with CRA. |
| **Commonwealth Rent Assistance (CRA)** | A fortnightly supplement paid to two types of renter in private and community housing: income support recipients (for example, people receiving the Disability Support Pension), and low– and moderate–income families with children. Payment of CRA continues as long as recipients meet income tests for their primary payment and continue to pay a predetermined amount of rent. |
| **Dependent child for CRA** | Dependent child has a wider meaning under Social Security and Family Assistance law than is used in this chapter in relation to CRA. In this chapter, a dependent child is one in respect of whom an adult member of the income unit receives Family Tax Benefit (FTB) Part A at more than the base rate. Prior to 1 January 2012, children aged 16 or older attracted the base rate of FTB Part A so are not included in the count of dependent children. From January 2012 children aged 16 to 19 years attending secondary school may now receive more than the base rate of FTB Part A. Figures from June 2013 include 16 to 19 years olds who receive more than the base rate of FTB Part A. Some children under 20 years of age attract the base rate of FTB Part A only and may not be eligible to be counted for CRA entitlement. |
| **Income support recipient** | Recipients in receipt of a payment made under social security law. Under the Machinery of Government changes announced on the 18 September 2013 Income Support Payments administered under social security law are now the responsibility of the Department of Social Services. Family Tax Benefit is paid under family assistance law and is not an income support payment. |
| **Income unit** | An income unit may consist of:   * a single person with no dependent children * a sole parent with one or more dependent children * a couple (married, registered or defacto) with no dependent children * a couple (married, registered or defacto) with one or more dependent children.   A non–dependent child living at home, including one who is receiving an income support payment in their own right, is regarded as a separate income unit. Similarly, a group of non–related adults sharing accommodation are counted as separate income units. |

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| **Machinery of Government Changes** | Prior to the Machinery of Government changes announced on  18 September 2013, the main income support payments administered by the former Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous affairs (FaHCSIA) were Age Pension, Disability Support Pension and Carer Payment, while the main income support payments administered by former Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations were Newstart Allowance, Youth Allowance (other), Parenting Payment (Single) and Parenting Payment (Partnered). Youth Allowance (student) and Austudy were administered by the former Department of Industry, Innovation, Climate Change, Science, Research and Tertiary Education. |
| **Rent** | Amount payable as a condition of occupancy of a person’s home. Rent includes site fees for a caravan, mooring fees and payment for services provided in a retirement village. Rent encompasses not only a formal tenancy agreement, but also informal agreements between family members, including the payment of board or board and lodgings. Where a person pays board and lodgings and cannot separately identify the amount paid for lodgings, two thirds of the payment is deemed to be for rent. |
| **Special needs** | Individuals and families with at least one member who either self–identifies as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, receives a Disability Support Pension; is aged 24 years or under; or is aged 75 years or over. |
| **Total income from all sources** | Income received by the recipients or partner, excluding income received by a dependent. It includes regular social security payments and any maintenance and other private income taken into account for income testing purposes. It does not include:   * one–time payments * arrears payments * advances * Employment or Education Entry Payments * Mobility Allowance * Baby Bonus * Child Care Tax Rebate.   In most cases, private income reflects the person’s current circumstances. Taxable income for a past financial year or an estimate of taxable income for the current financial year is used where the income unit receives more than the minimum rate of the Family Tax Benefit part A but no income support payment. Income received includes Energy Supplement amounts paid with income support payments and Family Tax Benefit from June 2014. |

## Appendix – Private housing market contextual information

### Housing market demand, supply and affordability

The private housing market encompasses rented accommodation, home ownership and housing investment. A range of factors influence demand and supply in the private housing market:

* factors affecting the demand for housing include population growth, household formation, household income and employment, investor demand, household preferences for size, quality and location of housing, the price and availability of housing, government taxes, concessions and transfers, and the cost and availability of finance (NHSC 2010)
* factors affecting the supply of housing include land tenure arrangements, land release and development processes, construction and infrastructure costs, government taxes, concessions and transfers, and the availability and price of land (NHSC 2010). The availability of credit to finance the development of new housing can also affect the supply of housing (RBA 2009).

An efficient housing market refers to achieving a balance between housing supply and demand (CRC 2010).

Nationally at June 2011, there was an estimated cumulative gap between underlying demand for housing and housing supply, as a proportion of growth in underlying demand, of 2.6 per cent. An estimated 228 000 dwellings were required in Australia to meet growth in demand (NHSC 2012: tables 4.1 and 4.4).

#### Housing affordability

A shortage of affordable housing is likely to affect demand for housing and homelessness services. Governments provide support to ensure people can access affordable rental housing, either in the private market or in social housing, and many governments provide support to those purchasing houses, particularly first home buyers (box G.5).

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| Box G.5 Government assistance for affordable housing |
| A range of government initiatives and programs are designed to help households to pay for housing, and to increase the supply of affordable housing. These initiatives include:   * direct assistance to first home buyers through schemes such as the First Home Owners Grant and the First Home Owners Boost (FHOB). Until 2012–13, the FHOB was funded by the Australian government and administered by the states and territories. Funding for FHOB ceased on 31 December 2009 * funding for Indigenous home ownership programs (the Home Ownership Program [HOP] funded and administered by Indigenous Business Australia [IBA] and the Home Ownership on Indigenous Land Program [HOIL] jointly funded by FaHCSIA and IBA). On 1 July 2012, IBA’s HOP, and HOIL Program were integrated into a single Indigenous Home Ownership program * stamp duty concessions or exemptions for first home buyers * incentives to save for first home ownership through First Home Saver Accounts * State and Territory Government funding to assist low income households with home purchases or mortgage repayments * Commonwealth Rent Assistance paid on an ongoing basis to income support and family tax benefit recipients in the private rental market and community housing * funding for provision and management of social (public and community) housing and related reforms through the National Affordable Housing Specific Purpose Payment * incentives for institutional investors and community housing providers to build new affordable rental properties * Commonwealth, State and Territory land and planning measures to increase the supply of affordable housing * Housing Affordability Fund grants to improve planning and infrastructure provision. |
| *Source*: Australian, State and Territory governments (unpublished). |
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