
16 Housing

Government plays a significant role in shaping the Australian housing market, directly through housing assistance and indirectly through policies associated with land planning and taxation. Commonwealth, State and Territory governments share responsibility for housing assistance. Direct assistance includes public and community housing, home purchase and home ownership assistance, Indigenous housing, State and Territory rental assistance (such as State and Territory provided bond loans, assistance with rent payments and advance rent payments, relocation expenses and other one-off grants) and Commonwealth Rent Assistance (CRA).

This chapter focuses on the performance of government in providing public and community housing under the Commonwealth–State Housing Agreement (CSHA) (box 16.1), and CRA.

Close links exist between public and community housing services and other government programs and support services discussed elsewhere in the Report. These include:

- the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) which provides accommodation and other services for homeless people or those at imminent risk of becoming homeless (see chapter 15); and
- health services delivered by Commonwealth, State and Territory governments and community organisations to further independent living program objectives, including disability services (see chapter 13), mental health services (see chapter 7) and aged care services (for example, the Home and Community Care Program —see chapters 12 and 13);

Housing services not covered

The chapter does not cover a number of government funded and provided housing services including:

- the Aboriginal Rental Housing Program under the CSHA, which provides government owned housing to Indigenous households (except where specified as being included);
- the Crisis Accommodation Program under the CSHA, which provides capital funding for accommodation for homeless people;

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- home purchase assistance and private rental assistance provided under the CSHA;
 - community managed Indigenous housing;
 - the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC)/Army Community Assistance Program, which provides new housing and improved infrastructure to Indigenous communities;
 - non-CSHA programs, including those provided by the Commonwealth Department of Health and Family Services, the Department of Veterans' Affairs and ATSIC;
 - CRA paid by the Department of Veterans' Affairs or the Department of Employment, Training and Youth Affairs;
 - Indigenous housing and infrastructure assistance provided by ATSIC, State and Territory governments, land councils and Indigenous community organisations; and
 - community housing not funded under the CSHA.

A profile of housing and housing assistance is presented in section 16.1, followed by a brief discussion of recent policy developments in section 16.2. Together these provide the context for assessing the performance indicators presented later in the chapter. All jurisdictions have agreed to develop and report comparable indicators, and a framework of performance indicators is outlined in section 16.3. The data are discussed in section 16.4 and future directions for performance reporting are discussed in 16.5. The chapter concludes with jurisdictions' comments in section 16.6 and definitions in section 16.7.

A negotiated four-year CSHA came into effect on 1 July 1999. A new performance framework for reporting under the CSHA has been developed to reflect the national objectives of the agreement, improve the quality of national performance information and recognise the need for balanced reporting at the national and bilateral levels. This chapter reports on performance reporting for public and community housing based on the new national framework for the first time.

This is the second year that performance reporting for CRA has been included in this chapter, and additional data have been provided on the average CRA entitlement paid on a State basis. Some additional contextual information is also provided from a survey of CRA recipients.

Supporting tables

Supporting tables for chapter 16 are provided on the CD-ROM enclosed with the Report. The files are provided in Microsoft Excel 97 format as \Publications\Reports\2001\Attach16A.xls and in Adobe PDF format as \Publications\Reports\2001\Attach16A.pdf.

Supporting tables are identified in references throughout this chapter by an 'A' suffix (for example, table 16A.3 is table 3 in the electronic files). Supporting tables may be subject to revision. The most up-to-date versions of these files can be found on the Review web page (www.pc.gov.au/service/gsp/2001/). Users without Internet access can contact the Secretariat to obtain up-to-date versions of these tables (see the details on the inside front cover of the Report).

16.1 Profile of housing and housing assistance

Service overview

The 1996 ABS Population Census identified 6.5 million private households in Australia, where 'household' is classified as a person living alone or a group of related or unrelated people who usually reside and eat together. Of these households, 69 per cent owned or were purchasing their own home, 20.3 per cent rented in the private sector, 5.3 per cent were in public rental accommodation and 0.5 per cent lived in community housing, with 4.9 per cent residing in other tenure types (table 16A.32).

The composition of Australian households is changing. There is an increasing number of smaller households, including a rising number of single person households. The proportion of single person Australian households increased from 13.6 per cent to 22.8 per cent between 1971 and 1996, while the proportion of households with four or more people fell from 42 per cent to 28.2 per cent over the same period (AIHW 1999b).

Why government provides housing assistance

Australia's private housing stock houses the majority of the population. Most Australian households are able to access accommodation either through owner occupation or by renting from a private landlord. Many households, however, face problems in acquiring or accessing suitable private accommodation for reasons of cost, discrimination, availability or adequacy. The price of rental dwellings can be

prohibitive for lower income families. Further, stock may not be available in the private rental market for households with special accommodation needs. In these situations, housing assistance from Commonwealth, State and Territory governments can help these households.

Roles and responsibilities

Various levels of government have different roles and responsibilities in housing and housing assistance:

- the Commonwealth Government provides CRA and shares responsibility with State and Territory governments for housing assistance provided under the CSHA (box 16.1). The Commonwealth also influences the housing market through other direct and indirect means, including taxation;
- State and Territory governments deliver and manage housing assistance provided under the CSHA, such as public housing, community housing, Indigenous rental housing, private rental assistance and home purchase assistance. Some State and Territory governments also contribute to the delivery of housing assistance within their jurisdictions through mechanisms such as home lending programs and joint ventures with the private sector. State and Territory governments are also responsible for land taxes, stamp duties and residential tenancy legislation; and
- local governments implement planning regulations and are sometimes involved in providing community housing.

Box 16.1 Commonwealth–State Housing Agreement (CSHA)

The CSHA is an agreement made under the *Housing Assistance Act 1996* between the Commonwealth, State and Territory governments to provide strategic direction and funding certainty for the provision of housing assistance. The aim of this agreement is to provide appropriate, affordable and secure housing assistance for those who most need it, for the duration of their need.

A new four-year agreement came into effect on 1 July 1999 and includes, for the first time, bilateral agreements between the Commonwealth and each State and Territory government, as well as an overarching multilateral agreement. Bilateral agreements are intended to provide greater flexibility for States and Territories to respond to their particular housing needs.

(Box continued)

Box 16.1 (Continued)

Funding arrangements

The majority of funding under this agreement is provided by the Commonwealth and takes the form of general assistance funding (public housing, home purchase assistance and private rental assistance) and specified funding for identified programs — the Aboriginal Rental Housing Program, Crisis Accommodation Program and Community Housing Program. The majority of CSHA funding is distributed to State and Territory governments on a modified per capita basis, with the State and Territory governments contributing additional funding from their own resources to partly 'match' Commonwealth funding allocations.

Roles and responsibilities

Under the CSHA, the Commonwealth has responsibility for:

- ensuring the outcomes pursued through the agreement are consistent with broader national objectives, particularly in relation to support for individuals and communities;
- advising States and Territories of Commonwealth objectives to be achieved under the agreement; and
- reporting to the Commonwealth Parliament on performance against agreed outcomes and targets of housing assistance provided under the agreement.

States and Territories have responsibility for:

- developing housing assistance strategies that are consistent with Commonwealth and State and Territory objectives and best meet the circumstances of the State or Territory;
- developing, implementing and managing services and programs to deliver agreed outcomes; and
- reporting on a basis that enables performance assessment by the Commonwealth and by the State or Territory, based on agreed performance indicators.

Source: CSHA (1999).

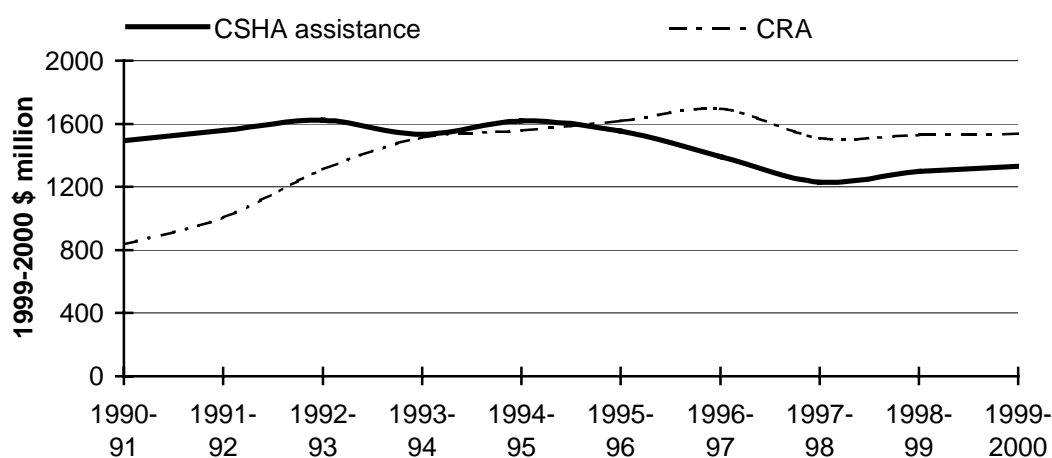
Funding

The Commonwealth Government provided over \$1.5 billion for CRA in 1999-2000. The Commonwealth, State and Territory governments also provided over \$1.3 billion (contributing about 72 per cent and 28 per cent respectively) for housing programs under the CSHA in 1999-2000 (CSHA 1999).

Commonwealth Rent Assistance expenditure increased by approximately 84 per cent in real terms between 1990-91 and 1999-2000, while annual expenditure

on CSHA assistance declined by almost 11 per cent over the same period (figure 16.1). Given the largely capital nature of public housing, funding is cumulative and assistance is provided through the use of approximately \$34 billion of housing stock owned by housing authorities (FaCS unpublished). Reduced funding in any given year may not necessarily result in a decline in the level of housing stock provided for that year, although it may affect levels of maintenance and the ability to reconfigure stock, and eventually result in fewer dwelling constructions or acquisitions.

Figure 16.1 Real government expenditure on CSHA assistance and CRA^{a, b}



^a Care should be taken in interpreting data because Commonwealth Rent Assistance is a demand driven recurrent expenditure program, whereas CSHA expenditure includes a component for capital investment that has resulted in around \$30 billion of public housing assets that are continually used for housing assistance.

^b CSHA data are not comparable to data published before last year's Report. The data for 1989-90 to 1995-96 have been adjusted to enable comparability (see source document for further explanation). The data for 1996-97 are different from that published in some earlier years. Commonwealth CSHA expenditure differed from Commonwealth budgetary allocations for the three years from 1996-97 to 1998-99. Commonwealth allocations were \$1068 million in 1996-97, \$975 million in 1997-98 and \$967 million in 1998-99. Commonwealth expenditure was \$926 million in 1996-97, \$825 million in 1997-98 and \$898 million in 1998-99. This difference arose because some States and Territories chose CSHA funds as the source to offset their State Fiscal Contributions to the Commonwealth Government's debt reduction program, which was agreed at the 1996 Premiers Conference. State Fiscal Contributions deducted from the CSHA allocations totalled approximately \$142 million in 1996-97, \$150 million in 1997-98 and \$70 million in 1998-99. Queensland, for administrative simplicity, chose to meet its whole State Fiscal Contribution liability from CSHA funds, but subsequently directed other State funds to housing. Data include all CSHA expenditure.

Source: table 16A.39.

Nationally total government recurrent expenditure per capita on public housing in 1999-2000, was approximately \$71. State and Territory recurrent expenditure per capita on public housing ranged from \$45 in Victoria to \$242 in the NT in 1999-2000. For jurisdictions who provided information on capital costs, total government per capita expenditure ranged from \$175 in Queensland to \$634 in the NT. Average national total government per capita expenditure in 1999-2000 was

\$248 (table 16A.43). Public and community housing accounted for the majority of CSHA funding in 1999-2000 (CSHA 1999).

Size and scope

Housing assistance is provided in various forms, and models for delivering forms of assistance can vary both within and between jurisdictions. The main forms of assistance are outlined in box 16.2.

Box 16.2 Forms of housing assistance

Forms of housing assistance include:

- *Commonwealth Rent Assistance*: a non-taxable income support supplement paid by the Commonwealth Government to individuals and families who pay private rents and also receive an income support payment or family assistance.
- *Public housing*: dwellings owned (or leased) and managed by State and Territory housing authorities to provide affordable rental accommodation. The CSHA is the main source of funding for public housing.
- *Community housing*: rental accommodation provided by not-for-profit organisations and local governments. Community housing models vary across jurisdictions. The CSHA is a major source of funding for community housing.
- *Aboriginal housing*: includes public rental housing targeted at Indigenous households and houses which are owned by Indigenous community housing organisations and community councils in urban, rural and remote areas. In addition to funding under the CSHA, Aboriginal housing is funded through the Community Housing Infrastructure Program administered by ATSIC. State and Territory governments also provide funding from their own resources.
- *Crisis accommodation*: accommodation services to help people who are homeless or in crisis. Services are generally provided by non-government organisations and many are linked to support services funded through the SAAP. Sources of government funding include the Crisis Accommodation Program of the CSHA, which provides funding for accommodation, and SAAP funding for live-in staff, counselling and other support services.
- *Home purchase assistance*: assistance provided by State and Territory governments to low to moderate income households to help with first home purchases or mortgage repayments.

(Box continued)

Box 16.2 (Continued)

- *Private rental assistance*: assistance provided by State governments to low income households experiencing difficulty in securing or maintaining private rental accommodation. This assistance may include ongoing or one-off payments to help households meet rent payments, one-off payments for relocation costs, guarantees or loans to cover the cost of bonds, and housing assistance advice and information services.

Sources: DSS (1998) and CSHA (1999).

This chapter focuses on three forms of assistance: public housing, community housing and CRA. Eligibility and assistance levels differ for each. Eligibility for public and community housing tends to be consistent in each jurisdiction. Eligibility for public and community housing is income tested but, unlike CRA, not limited to those receiving an income support payment or family assistance. Commonwealth Rent Assistance is available only to recipients of such assistance and is paid as a supplement to their other payments. Access to public and community housing is restricted by the available amount of housing stock.

The level of assistance provided in public and community housing depends on the income of the household and the rental value of the property. Rent rebates are set to achieve an affordability outcome for low income tenants where tenants pay either the lower of market rent or a maximum 25 per cent of their assessable income in rent. The amount of rent paid for a private rental dwelling, subject to a minimum rent threshold and a maximum rate which vary according to family structure, is the basis of CRA. Unlike public and community housing, affordability outcomes for households receiving CRA will vary with the rental value of the property and the amount of private income and benefits the households receive.

Public housing

Public housing comprises those dwellings owned (or leased) and managed by State and Territory housing authorities. The CSHA is the main source of funding for public housing, which is also the largest program under the CSHA. Some 340 000 households lived in public housing on 30 June 2000.

Public housing is available to people on low incomes and those with special needs. Although people with a disability represent 17 per cent of the total population aged

between 15 – 64 years, 39 per cent of public housing tenants of this age group in 1998 were people with a disability (ABS 1999a, AIHW 1999b).¹

Commonwealth Government pensions and allowances are the main source of income for the majority of households in public housing. The ABS estimated that approximately 80 per cent of households renting from a State or Territory housing authority in 1997-98 relied on pensions and allowances as their principal source of income (ABS 1999a).

The proportion of total households residing in public housing ranged from 3.4 per cent in Victoria to 14.3 per cent in the NT in 1996 (table 16A.35). In the 1996 ABS Census of Population and Housing, 5 per cent of public housing tenants were people aged 65 or over, meaning representation of this group was similar to its representation in the general community (AIHW 1999b).

Public housing rents are generally set at market levels and rebates are provided to low income earners (so they pay a maximum of 25 per cent of their assessable income in rent), thereby providing affordable housing to people on low incomes.

Community housing

Community housing is generally managed by not-for-profit organisations and/or local government, which perform asset and tenancy management functions. The primary objective of community housing is to encourage local communities to take a more active role in planning and managing appropriate and affordable transitional and long term rental accommodation. Community housing also aims to provide a choice of housing location, physical type and management arrangements. Some forms of community housing also allow tenants to participate in the management of their housing.

Community housing aims to achieve links between housing and services that are best managed at the community level, including disability services and home and community care. Notwithstanding their common objectives, community housing programs vary within and across jurisdictions in their administration and types of accommodation (box 16.3).

Funding for community housing is typically either fully or partly provided by governments to not-for-profit organisations or local government. Commonwealth funding for community housing amounted to 6.7 per cent (or \$64 million) of total Commonwealth CSHA funding in 1999-2000. There were approximately 24 100

¹ Disability is defined as any restriction or lack of ability (resulting from an impairment) to perform an action in the manner or within the range considered normal for a human being.

CSHA community housing dwellings in Australia at June 2000, or about 6.3 per cent of the total public and community housing stock supported under the CSHA.

Box 16.3 Models of community housing

Community housing models vary across jurisdictions in terms of their scale, organisational structure, financing arrangements and the extent to which the community or government has management responsibility and ownership of the housing stock. Attachment 16A lists the relevant community housing programs in each jurisdiction.

Some community housing models are:

- *regional housing associations*: the associations provide property and tenancy management services and community groups provide support services to tenants;
- *headleasing*: housing authorities or private landlords own the housing stock, which is managed by community groups;
- *joint ventures and housing partnerships*: a range of church, welfare, local government agencies and other organisations provide resources in cooperation with State and Territory government organisations;
- *housing cooperatives*: the cooperatives are responsible for tenant management and maintenance, while government, a central finance company or individual cooperatives own the housing stock;
- *community management and ownership*: not-for-profit or community housing associations both own and manage housing;
- *local government housing associations*: the associations provide low cost housing within a particular municipality, are closely involved in policy, planning, funding and/or monitoring roles, and may directly manage the housing stock; and
- *equity share rental housing*: housing cooperatives wholly own the housing stock and lease it to tenants (who are shareholders in the cooperative and therefore have the rights and responsibilities of cooperative management).

Source: State and Territory governments (unpublished).

The community sector has played a small but increasingly important role in the provision of housing assistance within most jurisdictions. Less than one per cent of households in each State and Territory in 1996 lived in community housing, except in the NT (4.6 per cent) (table 16A.37).

The focus of this chapter is on community housing stock funded wholly or partly through the CSHA. However, a recent mapping study estimated that approximately 15 000 community housing dwellings (or 38 per cent of total community housing dwellings) across Australia at 30 June 1998 were funded and delivered through

other means (AIHW 1999a). There is also likely to be additional community housing stock not identified through the study.

Commonwealth Rent Assistance

Commonwealth Rent Assistance is a non-taxable supplementary payment to help with the additional cost of private rental housing. It is available to recipients of income support payments, including those who receive more than the minimum rate of Family Allowance and pay private rent above minimum thresholds. Private rent includes both formal tenancy agreements and informal arrangements such as board and lodgings paid to a family member. It also includes mooring and site fees (for boats and caravans) and payments for retirement village services. Community housing tenants may also be eligible for CRA.

Commonwealth Rent Assistance is paid at a rate of 75 cents for every dollar above the threshold until a maximum rate is reached. The maximum rates and thresholds vary according to a client's family situation and their number of children (table 16.1). For single people without children, the maximum rate also varies according to whether accommodation is shared with others. Rent thresholds and maximum rates are indexed twice a year (March and September) to reflect changes in the consumer price index.

Table 16.1 Eligibility and payment scales for CRA (dollars per fortnight)^a

<i>Personal circumstances</i>	<i>Minimum rent to be eligible for CRA</i>	<i>Minimum rent to be eligible for maximum CRA</i>	<i>Maximum CRA</i>	<i>Average CRA paid^b</i>
Single, no children	73.80	176.73	77.20	59.08
Single, no children, sharer	73.80	142.47	51.50	43.48
Single, 1 or 2 children	97.00	217.27	90.20	69.02
Single, 3 or more children	97.00	233.00	102.00	81.94
Partnered, no children	120.20	217.00	72.60	58.92
Partnered, 1 or 2 children	143.60	263.87	90.20	71.30
Partnered, 3 or more children	143.60	279.60	102.00	78.88
Partnered, illness separated, no children	73.80	176.73	77.20	72.12
Partnered, temporarily separated, no children	73.80	170.60	72.60	73.56

^a Maximum rates and thresholds payable at 20 March 2000. ^b At March 2000.

Source: table 16A.20.

As a national payment, CRA seeks to ensure clients that have the same household characteristics and pay the same amount of rent (where that rent is below the threshold for maximum assistance) receive the same amount of assistance wherever they live.

The maximum rate of assistance is received by 62 per cent of CRA recipients. This outcome and the national payment objective of CRA result in little variation in the average level of assistance across locations (table 16A.31) even though rents vary considerably by location (table 16A.34). At March 2000, the average payment across Australia was \$61.16 per fortnight (or approximately \$1590 per year). On a capital city/rest of State or Territory basis, Sydney had the highest average CRA payment (\$63.20 per fortnight) in March 2000. The lowest average CRA payment (\$58.00 per fortnight) was in non capital city Victoria (table 16A.31).

There were 937 078 income units — where an income unit is defined as either a single person or a couple with or without dependents² — receiving this assistance in March 2000 (table 16.2).

Table 16.2 Income units receiving CRA, by benefit type, 31 March 2000^a

<i>Benefit type</i>	<i>Income units</i>	<i>Proportion of CRA recipients</i>	<i>Proportion of benefit type recipients</i>
	no.	%	%
Newstart	245 971	26	40
Age Pension	149 959	16	12
Disability Support Pension	154 245	17	28
Parenting Payment, single	180 653	19	46
Parenting Payment, partnered	28 263	3	28
Youth Allowance	81 236	9	22
Family Allowance	63 088	7	28
Other qualifying payments	33 663	4	24
Total	937 078	100	25

^a Data are for CRA recipients who were clients of the Department of Family and Community Services only. Data exclude those paid rent assistance by, or on behalf of, the Department of Veterans' Affairs or the Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs. Components may not sum to 100 per cent as a result of rounding.

Source: table 16A.22.

The mix of clients by payment type reflects the fact that the proportion of social security recipients receiving CRA decreases with age. Approximately 49 per cent of income units aged 25–27 years received CRA in 2000, but this proportion declined to 40 per cent at age 34 years, 30 per cent at age 48 years, 20 per cent at age 59 years and less than 13 per cent at aged 65 years or more. Clients aged under 25 years are less likely to receive CRA because young single Youth Allowance clients without children must be entitled to the away-from-home rate to qualify for CRA. In most cases this means they have to live away from home for study or training.

² Children over 16 years of age are not regarded as dependent unless they are full time secondary students aged under 18 years and do not receive social security payments.

Survey of CRA recipients

In July 1998, the Commonwealth Department of Family and Community Services commissioned a national survey of CRA recipients to obtain data on recipients' housing circumstances (FaCS unpublished). The main objective of the survey was to learn more about CRA recipients, their housing consumption, and their social and economic circumstances. This type of information is not available from regular departmental administrative data collections.

Family situation

The majority of respondents at September–October 1998 were categorised as a single person (55 per cent). The remainder were categorised as partners in a couple (23 per cent) or single parents (21 per cent). Forty-three per cent of single person CRA recipients lived alone and 24 per cent lived with unrelated people. The other arrangements for single person recipients included living with adult children (9 per cent), parents (12 per cent) and other relatives (12 per cent).

Most single parents (73 per cent) lived with only their dependent children, while in other single parent families a variety of other people might have lived in the household. Six per cent of single parents lived with their parents and paid rent, and 8 per cent had both dependent and non-dependent children in the household. The majority of respondents defined as a 'partner in a couple' live with their dependent children (65 per cent) while the remainder had no dependents in the household.

Household situation

Approximately 80 per cent of CRA recipients in September–October 1998 lived in households that can be defined as 'independent', meaning the recipient is primarily responsible for meeting housing costs (rather than being a boarder or lodger). This category includes group houses. Of this category, living alone appeared to be the most frequent living arrangement, followed by single parent and two parent situations. Although not strictly comparable with data on other private renters, the proportion of CRA recipients living alone in September–October 1998 was similar to that in the private rental market generally, while single parent households tended to be over represented.

Renters living in someone else's household made up around 20 per cent of CRA recipients. This group is 'hidden' in the sense that it has not been easily detected in previously available data, such as the ABS Population Census and Household Survey data. Recipients who live as members of someone else's household include

those who reside with their parents or other relatives where someone else is responsible for meeting housing costs, such as boarders or lodgers.

Dwelling rents

The survey findings were consistent with previous findings that the pattern of rents paid by social security households is similar to that of households as a whole, with CRA recipients (like most private renters) tending to live in relatively low cost dwellings.

The single recipient who lives alone almost invariably rents a low cost dwelling. Just under half of this group pay less than \$100 a week and another two-fifths can be found in the low-to-moderate priced rental stock (\$100–149 per week). In contrast, group household living (where unrelated individuals live together and each pays a proportion of the rent) provides the opportunity for single CRA recipients to reside in more expensive rental stock, with 30 per cent in dwellings with rents over \$200 a week. Couples without dependents and single parent families are clustered in the low-to-moderate cost rental category, while nearly all couples with dependants rent dwellings priced at \$100–199 a week.

Households receiving CRA tend to locate in different parts of metropolitan areas based on their life cycle stage. Single parent families and childless couples tend to be in the outer urban areas, while young single people living in group households are more typically found in the inner urban areas. Families with children live in outer areas where greater amounts of larger housing stock are available and at a lower cost.

Housing satisfaction

Recipients of CRA living in another person's household (including with their parents or adult children) or boarding or lodging with another person at September–October 1998, had the highest level of satisfaction with their dwelling. Of this group, 74 per cent considered their dwelling to be in good or very good condition. The economies achieved by boarding with others allows a greater level of housing and locational amenity than would otherwise be available for single people living alone or in a group household.

Couples without children reported similar levels of satisfaction with the condition and size of their dwelling, with 67 per cent considering the dwelling to be in good or very good condition. This proportion falls to 64 per cent for single people living in a group household, 59 per cent for single parents and 57 per cent for people living alone. Couples with children reported the least satisfaction, with only

55 per cent considering their dwelling to be in good or very good condition and 15 per cent being dissatisfied with the size of their dwelling. Of single parent families, 14 per cent reported being dissatisfied with the size of their dwelling.

Diversity of State and Territory housing assistance operations

State and Territory governments have similar broad objectives in providing housing assistance. Individually, jurisdictions placed emphasis on different objectives because they have different historical precedents and interact with community sector providers in different ways. These differences lead to a variety of policy responses and associated assistance products. It is important to be aware of all the housing assistance operations in each State and Territory when analysing performance information.

Appendix A contains information on each State and Territory, which may help in interpreting the performance indicators presented in this chapter. State and Territory governments have provided some additional information on the key operating parameters characterising housing assistance provision across jurisdictions.

Public housing:

- *Priority allocations.* The proportion of public rental allocations made on the basis of priority in 1999-2000 ranged from 4 per cent in Queensland to approximately 45 per cent in SA. The proportion of priority allocations in other States and Territories was approximately 39 per cent of allocations in NSW and Victoria, 17 per cent in WA, 23 per cent in Tasmania, 27 per cent in the ACT and 10 per cent in the NT.
- *Eligibility criteria for access to public housing.* Definitions of income and assets, and income and asset limits for access to public housing vary across jurisdictions. At June 2000, income limits for a single person ranged from \$289 a week in Tasmania to \$499 a week in SA. In most cases, jurisdictions require that applicants are Australian citizens or permanent residents and do not own or part-own residential property. 'Other' asset limits for a single person household ranged from \$20 000 in the ACT (including cash and convertible assets but excluding household and personal effects) to \$219 250 in SA (with the same definition as the Centrelink asset test threshold at 30 June 2000 for a single person who does not own their own home) There are no 'other' asset limits in NSW and Queensland, although NSW assesses liquid assets as part of a household's weekly income when determining eligibility. The minimum age for eligibility also differs — 18 years in Queensland, WA and the NT; 16 years in Tasmania and the ACT; 15 years in Victoria; and no set minimum age in NSW and SA. Applicants under the age of 18 in NSW, however, must demonstrate

living skills to be eligible for housing. All jurisdictions require eligible applicants to be resident in the respective State or Territory.

- *Management of the waiting list.* All State and Territory governments have at least a two-segment waiting list (priority and 'wait turn'), while Tasmania, Victoria and SA have implemented more complex segmented waiting lists to categorise levels of priority. Priority segments are defined differently across jurisdictions but generally reflect urgent need/homelessness and inability to access appropriate private market accommodation.
- *Term of tenure.* Most jurisdictions provide security of tenure after an initial probationary period. In Victoria, new tenants after November 1997 have their eligibility reviewed after five years. Tenants aged 65 years and over have lifetime tenure. In SA, tenants who applied after February 1998 and were housed after September 1999, who exceed set income limits over three consecutive years and who do not meet a needs test, are encouraged into home ownership. Those who do not take up this option are able to remain in public housing but are charged a rent premium on top of the market rent they would otherwise pay.
- *Rebated rent setting.* Rebated rents in all jurisdictions are based on a household paying no more than 25 per cent of their assessable income in rent (the income-to-rent ratio). In recent years, NSW, Victoria, Queensland, WA and the ACT have introduced an income-to-rent ratio of 25 per cent for new tenants, and the NT has introduced a ratio of 23 per cent. In SA, the income-to-rent ratio ranges from 19.5 per cent (18.5 per cent in country regions) up to 25 per cent. In 1999-2000, the income-to-rent ratio for tenants receiving a Centrelink Family Allowance was lower in most jurisdictions (ranging from 10 per cent to 15 per cent). Definitions of assessable income vary across jurisdictions.
- *Rebated tenants.* The proportion of public housing tenants in receipt of a rebated rent in 2000 was 93 per cent in Queensland, 91 per cent in WA, 90 per cent in NSW and Victoria, 88 per cent in Tasmania, 87 per cent in the NT, 82 per cent in SA and in the ACT. Nationally, 89 per cent of public housing tenants received a rebate.
- *Remote area concentrations.* The proportion of public housing in remote areas ranged from none (or negligible, at less than 2 per cent) in NSW, Victoria, SA and the ACT to almost 19 per cent in WA.

Community housing:

- *Eligibility.* Eligibility for community housing is generally consistent with eligibility requirements for public housing in each jurisdiction.
- *Waiting list management.* In most jurisdictions there is no requirement for community housing organisations to segment waiting lists. In March 2000, SA

introduced a segmented waiting list for community housing consistent with the segmented waiting list in place for public housing. A segmented waiting list has also been introduced in Victoria.

- *Proportion of community housing dwellings.* The proportion of community housing dwellings to total public and community housing dwellings at June 2000 was approximately 5.8 per cent in NSW, 8.3 per cent in Victoria, 6.7 per cent in Queensland, 8.8 per cent in WA, 5.3 per cent in SA, 1.3 per cent in Tasmania, 2.6 per cent in the ACT and 1.8 per cent in the NT. Nationally, community housing dwellings represented approximately 6.3 per cent of total public and community housing dwellings.

Home purchase assistance

- *New home loans provided.* New South Wales and the ACT issued no home ownership loans in 1999-2000 and the number provided was negligible in Victoria and Queensland. In WA, the proportion of households helped by new home ownership loans comprised 52 per cent of all new households receiving any form of government housing assistance during the year, while households receiving these loans in the NT represented 34 per cent of new households assisted.

Private rental markets

- *Capital city vacancy rates.* Rates in the private rental market during 1999-2000 ranged from 1.6 per cent in Canberra to 10.8 per cent in Darwin. Tight private rental markets (vacancy rates below 3 per cent) were evident in Canberra, Sydney and Perth (table 16A.33).
- *Capital city median rents.* Median rents for three bedroom houses at June 2000 were lowest in Hobart at \$155 per week and highest in Darwin at \$245 per week. For two bedroom flats or units, median rents ranged from \$125 per week in Adelaide and Hobart, to \$250 per week in Sydney (table 16A.34).

16.2 Policy developments in housing assistance

Developments in managing national housing information

National Housing Data Agreement

The National Housing Data Agreement is a subsidiary agreement to the 1999–2003 CSHA, which has been entered into by all signatories to the CSHA, the NSW Aboriginal Housing Office, the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare and the

Australian Bureau of Statistics. Its aim is to provide a framework for a cooperative approach to national housing information development.

Progress during 1999-2000 focused on public rental housing, and included the development of a new national performance indicator framework for public and community housing, the development of data dictionary items for public housing, and work on a public housing data repository. Performance information for public housing and community housing in this chapter is based on the new national performance indicator framework. The National Housing Data Agreement is expected to lead to improvements in data comparability for future Reports.

Agreement on National Indigenous Housing Information

The Agreement on National Indigenous Housing Information commenced in November 1999, with an initial term of five years. This is a multilateral agreement between the Commonwealth, State and Territory housing agency chief executives, ATSIC, the Torres Strait Regional Authority, the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare and the ABS, to provide a national framework for improving Indigenous housing information.

The aim of this agreement is to establish an Indigenous Housing Information Management Strategy that will:

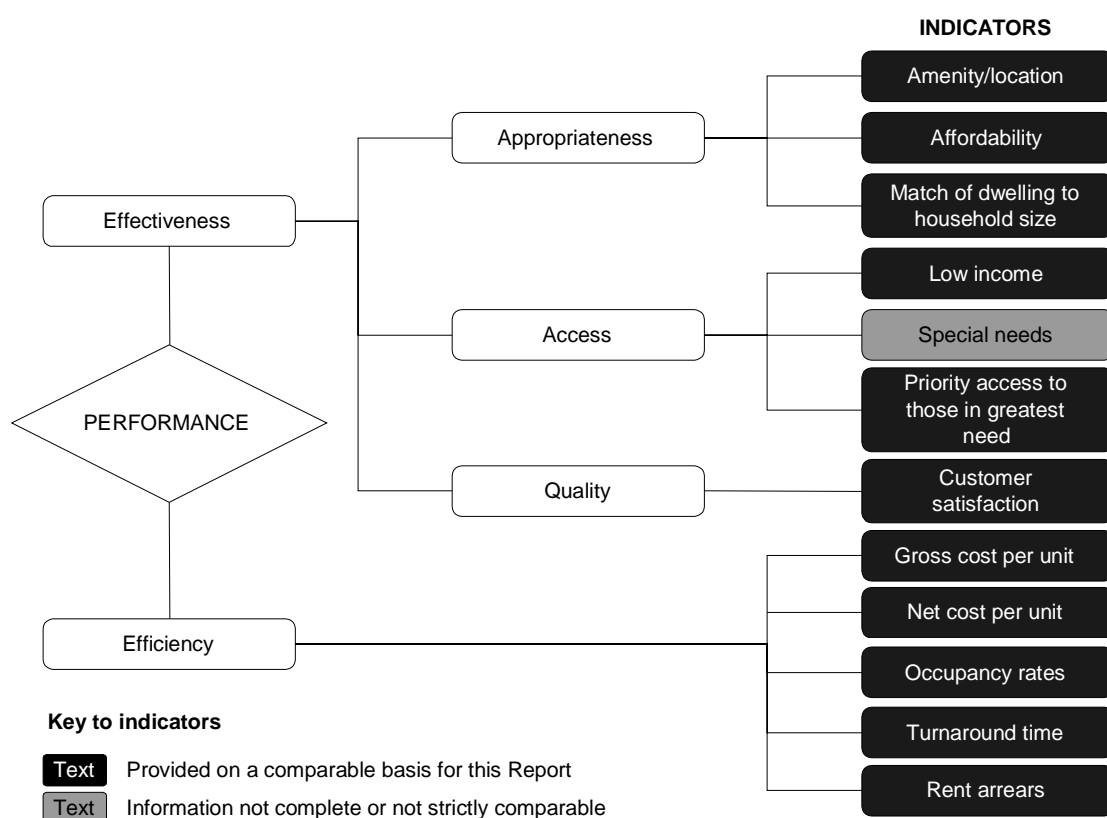
- improve the quality of, and access to, Indigenous housing information at the national level and at the same time maintain and protect the confidentiality of the data for individuals and for the signatories to the agreement;
- achieve consistency and compatibility of data collected from different sources across the country;
- improve the compatibility of Indigenous housing data with mainstream housing information and health and community services information; and
- improve Indigenous housing outcomes through the provision of reliable, consistent data.

Part of the work program under this agreement includes developing national data definitions and a national minimum data set. Signatories to the agreement are committed to collecting and providing data according to the standards and definitions endorsed under the agreement. The outcomes of this agreement will improve the ability of the sector to provide national performance reporting and are expected to lead to improvements in performance reporting in future Reports.

16.3 Framework of performance indicators

The framework of performance indicators for public and community housing in this chapter is based on the performance indicator framework developed for the 1999—2003 CSHA (figures 16.2 and 16.3). The CSHA framework reflects the agreement’s national objectives as outlined in a number of guiding principles (CSHA 1999).

Figure 16.2 Performance indicators for public housing

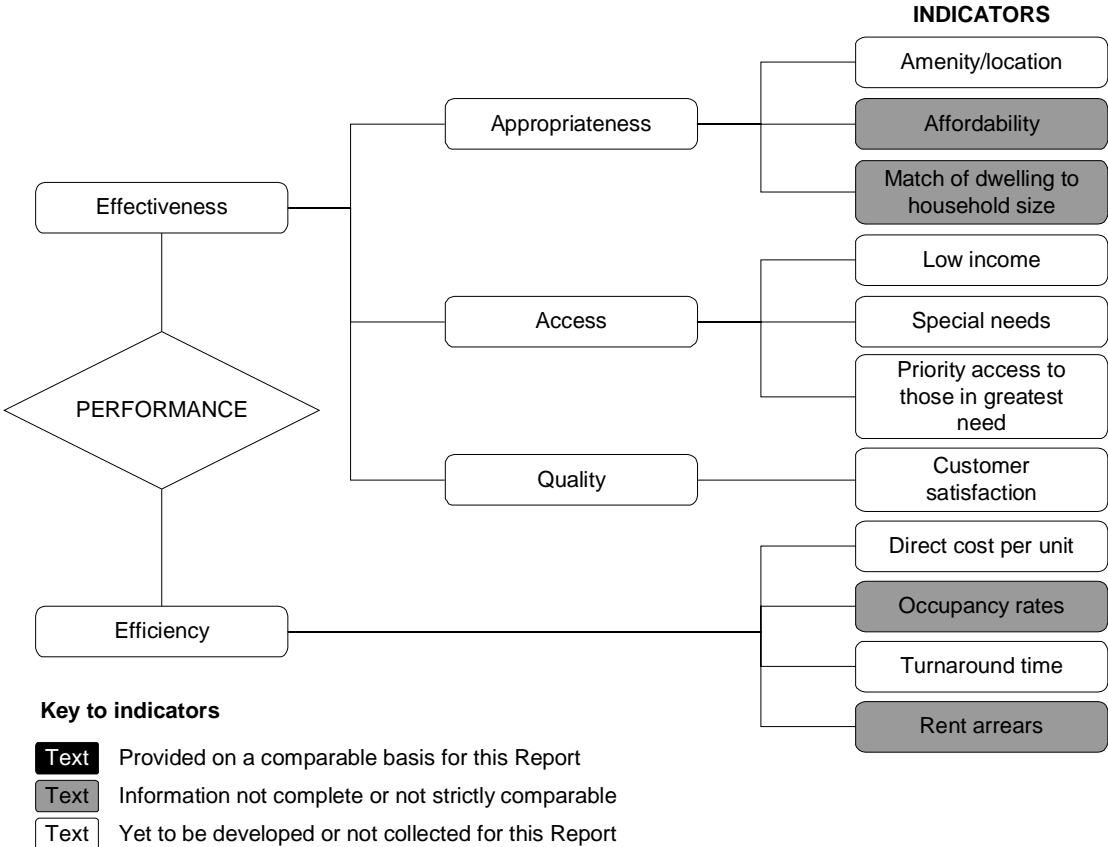


The general objectives for public and community housing services are similar. Both aim to help eligible people obtain housing that is affordable, secure and appropriate to their needs. However, the delivery method for community housing differs from that for public housing: community organisations and sometimes local government deliver community housing, while State and Territory governments deliver public housing.

Performance reporting this year, as for other services, is assessed in terms of effectiveness and efficiency. The public housing sector is able to report against all indicators in the new framework. Public housing data are presented for the full

range of effectiveness and efficiency indicators contained within the performance measurement framework. It is difficult to obtain nationally comparable performance information for community housing because jurisdictions operate a variety of funding and asset management models (box 16.3) and they are not always managed by State or Territory housing authorities.

Figure 16.3 Performance indicators for community housing



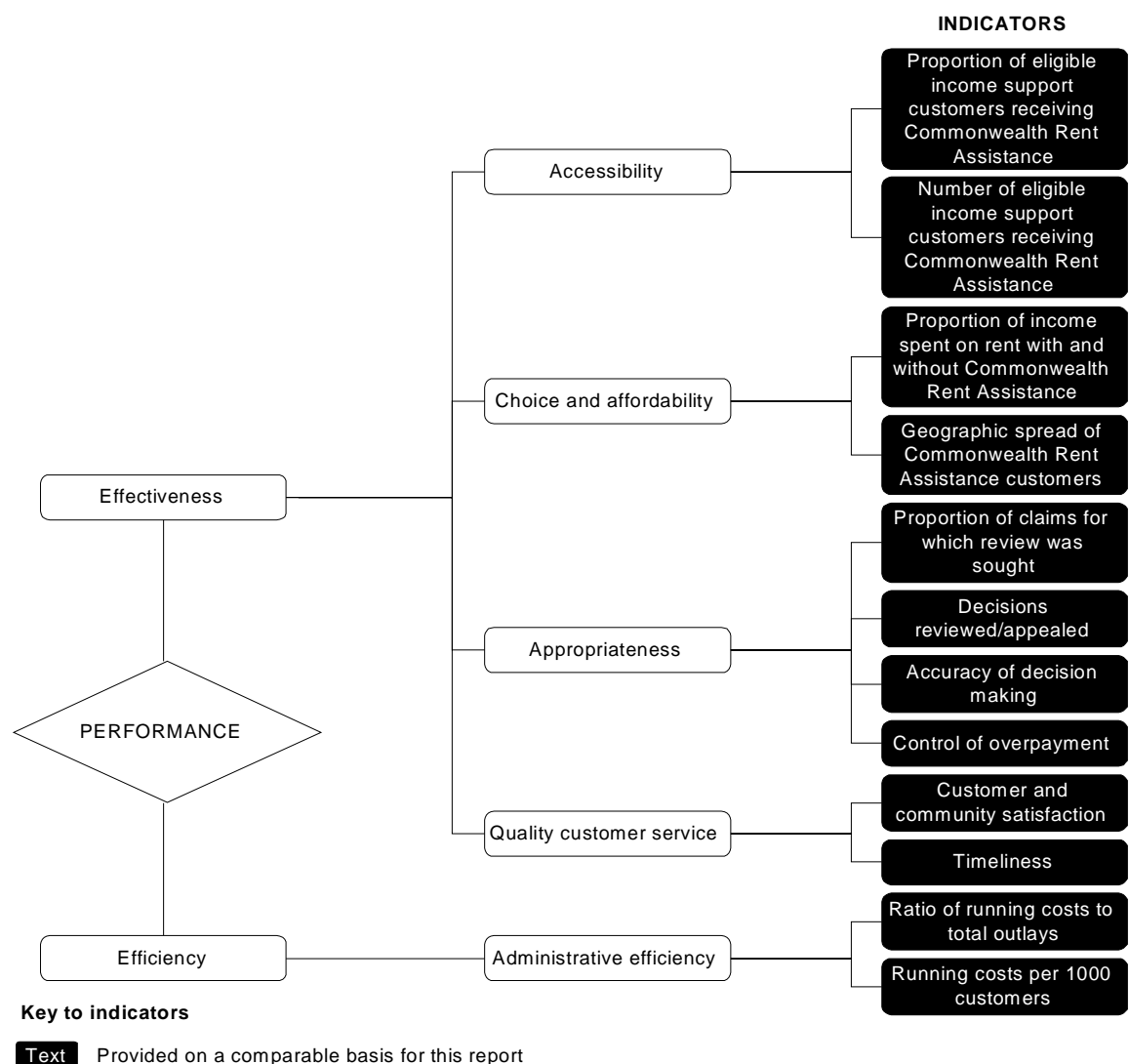
Performance indicator data are reported against the new public and community housing framework for the first time. The performance indicators contained in the old framework have not been continued, although information on the old affordability indicator and the former measures of moderate overcrowding and underuse can be found in tables 16A.40 and 16A.41 respectively.

The performance indicators for CRA differ from those for public and community housing because they have different objectives and delivery methods. The performance indicator framework for CRA (figure 16.4) is based on the objective outlined in box 16.4. Definitions for all indicators are provided in tables 16.15 and 16.17.

Box 16.4 Objective of Commonwealth Rent Assistance

The objective of CRA is to provide income support recipients and low income families in the private rental market with additional financial assistance in recognition of the housing costs they face (Newman 1998). This assistance should be provided in an equitable and efficient manner. In addition to housing effects and objectives, CRA is also governed by other objectives applying to the primary income support payment.

Figure 16.4 Performance indicators for CRA



Data are for CRA recipients who are clients of the Department of Family and Community Services only. Data excludes those paid rental assistance by, or on

behalf of, the Department of Veterans' Affairs or the Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs. Data are presented for all effectiveness and efficiency indicators within the performance measurement framework.

Ongoing work to provide a more comprehensive set of performance indicators, and to improve existing indicators and the data, is discussed in section 16.5.

16.4 Key performance indicator results

Public housing

Different delivery contexts, locations and types of client may affect the performance of public housing reported in this chapter. The adoption of the new performance indicator framework is expected to lead to improvements in the comparability and usefulness of public housing indicators. Performance indicator results need to be interpreted with caution, having regard to the qualifications presented with the data.

Effectiveness

Appropriateness

This chapter reports three measures of appropriateness. The first is the match of rental dwellings to household size. Data are provided on the match of households to different size dwellings using a proxy occupancy standard based on the size of the dwelling and household structure (table 16.3).

Table 16.3 **Proxy occupancy standard for appropriate sized dwelling, by household structure**

<i>Household structure</i>	<i>Bedrooms required</i>
Single adult only	1
Couple with no children	2
Sole parent or couple with 1 child	2
Sole parent or couple with 2 or 3 children	3
Sole parent or couple with 4+ children	4

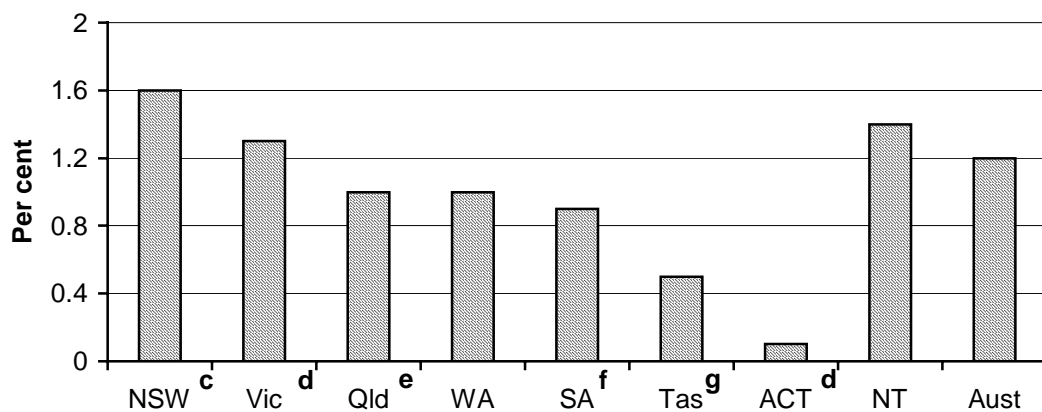
Source: AIHW (2000a).

Overcrowding is deemed to have occurred where two or more additional bedrooms are required to satisfy the proxy occupancy standard. The occupancy standards in table 16.3 may differ from the specific criteria used by State and Territory housing

authorities to match households to dwelling types, affecting interpretation of this indicator.

New South Wales had the highest proportion of overcrowded dwellings at June 2000, while the ACT had the lowest proportion. Overcrowded dwellings made up no more than 1.6 per cent of dwellings in any jurisdiction, and represented 1.2 per cent of dwellings nationally (figure 16.5). More information on overcrowding can be found in table 16A.41.

Figure 16.5 **Proportion of households with overcrowding (per cent), 30 June 2000^{a, b}**



^a Includes rebated and non-rebated households where household composition details are known. ^b Children were counted differently this year for all jurisdictions except Tasmania who used last year's definition. ^c Includes data on extended family members not previously available. Counts for previous years are overestimates. ^d Bedsitters are deemed to have one bedroom. ^e A more precise identification of the bedroom entitlements of multiple income group households was performed this year. ^f This figure differs significantly from last year due to a change in methodology. ^g Children aged 16 years or over who are not full time students are defined as adults.

Source: table 16A.2.

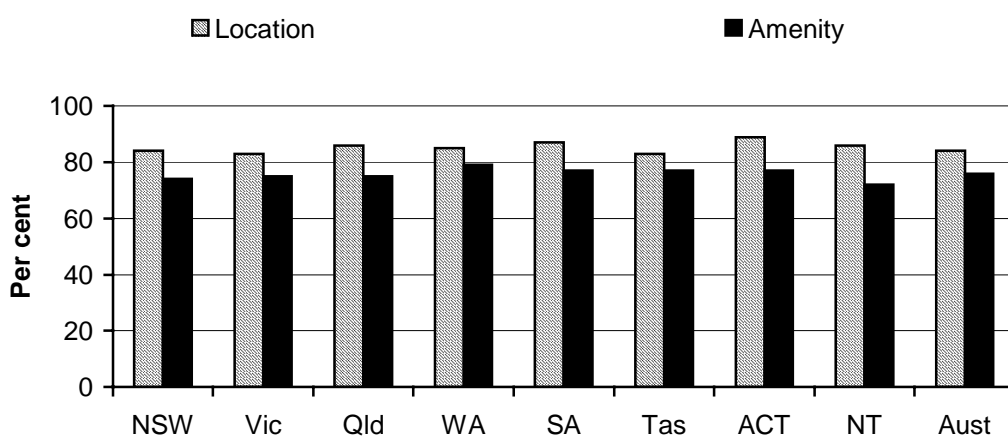
The second measure of the appropriateness of public housing assistance is provided by surveying tenants about the amenity and location of their dwellings. The precision of survey estimates will depend on the survey sample size and the sample estimate. Larger sample sizes result in higher precision, as do larger sample estimates; for example if 90 per cent of surveyed respondents chose an answer, there would be less uncertainty about the actual population's views than if 50 per cent of respondents had chosen it.

Caution should be used when interpreting small differences in results. Further information on the sampling method is provided in attachment 16A. Appendix A outlines a method that can be used to test whether the difference between two

sample proportions is statistically significant. This test may be required to assess the significance of differences between the survey estimates reported here.

The proportion of tenants satisfied with the location of their dwelling ranged from 83 per cent in Victoria and Tasmania to 89 per cent in the ACT. Satisfaction was above the national average in Queensland, WA, SA, the ACT and the NT. The proportion of tenants satisfied with the amenity of their dwelling ranged from 72 per cent in the NT to 79 per cent in WA. Satisfaction levels were above average in WA, SA, Tasmania, the ACT and the NT (figure 16.6).

Figure 16.6 Proportion of tenants satisfied with location or amenity aspects of their dwelling



^a Caution should be used when interpreting small differences in the results, which are affected by sample and estimate size.

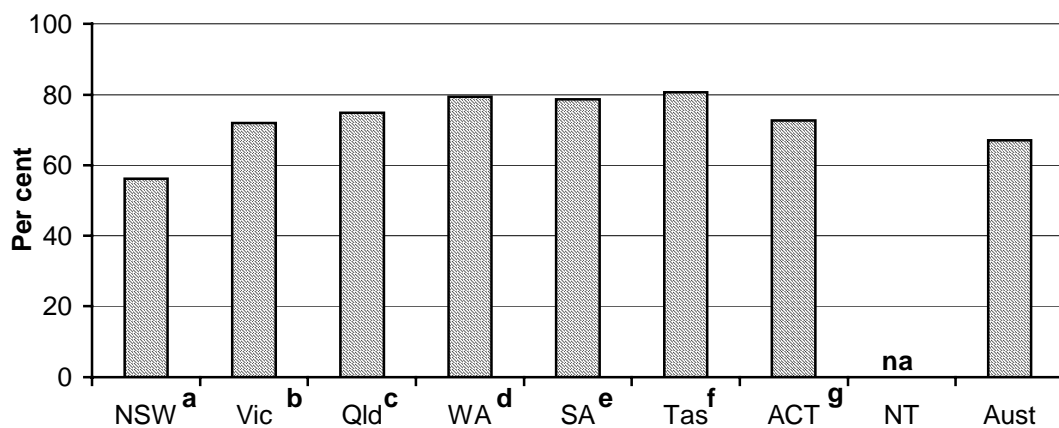
Source: tables 16A.13, 16A.14.

These overall satisfaction results were obtained by surveying tenants regarding a number of aspects of the location and amenity of their dwellings. Tenants were asked whether particular aspects were important to them and, if so, whether they felt their needs were met. More information on this indicator can be found in tables 16A.13 and 16A.14.

The third measure of appropriateness is affordability, which measures the rent charged to tenants as a proportion of the market rent for each dwelling, adjusted for CRA.

The rent charged in 1999–2000 as a proportion of the market rate for each dwelling (adjusted for CRA) ranged from 56 per cent in NSW to 81 per cent in Tasmania (figure 16.7).

Figure 16.7 Rent charged as a proportion of market rent, adjusted for CRA, 30 June 2000



^a Market rents are the valuations applied to each property. CRA information for rebated tenants only. Available data exclude information on relationships other than those to the household head. It is assumed that all children under 16 years are sons or daughters of the household head. ^b Market rent figures revised annually, with rent amendments affected by around April each year. For households with single people only, all children were assumed to belong to one of the single people. For households with single people sharing with a couple, children were assumed to belong to the couple. Households assessed only on main income source. ^c Market rents have not been globally adjusted to reflect the current market for a number of years, leading to a reduced proportion of households paying less than market rent and a corresponding increase in the proportion of those paying market rent due to consumer price index rent rises. ^d Rents updated annually on the basis of age, construction material, dwelling type, number of bedrooms and location. For households with single people only, all children were assumed to belong to one of the single people. For households with single people sharing with a couple, children were assumed to belong to the couple. Households assessed only on main income source. ^e Market rents obtained from Valuer General Department report. Households assessed through gross income test. For households with single people only, all children were assumed to belong to one of the single people. For households with single people sharing with a couple, children were assumed to belong to the couple. ^f Includes Aboriginal Rental Housing Program. Market rent determined by the Office of the Valuer General. ^g Every three years advice is given on the market rents to be charged. In between external valuations calculation of market rents is based on movements in the consumer price index. CRA calculations based on sample where the household composition was known and reasonable.

Source: table 16A.7.

More information on affordability, measured as the percentage of household income spent on housing costs, can be found at table 16A.40.

Access

Three performance indicators measure access to public housing assistance for those in need. The first measures the low income and special needs (but not low income) status of households receiving public housing assistance (figure 16.4).

There are two household income measures for the purpose of this indicator:

- ‘Low income A’ households are those in public housing where all members of the household have incomes at or below the maximum pension rate. (Pension rates have been selected for calculating this indicator because they are higher than allowance rates).
- ‘Low income B’ households are those in public housing that receive an income equivalent to that at which minimum government income support benefits are received.

Table 16.4 Low income and special needs households as proportion of all new households, 30 June 2000 (per cent)

NSW	Vic ^b	Qld ^c	WA ^d	SA ^e	Tas ^f	ACT ^g	NT	Aust
<i>New low income A households as proportion of all new households</i>								
95.7	84.3	91.1	86.5	87.0	87.5	85.4	na	89.4
<i>New low income B households as proportion of all new households</i>								
4.0	6.7	7.5	10.9	9.2	11.7	11.0	na	7.2
<i>New low income A households or special needs (not low income households) as proportion of all new households</i>								
96.0 ^a	86.4	93.7	90.0	94.1	91.4	85.6	na	92.0
<i>New low income B households or special needs (not low income households) as proportion of all new households</i>								
4.0 ^a	7.0	7.8	11.2	10.8	12.0	12.2	na	7.7

^a Data shown are 12 month estimates based on data available for November 1999 to June 2000. A change in computer systems means various applicant details are not available for households housed before November 1999, including special or greatest need status. Special needs categories cover Indigenous Australians, asylum seekers, refugees, sponsored migrants, applicants with a disability in the household, youth aged 16-24 years, elderly (80 and over) and applicants at risk due to domestic violence. New tenants in greatest need cover those who are on the priority approved waiting list. ^b Special needs categories are recurring homelessness, need for supported housing and need for special housing. ^c Special needs categories includes those where the main source of household income is a Disability Support or Carers Pension; one or more occupants have a disability; one or more occupants are Indigenous; all occupants are aged under 25 years; more than three dependants are aged under 25 years; and two or more families live in the household and there are more than four occupants in total. ^d Special needs category includes households containing people who either have a disability or are Indigenous, newly arrived in Australia or classified as youth or frail aged. ^e Special needs includes youth aged less than 25 years; persons aged 65 years or over; Indigenous Australians; homeless people; people with a disability; victims of domestic violence and people from a culturally or linguistically diverse background. ^f Income and household composition calculated at tenancy start date. Income source not taken into account. Based on gross income only. Special needs categories include homelessness; disability; non-English speaking background; Indigenous status; victims of family violence; and tenants aged over 65 years or under 18 years. ^g Special needs defined as involving a disability impacting on public housing requirements. Based on voluntary self-identification.

Source: table 16A.3.

Households with incomes below these levels are included in the measure, although they may not necessarily receive income support benefits.

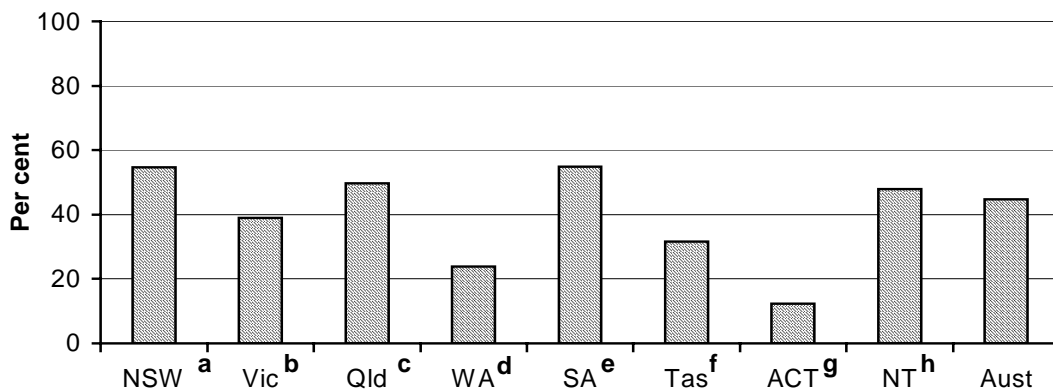
The proportion of new tenancies allocated to ‘low income A’ households varied in 1999-2000 from 84 per cent in Victoria to 96 per cent in NSW. The proportion of

new tenancies allocated to ‘low income A’ or special needs (not low income) households varied from 86 per cent in Victoria and the ACT to 96 per cent in NSW (table 16.4).

The second indicator measures the proportion of new tenancies allocated to households with special needs, with the definition of ‘special needs’ differing among States and Territories according to allocation policies.

The proportion of new tenancies allocated to ‘special needs’ households in 1999-2000 varies from 12 per cent in the ACT to 55 per cent in NSW and SA (figure 16.8). Differences between ‘special needs’ categories across jurisdictions mean this indicator needs to be interpreted with caution.

Figure 16.8 Proportion of new tenancies allocated to households with special needs, 1999-2000

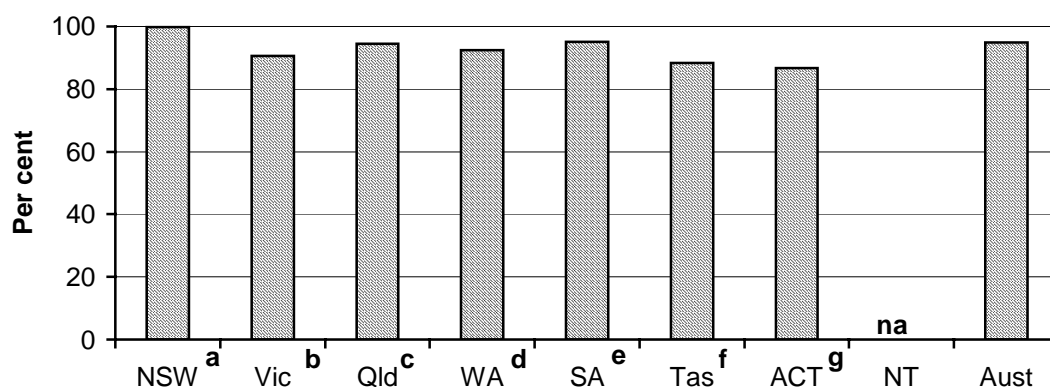


^a Data shown are 12 month estimates based on data available for November 1999 to June 2000. A change in computer systems means various applicant details are not available for households housed before November 1999, including special or greatest need status. Special needs categories cover Indigenous Australians, asylum seekers, refugees, sponsored migrants, applicants with a disability in the household, youth aged 16-24 years, elderly (80 and over) and applicants at risk due to domestic violence. New tenants in greatest need cover those who are on the priority approved waiting list. ^b Special needs categories are recurring homelessness, need for supported housing and need for special housing. ^c Special needs categories includes those where the main source of household income is a Disability Support or Carers Pension; one or more occupants have a disability; one or more occupants are Indigenous; all occupants are aged under 25 years; more than three dependants are aged under 25 years; and two or more families live in the household and there are more than four occupants in total. ^d Special needs category includes households containing people who either have a disability or are Indigenous, newly arrived in Australia or classified as youth or frail aged. ^e Special needs includes youth aged less than 25 years; persons aged 65 years or over; Indigenous Australians; homeless people; people with a disability; victims of domestic violence and people from a culturally or linguistically diverse background. ^f Special needs categories include homelessness; disability; non-English speaking background; Indigenous status; victims of family violence; and tenants aged over 65 years or under 18 years. ^g Special needs defined as involving a disability impacting on public housing requirements. Based on voluntary self-identification. ^h Special needs categories are Indigenous status (identified through optional self identification on the tenancy application) and youth. Special needs details recorded only where known to exist.

Source: table 16A.5.

The third indicator measures the priority of access given to those in greatest need. This includes the proportion of all households in public housing that either pay less than market rent or are special needs households paying market rent, along with whether allocation processes are such that those in greatest need receive timely access to public housing. The proportion of all households that pay less than market rent or that are special needs households paying market rent in 1999-2000 ranged from 87 per cent in the ACT to 95 per cent in Queensland and SA and 100 per cent in NSW (figure 16.9). In NSW special needs status is not known for those paying market rent, which means such tenants are excluded from the calculation of this indicator and the overall proportion may be inflated.

Figure 16.9 **Households that pay less than market rent or that are special needs households paying market rent, as a proportion of all households, 30 June 2000**



^a Special needs categories cover Indigenous Australians, asylum seekers, refugees, sponsored migrants, applicants with a disability in the household, youth aged 16-24 years, elderly (80 and over) and applicants at risk due to domestic violence. New tenants in greatest need cover those who are on the priority approved waiting list. Special needs status is not known for those paying market rent, meaning such tenants are excluded from the calculation of this indicator and the overall proportion may be inflated. ^b Special needs categories are recurring homelessness, need for supported housing and need for special housing. ^c Special needs categories includes those where the main source of household income is a Disability Support or Carers Pension; one or more occupants have a disability; one or more occupants are Indigenous; all occupants are aged under 25 years; more than three dependants are aged less than 25 years; and two or more families live in the household and there are more than four occupants in total. ^d Special needs category includes households containing people who either have a disability or are Indigenous, newly arrived in Australia or classified as youth or frail aged. ^e Special needs includes youth aged less than 25 years; persons aged 65 years or over; Indigenous Australians; homeless people; people with a disability; victims of domestic violence and people from a culturally or linguistically diverse background. ^f Income and household composition calculated at tenancy start date. Income source not taken into account. Based on gross income only. Special needs categories include homelessness; disability; non-English speaking background; Indigenous status; victims of family violence; and tenants aged over 65 years or under 18 years. ^g Special needs defined as involving a disability impacting on public housing requirements. Based on voluntary self-identification.

Source: table 16A.4.

The proportion of new allocations to those in greatest need varied for the year ending 30 June 2000, from 4 per cent in Queensland to 45 per cent in SA (table 16.5). Table 16.5 shows the proportion of new allocations to applicants with 'greatest need' for applicants spending various time periods on the waiting list. Data are provided for tenants waiting for periods from under three months to more than two years. These numbers are not cumulative.

Table 16.5 Greatest need allocations as a proportion of all new allocations, 1999-2000 (per cent)^a

	<i>NSW^b</i>	<i>Vic^c</i>	<i>Qld^d</i>	<i>WA^e</i>	<i>SA^f</i>	<i>Tas^g</i>	<i>ACT^h</i>	<i>NTⁱ</i>	<i>Aust</i>
Total for year ending 30 June 2000	39.1	38.9	3.7	16.8	44.9	22.8	26.2	10.1	27.0
Proportion of greatest need allocations to new allocation with time to allocation:									
Under 3 months	75.2	31.3	6.2	15.3	37.9	23.3	35.1	21.7	31.7
3 < 6 months	54.5	96.7	4.4	27.5	66.7	22.2	37.2	11.2	38.7
6 months to < 1 year	34.1	95.5	2.6	23.4	65.7	22.2	38.0	4.1	29.5
1 < 2 years	22.6	86.1	1.8	20.1	45.3	13.0	13.0	2.3	16.9
2+ years	5.0	61.5	1.0	7.7	37.2	14.3	6.2	1.0	9.6

^a Priority access is defined by each jurisdiction for the purpose of this collection. Differences exist between jurisdictional definitions and the management of segmented waiting lists which will influence the results of this indicator. ^b Data shown are 12 month estimates based on data available for November 1999 to June 2000. A change in computer systems means various applicant details are not available for new households housed before November 1999, including special or greatest need status. Greatest needs applicants are those with priority approval but do not include applicants for temporary emergency accommodation. Wait time counted from date listed on priority category only. ^c Greatest needs categories are recurring homelessness, need for special housing and need for supported housing. Aboriginal Rental Housing Program data is included as it cannot be separated on the waiting list. Wait time counted from date listed on priority category only. ^d Greatest need includes priority A allocations only. This will underrepresent the level of priority assistance because, in low wait times areas, the Department is generally able to assist people in urgent housing need, without registering them with a priority classification. Wait time counted from date listed on waiting list (at any category). ^e Greatest needs categories are victims of domestic violence, harassment and people with a medical condition. Wait time counted from date listed on waiting list (at any category). ^f Screening procedure for greatest need applicants involves an income test and checks for homelessness, domestic violence, overcrowding and geographic location. Wait time counted from date listed on priority category only. ^g Defined as 'priority 1' on the waiting list. Excludes transfers, police housing, suspended, incomplete and unprocessed applications. Wait time counted from date listed on priority category only. ^h Factors taken into account in determining if a client is entitled to have their allocation classified as a priority include age, health, domestic violence, financial status, homelessness, adequacy of current accommodation, social needs, neighbourhood disputes and physiological stress. Wait time counted from date listed on waiting list (at any category). ⁱ Greatest need refers to applicants that are housed through priority housing. Applicants for priority housing may be made on the grounds of homelessness, serious medical or social problems including domestic and/or sexual violence. Wait time counted from date listed on waiting list (at any category).

Source: table 16A.6.

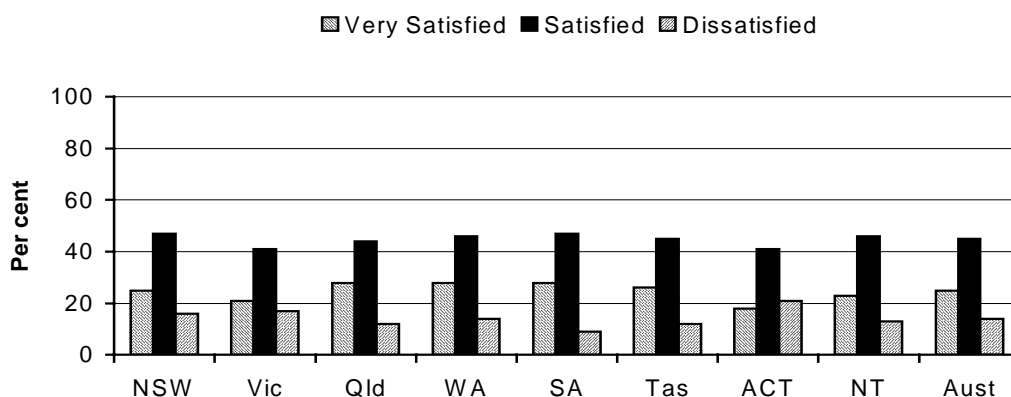
The variation across jurisdictions reflects different priority allocation processes and the different way in which 'greatest need' groups are defined. Care needs to be taken in interpreting the differences across States and Territories.

Quality

The quality (condition) of public housing stock is reported by surveying tenants regarding their overall satisfaction with housing provided.

Satisfaction with the location and amenity aspects of public housing is reported under the appropriateness indicator (figure 16.10). The satisfaction outcomes for these areas influence the general satisfaction of public housing tenants. A more comprehensive discussion of customer satisfaction results is provided in the *National Social Housing Survey with Public Housing, November 2000* (Donovan Research 2000).

Figure 16.10 Tenant satisfaction, 2000^{a, b}



^a Caution should be used when interpreting small differences in the results, which are affected by sample and estimate size (see attachment 16A for details of the sample size). ^b Categories do not add to 100 per cent because of nonresponses. ^c Calculated as simple numerical averages due to lack of raw data.

Source: table 16A.12.

- The vast majority of tenants (between 59 per cent and 75 per cent) in all States and Territories were either satisfied or very satisfied with the condition of housing provided. This proportion increased in five States and Territories between 1999 and 2000 and decreased in two. The largest changes occurred in WA, where the proportion increased by 7 percentage points and Victoria, where the proportion decreased by 7 percentage points.
- The proportion of public housing tenants surveyed who were dissatisfied fluctuated across States and Territories between 1999 and 2000, ranging from an increase of 4 percentage points in the ACT to a decrease of 2 percentage points in NSW, WA, SA and the NT.
- The proportion of public housing tenants surveyed who were very satisfied was the same as or above the national average in NSW, Queensland, WA, SA and Tasmania in 2000.

-
- The proportion of public housing tenants surveyed who were dissatisfied was the same as or above the national average in NSW, Victoria, WA and the ACT in 2000 (figure 16.10).

Efficiency

Four performance indicators measure the efficiency of public housing provision. The first is cost per unit of public housing. The costs incurred by jurisdictions in providing public housing include:

- administration costs (the cost of the administration offices of the property manager and tenancy manager);
- operating costs (the costs of maintaining the operation of the dwelling, including repairs and maintenance, rates, the costs of disposals, market rent paid and interest expenses);
- depreciation costs; and
- the user cost of capital (the cost of the funds tied up in the capital used to provide public housing).

The extent to which these unit costs are complete and comparable is summarised in box 16.5.

Box 16.5 Comparability of cost estimates

It is an objective of the Review to report comparable estimates of costs. Ideally, the full range of costs to government is counted on a comparable basis. Where the full costs cannot be counted, costs should be estimated on a consistent basis.

The Steering Committee has done work in four areas to improve the comparability of costs across government and private providers.

- Superannuation costs are included in cost estimates for housing services. This ensures comparability across jurisdictions. SCRCSSP (1998) recommended costing superannuation on an accrual actuarial basis. There is an ongoing process to determine whether superannuation costs have been included in the costs of housing services on this basis.
- Depreciation costs are included in estimates of maintenance and depreciation costs per dwelling for both community and public housing. This year the Report documents differences in how depreciation is measured in table 16A.38.

(Box continued)

Box 16.6 (Continued)

- The user cost of capital is reported separately for public and community housing. The user cost of capital represents the opportunity cost to government of the funds tied up in housing assets. Excluding this cost lowers the reported costs per dwelling. Comparability will be improved by adding the reported user cost of capital to costs, and ensuring debt servicing costs and State and Territory based capital asset charges are deducted from estimates of administration and operating costs per dwelling.
- Payroll tax is payable by government public and community housing authorities in all jurisdictions. SCRCSSP (1999) recommended that no additional treatment was necessary to improve the cost comparability of the sector.

The Steering Committee will undertake further work in areas where the comparability of cost data has not been achieved (for example, as a result of differences in the apportionment of overheads across services and jurisdictions).

Sources: SCRCSSP (1998) and SCRCSSP (1999).

Some cost data are either more complete or collected on a more consistent basis than other cost data. Consequently, care needs to be taken when interpreting the total cost of delivering public housing. Administration costs and operating costs, for example, may not capture all costs incurred by government, so could understate the total costs of public housing.

The user cost of capital for government services is the cost of having funds tied up in the capital used to deliver services (for example, houses and land in public housing). The user cost of capital makes explicit the opportunity cost of using the funds to deliver services rather than investing them elsewhere or using them to retire debt.

When comparing costs of government services, it is important to account for the user cost of capital because it is often:

- a significant component of the cost of services; and
- treated inconsistently (that is, it is included in the costs of services delivered by many non-government service providers, but effectively costed at zero for most budget sector agencies).

The indicative user cost of capital for land per public housing dwelling was highest in the ACT (\$5365) and lowest in SA (\$1897) in 1999-2000. The full indicative cost of capital per dwelling ranged from \$4512 in SA to \$10 287 in NSW. These numbers are not comparable to those in the 2000 Report (table 16.6).

Table 16.6 Costs per dwelling, 1999-2000 (dollars)^a

	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Vic</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>WA</i>	<i>SA</i>	<i>Tas^b</i>	<i>ACT</i>	<i>NT^c</i>	<i>Aust</i>
Total recurrent costs	3 617	3 188	3 503	3 867	3 719	4 378	5 434	6 271	3 704
Depreciation	1 175	1 251	1 583	822	675	na	749	1 629	1 252
Indicative user cost									
– land	4 881	3 487	2 995	na ^d	1 897	na	5 365	3 264	3 765
– other assets	5 406	4 825	4 033	na ^d	2 615	na	3 891	5 246	4 534
– total assets	10 287	8 312	7 028	6 461	4 512	na	9 256	8 510	8 128
Total capital costs	11 463	9 563	8 611	7 283	5 188	na	10 005	10 140	9 380
<i>Full gross costs</i>	15 080	12 751	12 114	11 150	8 907	na	15 439	16 411	13 083
Rent collected from tenants	3 204	3 412	3 240	3 160	3 380	3 177	3 865	3 654	3 298
<i>Full net costs</i>	11 876	9 339	8 874	7 990	5 527	na	11 574	12 757	9 785

^a Asset data used to calculate indicative user cost of capital have been collected differently this year, so data are not directly comparable to that in previous Reports. ^b Expenditure data includes Aboriginal Rental Housing Program. ^c It is not possible to extract some costs directly relevant to the provision of public housing so the cost per dwelling is overstated. ^d It has not been possible to separate the indicative user cost of capital for land.

Source: table 16A.11.

Cost per dwelling is broken down into gross cost to government (administration and operating costs plus capital costs) and the net cost to government (which nets out rents received from tenants). The net cost to government per dwelling in 1999-2000 ranged from \$5527 in SA to \$12 757 in the NT. Some jurisdictions had difficulty separating costs for public housing from those for other housing assistance activities, so these results need to be interpreted with caution. Asset data used to calculate user cost of capital was collected in a different manner this year, so figures are not directly comparable with those in last year's Report (table 16.6).

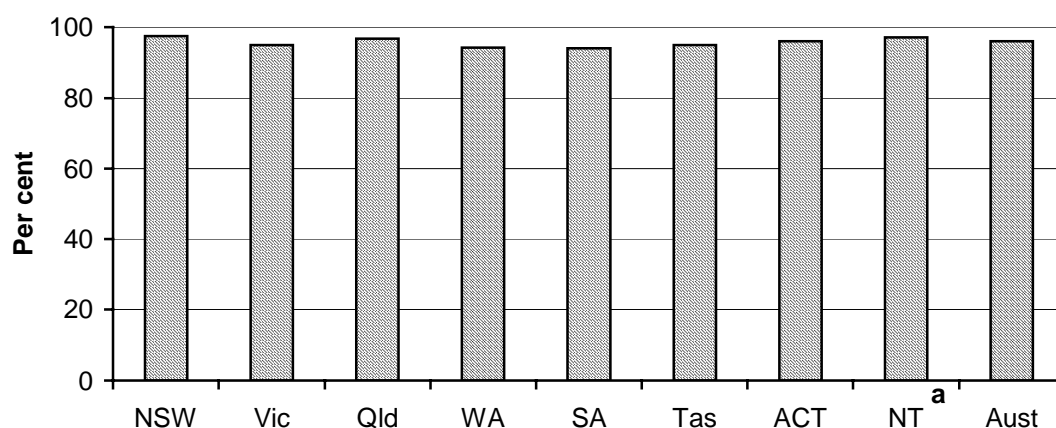
Caution needs to be exercised when comparing the full gross costs of public housing, because there may be some double counting for some jurisdictions. The user cost of capital is intended to capture all the costs of funding assets used to produce the services, but some of these costs (such as interest expenses incurred by housing authorities) may already be included in reported operating costs.

This Report includes a user cost of capital, where possible, as part of the costs to government of each service. User cost of capital is calculated by applying a jurisdictional cost of capital rate to the value of government assets (see chapter 2 for details of the determination of a cost of capital rate). The costs of capital for land and other assets are shown separately to allow users to consider any differences in land values among jurisdictions when assessing the results (table 16.6).

The Steering Committee accepts that asset valuation data are imperfect. It also recognises that the treatment of costs has not fully recognised the cost of public capital used by departments to deliver services, that is; capital has generally been considered ‘free’. This can lead to significant underestimating of costs for those services for which government capital is a major input. Nevertheless, using an imperfect costing is preferable to not costing government capital.

The second indicator of efficiency measures the proportion of the housing stock (including untenable dwellings) occupied by households. The proportion of public rental stock occupied at 30 June 2000 was broadly similar across jurisdictions and varied from 94 per cent in WA and SA to 98 per cent in NSW. The national average occupancy rate was 96 per cent (figure 16.11).

Figure 16.11 Housing stock occupancy rates 30 June 2000



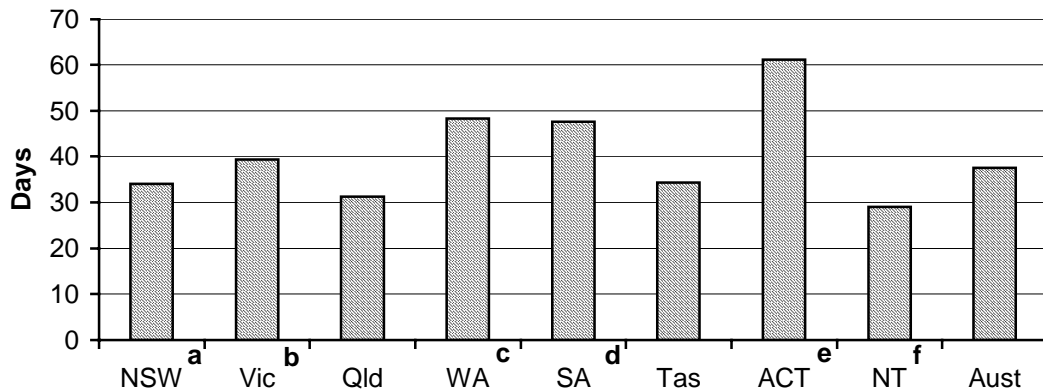
^a Includes dwellings leased under industry housing programs which revert to general public housing stock when unoccupied.

Source: table 16A.8.

The third indicator — turnaround time — indicates the speed with which jurisdictions rent housing stock after it has been vacated or acquired. The length of time taken to rent untenanted stock affects allocations of public housing, waiting times, the length of waiting lists and rent forgone. All jurisdictions aim to minimise turnaround times.

The average number of days for vacant stock to be allocated in 1999-2000 varies from 29 days in the NT to 61 days in the ACT (figure 16.12). (Vacant stock includes stock vacated by tenants and newly constructed or acquired stock.) This indicator may be affected by increased maintenance programs or stock redevelopment.

Figure 16.12 Average turnaround times, 1999-2000



^a Excludes time vacant during redevelopment and a small number of new acquisitions. ^b Currently undergoing a dwelling consolidation project. ^c Excludes 1100 dwellings where insufficient or inconsistent data exists. Includes time properties vacant due to major refurbishments. The internal measure for turnaround time, excluding these refurbishments and extraordinary events such as fire damage, was nine days. ^d Currently undertaking a major redevelopment. ^e This figure includes the time properties are vacant due to major refurbishments. The actual average days vacant from handover to the tenancy manager is only 24 days. ^f Includes dwellings leased under industry housing programs which revert to general public housing stock when unoccupied.

Source: table 16A.10.

The fourth efficiency indicator — total rent collected as a proportion of the rent charged — represents a financial burden to housing authorities. Differences in recognition policies, write-off practices, the treatment of disputed amounts and the treatment of payment arrangements may affect the comparability of this indicator's reported results.

Rent collected as a proportion of the rent charged in 1999-2000 varied from 97 per cent in Queensland and the ACT to 104 per cent in Tasmania (table 16.7). Payment arrangements for rent in some jurisdictions mean that the rent collected over a 12 month period may be higher than rent charged over that period.

Table 16.7 Total rent collected as a proportion of total rent charged (per cent), 1999-2000^a

	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas ^b	ACT	NT	Aust
1999	100.6	96.8	99.5	100.3	98.8	103.2	99.7	87.1	99.1
2000	99.7	100.4	97.1	102.6	100.1	103.8	96.8	98.2	99.8

^a Payment arrangements for rent in some jurisdictions mean that rent collected over a 12 month period may be higher than rent charged over that period. ^b Includes Aboriginal Rental Housing Program.

Source: table 16A.9.

Community housing

Community housing data have two sources:

- administration data, collected by the State or Territory government body with responsibility for administering the community housing program in its jurisdiction; and
- survey data, collected by the community organisations (providers) that manage the service delivery.

This chapter provides data on a subset of indicators for community housing — the appropriateness, affordability and efficiency of services. Due to the timing of the most recent consumer satisfaction survey for community housing, survey data are unavailable this year.

Effectiveness

Appropriateness

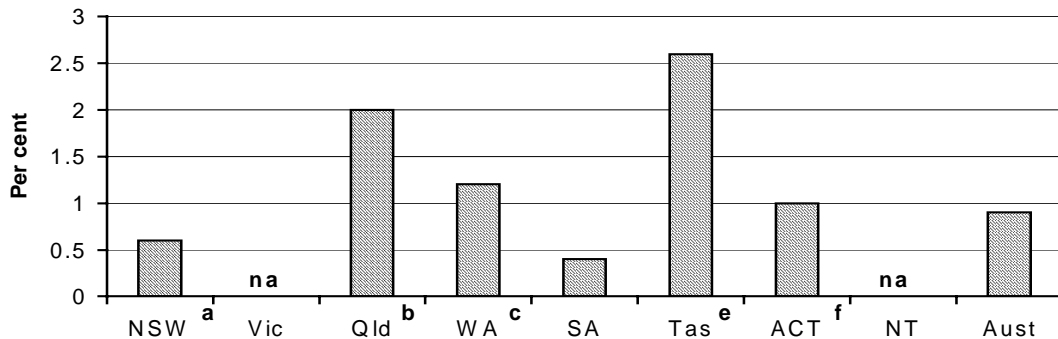
This chapter is able to report two measures of appropriateness for community housing. As with public housing, the first is indicated by the match of rental dwellings to household size. For those jurisdictions able to provide data, Tasmania had the highest proportion of overcrowded dwellings (2.6 per cent) at 30 June 2000, while SA (0.4 per cent) had the lowest (figure 16.13).

The second measure of appropriateness is the affordability of community housing, which is measured by calculating the proportion of household income remaining after paying rent. For those jurisdictions able to provide data, the rate was broadly similar across jurisdictions and ranged from 65 per cent in Tasmania to 70 per cent in Queensland, SA and the ACT in 1999-2000 (figure 16.14).

Efficiency

This chapter is able to report two measures of efficiency for community housing. The first is the rent arrears indicator. Rent collected as a proportion of that charged ranged from 97 per cent in Queensland to 101 per cent in the ACT at 30 June 2000 (table 16.8). As with public housing, payment arrangements for rent in some jurisdictions mean that the rent collected over a 12 month period may be higher than rent charged over that period.

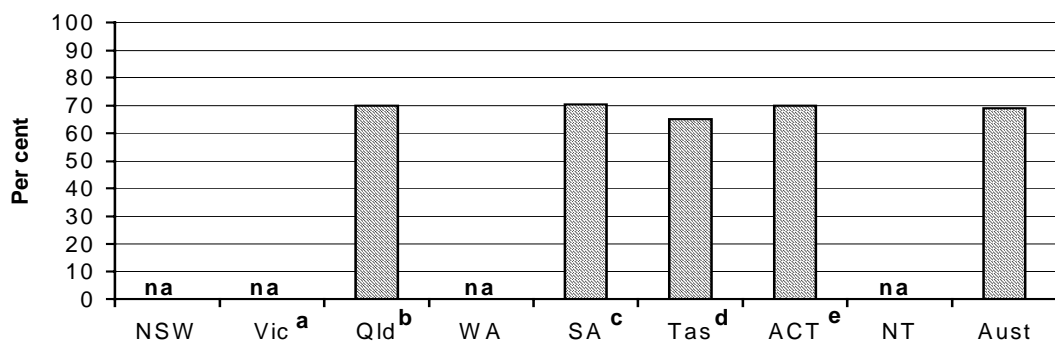
Figure 16.13 Overcrowding in community housing dwellings, 30 June 2000



a Survey data from full survey of all 209 providers with a response rate of 86 per cent. **b** From mailout to 328 providers with a response rate of 59 per cent. **c** Data mostly from a survey with a 25 per cent response rate but includes some administrative data. **d** Survey data, based on 2906 properties for which data are available. The response rate to the survey was 97 per cent. **e** Data from survey of 73 providers with a response rate of 25 per cent. Few survey forms were returned fully completed. **f** Data from survey of 320 properties (out of total of 360) with 98 per cent response rate. Excludes crisis accommodation and privately leased properties. Not all community housing properties included. Survey includes 98 boarding house units.

Source: table 16A.16.

Figure 16.14 Proportion of household income remaining after paying rent, 1999-2000



a Information not available. **b** From mailout to 328 providers with a response rate of 59 per cent. **c** Survey data, based on 2906 properties for which data are available. The response rate to the survey was 97 per cent. **d** Data from survey of 73 providers with a response rate of 25 per cent. Few survey forms were returned fully completed. Data for this indicator represents six responses from a total of 18 forms returned. **e** Data from survey of 320 properties (out of total of 360) with 98 per cent response rate. Excludes crisis accommodation and privately leased properties. Not all community housing properties included. Survey includes 98 boarding house units.

Source: table 16A.17.

Table 16.8 Total rent collected as a proportion of total rent charged (per cent)^a

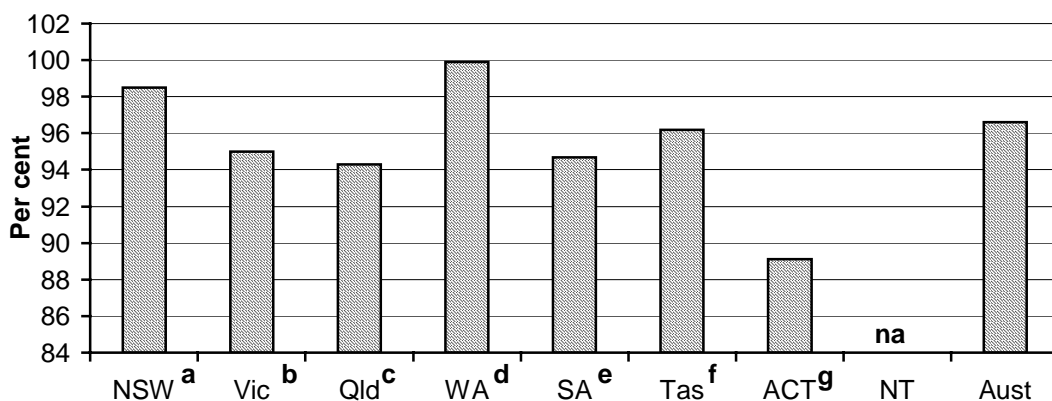
	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Aust
1999	88.7	83.5	89.8	na	97.0	98.1	98.3 ^b	na	90.1
2000	100.3 ^c	na	97.1 ^d	100.4	na	98.8 ^e	100.7 ^f	na	99.4

^a Payment arrangements for rent in some jurisdictions mean that rent collected over a 12 month period may be higher than rent charged over that period. ^b Data refer to 199 households only and data for Community Housing Canberra properties transferred are for part year only. ^c Survey data from full survey of all 209 providers with a response rate of 86 per cent. ^d From mailout to 328 providers with a response rate of 59 per cent. ^e Data from survey of 73 providers with a response rate of 25 per cent. Few survey forms were returned fully completed. ^f Data from survey of 320 properties (out of total of 360) with 98 per cent response rate. Excludes crisis accommodation and privately leased properties. Not all community housing properties included. Survey includes 98 boarding house units. **na** Not available.

Source: table 16A.18.

The second measure of efficiency for community housing is the level of community housing occupied. The proportion of community housing stock occupied by tenants at 30 June 2000 ranged from 89 per cent in the ACT to 100 per cent in WA (figure 16.15).

Figure 16.15 Community housing occupancy rates, 30 June 2000



^a Survey data from full survey of all 209 providers with a response rate of 86 per cent. ^b Excludes information on the Common Equity Rental Co-ops. Based on administrative data. ^c From mailout to 328 providers with a response rate of 59 per cent. ^d Data mostly from a survey with a 25 per cent response rate but includes some administrative data. ^e Survey data, based on 2906 properties for which data are available. The response rate to the survey was 97 per cent. ^f Data from survey of 73 providers with a response rate of 25 per cent. Few survey forms were returned fully completed. ^g Data from survey of 320 properties (out of total of 360) with 98 per cent response rate. Excludes crisis accommodation and privately leased properties. Not all community housing properties included. Survey includes 98 boarding house units.

Source: table 16A.19.

Commonwealth Rent Assistance

Data for CRA recipients are for clients of the Department of Family and Community Services only, and is for the year to March 2000. Data excludes those paid rental assistance by, or on behalf of, the Department of Veterans' Affairs or the Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs. Data are collected centrally by Centrelink and the Commonwealth Department of Family and Community Services. Information on CRA recipients by benefit type is provided at table 16.9.

Table 16.9 Income units receiving CRA, by benefit type, 31 March 2000^a

<i>Benefit type</i>	<i>Income units</i>	<i>Proportion of CRA recipients^b</i>	<i>Proportion of benefit type recipients</i>
	no.	%	%
Newstart	245 971	26	40
Age Pension	149 959	16	12
Disability Support Pension	154 245	17	28
Parenting Payment, Single	180 653	19	46
Youth Allowance, Widows Pension and Allowance, Sickness Allowance and Special Benefit	81 236	9	22
Family Allowance	63 088	7	28
Parenting Payment, Partnered	28 263	3	28
Other qualifying payments	33 663	4	24
Total	937 078	100	25

^a Data are for CRA recipients who were clients of the Department of Family and Community Services only. Data exclude those paid rental assistance by, or on behalf of, the Department of Veterans' Affairs or the Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs. ^b Components may not sum to 100 per cent as a result of rounding.

Source: table 16A.22.

Effectiveness

Access

Access to CRA is measured by the proportion of eligible income support recipients receiving the payment. This indicator also provides information on Indigenous recipients.

Once eligibility has been established CRA is automatically paid. Important eligibility requirements are the receipt of an income support payment, or more than the minimum rate of family allowance, and liability to pay rent. The only eligible clients who are not paid are those affected by recording errors or program errors.

The proportion of income support recipients receiving CRA was 25 per cent, ranging from 12 per cent for income units where either one or both partners received the age pension to 46 per cent for single parenting recipients (table 16.9).

Over 988 000 individuals across Australia were receiving CRA at March 2000, of whom approximately 1.8 per cent self identified as Indigenous. Nationally, the proportion of individuals receiving CRA who identified as Indigenous was lower than the Indigenous representation in the overall community. The NT had the highest proportion of self identified Indigenous people receiving the payment (13.2 per cent) in 2000, while Victoria had the lowest proportion (0.5 per cent) (table 16.10).

Choice and affordability

The affordability measure provides information on the proportion of income spent on rent with and without CRA. Nationally, if CRA were not payable, only 25 per cent of those income units currently receiving CRA would have spent less than 30 per cent of income on rent at March 2000. Across jurisdictions this proportion ranged from 17 per cent in the NT to 31 per cent in Tasmania and 35 per cent in other Territories. Accounting for CRA payments (thereby reducing the rent paid by the amount of the assistance), the national proportion of income units who spent less than 30 per cent of income on rent increased to 58 per cent in March 2000. Across jurisdictions, this proportion ranged from 46 per cent in the NT to 69 per cent in Tasmania (figure 16.16).

Similarly, if CRA were not payable only 67 per cent of income units across Australia would have spent less than 50 per cent of income on rent at March 2000. Accounting for CRA payments proportion this increased to 89 per cent (figure 16.16).

Approximately half of all areas included in the 1996 ABS Census of Population and Housing contained between 70-150 income units receiving CRA per 1000 private dwellings at March 2000. The majority of postal areas (71 per cent) contained fewer than 150 income units receiving the payment per 1000 private dwellings. Only 1 per cent of postal areas did not include any income units receiving the payment (table 16.11).

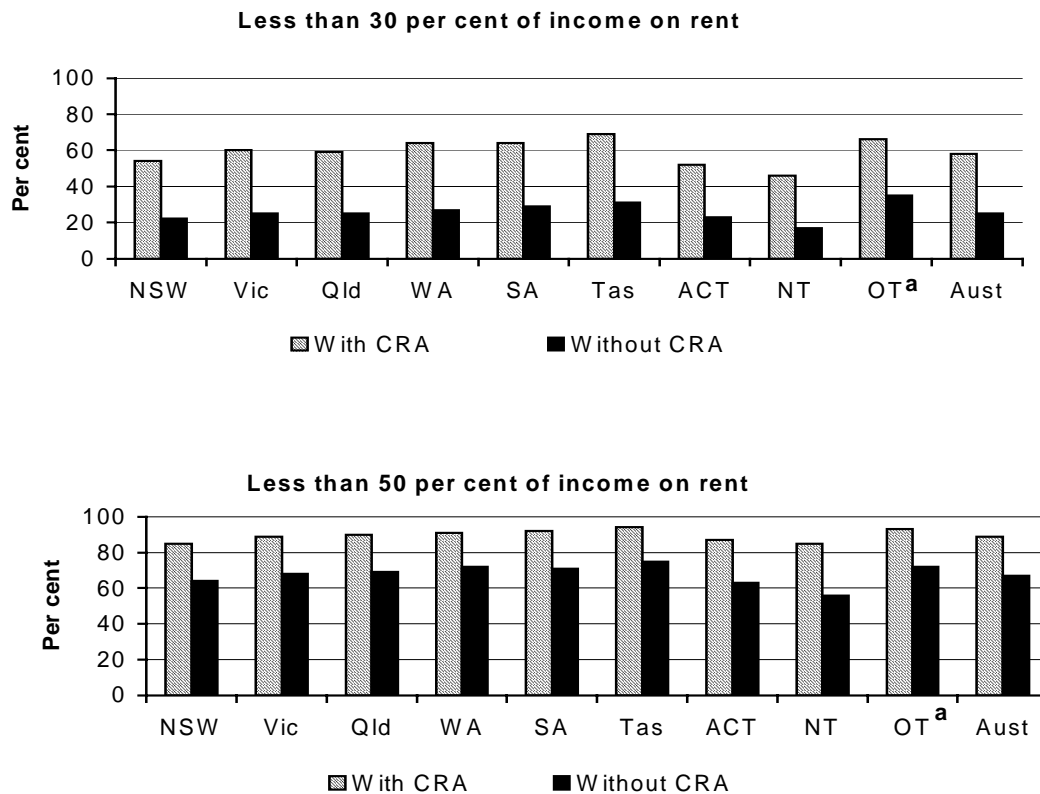
Table 16.10 Individuals receiving CRA, by Indigenous status and geographic location, March 2000

	Unit	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	OT ^a	Aust
<i>Non-Indigenous</i>											
Individual recipients	No.	330 902	215 781	235 415	83 818	66 315	24 067	8 467	5 206	209	970 180
In capital city	No.	178 566	151 998	99 225	64 045	51 572	10 157	8 467	3 567	209	567 506
In rest of State	No.	152 336	64 083	136 190	19 773	14 743	13 910	..	1 639	..	402 674
Share of all recipients	%	98.2	99.5	96.9	98.0	99.0	98.2	98.9	86.8	97.2	98.2
Non-Indigenous population, as a proportion of total population ^b	%	98.2	99.5	96.8	96.8	98.4	96.5	98.9	71.7	na	97.8
<i>Indigenous</i>											
Individual recipients	No.	6 146	982	7 416	1 728	638	445	78	794	6	18 233
In capital city	No.	1 416	412	2 009	861	391	165	78	408	6	5 746
In rest of State	No.	4 730	570	5 407	867	247	280	..	386	..	12 487
Share of all recipients	%	1.8	0.5	3.1	2.0	1.0	1.8	1.0	13.2	2.8	1.8
Indigenous population, as a proportion of total population ^b	%	1.8	0.5	3.2	3.2	1.6	3.5	1.1	28.3	na	2.2
Total individual recipients	No.	337 048	216 763	242 831	85 546	66 953	24 512	8 545	6 000	215	988 413

^a OT: Other Territories, comprising Jervis Bay, Christmas Island and Cocos (Keeling) Island. ^b Based on low series population projections, ABS, 1999b. **na** Not available. **..** Not applicable.

Source: table 16A.23.

Figure 16.16 Recipients, by proportion of income spent on rent with and without CRA, March 2000



^a OT = Other Territories, comprising Jervis Bay, Christmas Island and Cocos (Keeling) Island.

Source: table 16A.24.

Table 16.11 Geographic spread of income units receiving CRA, March 2000

	<i>no.</i>	<i>%</i>
Postal areas not containing CRA income units ^{a, b}	13	1
Postal areas containing CRA income units ^a		
< 70 ^c	548	23
70–150 ^c	1 118	47
151–200 ^c	395	17
201–250 ^c	142	6
251–300 ^c	78	3
300+ ^c	79	3
Total number of postal areas in 1996 Population Census	2 373	100

^a Postal areas in the 1996 Census. ^b One third of the private dwellings in this group were at the Macquarie University, the Williams RAAF Base and the World Trade Centre. ^c Number of income units per 1000 private dwellings.

Source: table 16A.25.

Information on the average CRA entitlement across locations is contained in table 16A.31.

Appropriateness

Four indicators of appropriateness are reported in this chapter relating to the review process for decisions about CRA availability:

- the proportion of claims for which review is sought;
- the proportion of decisions reviewed or appealed;
- the accuracy of the decision making; and
- control of overpayments.

There is a formal review process for decisions related to the payment of CRA. Clients who are dissatisfied with a decision are encouraged to discuss the matter with the original decision maker before taking the matter further, although this is not a necessary step. Authorised review officers conduct a quick and informal internal review of the decision. Generally, customers who are dissatisfied with the authorised review officer's decision can appeal to the Social Security Appeals Tribunal. The Tribunal is an independent body with decision making powers. Either the customer or the Commonwealth Department of Family and Community Services can seek a further review of tribunal decisions by the Administrative Appeals Tribunal.

A total of 139 people appealed to an authorised review officer in 1999-2000, representing approximately 0.01 per cent of people receiving CRA. Approximately 56 per cent of finalised appeals to either an authorised review officer or the Social Security Appeals Tribunal led to the original decision being confirmed, while 44 per cent led to the original decision being set aside or varied, or the appeal being withdrawn/dismissed. In the case of the Administrative Appeals Tribunal, 50 per cent of finalised appeals led to the original decision being set aside or varied (table 16.12).

Centrelink relies on risk based review activities to control overpayment, some of which are targeted at CRA. In total, Centrelink conducted 44 625 risk based reviews relating to CRA in 1999-2000, but detailed results are only available for 25 092. Of the 25 092 reviews where the effect on CRA was separately identified CRA was cancelled in 17 per cent of cases, reduced in 14 per cent of cases and increased in 1 per cent of cases (figure 16.17). Estimated fortnightly savings were \$359 278.

Table 16.12 Outcome of all CRA appeals finalised in 1999-2000^a

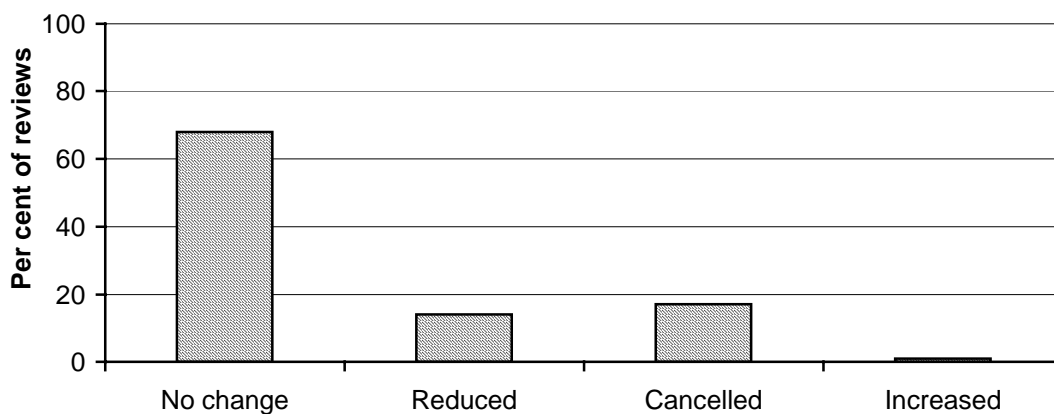
<i>Outcome</i>	<i>Appeals to ARO</i>		<i>Appeals to SSAT</i>		<i>Appeals to AAT</i>	
	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%
Original decision affirmed	79	57	15	52	0	0
Original decision set aside	28	20	9	31	4	40
Original decision varied	27	19	0	0	1	10
Appeal withdrawn/dismissed	5	4	5	17	5	50
Total finalised	139	100	29	100	10	100

^a For year to 31 March.

ARO = Authorised Review Officer; SSAT = Social Security Appeals Tribunal; AAT = Administrative Appeals Tribunal.

Source: table 16A.26.

Figure 16.17 CRA payments adjustments resulting from a risk based review, 1999-2000^{a, b}



^a For year to 31 March 2000. ^b Excludes the results of 19 533 debt prevention and monitoring reviews for which the impact on CRA cannot be separated from the impact on the main benefit type.

Source: table 16A.27.

Quality of customer service

Twice a year, Centrelink engages external consultants to carry out quantitative research to gauge customer satisfaction with its performance and community perceptions of its image. The surveys are not specific to CRA but may broadly indicate the views of CRA recipients. The latest information is for May 2000 and included the following findings:

- 66 per cent of clients were satisfied with the overall quality of Centrelink's people, services and information;

-
- 77 per cent of clients were satisfied with services delivered in person; and
 - 70 per cent of clients were satisfied with services delivered over the telephone.

Efficiency

The cost of delivering CRA cannot be separately identified from that for delivering income support payments generally. In past years the ratio of running costs to outlays for CRA has been estimated at 0.015 per cent.

In recent years total Centrelink running costs have been apportioned across programs on the basis of work effort surveys. In 1998–99 running costs were estimated to be \$21 650 per year per 1000 CRA recipients. This estimate is subject to survey inaccuracies and is only indicative.

16.5 Future directions in performance reporting

Reviewing the public and community housing performance measurement frameworks

Data are reported against the new national performance frameworks developed to link to the guiding principles of the 1999–2003 CSHA. These frameworks will be developed and enhanced to improve the collection of nationally comparable data on housing assistance and to minimise the reporting burden and amount of duplication across CSHA requirements, those of this Review, and other external requirements (for example, State and Territory budgets and annual reports).

Reporting of CRA

The 2001 Report presents performance reporting for CRA for the second consecutive year. The performance measurement framework will be developed over the coming year.

Reporting on the Aboriginal Rental Housing Program

A performance indicator framework for the Aboriginal Rental Housing Program (another CSHA program) was developed as part of the 1999–2003 CSHA. It is identical to the framework for public and community housing. Performance

reporting for the Aboriginal Renting Housing Program is anticipated for the 2002 Report.

16.6 Jurisdictions' comments

This section provides comments from each jurisdiction on the services covered in this chapter and attachment 16A on the CD-ROM. Appendix A contains detailed statistics and short profiles on each State and Territory, which may assist in interpreting the performance indicators presented in this chapter. In addition, detailed statistics covering aspects such as age profile, geographic distribution of the population, income levels, education levels, tenure of dwellings, and cultural heritage (such as Indigenous and ethnic status) are included in the appendix.

Commonwealth Government comments

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This is the second year for which performance information relating to Rent Assistance has been provided for the *Report on Government Services*. Additional contextual information has been included relating to the living arrangements and housing circumstances of Rent Assistance recipients.

Rent Assistance performance information is reported separately.

The performance information framework adopted for this report is better suited to the direct provision of services rather than financial assistance. In addition, Rent Assistance is paid as a supplement to other income support payments, which have their own objectives. Because of this, the indicators need to be interpreted with some caution.

Rent assistance is provided as a financial supplement and has the flexibility to cope with changing demand and provide customers with more choice about where they live and the quality of their housing. This choice can involve a trade-off with the consumer's after-housing income.

Therefore, it is important to recognise that the rent assistance program has no specific benchmark for affordability. The adoption of an affordability benchmark would fail to recognise the element of choice exercised by customers who place a higher value on housing than placed by others in comparable circumstances.

On 22 June 2000 the Commonwealth announced that the maximum rate of CRA would be increased by another 3 per cent to make a total increase of 10 per cent, taking effect from 1 July 2000 as part of The New Tax System. The rent thresholds remained the same.

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New South Wales Government comments

“ The demand for housing assistance in NSW continued to increase in the 1999-2000 year. House prices and rents have increased substantially in Sydney over the last decade and are, on average, the highest in Australia. At the same time, there have been significant losses in low cost rental and boarding house stock.

This has contributed to a rise in demand for housing assistance. There are currently 98,000 households on waiting lists for public and community housing. The waiting list has grown by 58% in the last 10 years.

As the needs of housing assistance clients have become more complex, public and community housing in NSW has become highly targeted. An increasing number of applicants have support needs in addition to their inability to access affordable housing in the private market. Many allocated priority housing are escaping domestic violence or have mental health problems needing additional support services. New allocations procedures were implemented in public housing from October 1999 to give quicker access for priority applicants. Allocations to priority applicants have doubled since these changes.

In the context of a highly targeted social housing sector and increasing demand, NSW continues to focus on the quality of services provided. A new system of best value inspections was introduced to improve public housing client service processes at the local level. Major reform was introduced in April 2000 when rent rebates for public tenants were reduced. This will assist the Department to continue its effort to improve maintenance in public housing. By 2004, most social housing tenants will be paying 25% of their income in rent (or market rent), an increase from 20% in 1999.

Public and community rental housing show good performance against the new CSHA performance indicators. Reporting highlights for public housing include high levels of targeting to low income and special needs clients; and quick response time to those in need of priority access. Reporting highlights for community housing include low overcrowding and a high proportion of rent collected to rent charged.

The 1999-2000 collection process for public housing was hampered by the changeover to a new integrated client information system in October 1999. This has required data extraction from both the new and old systems in order to compile the reported data. The new system has improved the capacity of public housing to report performance data in the future.

Community housing continues to improve its performance reporting capacity. The data return rate from community housing organisations for the 1999-00 Data Collection was 86 per cent (81 per cent in 1998-99).

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Victorian Government comments

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The Social Housing Sector in Victoria consists of some 74,200 units (at June 2000) with 65,200 public rental units and some 9,000 community housing units (including leased properties and community owned units). Acquisition funds during 1999/2000 were directed to the Community Housing sector, which grew by 5% during the year.

86,000 households benefited from assistance on any one night of the year with 58,000 receiving new assistance during the year through a broad range of programs. Approximately 89% of public housing tenants in Victoria were in receipt of rental rebates, totalling some \$189m.

“Early Housing” allocations continued to represent a large proportion of total allocations for the year, with 44% of all public housing allocations being of that type. The average waiting time to allocation for these was 3 months at year’s end.

In May 2000 Victoria established the Victorian Homelessness Strategy (VHS) to develop a whole of government response to the prevention and early intervention of homelessness. This strategy will also provide the framework for Victoria’s ongoing development of its homelessness service system.

There were also changes to the tenure review policy with the Minister announcing that tenants over 65 were no longer subject to tenure review, and that the time for tenure review for other tenants has been extended to 5 years. Significant increases to income limits have also been made, to prevent poverty traps and other disincentives.

The VHS, policy reviews and redevelopment projects will all be undertaken with significant community consultation.

A major focus of the Commonwealth/State Bilateral Agreement is to improve stock quality, in particular those in the inner city and regional centre estates. The budgets for stock improvement and rejuvenation will be increased in the coming years, and there will be a lower level of stock acquisition and growth as a result. The redevelopment and upgrade of existing estates will bring them up to community standards and better integrate estates with the local communities.

Further, management of the SAAP program was transferred to the Office of Housing to improve links between accommodation and support services and to streamline the service system response to homelessness through joint planning and development processes.

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Queensland Government comments

“ The housing system is an important environmental influence on key Queensland government policy objectives, particularly those targeted at families, improving health and wellbeing and reducing unemployment. The Queensland Department of Housing contributes to the accomplishment of these policy objectives by influencing the housing system, providing direct and indirect employment opportunities and providing housing assistance.

In 1999-2000, the Department of Housing launched its new strategic direction, outlined in its statement *Improving People's Lives Through Housing: An Integrated Approach to Housing for People and Communities*. This new direction is an important step towards reshaping our work. It clearly places the Department's focus on the current and future needs of clients resulting in changes to strategic priorities, organisational culture and operations.

During 1999-2000, the Department strengthened its partnerships with the private development industry, the community sector and other government agencies to address systemic issues that contribute to housing need.

Under the new CSHA agreement, the Department is committed to even greater accountability through new initiatives such as the Bilateral Agreement and the development of a central data repository. This data repository was trialed for the first time in 1999-2000. However, the state still provided actual performance data, produced in collaboration with AIHW.

Public rental housing performance remains high across the majority of comparative data collected. Results have been consistently good in the areas of arrears and allocation management. Whilst data collection methodologies have improved considerably over the last few years there still remains a number of results which clearly indicate variances in methodologies and/or definitions; for example, greatest need allocations.

The Queensland Department of Housing, through its Community Housing service area, published the Community Housing five year plan (1999-2004) in July 1999. The Plan aims to firmly establish community housing as an effective and integral part of the social housing system in Queensland. Significant focus is being directed to enhancing tenant outcomes, sector and organisational viability, flexible and high-quality service provision, responsive administrative systems, and contributions to community well-being.

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Western Australian Government comments

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Western Australia's *New Living* projects continued to expand during the 1999-2000 financial year, with a total of seventeen projects current at the close of the year. Eight of these projects are in metropolitan Perth, and nine are in country areas. These projects will affect over 10,000 properties, more than a quarter of all public rental homes.

As the projects mature over the next few years, and a better balance of public and private housing is achieved, the stigma often associated with public housing will disappear. This has been the case with the Lockridge project, one of *New Living's* first redevelopment projects, which was completed this year. This project saw the public housing presence reduce from more than 50 per cent to 16 per cent, a significant reduction in crime and the transition of the suburb into a much sought after residential area. The Urban Development Institute of Australia gave its Award for Excellence in Urban Renewal to this project. *New Living* was also awarded the prestigious World Habitat Award. Upon visiting several *New Living projects* the Director of the Building and Social Housing Foundation, Mr Peter Elderfield commented that 'what impressed me in WA was the quality, housing location and pricing, which was remarkably reasonable'.

This year also saw the value of *Keystart* home loans approved since 1989 pass the \$3 billion mark. Western Australia places great emphasis on providing people on low and moderate incomes with access to affordable home finances. As well as assisting these people to realise their dream of home ownership, it also reduces the community's collective dependence on public housing. Specially tailored home loans for Aboriginal people and people with disabilities were also well patronised.

In response to last year's National Customer Satisfaction Survey, several strategies were implemented to improve services to customers. Maintenance concerns were addressed through the allocation of a budget for refurbishment and maintenance of rental stock, with attention to flats and townhouses. Maintenance contractors were monitored for quality and customer service. A Customer Focus group was formed to consult with staff and recommendations for improved service delivery were implemented. As a result refresher training courses in customer service and use of computer systems were held. Additionally, a Ministry of Housing website was developed to increase accessibility of information to customers, with the convenience of accessing application forms on-line and also providing access to the Western Australian Government's *fast pay* for on-line bill payments. As a consequence, a significant improvement in customer satisfaction has been achieved this year.

Other achievements included a reduction of 1447 in the waiting list, commencement of 1444 dwellings, refurbishment of 255 dwellings, the sale of 455 dwellings refurbished under the *New Living* program, provision of 443 units for people with disabilities, including construction of 75 purpose built homes.

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South Australian Government comments

“ SA has a significant public housing sector, which provides housing for approximately 10 per cent of SA households. The community housing sector provides housing for less than 1 per cent of households although it is experiencing steady growth as part of a strategy to increase diversity, increase housing choice and improve the flexibility and responsiveness of the range of housing options which are available.

In February 2000, responsibility for the State's Aboriginal housing programs was transferred from the South Australian Housing Trust to the new Aboriginal Housing Authority, which was proclaimed in October 1998. This involved the reassignment of staff and the transfer of rental housing and other properties to the authority. Growth in Aboriginal urban rental housing and community managed housing in rural and remote areas is being supported through the allocation of additional State Government resources.

The relatively large public housing sector in SA is largely the result of building programs during the 1950s and 1960s, which were focused on providing housing for working families. This history has left the State with large and ageing estates of three bedroom housing, many of which are on the urban fringe. With public housing now being focused on providing housing to those in need, and housing predominantly small or single households, this housing stock often does not match tenant needs. During 1999-2000, the State continued to focus on addressing asset management issues for public housing through a range of measures, including newbuild, home renovation, sales and urban regeneration programs.

In March 2000, new policies became operational in public housing and community housing, to improve the targeting of housing provision to those most in need. These policies included new eligibility criteria for access, changes to the management of the waiting list and the introduction of new tenure arrangements. To be eligible for public or community housing, new applicants now have to meet income and asset limits or pass a needs test. The waiting list for public housing is now divided into four categories, which reflect urgency of housing need. A similar arrangement is in place in community housing. New tenure arrangements require that new tenants who exceed income review limits for three consecutive years and who no longer meet the needs criteria will pay a premium on top of the rent for their property and be encouraged to pursue other housing options. Much of the impact of these policy changes will not be evident until future years.

Associated with the changing profile of need, links are being developed with other support programs to address often complex needs and improve the stability of tenancies for households which would otherwise be vulnerable to housing crisis. Pilot projects with a focus on sustaining tenancies have been established.

Overall, the effectiveness of housing assistance programs in SA continues to improve. They are achieving both high levels of customer satisfaction and good levels of efficiency.”

Tasmanian Government comments

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Housing Tasmania has continued to develop the understanding of the interrelationships between good housing outcomes and health and wellbeing factors with the Tasmanian communities. This approach has resulted in the achievement of key objectives aligned to the strategic priorities of the bilateral agreement under the Commonwealth State Housing Agreement.

Due to the increased level of need in the community, the number of applicants waiting for housing assistance has grown by 19% as at 30 June 1999, when compared to the same period last year. The services provided by Housing Tasmania continue to achieve improved results in terms of overall satisfaction amongst its tenants, with this years Customer Satisfaction Survey indicating that 69% expressed satisfaction.

The number of vacant dwellings has increased slightly from 674 to 677. The total public rental stock numbers have decreased by 1.3% to a year end portfolio of 13 405 properties, which represents a market share of approximately 7%.

The stock reduction has resulted from the continuance of a dedicated sales program. For a second full year, the sales program has been supported by the Deposit Assistance Scheme (72 households assisted) and the continued promotion of home ownership through the Home Ownership Assistance Program (HOAP), which issued some 170 loan approvals for the year to the value of \$7.9M.

Housing Tasmania has concentrated effort on reducing stock levels in areas of low demand and repositioning the remaining stock base. The principal capital effort has focused on renewal and regeneration of existing stock, with particular emphasis placed on unit complexes for the elderly and people with special needs as part of the strategic focus to provide more responsive and effective housing assistance.

The partial re-profiling of stock has been achieved within a property market that shows some signs of continuing oversupply. Generally, the Tasmanian property market continues to show good availability and strong affordability, however there are some indications of the tightening of the availability of properties suitable for persons on low incomes.

Public rental however continues to represent an affordable housing option, with the majority of tenants paying between 20 and 25% of their income as rent. The up take of the direct debit facility has continued, with approximately 47% of eligible tenants now participating. Strong performance in terms of affordability are reflected in this years Customer Satisfaction Survey, with in 72% of survey recipients indicating high levels of satisfaction.

Public housing remains highly accessible, with approximately 92% of all eligible applicants being housed within 6 months, and 97% of all applicants waiting for less than 12 months.

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Australian Capital Territory Government comments

“ Consistent with the principles of the 1999 CSHA, the ACT is increasingly targeting housing assistance to those who are most in need and who may be facing difficulties finding accommodation in the private rental market. As a consequence of targeting, about 83 per cent of public housing tenants are in receipt of a rebate (at 30 June 2000). Pricing reforms have resulted in the majority of tenants paying 25 per cent of their assessable household income in rent, capped at market rent. However, public housing rents in the ACT are still heavily subsidised and result in rental rebates of over \$40 million per year. Further ACT Government reforms to pricing, tenure, allocation and eligibility were referred to a Select Committee of the ACT Legislative Assembly. The Government has recently responded to the Committee’s report *The Role of Public Housing in the Australian Capital Territory*.

The rejuvenation and restructuring of the ACT’s public housing stock continued to be a high priority in 1999-2000. The restructuring process will take some years to complete, given the size of the portfolio (12 000 dwellings) and the poor condition of much of the stock. The redevelopment and upgrading processes will be partly funded from the proceeds of asset sales and, as a result, there will be a modest reduction in stock levels in the forward years. The requirement to use this source of funding is a consequence of the continued decline in funding under the 1999 CSHA, as well as of internalising the cost of rental rebates.

A major focus of the rejuvenation process is the redevelopment of the ACT’s multi-unit sites. This was identified as a priority under the ACT’s CSHA Bilateral Agreement. In the recent 2000-01 Budget the Government announced a major \$60 million rejuvenation of the ACT’s multi-unit sites over the next 10 years. The program will provide a higher quality and more appropriate standard of accommodation, as well as improve the overall amenity of the sites, while in many instances reducing concentrations of disadvantage. There has been some impact on the availability of accommodation for single people as a result of the current tight private rental market and the redevelopment of a number of the multi-unit complexes. An accommodation strategy for single people is being developed and will be finalised during 2000-01.

The expansion of the community housing sector continues to be a priority. In 1999-2000 the transfer of 200 properties to the community housing provider, Community Housing Canberra Ltd (CHC), was completed. The ACT Government has made a commitment to transfer an additional 800 properties over the next five years, from public to community housing management, subject to an evaluation of the initial 200 properties. The ACT has also made substantial progress on the development of a Trilateral Agreement on Indigenous Housing and on the establishment of an independent Indigenous housing provider in the ACT.”

Northern Territory Government comments

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The new Commonwealth State Housing Bilateral Agreement between the Commonwealth and the NT came into operation on 1 July 1999. This agreement sets the direction of housing in the Territory until 2003 and builds on the initiatives commenced under Housing 2003, the five-year revitalisation program that was introduced in April 1998. Achievements for the NT in 1999-2000 include:

- a continued reduction in wait times for major centres;
- an increase in the percentage of tenants on rental rebates (up to 80 per cent), demonstrating that housing assistance is being targeted to those most in need;
- the commencement of construction on two purpose-built seniors villages;
- the revision of allocations and transfer policy to allow more choice in location and type of housing catering for particular needs;
- reviews conducted on the Bond Assistance Scheme and the HomeNorth home purchase assistance schemes, with a view to improving housing options for Territorians;
- the running of inter-agency forums involving community service and housing agencies in Darwin and Alice Springs to improve Territory Housing's ability to function as an effective part of the human services network; and
- the implementation of a public housing administration appeals system.

The NT Government delivers housing assistance to Indigenous people through its partnership with the Indigenous Housing Authority of the Northern Territory. Information in this Report does not include the NT Government's commitment to the provision of housing and related infrastructure to Indigenous communities.

Other than Indigenous community delivered housing, the community housing sector is extremely small in the NT. Due to the size of the sector, the NT's community housing data for this Report is incomplete. The NT's emphasis for community housing is to continue to encourage the development of flexible housing provider models, particularly targeting the provision of specific, unmet housing needs.

The NT's results in the National Customer Satisfaction Survey demonstrate consistent improvement in performance over the five years that the Survey has been undertaken.

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16.7 Definitions

Public and community housing

Table 16.13 Terms

<i>Term</i>	<i>Definition</i>
Administration costs	Costs incurred for direct salaries; payroll and other taxes; superannuation; compensation; accrued leave; training; accommodation; vehicles; marketing; information systems; printing; stationery; postage; telephone expenses; uniforms; travel expenses; office expenses; office equipment; collection fees; management fees; rent; grants and subsidies; expenditure incurred by other government agencies on behalf of the public housing agency; contracted public housing management services; and overheads (corporate services/unallocated expenses). Accrual data are used wherever possible.
Appropriate	The size of a dwelling, or the number of bedrooms a household is deemed to require based on the number of adults and children residing in it, as determined by the proxy occupancy standard (table 16.3).
Assessable income	The income used in the assessment of eligibility for public housing rebate assistance. For the purposes of this Report, assessable income includes Commonwealth Rent Assistance (if applicable) and rent contributions from non-tenant, adult household members. Actual definition may vary across jurisdictions.
Community housing rental dwelling	Includes properties covered by the Commonwealth–State Housing Agreement. Excludes properties for which the tenancy management functions are undertaken and administered under the Public Rental Housing Program, the Aboriginal Rental Housing Program or transitional/emergency accommodation for people who are homeless and in crisis (Crisis Accommodation Program).
Depreciation costs (as per the Australian Accounting Standards 13–17)	Depreciation calculated on a straight-line basis at a rate that realistically represents the useful life of the asset.
Direct costs	Total administration costs and costs of maintaining the operation of dwellings.
Disability (as per the ABS Survey of Disability Ageing and Carers)	Any restriction or lack of ability (resulting from an impairment) to perform an action in the manner or within the range considered normal for a human being.
Dwelling	The physical structure in which a household may reside. These include houses, flats, boarding houses and/or parts of a house, and could have been vacant or occupied by tenants. A dwelling is considered to be tenanted when occupied by a household with a current tenancy agreement. A dwelling equals a tenancy unit, where a tenancy unit is a unit of accommodation to which a rental agreement can be made.
Greatest need	Applicants with one or more of the following characteristics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • homelessness; • exiting a crisis service; • under a case management plan; or • classified as priority one on waiting list.

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Table 16.13 (Continued)

<i>Term</i>	<i>Definition</i>
Household	<p>A group of people who usually reside and eat together. Operationally, a household is defined as either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a one-person household— that is, a person who makes provision for their own food or essentials for living without combining with any other person to form part of a multi-person household; or • a multi-person household— that is, a group of two or more people, living within the same dwelling, who make common provision for food and other essentials for living. The people in the group may pool their incomes and have a common budget to a greater or lesser extent; they may be related or unrelated or a combination.
Income unit	<p>One person or a group of related people within a household who share command over income. The allowable relationships in the definition of income unit are restricted to marriage (registered or <i>de facto</i>) and parent and dependent child who usually reside in the same household. Operationally, an income unit is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a married couple (registered or <i>de facto</i>) or sole parent, and dependent children only; or • married couple only (registered or <i>de facto</i>) with no dependent children present; or • a person in a private dwelling who is not related to any other household member either by marriage (registered or <i>de facto</i>) or by a parent/dependent child relationship. <p>(Defined differently for CRA).</p>
Indigenous household	<p>A household with one or more members (including children) who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islanders.</p>
Low income household	<p>A household whose members are assessed as having a low income according to the following definitions. Households are assigned an income status based on total household gross income and the composition of the household.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Low income A' households are those in public housing for which all household members have incomes at or below the maximum pension rate. • 'Low income B' households are those in public housing which receive an income at a level equivalent to that at which minimum government income support benefits are received (at the pensioner rate).
Maintenance costs	<p>Costs incurred to maintain the value of the asset or to restore an asset to its original condition. The definition includes: day-to-day maintenance, reflecting general wear and tear; cyclical maintenance, performed as part of a planned maintenance program; and other maintenance, such as repairs as a result of vandalism.</p>
Market rent	<p>Aggregate market rent that would be collected if the public rental housing properties were available in the private market.</p>
New household	<p>Households allocated from the waiting list (excluding transfers).</p>
Occupied dwelling	<p>Tenantable dwellings occupied by tenants who have a public or community housing tenancy agreement with the relevant State housing authority.</p>

(Continued on next page)

Table 16.13 (Continued)

<i>Term</i>	<i>Definition</i>
Overcrowding	Where there are insufficient bedrooms to meet the proxy occupancy standard. Moderate overcrowding is where one additional bedroom is required to satisfy the proxy occupancy standard and high overcrowding is where two or more additional bedrooms are required. For this Report, the high overcrowding definition has been used to measure overcrowding for performance indicator purposes.
Proxy occupancy standard	The standard used to determine overcrowding/underuse. The standard used in the public and community housing collections is based on the Canadian model. (For further discussion on measuring household bedroom requirements, see Foard, et al. 1994).
Public rental dwelling	Includes only public rental properties covered by the Commonwealth–State Housing Agreement. Excludes properties administered under Community Rental Housing, the Aboriginal Rental Housing Program or transitional/emergency accommodation for people who are homeless and in crisis (Crisis Accommodation Program—CAP).
Relocated household	Households, either rebated or market renters, who relocate (transfer) from one public or community rental dwelling to another public or community rental dwelling.
Rent charged	The amount in dollars that households are charged based on the actual rents they are expected to pay. The rents charged to tenants may or may not have been received.
Rent collected	The actual rent received from tenants.
Special needs household	A household that has a member(s) with a special need, based on State and Territory definitions.
Special needs but not low income	Where a household member(s) has a special need but the household income is assessed as not being 'low income' according to a household income cut-off value.
Tenantable dwelling	Dwellings where maintenance has been completed whether occupied or unoccupied. at 30 June 2000. All occupied dwellings are tenantable.
Tenant or tenant household	The usual members of a household occupying a public or community rental housing dwelling where there is a tenancy agreement with the housing authority. A tenant household either receives rebated assistance or pays the market rent as determined by the agency.
Total gross household income	The value of gross weekly income from all sources (before deductions for income tax, superannuation, etc) for all household members expressed as dollars per week. The main components of gross income are current usual wages and salary, income derived from self employment, government pensions, benefits and allowances, and other income comprising investments and other regular income.
Underutilisation	Where there are two or more bedrooms additional to the number required in the dwelling to satisfy the proxy occupancy standard.
Untenantable dwelling	Dwellings not currently occupied by a tenant where maintenance has been either deferred or not completed at 30 June.
Waiting list applicant	A household that has applied for public or community rental housing assistance and is deemed eligible but had not yet received the assistance. Includes current public housing tenants who are applicants for assistance other than that currently received.

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Table 16.13 (Continued)

<i>Term</i>	<i>Definition</i>
Waiting list — total number of households on waiting list	<p>The total number of applicants on the tenant manager/agency's waiting list at 30 June. The waiting list population refers to applicants who, at 30 June, are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • still residing in the State or Territory of application; • still eligible for public housing; and • still wish to pursue their application. <p>Potential applicants still awaiting eligibility assessment at 30 June are excluded.</p>

Source: AIHW (2000a, 2000b).

Table 16.14 Descriptors

<i>Descriptor</i>	<i>Definition</i>
Applicants on community housing waiting list	The total number of applicants on the community housing waiting list.
Applicants on public housing waiting list	The total number of applicants on the public housing waiting list.
Greatest need applicants on community housing waiting list	<p>The total number of greatest need applicants on the community housing waiting list. Greatest need is defined as applicants who are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • homeless; • under a case management plan; • exiting crisis service; and/or • classified as priority one on waiting list.
Greatest need applicants on public housing waiting list	<p>The total number of greatest need applicants on the public housing waiting list. Greatest need is defined as applicants who are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • homeless; • under a case management plan; • exiting crisis service; and/or • classified as priority one on waiting list.
Households paying less than market rent for community housing	The total number of households paying less than market rent who occupy community housing during the financial year.
Households relocated from one public housing dwelling to another (transfers)	The total number of households, either rebated or market renters, who relocate (transfer) from one public rental dwelling to another public rental dwelling.
Indigenous households in community housing	The total number of Indigenous households who are tenants in community housing where an Indigenous household has one or more household member/s (including children) that identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.
Moderate overcrowding	Where one additional bedroom is required to satisfy the proxy occupancy standard. Previously a performance indicator.

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Table 16.14 (Continued)

<i>Descriptor</i>	<i>Definition</i>
New households assisted with community housing	The total number of new households who become tenants in community housing. All new households assisted are counted, including households paying market rent and subsidised households.
New households assisted with public housing	The level of provision of new public rental housing. It is defined as the total number of new households, either rebated or market renters, occupying public rental housing.
New Indigenous households assisted with community housing	The total number of new Indigenous households who become community housing tenants where an Indigenous household has one or more household member/s (including children) that identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.
New Indigenous households assisted with public housing	The total number of new Indigenous households who become public housing tenants where an Indigenous household has one or more household member/s (including children) that identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.
New Indigenous community rental households	The total number of new Indigenous households which became tenants in community housing where an Indigenous household has one or more household members (including children) that identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.
Proportion of income paid in rent	<p>A measure of housing affordability within the public housing (or community housing) sectors, calculated as the percentage of assessable household income spent on housing costs — that is, the number of rebated public rental households (or community housing households) paying X per cent of assessable income on rent at 30 June, divided by the total number of rebated public rental households (or community housing households) occupying public (or community) housing, multiplied by 100. X is defined as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 0–20 per cent; • 21–25 per cent; • 26–30 per cent; or • greater than or equal to 31 per cent. <p>Previously reported as a performance indicator.</p>
Tenantable community housing dwellings	Dwellings where maintenance has been completed and that are either occupied or unoccupied. All occupied dwellings are tenantable.
Tenantable public housing dwellings	Dwellings where maintenance has been completed and that are either occupied or unoccupied. All occupied dwellings are tenantable.
Untenantable community housing dwellings	Dwellings that are not occupied by a tenant where maintenance has either been deferred or not completed at 30 June.
Untenantable public housing dwellings	Dwellings that are not occupied by a tenant, where maintenance has been either deferred or not been completed at 30 June 2000.
Underuse	Where two or more bedrooms are additional to the number required in the dwelling to satisfy the proxy occupancy standard.

Sources: AIHW (2000a, 2000b).

Table 16.15 Indicators

<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Definition</i>
Affordability	The level of housing affordability within the public housing (or community housing) sectors, measured as the rent charged as a proportion of the market rent for each dwelling (adjusted for Commonwealth Rent Assistance).
Amenity/location	The amenity of public rental housing stock, measured as the percentage of tenants expressing different degrees of satisfaction in relation to the amenity and location of their dwelling.
Customer satisfaction	The percentage of customers expressing different degrees of satisfaction in relation to various service aspects of their dwelling.
Direct cost per unit	The average cost of providing assistance (excluding capital) per dwelling.
Low income	The low income need status of all households receiving assistance, calculated as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the number of new income households as a proportion of all new households; • the number of new income households plus new special needs (not low income) households as a proportion of all new households; or • the number of all households either paying less than market rent or special needs households paying market rent as a proportion of all households (new and existing).
Match of dwelling and household size	The percentage of dwellings where dwelling size is inappropriate, calculated as the percentage of occupied public (or community) dwellings with overcrowding based on the following definition of <i>overcrowding</i> : where two or more additional bedrooms are required to satisfy the proxy occupancy standard. To derive the number of households in this category, every household is assigned a proxy occupancy status based on the size of the dwelling — that is, the number of bedrooms; the number of adults; the number of children; and the family relationships of household members.
Occupancy rate	The use of rental housing stock as measured by the occupancy rate of the stock, where 'occupied' is defined as tenantable dwellings occupied by tenants who have a public housing tenancy agreement with the relevant State housing authority.
Priority access to those in greatest need	The proportion of new allocations to those in greatest need in the following time frames: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • under three months; • three months to under six months; • six months to under one year; • one year to less than two years; • two years or more; • total.
Rent arrears	Total rent actually collected as a percentage of total rent charged.
Special needs	The proportion of new tenancies that are allocated to households with special needs.
Turnaround time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The time taken to use vacant stock.

Sources: AIHW (2000a, 2000b).

Commonwealth Rent Assistance

Table 16.16 **Terms**

<i>Term</i>	<i>Definition</i>
ARO	Administrative review officer.
Eligible income support clients	Clients in receipt of an income support payment, or more than the minimum rate of family allowance. Commonwealth Rent Assistance is automatically paid once eligibility is established. The only eligible clients who are not paid are those affected by Centrelink errors in recording information or by program errors.
Income units	The basic units used to determine eligibility for social security payments. Income units are analogous to family units with the distinction that non-dependent children and other adults living in the same household are treated as separate income units. Children are regarded as dependent until 16 years of age. Children aged 16 – 18 years may also be regarded as dependent if they are full time students, wholly or substantially dependent on another person, and not in receipt of an income support payment. (Defined differently for public and community housing).
Rent	Amounts payable as a condition of occupancy of the person's home. 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 is unable to separately identify the amount paid for lodgings, two-thirds of the payment is deemed to be for rent. There is no requirement that rent be paid; a person whose rent is in arrears may remain eligible for assistance provided Centrelink is satisfied that the liability is genuine.
Total income from all sources	Income received by the customer or partner, excluding income received by a dependent. Includes regular social security payments and any maintenance and other private income taken into account for income testing purposes. Excludes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • one time payments; • arrears payments; • advances; • Employment or Education Entry Payments; • Mobility Allowance; • Maternity Allowance; and • Child Care Assistance Rebate. <p>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 family allowance but no other income support payment.</p>

Source: FaCS (unpublished)

Table 16.17 Indicators

<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Definition</i>
Number of eligible income support customers receiving CRA	A point-in-time indicator, supplied for both individuals and income units. Individuals are counted as receiving Commonwealth Rent Assistance (CRA) if they are recorded as a current customer at the date data is extracted from the system and as having been paid CRA in the preceding fortnight. Income units are counted if either member of a couple meets that condition. In a small number of cases, a person may have ceased to be eligible for Rent Assistance at the extract date (for example, because they stopped paying rent) but are still counted if CRA was paid in the last fortnight.
Proportion of income spent on rent with and without CRA	A point-in-time indicator, measuring the proportion of income units spending less than (a) 30 per cent, and (b) 50 per cent of their income on rent, both with and without CRA. The proportion of income spent on rent is calculated as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • with CRA — $\text{rent} - \text{CRA} / \text{total income from all sources, excluding CRA}$; or • without CRA: — $\text{rent} / \text{total income from all sources, excluding CRA}$.
Geographic spread of CRA customers	A point-in-time indicator comparing the number of income units receiving CRA within a particular postcode with the number of private dwellings in that postcode (obtained from the 1996 Census).
Decisions reviewed/appealed	Number of CRA appeals to authorised review officers (the Social Security Appeals Tribunal and the Administrative Appeals Tribunal). Numbers relate to all cases finalised in the last financial year and show whether the decisions are favourable to the individual customer.
Accuracy of decision making	Centrelink procedure and accuracy check results for each of the main relevant payment types (Family Allowance and other income support payments). Although it does not relate directly to the program, CRA is included in the accuracy check. The results should therefore be indicative of the accuracy of decisions about CRA. Separate figures are provided for new claims and reviews. Data exclude procedural errors that do not affect payments, as indicated by the checking officer.
Control of overpayment	The number of reviews conducted targeted at CRA, and their outcomes — that is, the number and value of any increases in assistance, decreases in assistance, and overpayments detected. Although the reviews are targeted at CRA, they may also result in variations to the primary payment.
Proportion of claims for which review was sought	The number of customers seeking a review by an administrative review officer as a proportion of the number of customers receiving CRA. The number of customers receiving CRA is used as a proxy for the number of claimants. There is no formal claim for CRA, and all details needed to determine eligibility are recorded for all customers. Consequently, it is not possible to identify persons who have sought assistance, but were unsuccessful. Therefore, the number of customers receiving CRA may be the most appropriate proxy for claimants.
Customer and community satisfaction surveys	Surveys not specific to CRA that may be broadly indicative of the views of CRA recipients. This measure provides information about overall customer satisfaction with service delivery, customer service centre staff and call centre staff (the Centrelink telephone service).

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Table 16.17 (Continued)

<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Definition</i>
Timeliness	<p>The timeliness of new claim processing for primary payments (Family Allowance and other income support payments). A substantial proportion of new claimants will be eligible for CRA. These measures will provide some indication of the timeliness for CRA.</p> <p>For each payment type, a standard has been agreed with Centrelink that a specified proportion of claims will be finalised within an agreed period; for example, 80 per cent of Age Pension claims are to be finalised within 28 days of receipt. For each of the main payment types, details will be provided of both the agreed timeliness standard and the actual performance achieved over the full financial year. This information will be supplemented by a table showing the cumulative proportion of claims finalised by the number of weeks since lodgement.</p>
Ratio of running costs to total outlays for the CRA program	Total running costs for the CRA program as a proportion of total outlays.
Running costs per 1000 CRA customers	Total running costs for the CRA program per 1000 CRA customers.

Source: FaCS (unpublished).