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## 15 Protection and support services

Protection and support services aim to assist individuals and families who are in crisis or experiencing difficulties that hinder personal or family functioning. They do this by alleviating the difficulties and reducing the potential for their recurrence.

This chapter reports on:

- *child protection services*: the functions of government that receive and assess allegations of child abuse and neglect, and/or harm to children and young people, that provide and refer clients to family support and other relevant services, and that intervene to protect children;
- *out-of-home care services*: care for children placed away from their parents for protective or other family welfare reasons; and
- *supported accommodation and assistance services*: services to assist young people, adults and families who are homeless or at imminent risk of becoming homeless.

A profile of child protection and out-of-home care services appears in section 15.1, followed by a brief discussion of recent policy developments in section 15.2. A framework of performance indicators is outlined in section 15.3 and data are discussed in section 15.4. Future directions in performance reporting are outlined in section 15.5.

A profile of accommodation and assistance services funded under the Supported Accommodation and Assistance Program (SAAP) appears in section 15.6, followed by a brief discussion of recent policy developments in section 15.7. A framework of performance indicators for these services is outlined in section 15.8 and data are discussed in section 15.9. Future directions in performance reporting are discussed in section 15.10.

Jurisdictions' comments on both child protection and out-of-home care services, and supported accommodation and assistance services are reported in section 15.11. Definitions of data descriptors and indicators are provided in section 15.12.

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Major improvements for the 2002 Report include improved efficiency reporting for child protection and out-of-home care. There has also been continued refinement of the financial data counting rules to promote more comparable data.

### *Supporting tables*

Supporting tables for chapter 15 are provided on the CD-ROM enclosed with the Report. The files are provided in Microsoft Excel 97 format as \Publications\Reports\2002\Attach15A.xls and in Adobe PDF format as \Publications\Reports\2002\Attach15A.pdf.

Supporting tables are identified in references throughout this chapter by an 'A' suffix (for example, table 15A.3 is table 3 in the electronic files). They may be subject to revision. The most up-to-date versions of these files can be found on the Review's web page ([www.pc.gov.au/service/gsp/](http://www.pc.gov.au/service/gsp/)). Users without Internet access can contact the Secretariat to obtain up-to-date versions of these tables (see details on the inside front cover of the Report).

## **15.1 Profile of child protection and out-of-home care services**

### **Service overview**

Child protection services are provided to protect children and/or young people aged 0–17 years who are at risk of harm within their families, or whose families do not have the capacity to protect them. These services include:

- receiving and responding to reports of concern about children or young people, including investigation and assessment where appropriate;
- providing support services (directly or through referral) where harm or a risk of significant harm is identified, to strengthen the capacity of families to care safely for children;
- initiating intervention, including applying for a care and protection order through a court if necessary and placing children or young people in out-of-home care to secure their safety;
- ensuring the ongoing safety of children and young people by working with families to resolve protective concerns;

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- working with families to reunite children (who were removed for safety reasons) with their parents as soon as possible; and
  - securing permanent alternative care when it is determined that a child is unable to be returned to the care of their parents and working with young people to identify alternative supported living arrangements where family reunification is not possible. (In NSW, restoration may occur in voluntary placements as well.)

Certain social and demographic factors are associated with involvement in the child protection system (box 15.1).

**Box 15.1 Factors associated with involvement in child protection services**

Factors associated with involvement in child protection services include social factors (such as social stresses, social isolation, poverty, unemployment, cultural expectations and norms, and poor housing) and lack of access to, or inability to access, support services.

A 1995 Victorian study found that families investigated as a result of a child concern report tended to be more likely than the wider community to:

- be renting (60 per cent compared with 23 per cent in the wider community);
- be on a pension or benefit (58 per cent compared with 26 per cent);
- be a single parent family (46 per cent compared with 17 per cent); and
- be more mobile (90 per cent of families had moved in the past five years compared with 42 per cent in the wider community).

Other major factors associated with substantiated child protection reports include a parent's disability, mental health, poor parenting skills and substance abuse.

*Sources:* AIHW (1997), DHS (1995).

Out-of-home care services provide care for children and young people aged 0–17 years who are placed away from their parents or family home for reasons of safety or family crisis. These reasons include abuse, neglect or harm, illness of a parent and the inability of parents to provide adequate care. The placements may be voluntary or in conjunction with care and protection orders.

Out-of-home care services are either home based care (such as foster care, care with the child's extended family and other home based arrangements), facility based care (such as family group homes and community residential care), or independent living (which is often intensively supported) as a transition to full independence or supported placements.

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Across jurisdictions, there has been a shift away from the use of facility based (or residential) care towards foster care and other forms of home based care including relative/kinship care. Family preservation services are increasingly seen as an alternative to the removal of the child from their home for child protection reasons (box 15.2).

### **Box 15.2 Family preservation services**

Family preservation services are specialist services established in each jurisdiction that aim to:

- prevent the imminent separation of children from their primary caregivers as a result of child protection concerns; or
- reunify families where separation has already occurred.

In 2000-01, there were at least 25 family preservation programs and subprograms operating across Australia (five in NSW, three in Queensland, three in WA, 12 in SA and one each in Tasmania and the ACT). (Victoria was unable to provide data for 2000-01, but operated 18 programs in 1999-2000.)

The family preservation services differ from other types of child protection and family support services referred to in this chapter, in that they:

- are funded or established explicitly to prevent separation of, or to reunify, families;
- provide a range of services as part of an integrated strategy focusing on improving family functioning and skills, rather than providing a single type of service;
- are intensive in nature, averaging 8–10 hours of service provision per week for a specified short term period (usually less than six months); and
- generally receive referrals from a child protection service.

Family preservation services may use some or all of the following strategies: assessment and case planning; parent education and skill development; individual and family counselling; anger management; respite and emergency care; practical and financial support; mediation, brokerage and referral services; and problem solving training.

Expenditure data collected for the first time in this Report indicate that recurrent expenditure on family preservation services across all jurisdictions in 2000-01 was at least \$39.5 million (table 15A.1). Table 15A.21 provides additional information about families and children who were involved with family preservation services during 2000-01.

*Source:* AIHW (unpublished).

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## Roles and responsibilities

State and Territory governments fund child protection, out-of-home care, family preservation and other relevant services which may be delivered by the government or the non-government sector. State and Territory community services departments are responsible for investigating and assessing reports to the department, referring families to support services and intervening where necessary (including making court applications when an order is required to protect a child and placing children in out-of-home care). The non-government sector plays a significant role in the delivery of family support services in all jurisdictions.

Other areas of government also have a role in child protection and provide services for children who have come into contact with community services departments for protective reasons. Examples include:

- police services, which investigate serious allegations of child abuse and neglect, particularly criminal matters;
- courts, which decide whether a child will be placed on an order;
- education and child care services, which provide services for these children and also conduct mandatory reporting and protective behaviours education in some jurisdictions; and
- health services, which support the assessment of child protection matters and deliver therapeutic, counselling and other services.

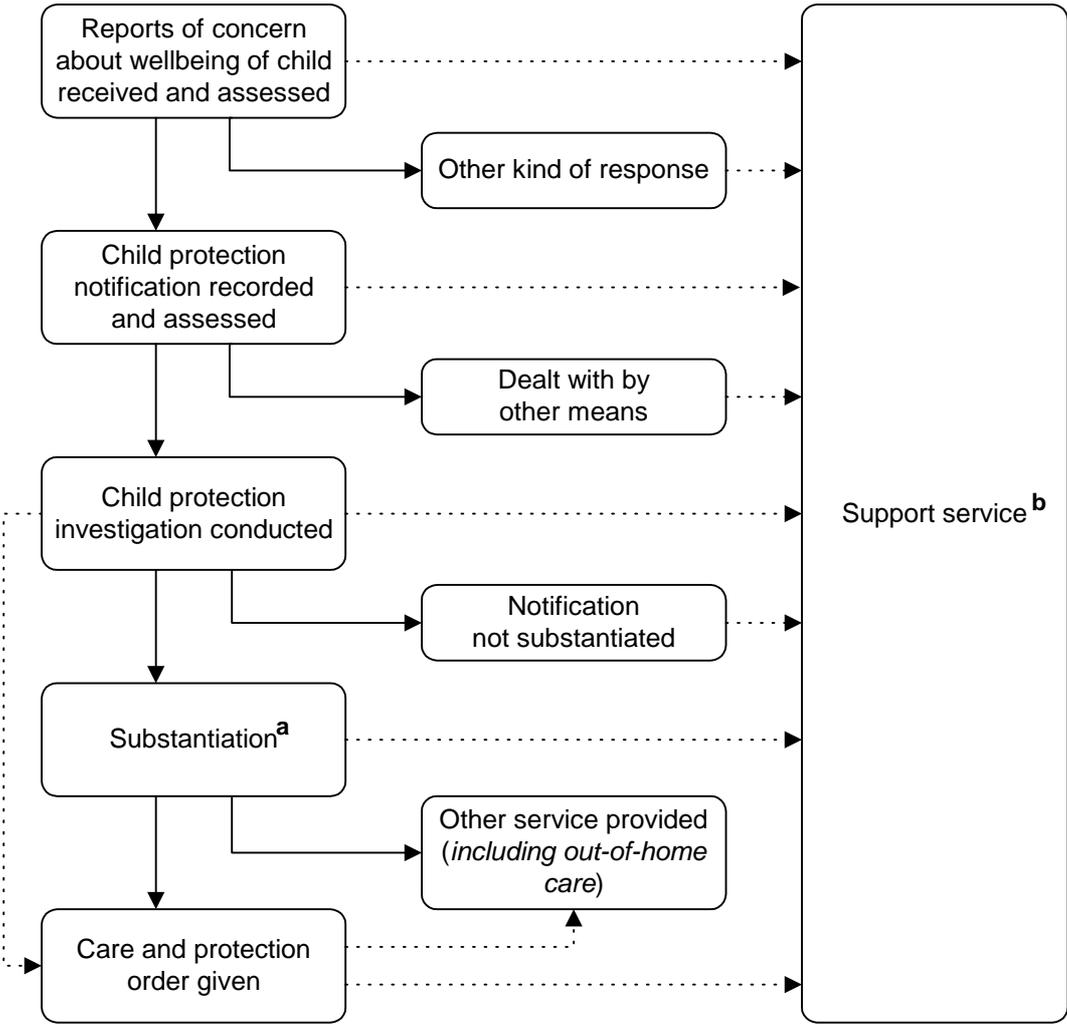
## Size and scope

### *The child protection system*

Child protection legislation, policies and practices vary among jurisdictions, but the broad processes in the child protection system are similar (figure 15.1). State and Territory community services departments are advised of concerns about the wellbeing of children through reports to the department. Reports may be made by people mandated to report (such as medical practitioners, police services, and school teachers and principals) or by other members of the community. These reports are then assessed and classified as child protection notifications, child concern reports or matters requiring some other kind of response. The most common sources of notification for finalised investigations in 1999-2000 were school personnel (16 per cent), police (15 per cent), parents and guardians (12 per cent), and friends and neighbours (11 per cent) (AIHW 2001).

Jurisdictions count notifications at different points in the response to a report, ranging from the point of initial contact with the source of the report to the end of a screening and decision making process. This means the number of notifications is not strictly comparable across jurisdictions.

Figure 15.1 **Child protection system**



Note: Dashed lines indicate that clients may or may not receive these services, depending on need.

<sup>a</sup> Tasmania also uses the category 'child at risk' where the notification is not substantiated but there is reasonable ground for suspecting the existence of previous or future abuse, neglect or harm. This suspicion is a basis for continued departmental involvement. <sup>b</sup> Support services include family support or family preservation services provided by community service departments and referrals to other agencies.

Although notifications are defined differently across jurisdictions, around 86 812 children (8180 Indigenous children and 78 632 non-Indigenous children) were the subject of child protection notifications in 2000-01. Nationally, the rate of notifications per 1000 children aged 0–16 years was 19.5 (44.8 for Indigenous

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children and 18.4 for non-Indigenous children).<sup>1</sup> Across jurisdictions, the rate of notifications per 1000 children was highest in Victoria (25.7) and lowest in Tasmania (2.7) (table 15A.8).

In NSW, Victoria, and the NT, notifications are caller defined; that is, if the person making the report believes a child is in need of protection, then the department classifies the report as a notification. As a result, the rates per 1000 children are highest in these jurisdictions.

New South Wales, Queensland, SA and the ACT screen each incoming report before deciding whether it will be designated and counted as a notification. This reduces the proportion of reports that become notifications. This Report does not record the number of reports that are screened out.

Western Australia and Tasmania also screen incoming reports and use a narrower definition of notification than that used by other jurisdictions. These States define only reports of suspected maltreatment as notifications; other reports of concern that would be counted as notifications in other jurisdictions are classified as child and family concern reports, for which the response is different from that for notifications of suspected maltreatment. Thus, the proportion of reports recorded as notifications is lower in WA and Tasmania than in other jurisdictions. This Report does not record the number of reports that are screened out.

In all jurisdictions, notifications are investigated when deemed appropriate, based on the policies and practices in that jurisdiction. Once it has been decided that an investigation is required, the investigation process is similar across jurisdictions. The community services department obtains further information about the child and its family by checking information systems for any previous history, undertaking discussion/case planning with agencies and individuals, interviewing/sighting the child and interviewing the caregivers/parents. At a minimum, the child is sighted whenever practicable and the child's circumstances and needs are assessed. This investigation process will determine whether the notification is substantiated or not substantiated (figure 15.1).

The criteria for substantiation vary across jurisdictions. In some jurisdictions, a notification is substantiated when an incident of abuse or neglect has occurred or is

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<sup>1</sup> Child protection services, care and protection orders and out-of-home care relate to children aged 0–17 years. Rates of children in notifications, investigations and substantiations, however, are calculated for children aged 0–16 years, given differences in jurisdictions' legislation, policies and practices regarding children aged 17 years.

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likely to occur; in others, it is substantiated when the child has been harmed or is likely to be harmed, or when there is a combination of action and harm.<sup>2</sup>

Tasmania also has a 'child at risk' category. This applies when the notification is not substantiated, but when there are reasonable grounds for suspecting the possibility of previous or future harm, so further involvement of the community services department is considered to be warranted. If harm or risk of harm is substantiated, then action will be taken to protect the child if it is required (including court action if warranted). These cases may be substantiated in other jurisdictions.

If an investigation results in substantiation, then intervention by the relevant community services department may be needed to protect the child. This intervention can take a number of forms, including referral to other services, supervision, counselling or recourse to the court, or placement in out-of-home care.

In 2000-01, 23 449 children (3004 Indigenous children and 20 445 non-Indigenous children) were the subject of a substantiation. Nationally, the rate of children who were the subject of a substantiation per 1000 children aged 0–16 years was 5.3 (16.4 for Indigenous children and 4.8 for non-Indigenous children).<sup>3</sup> Across jurisdictions, the rate of children who were the subject of a substantiation per 1000 children was highest in Queensland (7.4) and lowest in Tasmania (0.9) (table 15A.8).

Although child protection substantiations are often resolved without the need for a court order (which is usually a last resort), recourse to the court may take place at any point in the child protection investigation process (figure 15.1). The types of order available vary across jurisdictions.

At 30 June 2001, 19 783 children (4146 Indigenous children and 15 637 non-Indigenous children) were on care and protection orders. Nationally, the rate of children on care and protection orders per 1000 children aged 0–17 years was 4.2 (21.6 for Indigenous children and 3.4 for non-Indigenous children).<sup>4</sup> Across jurisdictions, the rate of children on orders per 1000 children was highest in NSW (5.1) and lowest in WA (2.5) (table 15A.8).

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<sup>2</sup> In the past, the main focus of child protection legislation and policy was on the identification and investigation of narrowly defined incidents that were broadly grouped as types of abuse or neglect. Across all jurisdictions, the focus is shifting away from the actions of parents and guardians, towards the outcomes for the child, and the identification and investigation of actual harm to the child and the child's needs.

<sup>3</sup> See footnote 1, page 795.

<sup>4</sup> See footnote 1, page 795.

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Out-of-home care is one of a range of services provided to families and children where there is a need to provide safe care for a child. The current emphasis in policy and practice is to maintain the child within the family if at all possible, and to place a child in out-of-home care only if this will improve the outcome for the child. If it is necessary to remove the child from their home, then placement with the wider family or community is sought where possible, particularly in the case of Indigenous children (AIHW 1999). Continued emphasis is being placed on improving case planning and case management processes, to facilitate the safe return home of children in out-of-home care and to maximise case workers' contact time with children and families.

Across Australia, 18 241 children (4073 Indigenous children and 14 168 non-Indigenous children) were in out-of-home care across Australia at 30 June 2001. Nationally, the number of children in out-of-home care per 1000 children aged 0–17 years was 3.9 (21.2 for Indigenous children and 3.1 for non-Indigenous children). Across jurisdictions, the rate of children in out-of-home care per 1000 children was highest in NSW (4.9) and lowest in the NT (2.7) (table 15A.11).

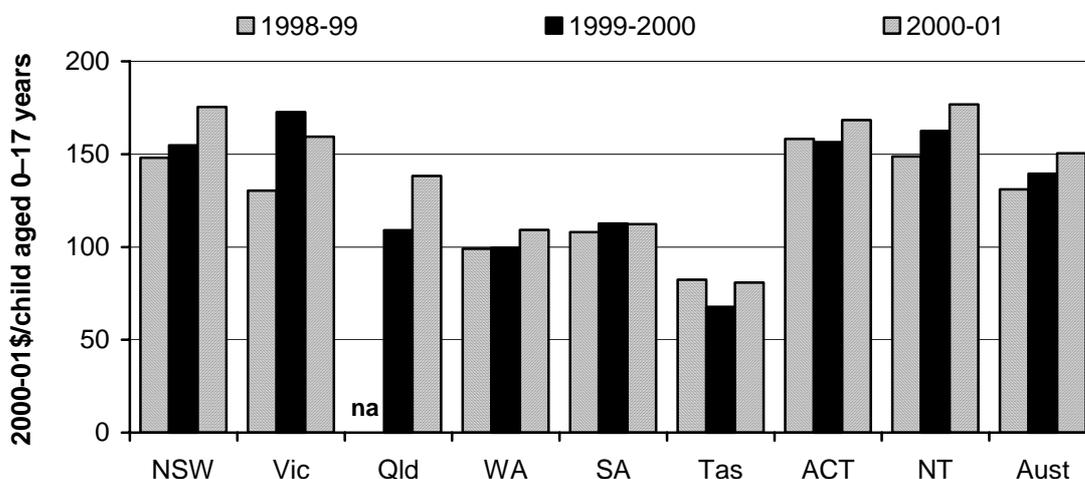
## **Funding**

Recurrent expenditure on child protection and out-of-home care services was at least \$712.1 million across Australia in 2000-01 — a real increase of \$52.6 million (or 8.0 per cent) from the 1999-2000 expenditure. Nationally, out-of-home care services accounted for the majority (57.8 per cent, or \$411.3 million) of this expenditure. Some jurisdictions, however, have difficulty in separating expenditure on child protection from expenditure on out-of-home care services (table 15A.1).

Nationally, real recurrent expenditure per child aged 0–17 years was about \$150 in 2000-01. This varied across jurisdictions, from \$177 in the NT to \$81 in Tasmania (figure 15.2). Real recurrent expenditure on child protection and out-of-home care services per child aged 0–17 years increased in all jurisdictions except Victoria and SA between 1999-2000 and 2000-01.

It is an objective of the Review to report comparable estimates of costs. Ideally, the full range of costs to government would be determined on a comparable basis across jurisdictions. Where the full costs cannot be counted, costs should be estimated on a consistent basis across jurisdictions. In the area of child protection, however, there are differences across jurisdictions in the costs reported. (Table 15A.4 identifies the level of consistency across jurisdictions for a number of expenditure items.) The scope of child protection systems also varies across jurisdictions, and expenditure on some services may be included for some jurisdictions and not for others (see page 793 for a fuller discussion of the child protection system).

Figure 15.2 Real recurrent expenditure on child protection and out-of-home care services



Source: table 15A.1.

## 15.2 Policy developments in child protection and out-of-home care services

Most jurisdictions are implementing child protection reforms to enhance the safety of children and ensure children and families receive the types of service most likely to meet their needs. Several jurisdictions introduced or passed new legislation in 2000.

The Tasmanian *Children, Young Persons and their Families Act 1997* was proclaimed on 1 July 2000 and changes the focus of child protection by emphasising that the family has primary responsibility for care and protection of children. The Act promotes support for families in preference to the removal of children, encourages involvement of the wider family and community in making decisions about children, and introduces family group conferencing.

Substantial reform of child protection service delivery in Queensland commenced in 1999-2000 with the proclamation of the *Child Protection Act 1999* and implementation of the recommendations of the Forde Inquiry. The *Child Protection Regulation 2000*, the *Commission for Children and Young People Act 2000* and the *Children's Services Tribunal Act 2000* were completed and proclaimed. The Statement of Standards and Charter of Rights for Children in Care contained in the Act and the Department's Statement of Commitment with Foster Carers were operationalised. These policies reflect the emphasis of the new legislation on the

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right of every child to protection from harm, and on meeting the needs of children and young people subject to statutory intervention in a quality care system.

New South Wales legislation that was partially proclaimed in December 2000 provides staff with greater flexibility in responding to a report of child abuse. It also shifts the focus to the children and young people most at risk, and emphasises a search for early solutions through cooperation by the Government and community agencies. The remaining sections of the NSW legislation are expected to be proclaimed in stages through until July 2002.

The ACT passed the *Children and Young People Act 1999* on 10 May 2000. The Act places an increased emphasis on family support and prevention services to assist children, young people and their families. The Act also articulates a strong set of guiding principles for decisions about the best interests of children.

### **15.3 Framework of child protection and out-of-home care services performance indicators**

The framework of performance indicators for child protection and out-of-home care services is based on shared government objectives (box 15.3).

**Box 15.3 Objectives for child protection and out-of-home care services**

The aims of child protection services are to:

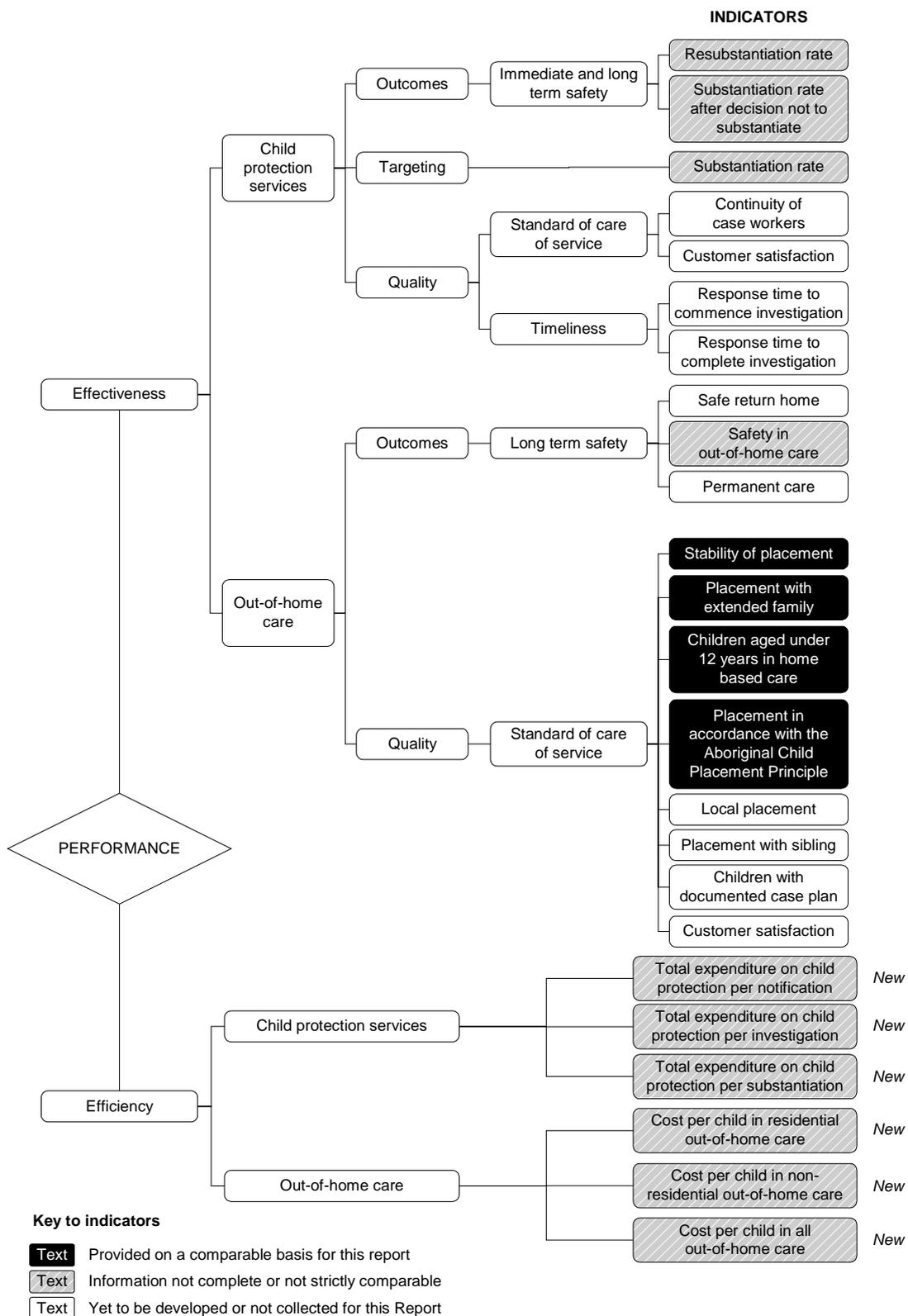
- protect children and young people at risk of harm within their family or in circumstances in which the family of the child or young person does not have the capacity to protect them; and
- assist families to protect children and young people.

The aim of out-of-home care services is to provide quality care for children and young people aged 17 years and under who cannot live with their parents for reasons of safety or family crisis.

Child protection and out-of-home care services should be provided in an efficient and effective manner.

The goal of child protection is to maintain the child within the family wherever this can be safely achieved. In some situations, however, it may be necessary to place the child in out-of-home care. The framework identifies key result areas that indicate the extent to which these broad objectives are met (figure 15.3).

**Figure 15.3 Performance indicators for child protection and out-of-home care services**



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## New and refined indicators

Major improvements for the 2002 Report include improved efficiency reporting for child protection and out-of-home care. For child protection, total expenditure on child protection is compared with the number of notifications, investigations and substantiations across jurisdictions. For out-of-home care, the actual expenditure on residential care is related to the number of children in residential care at 30 June, and the actual expenditure on non-residential care is related to the number of children in non-residential care at 30 June. Further refinement of these indicators is expected in future reports.

## 15.4 Key child protection and out-of-home care services performance indicator results

Different delivery contexts, locations and types of client may affect the effectiveness and efficiency of child protection services. Appendix A contains detailed statistics and short profiles on each State and Territory, which may assist in interpreting the performance indicators.

### Effectiveness: child protection services

#### *Outcomes — resubstantiation*

Child protection services aim to prevent the recurrence of abuse and neglect or harm to children. One way of observing whether this is achieved is to measure the number of children who were the subject of a resubstantiation. This indicator of service outcomes is important because it partly reveals the extent to which intervention by child protection services has succeeded in preventing further harm. Reported results, however, may be affected by factors that are beyond the control of child protection services, such as changes in the family situation (for example, illness, unemployment, a new partner).

Resubstantiation is measured by counting the proportion of children who were the subject of a substantiation in the previous financial year (1999-2000 for this Report) and who were subsequently the subject of a further substantiation within the following three and/or 12 months.

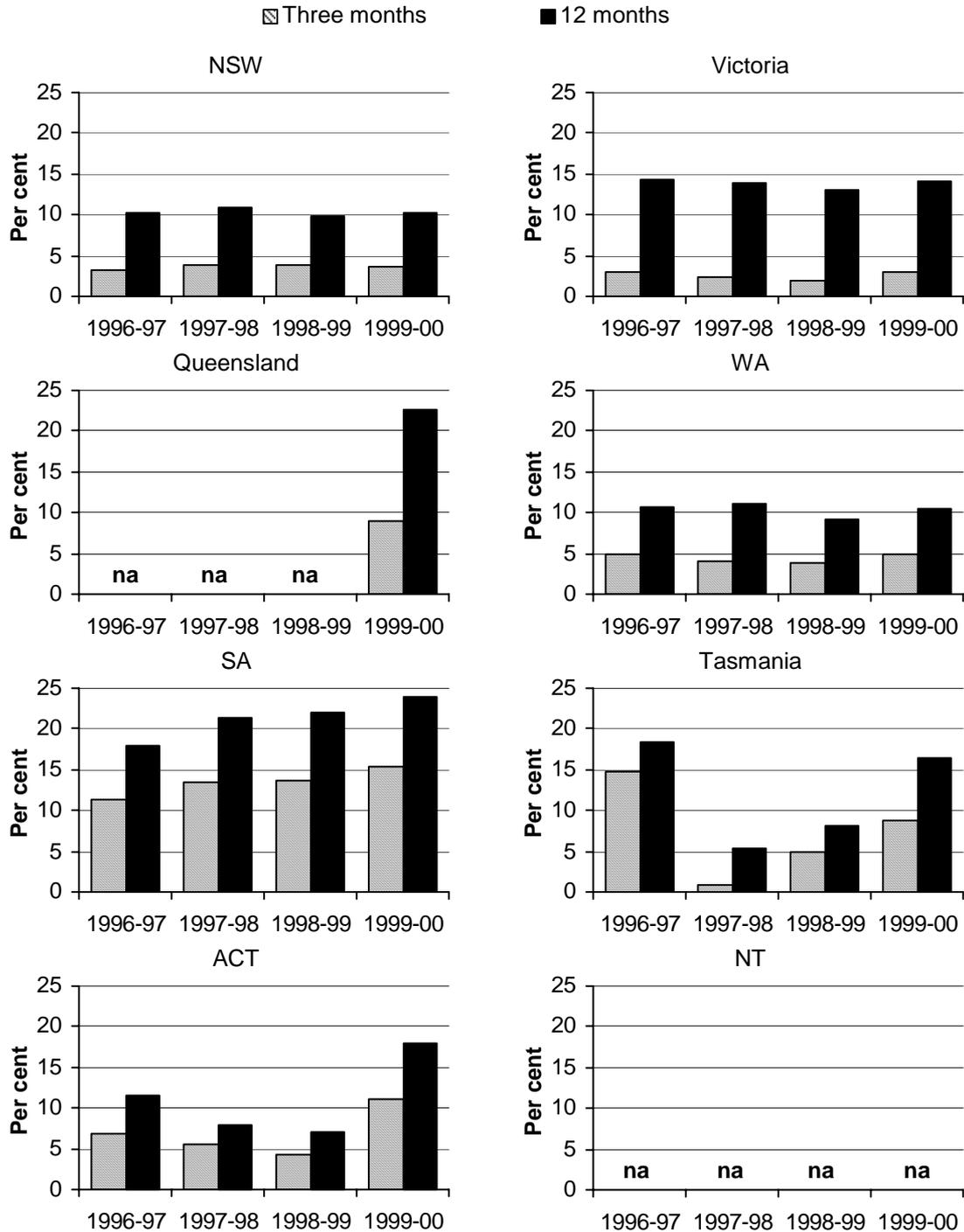
**Data that are comparable across jurisdictions were not available for this Report**, but data are comparable *within* each jurisdiction over time (figure 15.4).

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All jurisdictions except the NT were able to provide data on this indicator for 1999-2000.

- In NSW, the proportion of children who were the subject of a resubstantiation within three months after an initial substantiation in 1999-2000 was 3.6 per cent (a decline of 0.3 percentage points from 1998-99). The proportion of children who were the subject of a resubstantiation within 12 months was 10.2 per cent (an increase of 0.4 percentage points from 1998-99) (table 15A.29).
- In Victoria, the proportion of children who were the subject of a resubstantiation within three months after an initial substantiation in 1999-2000 was 2.9 per cent (an increase of 1.0 percentage point from 1998-99). The proportion of children who were the subject of a resubstantiation within 12 months was 14.0 per cent (an increase of 0.9 percentage points from 1998-99) (table 15A.45).
- In Queensland, the proportion of children who were the subject of a resubstantiation within three months after an initial substantiation in 1999-2000 was 9.0 per cent. The proportion of children who were the subject of a resubstantiation within 12 months was 22.6 per cent (table 15A.61). Data for previous years are not comparable.
- In WA, the proportion of children who were the subject of a resubstantiation within three months after an initial substantiation in 1999-2000 was 4.9 per cent (an increase of 1.1 percentage points from 1998-99). The proportion of children who were the subject of a resubstantiation within 12 months was 10.5 per cent (an increase of 1.4 percentage points from 1998-99) (table 15A.77).
- In SA, the proportion of children who were the subject of a resubstantiation within three months after an initial substantiation in 1999-2000 was 15.4 per cent (an increase of 1.7 percentage points from 1998-99). The proportion of children who were the subject of a resubstantiation within 12 months was 23.9 per cent (an increase of 1.9 percentage points from 1998-99) (table 15A.93).
- In Tasmania, the proportion of children who were the subject of a resubstantiation within three months after an initial substantiation in 1999-2000 was 8.9 per cent (an increase of 3.9 percentage points from 1998-99). The proportion of children who were the subject of a resubstantiation within 12 months was 16.5 per cent (an increase of 8.3 percentage points from 1998-99) (table 15A.109).

Figure 15.4 Proportion of children who were the subject of a substantiation during the previous year, who were the subject of a subsequent substantiation within three and 12 months<sup>a</sup>



<sup>a</sup> Data are not comparable across jurisdictions because definitions of substantiation vary significantly. Consequently, rates should not be compared across jurisdictions. **na** Not available.

Sources: tables 15A.29, 15A.45, 15A.61, 15A.77, 15A.93, 15A.109, 15A.125 and 15A.141.

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- In the ACT, the proportion of children who were the subject of a resubstantiation within three months after an initial substantiation in 1999-2000 was 11.1 per cent (an increase of 6.7 percentage points from 1998-99). The proportion of children who were the subject of a resubstantiation within 12 months was 17.9 per cent (an increase of 10.8 percentage points from 1998-99) (table 15A.125).

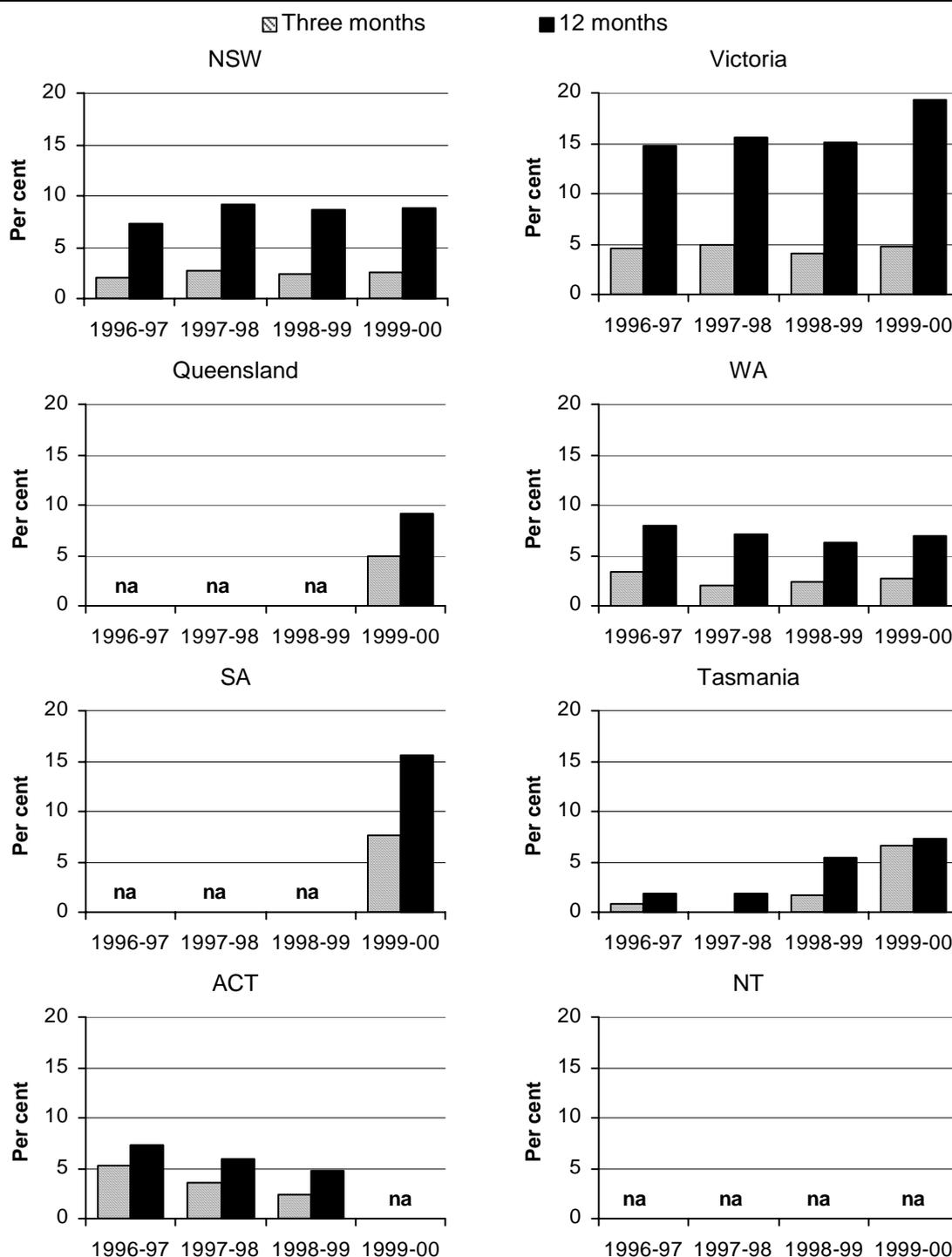
#### *Outcomes — substantiation after decision not to substantiate*

This indicator measures the proportion of children who were the subject of an investigation in the previous financial year which led to a decision not to substantiate, who were subsequently the subject of a substantiation within three and 12 months of the initial decision not to substantiate. This indicator is important because it partly reveals the extent to which an investigation has not succeeded in identifying the risk of harm to a child who is subsequently the subject of substantiated harm. It should be noted, however, that a demonstrable risk of harm might not have existed in the first instance. As such, reported results may be affected by factors that are beyond the control of child protection services, such as changes in the family situation (for example, illness, unemployment, a new partner).

**Data that are comparable across jurisdictions were not available for this Report**, but data are comparable *within* each jurisdiction over time (figure 15.5). All jurisdictions except the ACT and the NT were able to provide data for this indicator.

- In NSW, the proportion of children who were the subject of a decision not to substantiate in 1999-2000 and who were subsequently the subject of a substantiation within three months was 2.5 per cent (an increase of 0.2 percentage points from 1998-99). The proportion of children who were the subject of a decision not to substantiate in 1999-2000 and who were subsequently the subject of a substantiation within 12 months was 8.8 per cent (a slight increase of 0.1 percentage points from 1998-99) (table 15A.28).
- In Victoria, the proportion of children who were the subject of a decision not to substantiate in 1999-2000 and who were subsequently the subject of a substantiation within three months was 4.7 per cent (an increase of 0.7 percentage points from 1998-99). The proportion of children who were the subject of a decision not to substantiate in 1999-2000 and who were subsequently the subject of a substantiation within 12 months was 19.3 per cent (an increase of 4.2 percentage points from 1998-99) (table 15A.44).

**Figure 15.5 Proportion of children who were the subject of an investigation and decision not to substantiate in the previous year, who were the subject of a subsequent substantiation within three and/or 12 months<sup>a</sup>**



<sup>a</sup> Data are not comparable across jurisdictions because definitions of substantiation vary significantly. Consequently, rates should not be compared across jurisdictions. **na** Not available.

Sources: tables 15A.28, 15A.44, 15A.60, 15A.76, 15A.92, 15A.108, 15A.124 and 15A.140.

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- In Queensland, the proportion of children who were the subject of a decision not to substantiate in 1999-2000 and who were subsequently the subject of a substantiation within three months was 4.9 per cent. The proportion of children who were the subject of a decision not to substantiate in 1999-2000 and who were subsequently the subject of a substantiation within 12 months was 9.2 per cent (table 15A.60). Data for previous years are not comparable.
  - In WA, the proportion of children who were the subject of a decision not to substantiate in 1999-2000 and who were subsequently the subject of a substantiation within three months was 2.7 per cent (an increase of about 0.3 percentage points from 1998-99). The proportion of children who were the subject of a decision not to substantiate in 1999-2000 and who were subsequently the subject of a substantiation within 12 months was 6.9 per cent (an increase of 0.7 percentage points from 1998-99) (table 15A.76).
  - In SA, the proportion of children who were the subject of a decision not to substantiate in 1999-2000 and who were also subsequently the subject of a substantiation within three months was 7.7 per cent. The proportion of children who were the subject a decision not to substantiate 1999-2000 and who were also subsequently the subject of a substantiation within 12 months was 15.7 per cent (table 15A.92).
  - In Tasmania, the proportion of children who were the subject of a decision not to substantiate in 1999-2000 and who were subsequently the subject of a substantiation within three months was 6.6 per cent (an increase of 4.9 percentage points from 1998-99). The proportion of children who were the subject of a decision not to substantiate in 1999-2000 and who were subsequently the subject of a substantiation within 12 months was 7.4 per cent (an increase of 1.9 percentage points from 1998-99) (table 15A.108).

### *Targeting — substantiation rate*

Targeting, like appropriateness, is conceptually difficult to measure. The substantiation rate (the proportion of finalised investigations that result in substantiation) attempts to measure the effectiveness of targeting of investigation, recognising the human and financial cost of investigation where no harm has occurred. Decisions on targeting must weigh up these costs of investigation with the cost of failing to investigate a case where harm has occurred. However, the substantiation rate provides information on only one aspect of targeting — that is, the proportion of investigations that substantiated harm. It provides no information on cases that were not investigated but for which an investigation would have substantiated harm.

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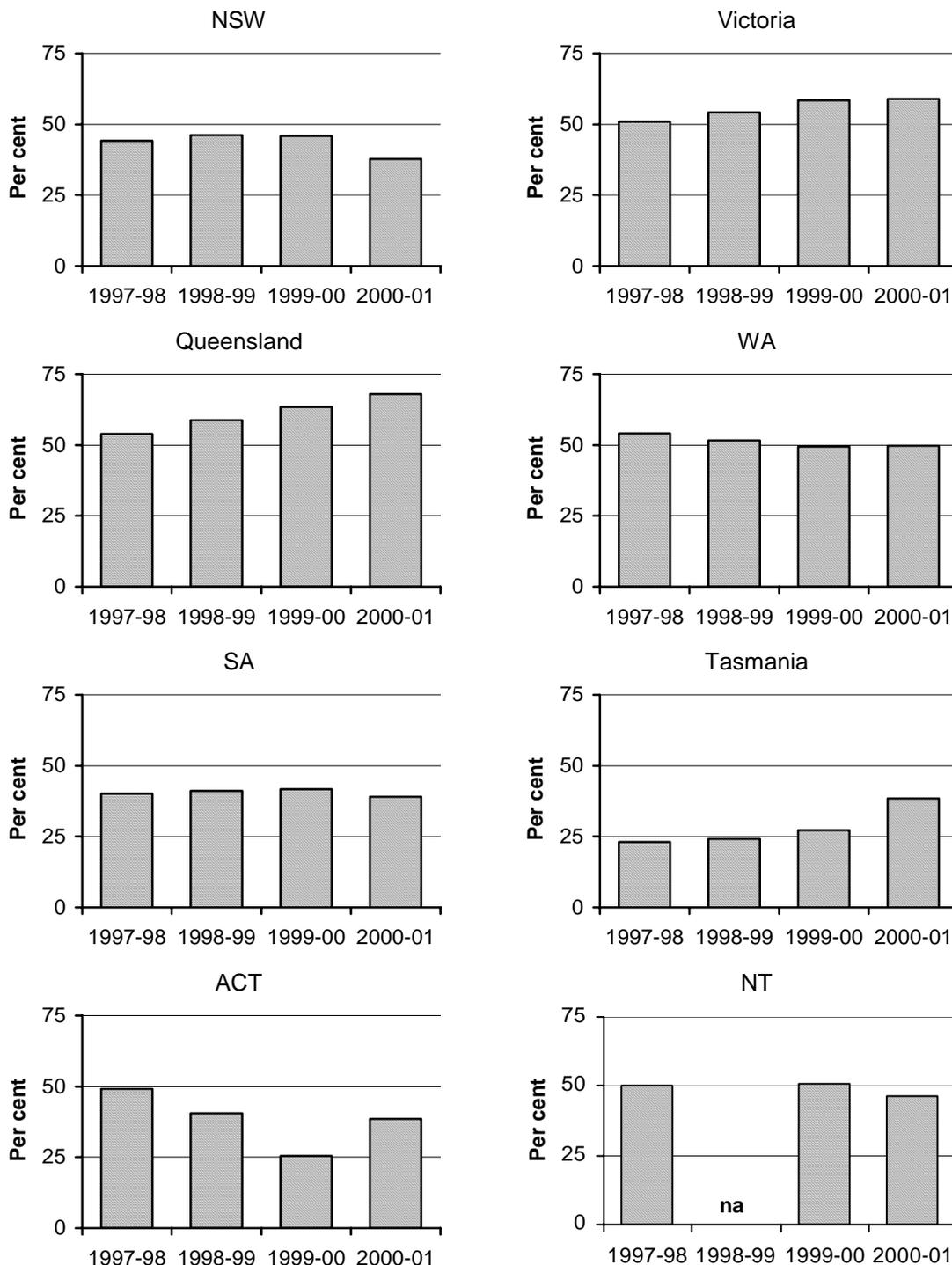
An increase in the substantiation rate may reflect changes in targeting strategies (that is, the same number of investigations with increased targeting of cases where harm has occurred) or more narrow targeting (that is, fewer investigations targeted at the highest priority cases). In the latter case, the benefits (both human and financial) from fewer investigations need to be weighed against the costs of harm having occurred in the 'lower risk' (as determined by the assessment process) cases that were not investigated.

Thus, differences in the substantiation rate across jurisdictions (when comparable data are available) and changes over time within jurisdictions should be used to prompt further analysis, rather than be considered as definitive performance information.

**Data that are comparable across jurisdictions were not available for this Report because definitions of substantiation vary across jurisdictions**, however, data are comparable *within* each jurisdiction over time unless otherwise stated (figure 15.6). Seven jurisdictions provided full data for the four years 1996-97 to 2000-01.

- In NSW, the substantiation rate was 37.7 per cent in 2000-01 — a decline of 8.3 percentage points from 1999-2000 (table 15A.24).
- In Victoria, the substantiation rate was 58.9 per cent in 2000-01 — an increase of 0.4 percentage points from 1999-2000 (table 15A.40).
- In Queensland, the substantiation rate was 68.0 per cent in 2000-01 — an increase of 4.5 percentage points from 1999-2000 (table 15A.56).
- In WA, the substantiation rate was 49.8 per cent in 2000-01 — an increase of 0.4 percentage points from 1999-2000 (table 15A.72).
- In SA, the substantiation rate was 39.0 per cent in 2000-01 — a decline of 2.7 percentage points from 1999-2000 (table 15A.88).
- In Tasmania, the substantiation rate was 38.4 per cent in 2000-01 — an increase of 11.2 percentage points from 1999-2000 (table 15A.104).
- In the ACT, the substantiation rate was 38.5 per cent in 2000-01 — an increase of 13.1 percentage points from 1999-2000 (table 15A.120).
- In the NT, the substantiation rate was 46.2 per cent in 2000-01 — a decline of 4.5 percentage points from 1998-99 (table 15A.136).

Figure 15.6 Proportion of finalised child protection investigations that were substantiated<sup>a, b</sup>



<sup>a</sup> Data are not comparable across jurisdictions because definitions of substantiation vary significantly. Consequently, rates should not be compared across jurisdictions. <sup>b</sup> From 1997-98, data also includes those notifications where it is possible to substantiate the presence of risk factors that place a child at risk of significant harm. **na** Not available.

Sources: tables 15A.24, 15A.40, 15A.56, 15A.72, 15A.88, 15A.104, 15A.120 and 15A.136.

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## Effectiveness: out-of-home care services

### *Client outcomes — safety in out-of-home care*

One indicator of the effectiveness of out-of-home care is the safety of clients in care situations. Only Victoria, Queensland, WA, Tasmania and the ACT were able to provide data on the incidence of child protection substantiations in 2000-01 where the person believed responsible was either the carer or another person living in the household. The number of children in out-of-home care in 2000-01 who were the subject of such a substantiation ranged from 3.6 per cent in Queensland to 0.1 per cent in Victoria and Tasmania (table 15A.20). Data are not comparable across jurisdictions as a result of differences in policy and recording.

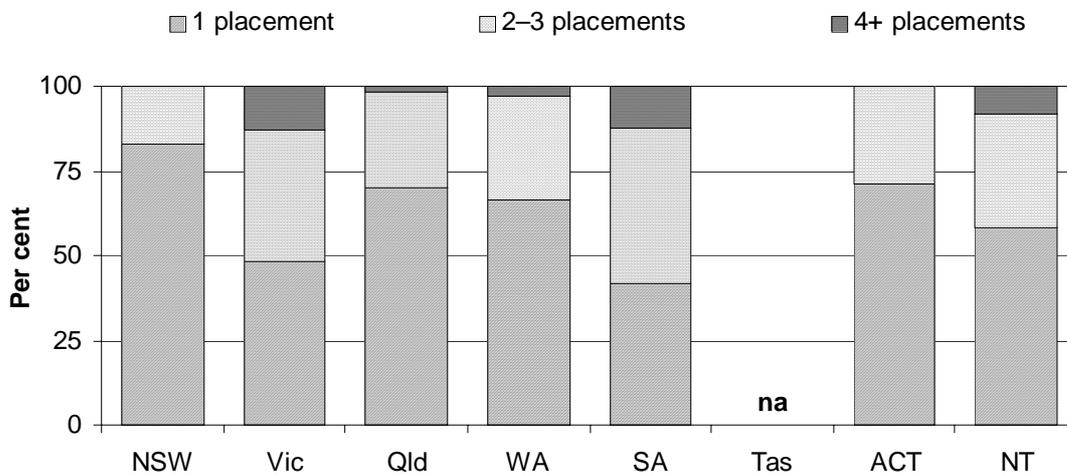
### *Service quality — stability of placement*

Stability of placement for children placed away from their family for protective reasons is an important indicator of service quality, particularly for those children who require long term placements. Many children will have more than one placement for good reasons (for example, an initial placement followed by a longer term placement), however, further placements may in some cases indicate instability.

Data were collected on the number of *different* placements for children who had exited out-of-home care in 2000-01. Data were grouped according to the length of time in care (less than 12 months and 12 months or more). Reported placements are not restricted to placements made as a result of a referral from child protection. They also include voluntary placements for which a financial payment is made. For the jurisdictions able to provide data (except Victoria and SA), the majority of children exiting care after less than 12 months had had only one placement. The proportion of children having had only one placement ranged from 82.8 per cent in NSW to 41.9 per cent in SA (figure 15.7).

For the jurisdictions able to provide data, children who had been in out-of-home care longer tended to have more placements. The proportion of children exiting care in 2000-01 after 12 months or more who had experienced one placement ranged from 60.3 per cent for NSW to 13.6 per cent in the NT (figure 15.8).

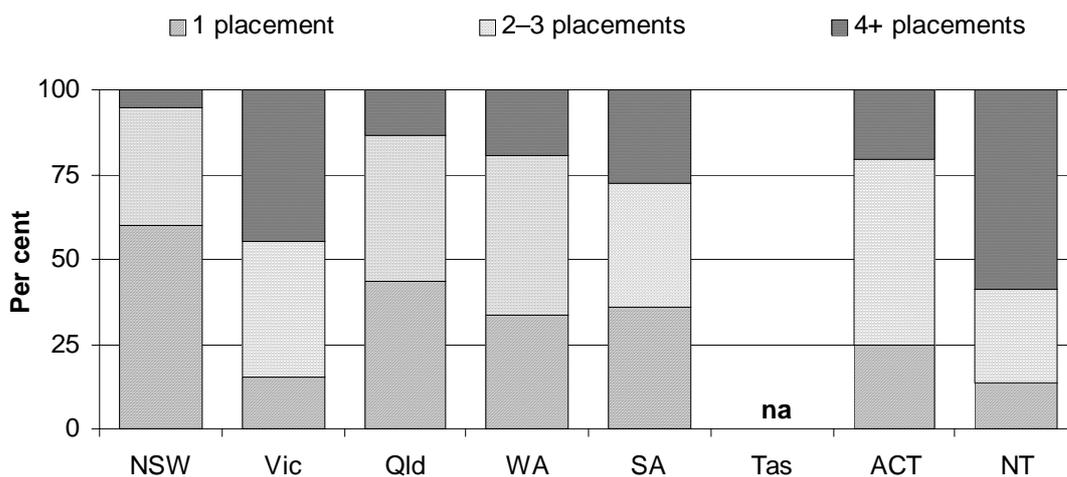
**Figure 15.7 Children exiting care after less than 12 months, by number of different placements, 2000-01<sup>a, b</sup>**



<sup>a</sup> Data refer to children exiting care in 2000-01. <sup>b</sup> Out-of-home care data are not the same for each State and Territory. Refer to footnotes in the source table for information about what each jurisdiction's data include. **na** Not available.

Source: table 15A.19.

**Figure 15.8 Children exiting care after 12 months or more, by number of different care placements, 2000-01<sup>a, b</sup>**



<sup>a</sup> Data refer to children exiting care in 2000-01. <sup>b</sup> Out-of-home care data are not the same for each State and Territory. Refer to footnotes in the source table for information about what each jurisdiction's data include. **na** Not available.

Source: table 15A.19.

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### *Service quality — placement with extended family or in home based care*

The type of placement is another indicator of the quality of child placement. Placing children with their relatives or kin is generally preferred for children in out-of-home care. The proportion of children placed with relatives or kin at 30 June 2001 ranged from 55.0 per cent in NSW to 12.5 per cent in SA. The proportion of children placed with relatives or kin was greater for Indigenous children than for non-Indigenous children in all jurisdictions except Tasmania (figure 15.9).

Placing younger children in home based care is generally considered to be in their best interests, particularly for younger children. The proportion of children aged under 12 years who were placed in home based care at 30 June 2001 ranged from 99.9 per cent in SA to 88.1 per cent in Tasmania. In all jurisdictions except NSW and SA, the proportion of Indigenous children aged under 12 years placed in home based care was smaller than the proportion of non-Indigenous children (figure 15.10).

It is also desirable to place children locally so some elements of their life remain unchanged (for example, enabling the child to continue attendance at the same school). Data are not yet available for this indicator.

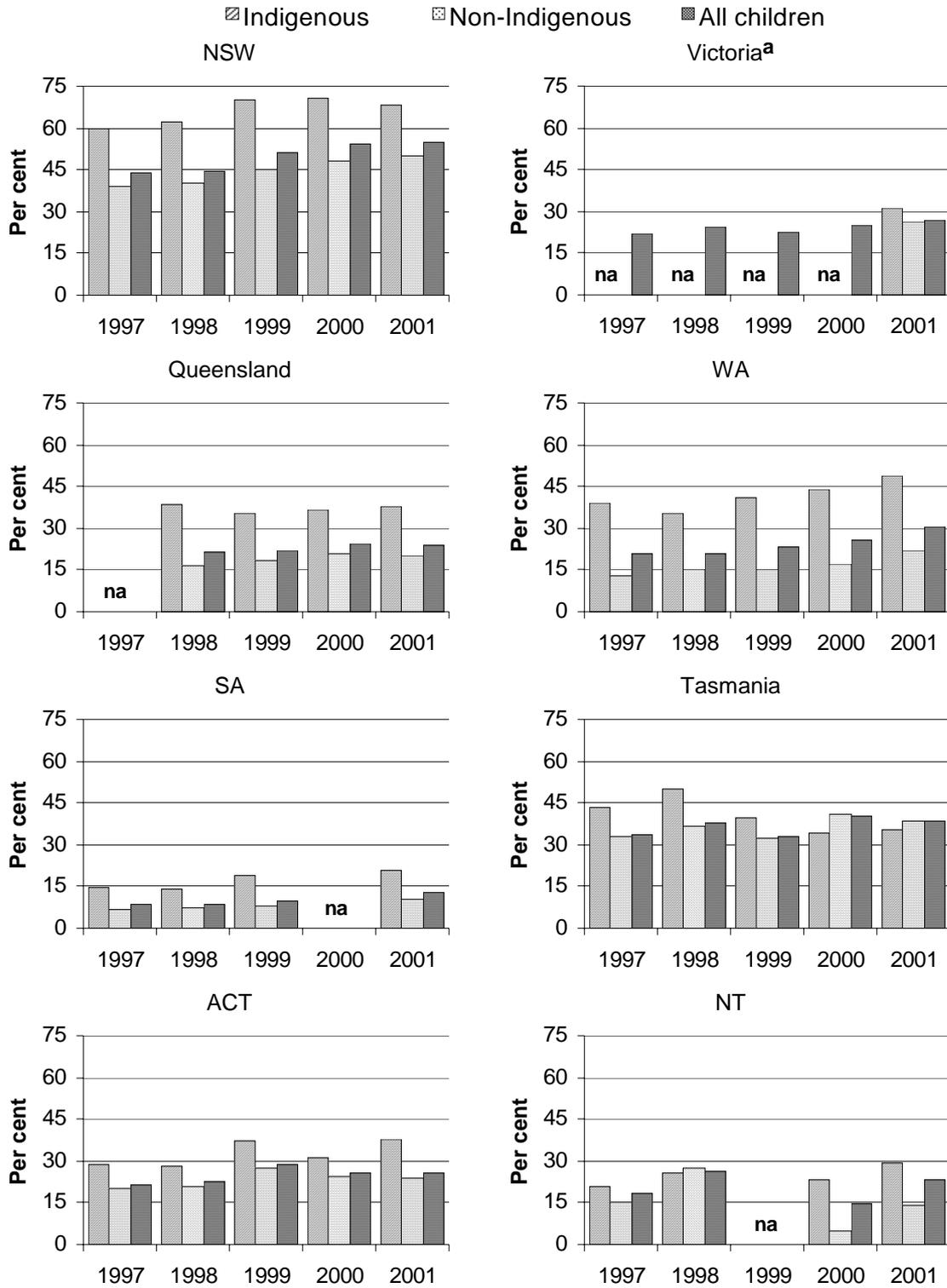
### *Service quality — placement in accordance with the Aboriginal Child Placement Principle*

The Aboriginal Child Placement Principle outlines a preference for the placement of Indigenous children. The principle sets out the following hierarchy or placement preference:

- placement with the child's extended family (which includes Indigenous and non-Indigenous relatives/kin);
- placement within the child's Indigenous community; or
- placement with other Indigenous people (NLRC 1997).

All jurisdictions have adopted this principle either in legislation or policy. The following analysis includes all jurisdictions except Tasmania and the ACT, which each had less than 35 Indigenous children in care at 30 June 2001. The proportion of Indigenous children placed in accordance with the principle ranged from 86.6 per cent in NSW to 56.4 per cent in Victoria at 30 June 2001 (excluding Tasmania and the ACT) (figure 15.11).

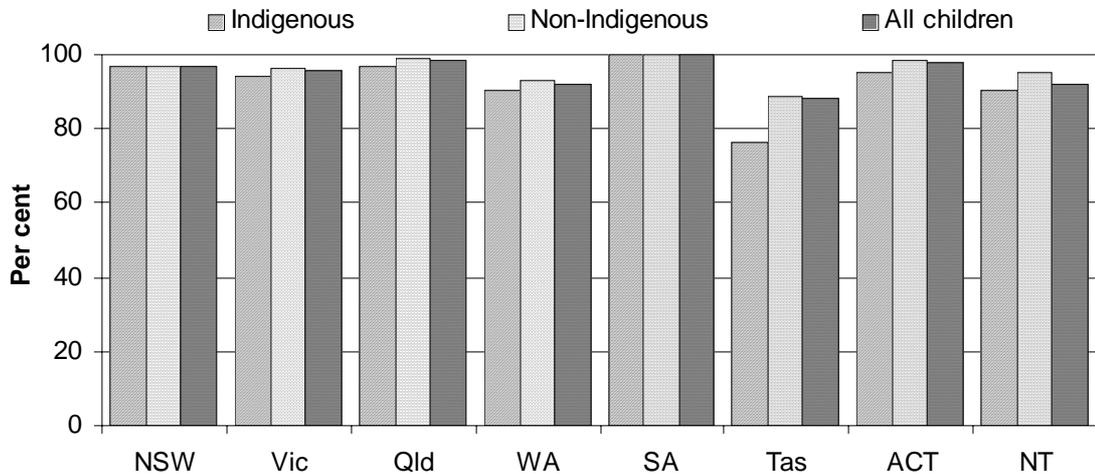
**Figure 15.9 Proportion of children in out-of-home care placed with relatives/kin, by Indigenous status, at 30 June**



<sup>a</sup> Victoria was unable to provide data on Indigenous children. **na** Not available.

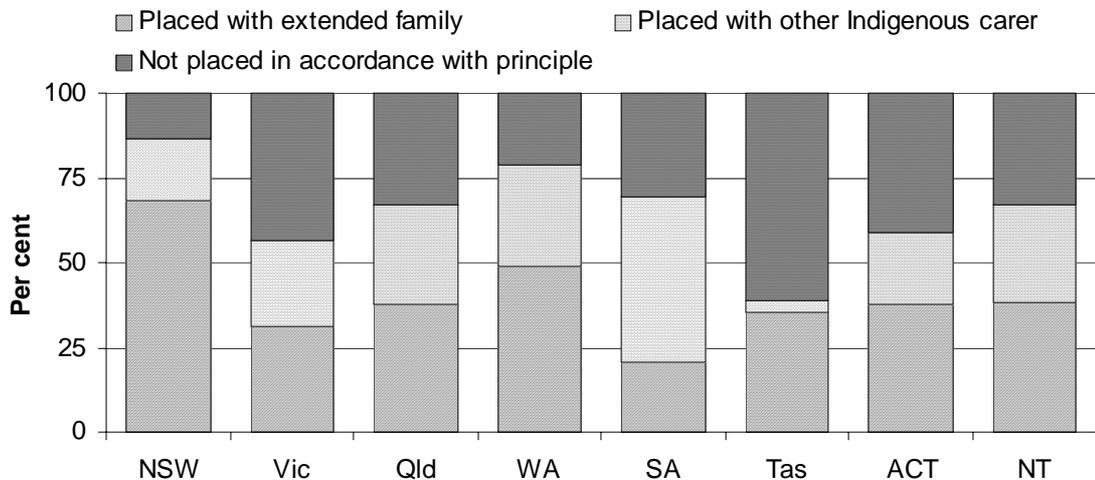
Sources: tables 15A.35, 15A.51, 15A.67, 15A.83, 15A.99, 15A.115, 15A.131 and 15A.147.

**Figure 15.10 Proportion of children aged under 12 years in out-of-home care placed in home based care, by Indigenous status, 30 June 2001**



Source: table 15A.18.

**Figure 15.11 Placement of Indigenous children, 30 June 2001<sup>a, b, c</sup>**



<sup>a</sup> Refer to footnotes in the source table for information about what the data include. <sup>b</sup> Includes Indigenous children in facility based care, independent living (including private board) and other living arrangements (including unknown living arrangements). <sup>c</sup> Note that data for Tasmania and the ACT relate to a small number of Indigenous children (31 and 29 respectively) in care at 30 June 2001.

Source: table 15A.17.

The most preferred placement option outlined under the aboriginal Child Placement Principle is placement with the child's extended family. The proportion of Indigenous children placed with extended family at 30 June 2001 ranged from 68.2 per cent in NSW to 20.7 per cent in SA (excluding Tasmania and the ACT). Placement with other Indigenous care providers (the child's Indigenous community

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or other Indigenous people) also complies with principle. The proportion of Indigenous children placed with other Indigenous care providers ranged from 48.9 per cent in SA to 18.5 per cent in NSW (excluding Tasmania and the ACT, which each had less than 35 Indigenous children in care) (table 15A.17).

## **Efficiency**

State and Territory governments have an interest in understanding the efficiency of the child protection systems they administer. This helps to identify the key cost drivers of a system and to provide valuable information for weighing the efficacy of various options for addressing child protection issues.

### *Challenges of efficiency report for child protection systems*

Although the Review is committed to reporting comparable efficiency data, identifying and measuring comparable and meaningful unit cost indicators for child protection are problematic for a number of reasons. First, as outlined in section 15.1, the child protection systems in Australia have evolved under the auspice of State and Territory governments, thus the emphasis of the system and its processes vary among jurisdictions. Secondly, across most jurisdictions there is also an increasing but variable emphasis on tailoring services to meet the individual client's needs, including a greater focus on diversionary options (box 15.2). In addition, in many jurisdictions there is not an easy separation between child protection, out-of-home care and other support services for families; it is difficult to apportion costs consistently across these services. Finally, the State and Territory agencies responsible for child protection issues are typically encompassed within larger community services departments and it can be difficult to identify many of the costs associated with child protection in a discrete manner. (Table 15A.4 identifies the level of consistency across jurisdictions for expenditure data.)

### *The pathways project*

The Protection and Support Working Group is developing a project to explore approaches for calculating comparable cost measures for child protection alternative support pathways that can be applied across all Australian jurisdictions (box 15.4). This project aims to provide a method to support the annual reporting of comparable cost data for the core set of alternate child protection pathways that can be applied across all Australian jurisdictions.

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#### Box 15.4 Examples of pathways in the Victorian system

As an example of the possible pathways, children and young people notified to the Victorian Department of Human Services' child protection service may follow one of four pathways.

1. The child/young person is assessed at the point of notification as having wider family and/or social needs but not requiring intensive support or statutory intervention. They are referred to an appropriate family support service, counselling service or other secondary service.
2. The child/young person is assessed at notification or following investigation as requiring intensive support to prevent risk of significant harm. They are referred to an intensive family support service and other secondary services, possibly including intensive case management. They may be case managed by the department's child protection service for up to three months to ensure engagement with appropriate services.
3. The child/young person is determined by the court to be in need of protection and made the subject of a supervision order, possibly preceded by an interim protection order. Intensive case management in addition to specific support, rehabilitation and other services may be required, some on an involuntary basis.
4. The child/young person is removed from the original carers by a court order. Alternate care arrangements as well as case management, rehabilitation and family reunification services may be required. Long term shared care or long term support to parents may be required. Permanent separation from parents may result.

One pathway or a combination of pathways may be necessary to successfully meet the needs of an individual clients.

Source: Victorian DHS (unpublished).

#### *Limitations of reported indicators*

This Report includes proxy efficiency indicators for child protection and out-of-home care. The method and reliability of these indicators are markedly different.

#### *Issues with child protection efficiency indicators*

Three different indicators of child protection costs are provided. These indicators were calculated by dividing total expenditure on child protection by the number of notifications, investigations and substantiations and do not therefore indicate the cost per notification, investigation and substantiation. The three different indicators are therefore:

- **total expenditure on child protection** per notification;

- 
- **total expenditure on child protection** per investigation; and
  - **total expenditure on child protection** per substantiation.

These indicators provide some insight into the cost of providing child protection services, but should not be added together. They need to be interpreted with care.

#### *Issues with out-of-home care efficiency indicators*

The out-of-home care proxy efficiency indicators look at the cost of placements in residential care, non-residential care and all residential care (the sum of the previous two). Some jurisdictions are unable to disaggregate their expenditure into residential and non-residential care. The number of children in each type of care are available for a snapshot day on 30 June each year. This allows three proxy efficiency indicators for out-of-home care to be derived:

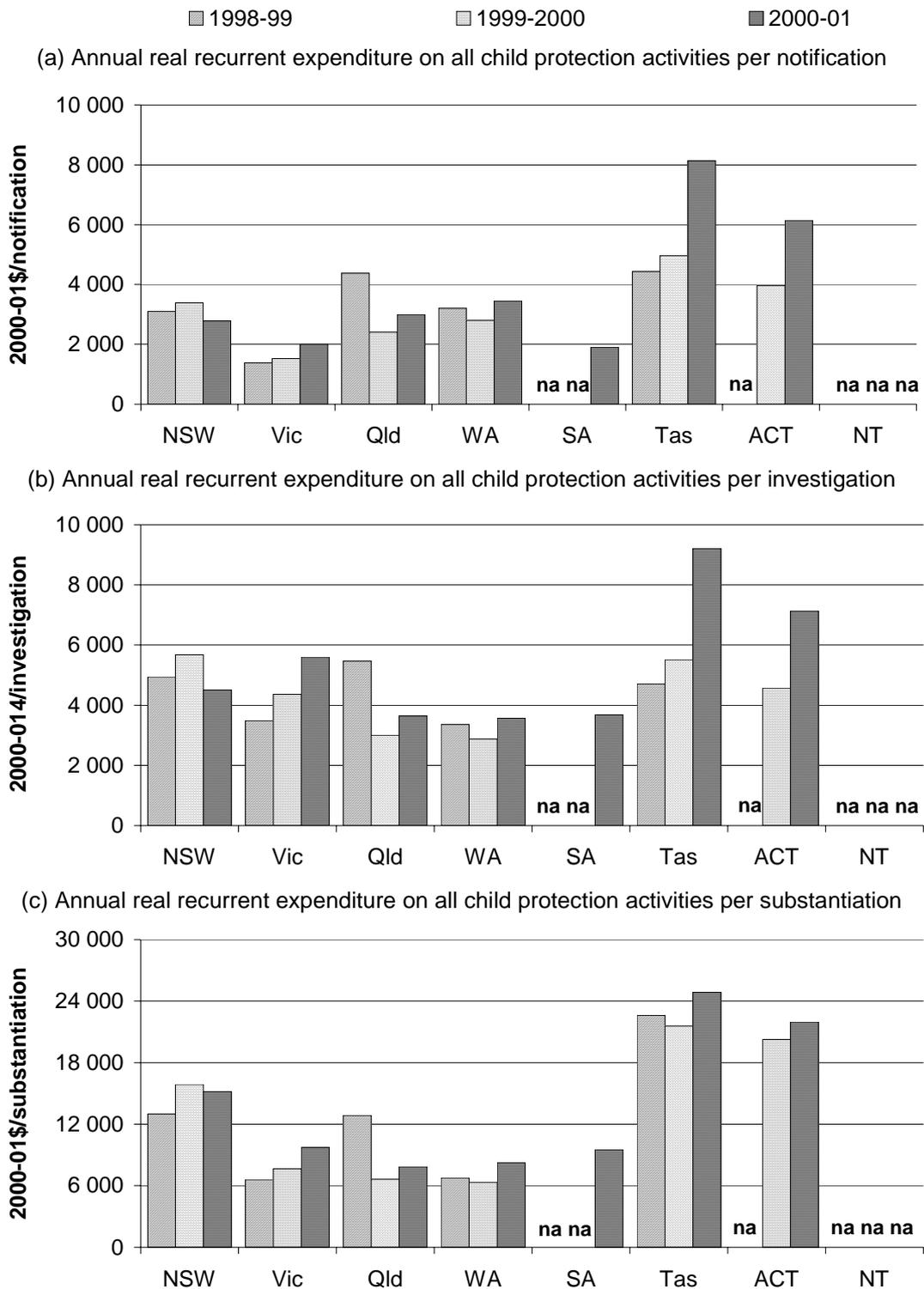
- annual expenditure on residential out-of-home care per child in residential care at 30 June;
- annual expenditure on non-residential out-of-home care per child in non-residential care at 30 June; and
- annual expenditure on all out-of-home care per child in all types of out-of-home care at 30 June.

Although more robust than the child protection indicators, these indicators still need to be treated with caution. Specifically, these measures do not represent the cost of providing out-of-home care to an individual child. Basing expenditure per child on the number of children in care at 30 June overstates the cost per child, because significantly more children are in care during a year than at a point in time. In addition, some children may have longer periods in care than others, which may lead the actual cost of providing out-of-home care to an individual child to be overstated by as much as 50 per cent.

#### *Child protection efficiency indicator results*

Total expenditure on child protection per notification in 2000-01 ranged from \$3452 in WA to \$1901 in SA (excluding Tasmania and the ACT) (figure 15.12a). Total expenditure on child protection per investigation in 2000-01 ranged from \$5601 in Victoria to \$3568 in WA (excluding Tasmania and the ACT) (figure 15.12b). Total expenditure on child protection per substantiation in 2000-01 ranged from \$15 203 in NSW to \$7854 in Queensland (excluding Tasmania and the ACT) (figure 15.12c).

Figure 15.12 **Child protection efficiency indicators<sup>a, b</sup>**



<sup>a</sup> Real expenditure based on ABS GDP price deflator 2000-01 = 100 (table A.19). <sup>b</sup> These data should not be interpreted as the 'cost per notification', 'cost per investigation' or 'cost per substantiation' because each is based on the total cost of all child protection activities. Differences across jurisdictions reflect the quantity of the three activities rather than a difference in unit costs.

Source: table 15A.2.

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Tasmania and the ACT had significantly higher expenditure than that of the other jurisdictions for all indicators, which may relate to the fixed costs associated with maintaining a child protection system and the economies of scale available to other jurisdictions.

#### *Out-of-home care efficiency indicator results*

All jurisdictions except NSW, Tasmania and the NT were able to separate expenditure on out-of-home care into expenditure on residential care and expenditure on non-residential care.

For those jurisdictions that provided data, expenditure on residential care ranged from about \$190 897 per child in residential care at 30 June 2001 in WA to about \$73 302 in SA (figure 15.13a). (WA expenditure may be overstated because it includes corporate and policy costs and funding to the non-government agencies.) For those jurisdictions that provided data on non-residential care, expenditure ranged from about \$33 538 per child in non-residential care at 30 June 2001 in the ACT to \$11 634 in WA (figure 15.13b). Total expenditure on residential care per child in care at 30 June 2001 ranged from \$38 302 in the ACT to \$12 330 in Tasmania (figure 15.13c).

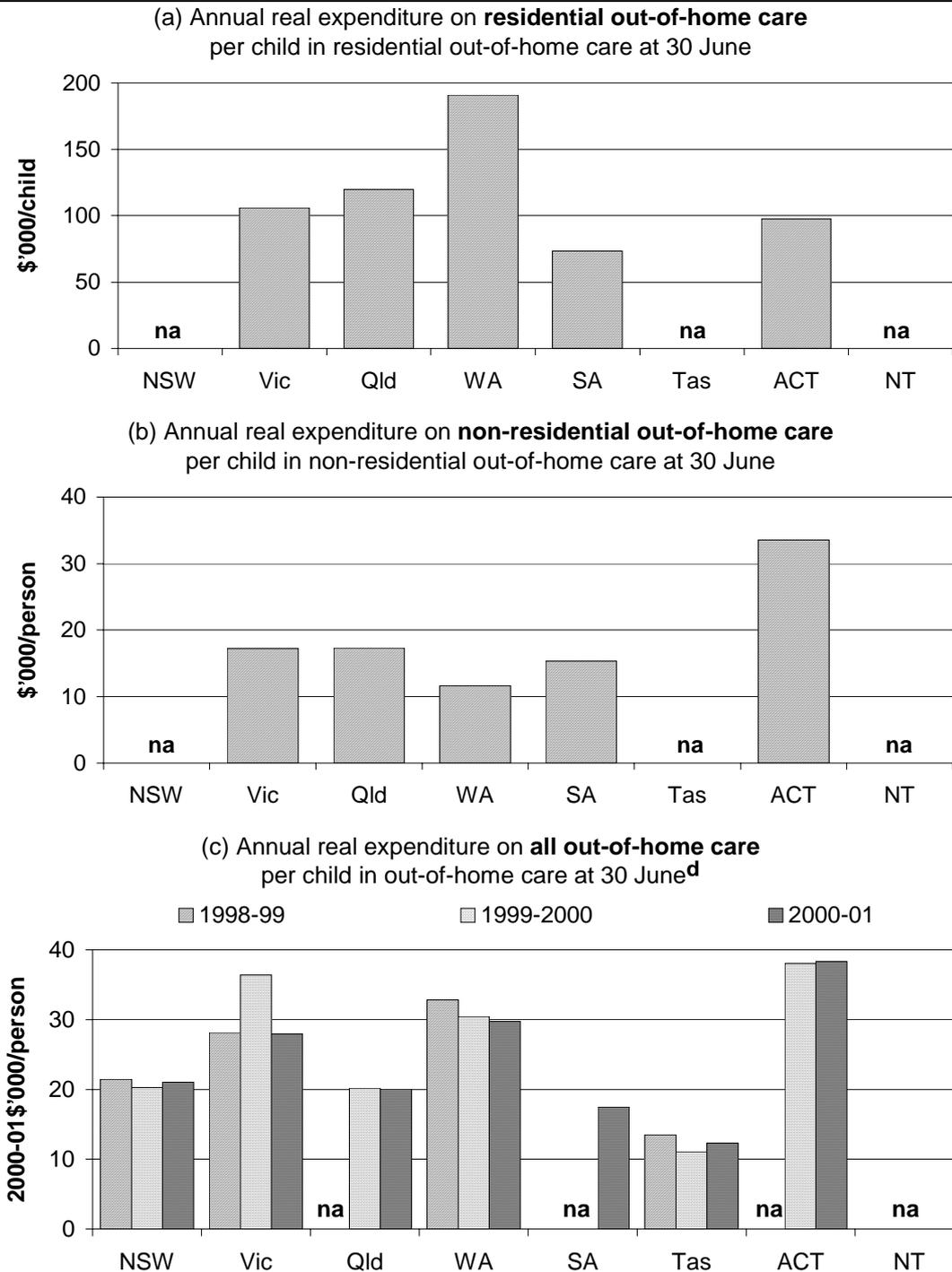
## **15.5 Future directions in child protection and out-of-home care services performance reporting**

### **Using client surveys**

Client views can be used to report on service delivery and to learn important information about how to improve services. National client surveys are used in a number of service areas in the Report, however, applying client survey principles to child protection services is not yet common practice in Australia or overseas (DHS 1998). The Victorian Department of Human Services (DHS) and the Queensland Department of Families are working cooperatively to develop client and family feedback surveys.

The Victorian DHS initiated a research project in 1999 to investigate, develop and pilot a survey method and tool. The overall goal of the Victorian Child Protection Client and Family Survey is to introduce client and family feedback as a systematic aspect of child protection case practice and planning processes, with the aim of

Figure 15.13 **Out-of-home care efficiency indicators<sup>a, b, c</sup>**



<sup>a</sup> Real expenditure based on ABS GDP price deflator 2000-01 = 100 (table A.19). <sup>b</sup> Queensland data for residential and non-residential out-of-home care are an estimated breakdown only. <sup>c</sup> Using the number of children in care at 30 June rather than the total number of children in care during the year leads to an overestimation of costs for WA of at least 50 per cent. <sup>d</sup> ACT data are affected by the higher subsidy levels for carers, higher SACS award costs in the ACT due to a more recently negotiated agreement, and the effect of a small number of children in care with special high support needs. **na** Not available.

Source: table 15A.3.

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enhancing client outcomes. The intention is to seek feedback from young people and families on the impact of the service, on how well some of the fundamental practice principles are upheld, and on the ways in which the service was delivered.

The project has three stages. Stage one — the development of an appropriate method — was completed in July 1999 following an international literature review and major consultations with key stakeholders (clients, family members, child protection workers and managers, and external stakeholders). Stage two — development of the questionnaire and a pilot survey of 47 clients and 97 family members in four DHS regions — was completed in July 2000. The pilot confirmed that the survey tool was psychometrically sound.

Stage three — the Statewide implementation of the questionnaire — commenced on 26 March 2001 and involved surveying 450 11–17 years old clients and 450 family members, from the nine DHS regions. At the completion of this stage, an analysis of the survey findings will occur, the outcomes of which will guide and inform the review and refinement of child protection practice and policy. The report for stage three is planned to be available by early 2002.

The Queensland Child Protection Client and Carer Survey was commenced in 2000. The survey objective is to establish baseline data on satisfaction with the child protection system given the implementation of the *Child Protection Act 1999* and the establishment of a new approach of working with children, young people and families.

The client and carer views elicited by the survey will assist the Queensland Department of Families to improve the quality of services and provide qualitative data on satisfaction measures for strategic plans and other reporting. The survey has targeted the following populations:

- young people in the department's guardianship who are aged 13 years and over;
- parents of children and young people who are subject to casework interventions; and
- foster carers who have provided a placement in the previous 12 months.

A reference group for the survey was formed in July 2000 to oversee the project and to address the confidentiality, methodological and ethical issues associated with the project.

The project method was signed off by the reference group in December 2000, a pilot study was completed in February 2001, and the findings were used to develop the final questionnaires. State-wide surveying of clients and carers began in May

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2001 and continued through to June 2001. Surveys were predominantly conducted over the telephone with some face-to-face interviews of Indigenous clients. The results of the survey will be finalised in 2001-02.

### **Improving the comparability of data**

The National Child Protection and Support Services data working group (NCPASS) of the National Community Services Information Management Group (NCSIMG), has been reviewing the national framework for reporting on child protection and child concern reports. After consultations with States and Territories, a proposed new framework for national reporting on child protection and child concern matters has been developed. The proposed framework reflects the significant shift in child protection policy and practice that locates child protection as part of a broader framework of the safety and wellbeing of children. It focuses reporting on:

- the range of reports received in relation to the safety and wellbeing of children;
- the range of responses to such reports; and
- the outcomes of direct departmental contact with children and/or families.

While reflecting new concepts that underpin changes in policy and practice by most States and Territories in recent years, the framework will not require, for most jurisdictions, a significant shift in what is being reported nationally. The feasibility of the new framework is being assessed by States and Territories and by NCPASS. The outcomes of the review of the national framework will be reported to the NCSIMG.

### **Reporting on family preservation services**

Jurisdictions provide a range of services to families and children where there are child protection concerns. This chapter reports on child protection and out-of-home care services only, but future reports are expected to report on other services aimed at protecting children (including casework services and family preservation services). For this Report, jurisdictions provided descriptive information relating to children and families using family preservation services, which appears in the supporting tables (table 15A.21). The nature of these services is described in box 15.3. Work will be done over the next two years to explore ways of collecting outcome information on a comparable national basis, to study how well this kind of service achieves the long term and short term safety objectives of child protection and out-of-home care services.

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## **Family support services**

There are strong links between child protection, crisis accommodation and family support services. Family support services are those that seek to benefit families by improving their capacity to care for children and/or strengthening family relationships. Coverage in this chapter may extend to family support services as data become available.

In 2000, a scoping study of family support services was commissioned by NCSIMG and funded by the Community Services Ministers' Advisory Council and the Commonwealth Department of Family and Community Services. The aim was to assess the scope of 'family support services' funded by State, Territory and Commonwealth community service departments, and to provide an overview of the current data collection efforts in relation to these services.

The study report, *Family Support Services in Australia 2000* (AIHW 2001), describes the programs that each jurisdiction funds or delivers in the area of family support services, as well as providing a broad description of the data collection systems in place or planned. Data systems varied from detailed unit record collections about activities, to six-month aggregates of information on key outputs and performance measures.

Preliminary work on developing a national minimum data set may be undertaken once the revision of the National Community Services Classification, which would include a nationally agreed classification for family support services, is completed.

## **15.6 Profile of supported accommodation and assistance**

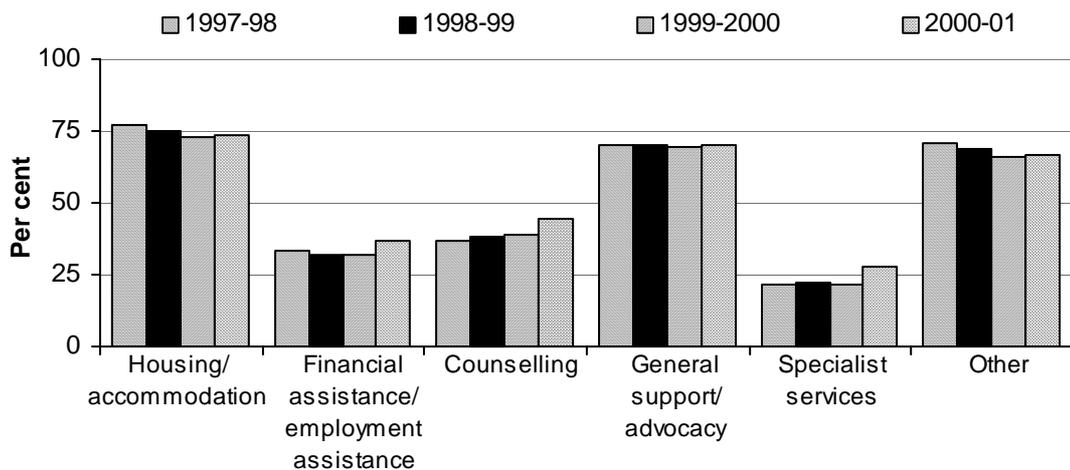
### **Service overview**

Supported accommodation and assistance services aim to assist people who are homeless or at imminent risk of becoming homeless as a result of a crisis, including women and children escaping domestic violence. Sections 15.6–15.10 report on services provided under the SAAP.

The primary focus of SAAP is to use a case management approach to support homeless people and victims of domestic violence. Through this process, clients are offered a range of services, including supported accommodation; counselling; advocacy; links to housing, health, education and employment services; outreach

support; brokerage; and meals services. Housing and accommodation services were provided in 73.8 per cent of support periods in 2000-01. General support and advocacy (provided in 70.4 per cent of support periods), counselling (44.6 per cent), financial and employment assistance (36.5 per cent) and specialist services (27.5 per cent) were also commonly provided (figure 15.14).

Figure 15.14 **Composition of SAAP support periods<sup>a, b</sup>**



<sup>a</sup> Agencies may provide more than one type of service as a part of a single support period, so services provided do not sum to 100 per cent. <sup>b</sup> Data for 2000-01 are preliminary.

Source: table 15A.152.

## Size and scope

Support services funded by SAAP are provided by agencies to a range of groups, such as homeless families, single men, single women, young people, and women and children escaping domestic violence. At least 1222 agencies are funded under the SAAP program and most target principally one client group. Services were delivered in 2000-01 by agencies targeting:

- young people (38.6 per cent of agencies);
- women escaping domestic violence (22.5 per cent);
- single men (8.0 per cent);
- families (8.8 per cent); and
- single women (3.5 per cent).

Agencies targeting multiple client groups or providing general support accounted for 18.5 per cent of service providers in 2000-01 (table 15A.153).

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Agencies also vary in their service delivery model. The most common models in 2000-01 were the provision of medium to long term supported accommodation (38.9 per cent of agencies) and the provision of crisis or short term supported accommodation (32.7 per cent). Agencies also provided services other than accommodation, such as outreach support (5.6 per cent of agencies), day support (2.0 per cent) and telephone information and referral (1.5 per cent). A further 13.4 per cent of agencies provided multiple services (table 15A.154).

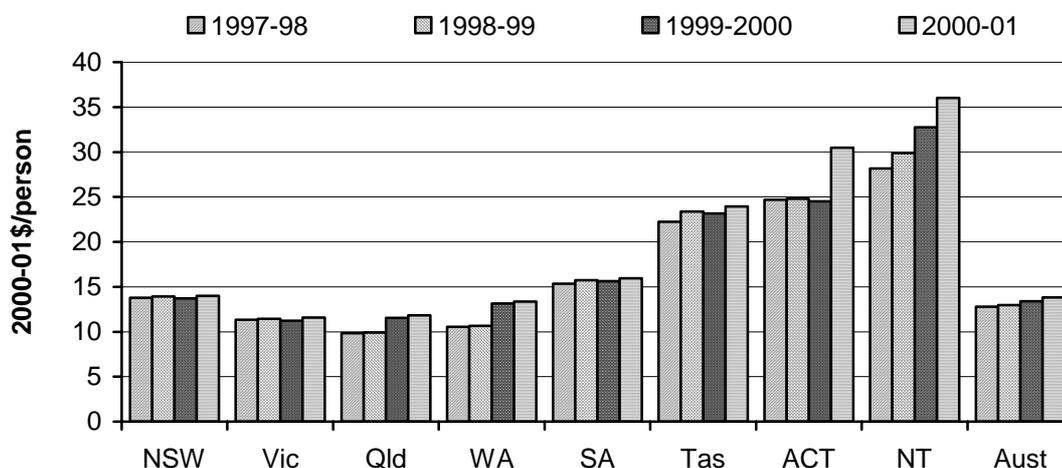
## **Roles and responsibilities**

Primarily non-government agencies, with some local government participation, deliver SAAP services. The Commonwealth, State and Territory governments jointly fund SAAP, which was established in 1985 to consolidate a number of existing programs. The State and Territory governments have responsibility for the day-to-day management of SAAP, including distributing funding to SAAP funded agencies. Research, strategy, and other planning and development activities are coordinated at the national level by the National SAAP Coordination and Development Committee (which includes representatives of the Commonwealth Government and each State and Territory government).

## **Funding**

Recurrent funding of SAAP services was \$268.5 million in 2000-01, of which the Commonwealth Government contributed 58.6 per cent and the States and Territories contributed 41.4 per cent (table 15A.155). Combined Commonwealth, State and Territory government funding for the period 1998-99 to 2000-01 remained relatively stable (in real terms) in all jurisdictions, except the ACT and the NT (in which funding increased as a result of the provision of additional award related funding) (table 15A.156). Recurrent SAAP funding per person in the total population ranged from \$36.04 in the NT to \$11.59 in Victoria in 2000-01 (figure 15.15).

Figure 15.15 Real recurrent SAAP funding per person in the residential population<sup>a, b, c</sup>



<sup>a</sup> Includes total recurrent allocations (including State and Territory level allocations for program administration). <sup>b</sup> The total population figure is not indicative of the demand for these services. <sup>c</sup> Real expenditure based on ABS GDP price deflator 2000-01 = 100 (table A.19).

Source: table 15A.157.

## 15.7 Policy developments in supported accommodation and assistance

The SAAP IV Agreement between the Commonwealth, States and Territories commenced on 1 July 2000 and will conclude on 30 June 2005. The agreement is underpinned by:

- the *Supported Accommodation Assistance Act 1994 (Cwlth)*;
- a Memorandum of Understanding, which sets out high level principles, strategic themes, a commitment to develop outcomes and measures of outcomes, roles and responsibilities, and arrangements for implementation. All signatories endorsed this memorandum on 8 April 1999; and
- bilateral agreements between the Commonwealth and each State and Territory government. These bilateral agreements establish State/Territory priorities within a multilateral policy and administrative framework, and establish outcomes for funding. All jurisdictions have signed bilateral agreements with the Commonwealth Government.

A National Strategic Plan for SAAP IV has been developed, approved and widely distributed. This plan is based on the Memorandum of Understanding and the

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bilateral agreements, and represents the basis for national reporting on SAAP IV (box 15.5). The plan will be reflected in State and Territory planning, which will also respond to the needs and priorities of individual jurisdictions.

**Box 15.5 Evaluation and reporting under SAAP IV**

The Memorandum of Understanding requires the development of a National Strategic Plan which identifies the key principles, priorities, strategies, data, research and other project commitments of SAAP IV. The plan sets out a national evaluation and reporting framework that will comprise:

- an annual national program report that provides:
  - an analysis of achievements, including analysis against program outcomes and performance indicators; and
  - a commentary on, and identification of, areas for further development and attention in subsequent years;
- a mid-term review; and
- a final evaluation report to be completed 12 months before the end of the SAAP IV Agreement.

Outcomes and performance indicators form the accountability framework in bilateral agreements and are the basis for review, evaluation and national annual reporting.

An evaluation framework has been cooperatively developed as part of the National Strategic Plan and focuses on:

- client outcomes, particularly the extent to which SAAP demonstrates capacity to:
  - resolve crises;
  - re-establish family links where appropriate; and
  - re-establish a capacity of clients to live independently of SAAP;
- client satisfaction with aspects of service delivery, including quality, accessibility, appropriateness and achievement of outcomes;
- the extent to which the strategic themes, directions and administrative framework for SAAP IV are addressed and implemented; and
- measures of performance in relation to appropriateness, efficiency and effectiveness.

*Source:* SAAP IV Memorandum of Understanding.

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## 15.8 Framework of supported accommodation and assistance performance indicators

### Framework of performance indicators

The framework of performance indicators is based on SAAP objectives (box 15.6).

#### Box 15.6 Objectives for SAAP services

The overall aim of SAAP is to provide transitional supported accommodation and a range of related support services, in order to help people who are homeless or at imminent risk of homelessness to achieve the maximum possible degree of self-reliance and independence. Within this aim, the goals are to:

- resolve crises;
- re-establish family links where appropriate; and
- re-establish the capacity of clients to live independently of SAAP.

These services should be provided in an equitable and efficient manner.

The reporting framework for SAAP is shown in figure 15.16. Ongoing work to provide a more comprehensive set of performance indicators and to improve existing indicators and the data is discussed in section 15.10.

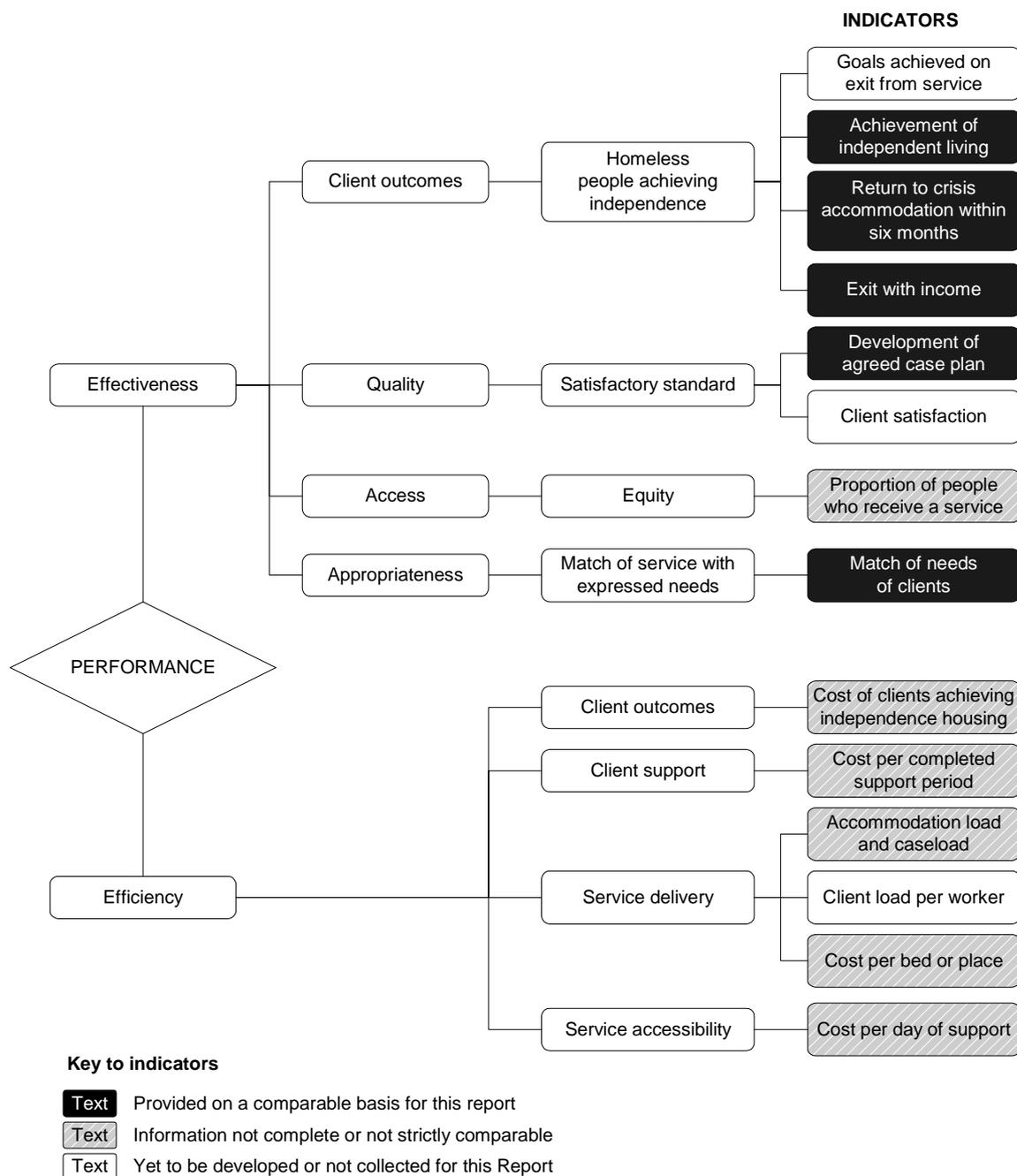
## 15.9 Key supported accommodation and assistance performance indicator results

Different delivery contexts, locations and types of client may affect the cost of supported accommodation and assistance services or the outcomes achieved. 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.

### Client outcomes — achievement of independent living

An important outcome is clients' achievement of self reliance and independence. Characteristics that may indicate whether clients can live independently include their income, housing status and workforce status. These characteristics of clients are recorded at the end of their support period.

Figure 15.16 Performance indicators for SAAP services



In all jurisdictions in 2000-01, most clients had ‘no substantive change’ in income source between entering and exiting the program (table 15.1). The majority of clients entering SAAP were receiving government benefits, and they were still receiving them when they exited SAAP support.

**Table 15.1 Change in client's income source after SAAP support, 2000-01 (per cent)<sup>a, b</sup>**

	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Vic</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>WA</i>	<i>SA</i>	<i>Tas</i>	<i>ACT</i>	<i>NT</i>	<i>Aust</i>
Moved from no income to some income	3.4	3.1	2.3	2.6	3.0	1.6	3.1	2.0	2.9
Obtained own benefit/extra benefit/wages	1.9	1.6	1.7	1.2	1.5	1.0	1.4	2.2	1.6
Had no substantive change	86.0	89.3	86.9	91.8	88.8	91.1	86.2	90.6	88.4
Had no income before or after support	7.7	4.8	8.3	3.7	5.7	6.0	9.0	4.3	6.2
Moved from wage to government payments/ some income to no income	1.0	1.2	0.8	0.7	1.0	0.3	0.3	0.8	0.9
<b>Total<sup>c</sup></b>	<b>100.0</b>								

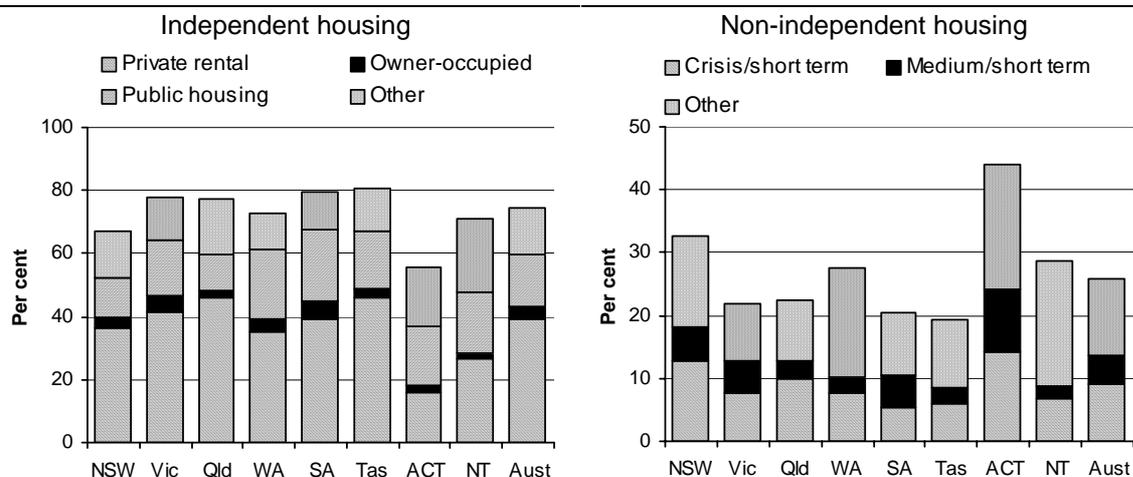
<sup>a</sup> Excludes clients of high volume agencies (those accommodating 50 or more clients per night, telephone referral agencies, day centres, and information and referral centres) because income source after support was not collected. <sup>b</sup> Preliminary data. <sup>c</sup> Total may not equal 100 as a result of rounding errors.

Source: table 15A.158.

The proportion of clients in 2000-01 who had 'no substantive change' in income source ranged from about 91.8 per cent in WA to 86.0 per cent in NSW. Moving from having no income before receiving services, to obtaining some income or obtaining their own benefit, an extra benefit or a wage indicates greater client independence. The proportion of clients who moved from having no income support to obtaining some income ranged from **Error! Not a valid link.** per cent in NSW to **Error! Not a valid link.** per cent in Tasmania. The proportion of clients who obtained their own benefit or a wage ranged from **Error! Not a valid link.** per cent in the NT to **Error! Not a valid link.** per cent in Tasmania. The proportion of clients in 2000-01 who had no income before or after support ranged from **Error! Not a valid link.** per cent in the ACT to **Error! Not a valid link.** per cent in WA. Nationally, just under 1 per cent of clients exiting the program moved from having a wage to having a government payment, or from having some income to having no income (table 15.1).

The proportion of clients achieving independent living at the end of a support period indicates the independence of clients after program support. Nationally, 74.3 per cent of clients achieved independent housing at the end of a support period in 2000-01 (figure 15.17). Across jurisdictions, the proportion ranged from 80.6 per cent in Tasmania to 55.9 per cent in the ACT. Data are available for only one third of completed support periods, so may not be representative of the total SAAP population.

**Figure 15.17 Accommodation type on exit from SAAP support, 2000-01<sup>a, b, c</sup>**



<sup>a</sup> Excludes high volume records because not all items are included in high volume forms. <sup>b</sup> 'Other' independent housing may include living rent free in a house or flat. 'Other' non-independent housing may include: SAAP funded accommodation at hostels, hotels or community placements; non-SAAP emergency accommodation; car, tent or squat; and an institutional setting. <sup>c</sup> Preliminary data.

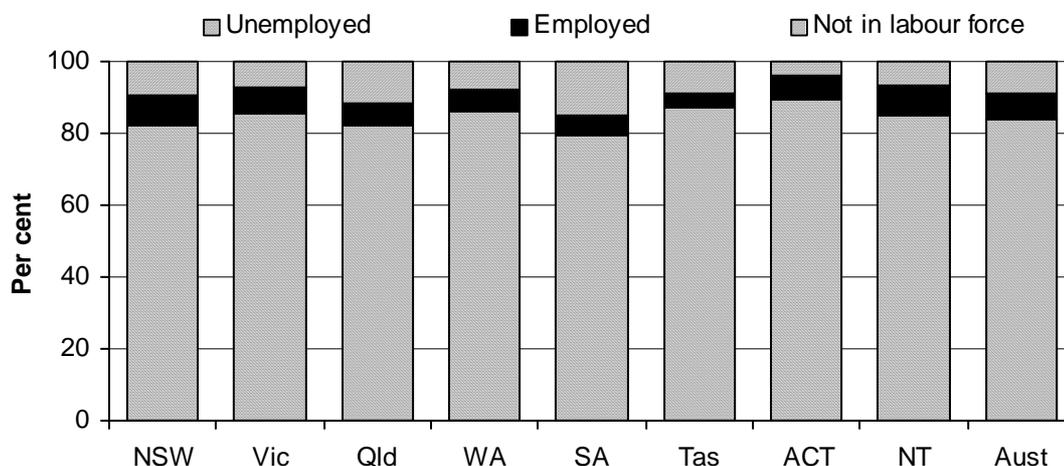
Source: table 15A.159.

By type of independent housing, 39.3 per cent of all clients in 2000-01 moved to private rental housing, 16.4 per cent entered public housing and 3.7 per cent moved to owner-occupied housing in 2000-01. The proportion of clients moving to private rental housing was highest in Queensland (46.2 per cent) and lowest in the ACT (15.9 per cent). The proportion of clients moving to public housing ranged from 22.4 per cent in SA to 11.3 per cent in Queensland (figure 15.17).

By type of non-independent housing, 13.6 per cent of all clients in 2000-01 continued to live in SAAP accommodation — 9.2 per cent in crisis or short term accommodation and 4.4 per cent in medium to long term accommodation. The proportion of clients remaining in SAAP accommodation was highest in the ACT (24.2 per cent) and lowest in Tasmania (8.5 per cent) (figure 15.17).

Employment is another indicator of clients' achievement of self reliance and independence. Nationally, 8.9 per cent of support periods in 2000-01 involved clients who were participating in the workforce before support, while 33.4 per cent of support periods involved clients who were unemployed (table 15A.160). Of the clients who were unemployed when entering the program, about 7.0 per cent were employed at the end of the support period (2.7 per cent full time, 1.4 per cent part time and 2.9 per cent on a casual basis), 83.9 per cent remained unemployed and 9.1 per cent were not in the labour force (figure 15.18). Across jurisdictions, the proportion of clients who achieved employment at the end of the support period ranged from 8.6 per cent in NSW to 3.6 per cent in Tasmania.

Figure 15.18 **Change in the labour force status of clients after SAAP support, 2000-01<sup>a, b, c</sup>**



<sup>a</sup> Data are for people who were unemployed when entering SAAP services. <sup>b</sup> Excludes high volume records because not all items are included on high volume forms. <sup>c</sup> Preliminary data.

Source: table 15A.161.

The performance information above relates to relatively short term outcomes — that is, outcomes for clients immediately after their support period. Longer term outcomes are important but, as in most service areas, there are challenges in collecting information on these outcomes. The data collection for SAAP allows for the measurement of the number of clients and the number and types of service provided to clients (box 15.7).

An important longer term indicator of whether clients are achieving self reliance and independence is whether a client has needed to return to SAAP services. If a client received two or more support periods over the year, then they must have returned to the program but not necessarily to the same agency for a period of support during the year.

Nationally, 21.2 per cent of clients returned to SAAP services in 2000-01 after having exited the program less than 12 months earlier. Across jurisdictions, the proportion ranged from 24.4 per cent in WA to 18.2 per cent in SA (figure 15.19). However, it may be appropriate for some clients to receive more than one support period (moving from crisis to medium term accommodation, for example). One group that makes multiple use of SAAP comprises women and children escaping domestic violence. This is evident in the data for the NT, which has the highest return rate and also the highest number of Indigenous women clients, who tend to use SAAP services for short respite periods to escape family violence and then return to their community. There are also a number of SAAP clients with long term

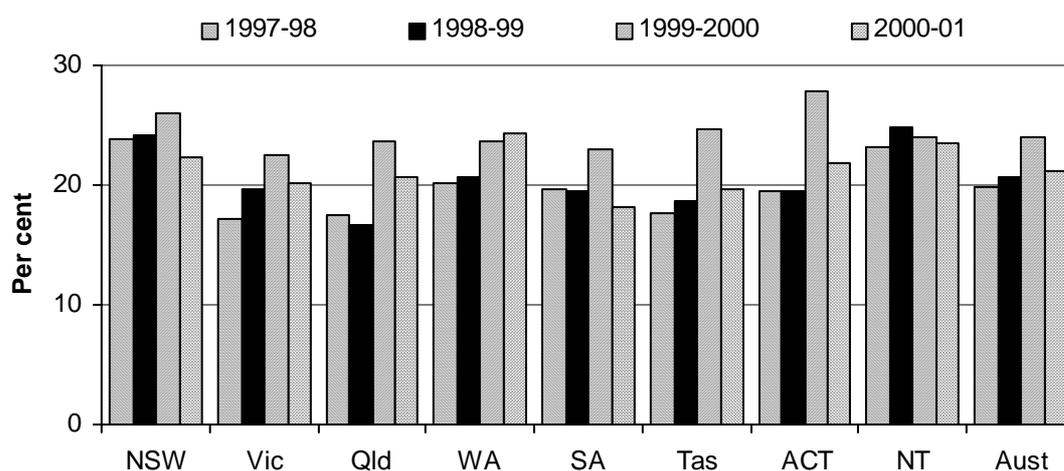
problems who may access SAAP services a number of times before being able to address their issues.

### Box 15.7 Issues when analysing SAAP data

The following three important issues need to be considered in analysis of SAAP data.

- Informed consent is an essential component of the integrity of the data. The principle of client/consumer rights (which underpins informed consent) recognises that clients do not receive services under a mandatory order. They have the right to accept or reject the services offered, as they have the right to provide or not provide information while receiving SAAP services.
- Comprehensive information cannot be collected for all clients, such as casual clients and clients of high volume agencies (those accommodating 50 or more clients per night, telephone referral agencies, day centres, and information and referral centres).
- Clients consented to provide personal details for the SAAP client collection for 81.5 per cent of support periods in 2000-01. A weighting system has been developed to adjust for agency nonparticipation (94.1 per cent of agencies participated in the client collection) and non-consent.

Figure 15.19 Clients who returned to a SAAP service in 2000-01 and who had exited the program less than 12 months earlier<sup>a</sup>



<sup>a</sup> Data for 2000-01 are preliminary.

Source: table 15A.162.

A further medium term indicator of the achievement of self reliance and independence is when the client exits to independent housing and does not return to

SAAP within a specified period (in this case, six months). Given the data issues discussed above, current estimates may not be representative of all clients; for example, nationally, only approximately 46.1 per cent of clients provided information on their accommodation after exiting at least one support period over the year (table 15.2).

**Table 15.2 Indicative estimates of clients exiting SAAP to independent housing and not returning within six months, 2000-01<sup>a, b</sup>**

<i>Unit</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Vic</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>WA</i>	<i>SA</i>	<i>Tas</i>	<i>ACT</i>	<i>NT</i>	<i>Aust</i>
Clients who provided information on accommodation after exit from support									
no.	9 900	13 400	6 200	5 000	3 000	1 700	1 100	1 600	42 000
As a proportion of total clients <sup>c</sup>									
%	41.1	51.0	36.7	54.9	43.5	51.5	61.1	57.1	46.1
Clients recorded as exiting to independent accommodation and not returning within six months									
no.	3 600	6 300	2 600	1 900	1 300	800	400	700	17 600
Indicative estimates of clients exiting to independent housing and not returning within six months <sup>d</sup>									
%	36.4	47.0	41.9	38.0	43.3	47.1	36.4	43.8	41.9

<sup>a</sup> See notes to table 15A.163 for details of how the estimates were calculated. <sup>b</sup> Preliminary data. <sup>c</sup> Estimate based on estimated total number of clients for 1999-2000. <sup>d</sup> Clients recorded as exiting to independent accommodation and not returning within six months as a proportion of clients who provide information on accommodation on exit from support.

Source: table 15A.163.

It is possible to estimate the proportion of clients who exit to independent housing and do not return to SAAP within six months (based on the subset of clients who provide information on accommodation after exiting support). Given the potential for bias in the data, however, these estimates should not be used for definitive performance comparisons across jurisdictions. They may be used to prompt further analysis of the reasons for cross-jurisdictional differences.

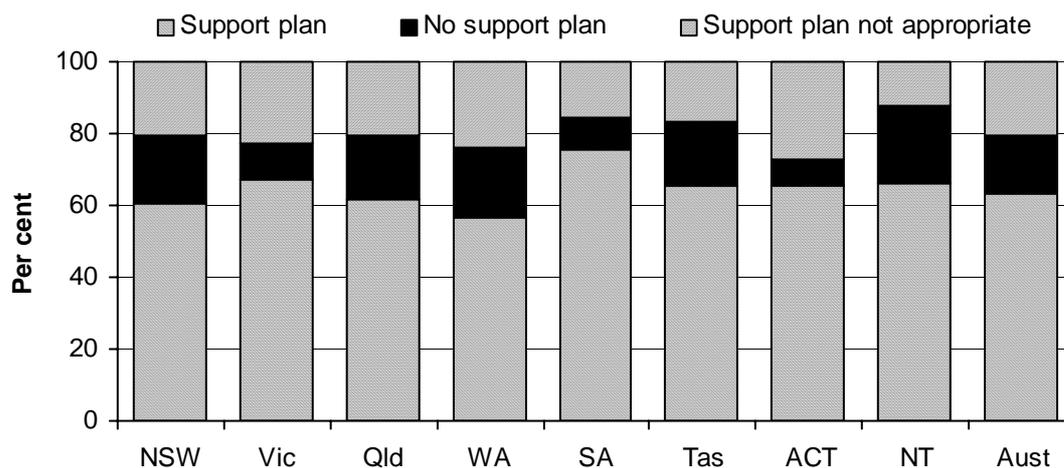
It is important to have data that are representative of all SAAP clients. Strategies are being implemented to improve the data quality progressively, including improving client consent rates and the collection of exit information. It is hoped that the data will eventually be robust enough to allow comparative performance assessment.

### **Quality — satisfactory standard**

Reflecting an increased emphasis on case management, the existence of an agreed support plan is an indicator of service quality. However, an agreed support plan may be judged to be inappropriate for some support periods (such as when a support period is short term). Nationally, the case worker in 20.8 per cent of support periods in 2000-01 judged that a support plan was inappropriate. Across jurisdictions, this

proportion ranged from 27.3 per cent in the ACT to 12.4 per cent in the NT. There was an agreed support plan for 63.6 per cent of support periods nationally in 2000-01. Across jurisdictions, the proportion ranged from 75.4 per cent in SA to 56.5 per cent in WA (figure 15.20).

Figure 15.20 **Support periods, by existence of a support plan, 2000-01**<sup>a, b, c</sup>



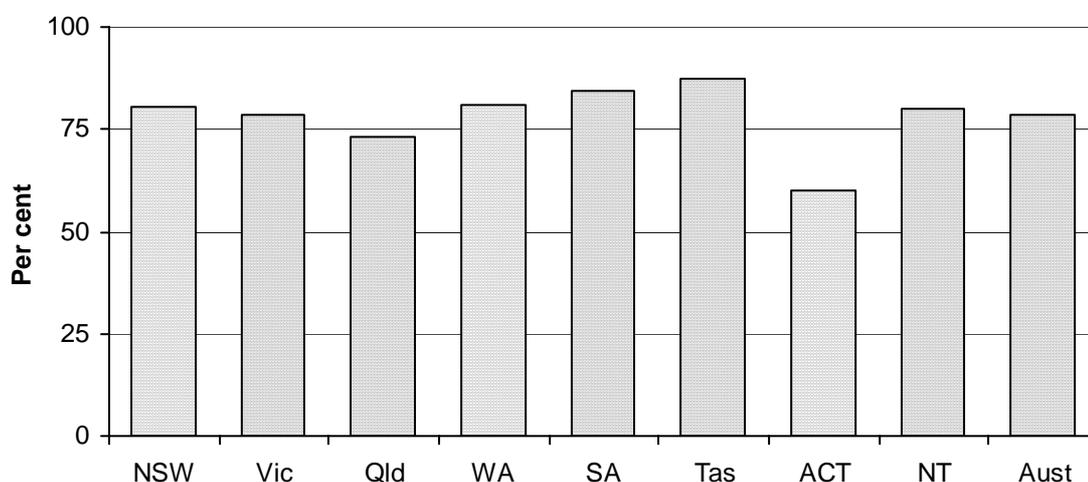
<sup>a</sup> Excludes high volume records because not all items are included on high volume forms. <sup>b</sup> See notes to table 15A.164 for more detail. <sup>c</sup> Preliminary data.

Source: table 15A.164.

### Access and equity — proportion of people who receive a service

The ability of services to assist those in need is an indicator of access. Data from a survey of SAAP agencies in the weeks 29 November–5 December 2000 and 9–15 May 2001 suggest that around 78.6 per cent of valid requests for SAAP services were provided with the assistance requested in that period. The proportion of valid requests for services that received the requested support ranged from 87.5 per cent in Tasmania to 60.0 per cent in the ACT. The estimates of unmet demand need to be interpreted with care because the two-week sample period over which data were collected might not be representative of the eventual success of clients accessing SAAP services over the full year. Also, different reporting practices are used in the Client Collection and Unmet Demand Collection, so the above percentages are indicative only (figure 15.21).

Figure 15.21 Proportion of valid requests for SAAP services that were provided with the requested support, 29 November–5 December 2000 and 9–15 May 2001<sup>a, b, c</sup>



<sup>a</sup> See table 15A.166 for an explanation of how the number of SAAP clients was estimated and for the definition of unmet demand. <sup>b</sup> Data on unmet demand needs to be interpreted with care for several reasons. First, a person can make a request on more than one occasion and to more than one SAAP agency. While double counting has been limited through the exclusion of those requests where the person had made a similar request to a SAAP agency within the collection period, this information might not always have been available to record; therefore, the total numbers do not represent actual people. Second, a number of people may receive ongoing support or accommodation from a SAAP agency at a later time, quite possibly soon after their initial request. As a result, this estimate may overstate the actual level of unmet demand. Third, a number of potential clients have their needs met by other means and do not return to a SAAP agency. Many factors influence the capacity of individual SAAP agencies to meet day-to-day demand for their services; it is not possible to identify a two-week period that is 'typical' for all SAAP agencies. <sup>c</sup> Preliminary data.

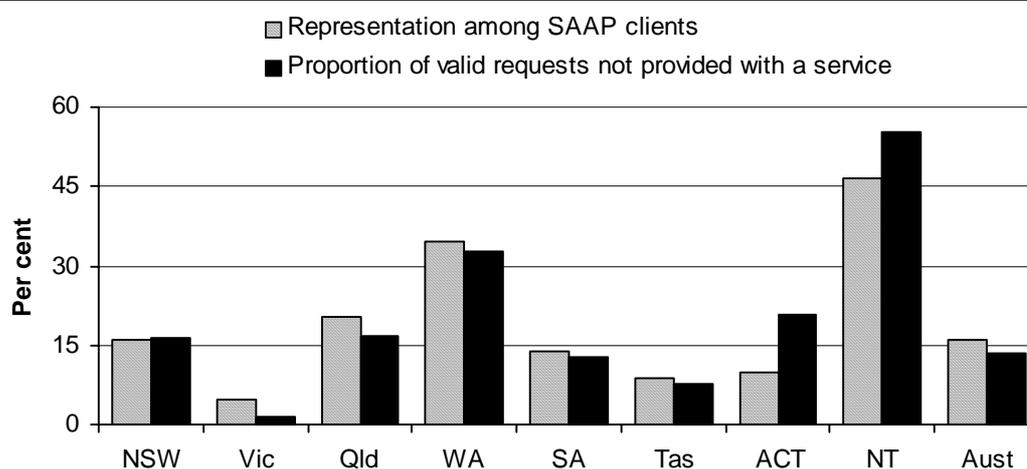
Source: table 15A.166.

Valid requests for SAAP services were not provided with the requested assistance in 2000-01 for a number of reasons, including lack of available accommodation (the main reason for 88.7 per cent of potential clients who were not provided with services), insufficient staff (3.3 per cent) and lack of facilities for special needs such as disability, culturally specific needs and other special needs (1.2 per cent) (table 15A.165).

The SAAP services target homeless people in general, but access by special needs groups (such as Indigenous people and people from non-English speaking backgrounds) is particularly important. Assessing the experience of target group using data from the unmet demand collection, however, is problematic. The client collection counts only clients, whereas the unmet demand collection records the cultural status of everyone in the group; no distinction is made between adults and accompanying children. Again, the client data and unmet demand data are not comparable.

Nationally, 13.4 per cent of valid requests that were not provided with a service in 2000-01 were from Indigenous groups, compared with 15.9 per cent of clients who were Indigenous. In all jurisdictions except the ACT and the NT (and to a much lesser extent, NSW), the proportion of valid requests from Indigenous groups not provided with a service was lower than the representation of Indigenous people among clients (figure 15.22). On average, the proportion of valid requests for SAAP service from non-English speaking backgrounds groups that were not provided with the assistance requested (6.3 per cent) was lower than the representation of clients from non-English speaking backgrounds among SAAP clients (10.5 per cent) (figure 15.23).

**Figure 15.22 Indigenous people among SAAP clients and the proportion of valid requests for SAAP service from Indigenous groups not provided with the assistance requested, 2000-01<sup>a, b, c</sup>**



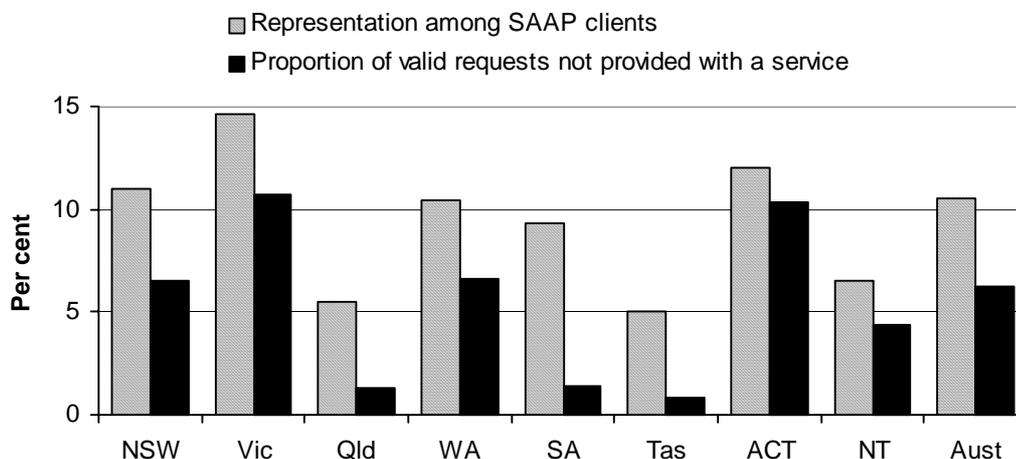
<sup>a</sup> The number of people unable to be provided with a SAAP service was the 'unmet demand'. See notes to table 15A.167 for more detail. <sup>b</sup> Excludes people who refused offered assistance; those who made a similar request at a SAAP funded agency within the collection period (to limit double counting); and those whose request was not met because either the referral was inappropriate (wrong target group) or the service requested was not provided by the agency. <sup>c</sup> Preliminary data.

Source: table 15A.167.

### Appropriateness — matching of service with expressed needs

The proportion of clients receiving services they need is an indicator of appropriateness. Data are collected on which services are needed by clients and whether these services are provided or the clients are referred to another agency. The range of needed services is broad (ranging from meals to laundry facilities to long term accommodation), so the effect of not providing these services varies.

**Figure 15.23 People from non-English speaking backgrounds among SAAP clients and the proportion of valid requests for SAAP service from non-English speaking background groups not provided with the assistance requested, 2000-01<sup>a, b, c</sup>**



<sup>a</sup> The number of people unable to be provided with a SAAP service was the 'unmet demand'. See notes to table 15A.168 for more detail. <sup>b</sup> Excludes people who refused offered assistance; those who made a similar request at a SAAP funded agency within the collection period (to limit double counting); and those whose request was not met because either the referral was inappropriate (wrong target group) or the service requested was not provided by the agency. <sup>c</sup> Preliminary data.

Source: table 15A.168.

The proportion of clients who received needed services or were referred to another agency for needed services was 93.2 per cent in 2000-01. Across jurisdictions, the proportion ranged from 96.4 per cent in the NT to 89.1 per cent in Victoria (figure 15.24).

**Figure 15.24 SAAP clients, by met and unmet support needs, 2000-01<sup>a</sup>**

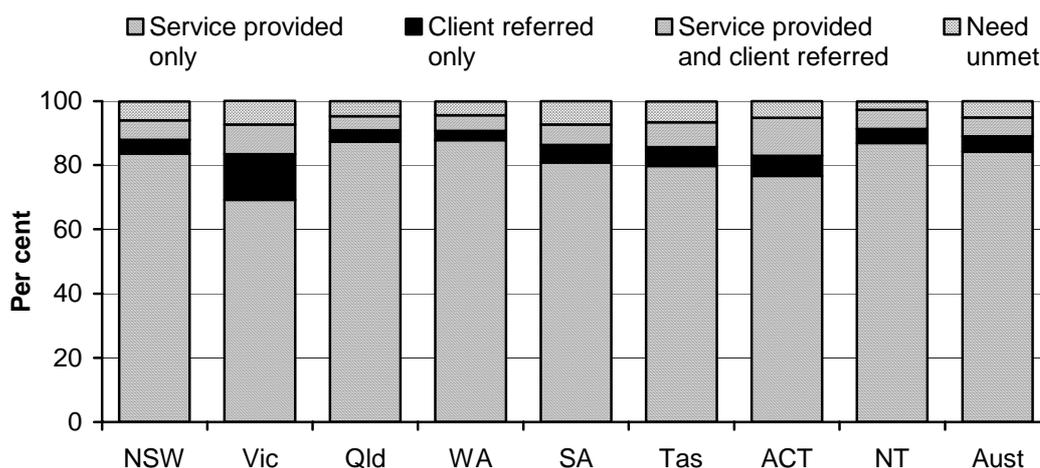


<sup>a</sup> Preliminary data.

Source: table 15A.169.

Nationally, 94.9 per cent of Indigenous clients in 2000-01 either received needed SAAP services or were referred to another agency for these services — more than 1 percentage point higher than the proportion for all clients. Across jurisdictions, the proportion ranged from 97.3 per cent in the NT to 92.7 per cent in Victoria (figure 15.25).

**Figure 15.25 Indigenous clients, by met and unmet support needs, 2000-01<sup>a</sup>**



<sup>a</sup> Preliminary data.

Source: table 15A.170.

Just under 92.8 per cent of clients from a non-English speaking background in 2000-01 either received needed services or were referred to another agency. Across jurisdictions, the proportion ranged from 96.9 per cent in SA to 89.0 per cent in Victoria (figure 15.26).

## Efficiency

A proxy indicator of efficiency is the level of government inputs per unit of output (unit cost). Across jurisdictions, there are varying treatments of expenditure items (for example, superannuation) and different counting and reporting rules in generating financial data. Efficiency indicator results may reflect these differences.

The unit cost analysis includes only expenditure by service delivery providers. Conceptually, unit cost indicators would include some of the administration costs borne by State and Territory departments in administering these services, but this is not yet possible. Unit cost data do not contain capital costs because capital funding for SAAP is provided under the Commonwealth State Housing Agreement through a special-purpose program (the Crisis Accommodation Program).

**Figure 15.26 Clients from non-English speaking backgrounds, by met and unmet support needs, 2000-01<sup>a</sup>**

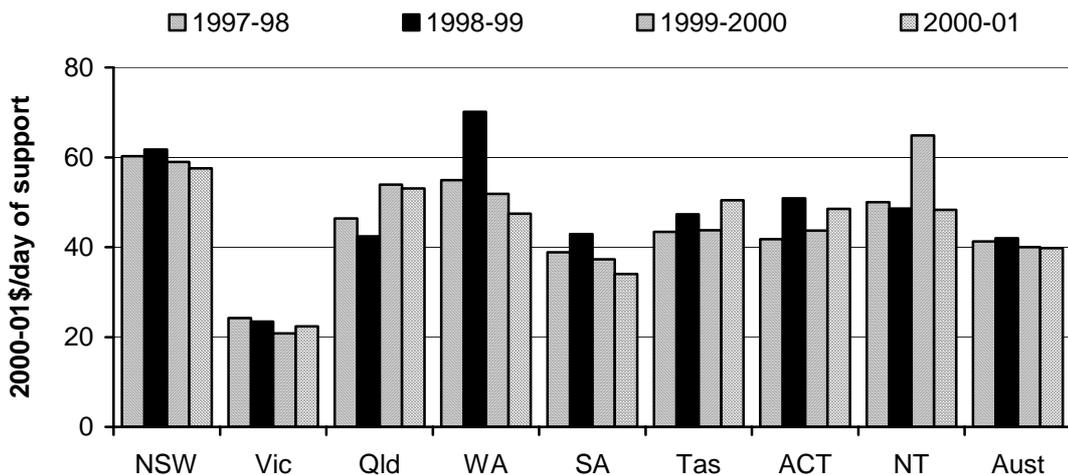


<sup>a</sup> Preliminary data.

Source: table 15A.171.

The recurrent cost per day of support for SAAP clients receiving support and/or supported accommodation (excluding casual and potential clients, and accompanying children who receive services as clients in their own right) averaged \$39.81 in 2000-01. Across jurisdictions, the cost ranged from \$57.53 in NSW to \$22.35 in Victoria (figure 15.27).

**Figure 15.27 Real recurrent cost per day of support for homeless clients<sup>a, b</sup>**

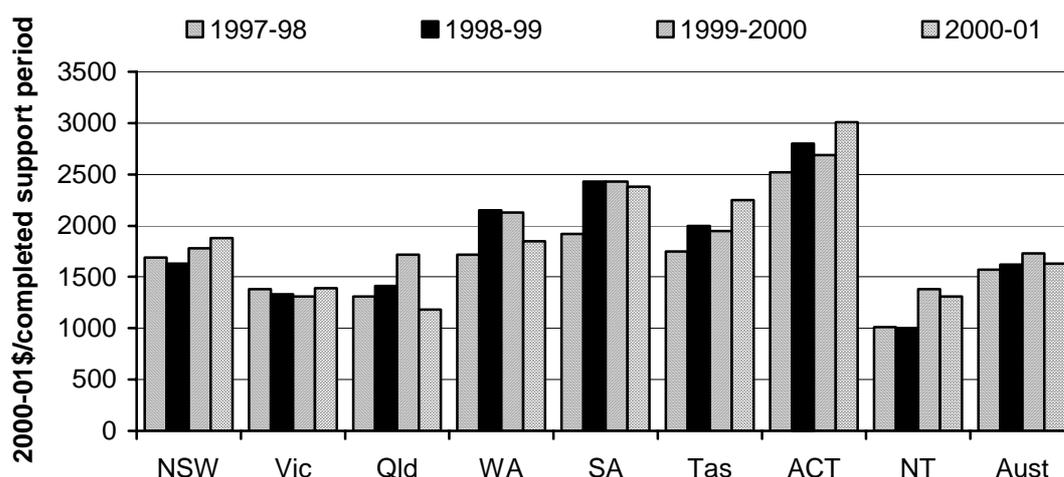


<sup>a</sup> See notes to table 15A.172 for a description of the analysis. <sup>b</sup> Data for 2000-01 are preliminary.

Source: table 15A.172.

The recurrent cost per completed support period (excluding casual and potential clients, and accompanying children who receive services as clients in their own right) averaged \$1630 in 2000-01. Across jurisdictions, it ranged from \$3010 in the ACT to \$1180 in Queensland (figure 15.28).

Figure 15.28 Real recurrent cost per completed support period<sup>a, b</sup>

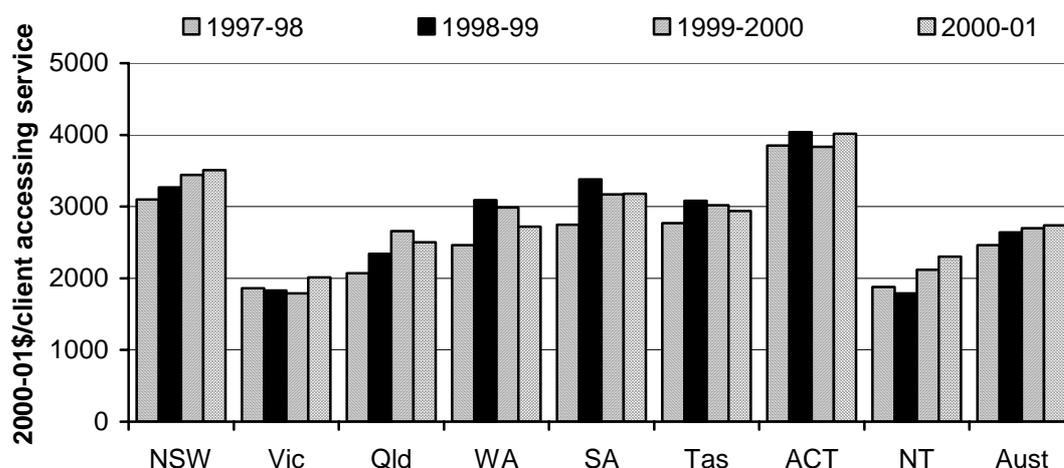


<sup>a</sup> See notes to table 15A.173 for a description of the analysis. <sup>b</sup> Data for 2000-01 are preliminary.

Source: table 15A.173.

Nationally, the recurrent cost per client accessing SAAP services was \$2740 in 2000-01. This figure varied across jurisdictions, from \$4020 in the ACT to \$2010 in Victoria (figure 15.29).

Figure 15.29 Real recurrent cost per client accessing services<sup>a, b</sup>

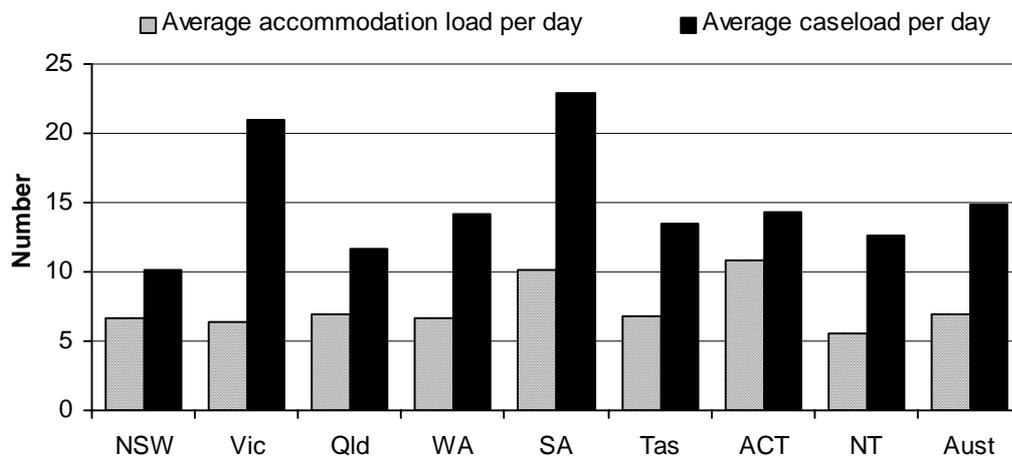


<sup>a</sup> See notes to table 15A.174 for a description of the analysis. <sup>b</sup> Data for 2000-01 are preliminary.

Source: table 15A.174.

The average accommodation load is an indicator of the average number of people accommodated per day per agency. The average accommodation load in 2000-01 ranged from 10.8 in the ACT to 5.5 in the NT. The average caseload is an indicator of the average number of people being supported per day per agency. The average caseload in 2000-01 ranged from 22.9 in SA to 10.2 in NSW (figure 15.30). Differences in the average accommodation load and caseload may reflect differences in the average size of agencies across jurisdictions.

Figure 15.30 **Average accommodation load and caseload per day, 2000-01<sup>a, b</sup>**



<sup>a</sup> See notes to table 15A.175 for a description of how accommodation and caseload were estimated.

<sup>b</sup> Preliminary data.

Source: table 15A.175.

## 15.10 Future directions in supported accommodation and assistance performance reporting

### Measuring client satisfaction, client outcomes and clients with high and complex needs

Client satisfaction is an important indicator of quality. The national SAAP III evaluation involved some work on assessing client satisfaction. Further work on developing measures of client satisfaction within the SAAP population is being undertaken through an eight-month consultancy which commenced in September 2001. The consultancy will involve widespread consultations and developmental work supported by limited trialing of measures that are considered to be appropriate for SAAP clients. Also planned is a second project designed to trial the client satisfaction measures within a much larger group of agencies.

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Research projects were completed during SAAP III on the measurement of client outcomes and on clients with high and complex needs. Further projects will be funded during 2001-02 to build on this earlier work, with a view to further developing and testing client outcome measures and to developing a method for collecting meaningful information on clients with high and complex needs.

## **Improving data and information collection**

A comprehensive review of the information needs of SAAP government and non-government stakeholders was conducted during the period July–December 2000. An objective of the review was to ensure SAAP information needs under the SAAP IV Agreement could be met. The review produced a draft Information Management Plan (IMP) for SAAP IV. The SAAP National Coordination and Development Committee and implementation work is underway. The first stage of the implementation process involves defining the information needs of all stakeholders more precisely and then determining the best way in which to collect and use this information. This work is likely to lead to changes in the scope and nature of the SAAP national data collection. The movement to an information management paradigm will require changes at all levels and will involve progressive implementation over a number of years.

The implementation of the IMP will:

- place increased emphasis on electronic data capture;
- require increased support processes for SAAP agencies (including training, a help line and so on.) to increase data quality and maximise use of the data.

Electronic data capture within SAAP agencies currently occurs through the use of specially developed software (SMART — SAAP Management and Reporting Tool) provided free to SAAP agencies and supported through specially developed training and documentation and the provision of a hot line. Agencies are actively encouraged to submit their data via SMART rather than via paper forms.

The number of SAAP agencies using SMART steadily increased over the years. The increased take-up is probably due to the provision of additional training, increased publicity and information about the benefits of SMART, and to a broader understanding that the automatic encryption process incorporated into SMART provides significantly better security than that of paper forms. A further benefit in using SMART is that data quality is enhanced because the software's prompts and processes aid the user.

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During the implementation of the IMP process, SMART will be maintained, enhanced and supported with increased training. The progressive move to an information management paradigm within SAAP may require new data capture processes, including new software, which may eventually involve the electronic transfer of information.

## **15.11 Jurisdictions' comments**

This section provides comments from each jurisdiction on the services covered in this chapter and attachment 15A 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. The information covers 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).

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## Commonwealth Government comments

“ 2000-01 has marked the end of the first year of a new five-year Supported Accommodation Assistance Agreement (SAAP) between the Commonwealth and the States and Territories. This is the fourth set of SAAP Agreements (SAAP IV).

The Commonwealth announced that it would provide for SAAP IV over \$800 million. This represents an increase of over \$160 million or some 30 per cent over total Commonwealth funding for SAAP III Agreements.

Major work has been undertaken during the year to progress implementation of the performance framework agreed by the Commonwealth and States for SAAP IV. This work has included the funding of a major consultancy project on measurement of client outcomes and the implementation of the first phase of an Information Management Plan (IMP) for SAAP IV. The first phase of the IMP work has involved extensive consultations in order to ensure that the information needs of SAAP service providers, the two levels of government and other stakeholders are fully understood. The IMP will lead to improved data and research activities for SAAP.

Under the new SAAP bilateral agreements each jurisdiction is required to report by September each year on progress against the undertakings made in these agreements. The first of these performance reports has been received from each jurisdiction and the information is being used in the development of the first of the SAAP National Performance Reports due for publication each year under SAAP IV.

The work on implementation of the National Homelessness Strategy has been progressed during the year by the release of a comprehensive discussion paper (*Working Towards a National Homelessness Strategy*) by the Commonwealth Advisory Committee on Homelessness (CACH). Following the release of the paper the CACH conducted a series of consultative forums in all parts of the country. The results of the forums are currently being analysed and will be considered by CACH in December 2001 in order to provide advice to the Commonwealth Minister on the next steps in implementing a national strategy. A number of research and demonstration projects have also been funded during the year as part of the Strategy.

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## **New South Wales Government comments**

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The new *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998* was partly proclaimed in December 2000 — the remainder will be proclaimed in March and July 2002. The Act creates new responsibilities for the Department of Community Services (DoCS) and other Government agencies: in reducing the risk of harm to children and young people; providing for their care and support; and means greater involvement by Aboriginal families and communities in decision making regarding the care of Aboriginal children and young persons.

In order to support the new legislation a number of initiatives have been undertaken throughout child and family services:

- The DoCS Helpline ensures a consistent response to callers wishing to report a concern for a child or young person, by receiving and managing initial contacts from across NSW.
- New risk assessment tools and procedural guidelines have been developed to support DoCS staff working with children, young people and families.
- Strategies including alternate dispute resolution and obtaining Apprehended Violence Orders on behalf of children and young people have been introduced.
- Establishment of the Office of the Children’s Guardian to exercise the Minister’s parental responsibility for children and young people in out of home care; accredit designated agencies to provide out of home care; and protect the interests of children and young people.

An amendment to the Act is currently before the NSW Parliament to focus effort in child protection and out-of-home care on permanency planning for children and young people.

In 2002, DoCS will commence phased implementation of the Looking After Children framework, to promote a holistic approach to case management for children and young people in care and their families and carers.

NSW has embraced the SAAP IV strategic directions, focusing on negotiations on a service framework and area based implementation planning. The framework will inform revised service agreements with SAAP agencies, for all 400 projects by July 2004. The implementation planning will include service mapping and transition plans for the required shifts in approaches by each SAAP agency. This will identify opportunities to refocus some services to improve responses for clients, address service gaps and identify priorities for use of growth funds.

The NSW Government’s Partnerships Against Homelessness now coordinates the responses of 10 government agencies on homelessness including critical issues such as Indigenous and aged homelessness and developing a cross-agency strategy to house people sleeping in the streets in the inner city area.

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## Victorian Government comments

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### *Child protection and supported placements*

Victoria has continued to undergo a significant reform process during 2000-01. Partnerships with community service organisations and local communities have been built upon through a number of joint initiatives.

In the past 12 months there has been an extensive examination of the quality of service provided to children in residential care, and a report was released which documented the findings. This has led to the adoption of new minimum service standards, the development of regional service improvement plans and the implementation of an enhanced monitoring framework. Complementing this will be a learning and development strategy that supports staff in residential care facilities. Increased funding was also made available to improve the infrastructure, service quality and to ensure the ongoing viability of agencies.

A wide ranging examination of child protection and supported placements was commenced in 2000-01. This examination has helped guide the development of a long term integrated strategy for the management of demand for child protection and placement services, including an examination of alternative service delivery models. A major focus of this strategy is to reduce the demand for tertiary welfare services by strengthening family support and other services.

Information from the regional service improvement plans, the soon-to-be-released client and family survey, and the demand management project will be used to guide future improvements in child protection, supported placements and support services for families.

### *Supported Accommodation and Assistance Program (SAAP)*

The Victorian Homelessness Strategy (VHS), established by the Premier in July 2000, will provide a framework for Victoria's ongoing development of its homelessness system. The VHS has undertaken extensive sector and consumer consultations. Issues raised will inform the development of the VHS Action Plan.

During 2001, a project commenced to develop an assessment and referral framework and related processes to enable people experiencing, or at risk of homelessness, to immediately access the most appropriate assistance. The project focused on clients seeking access to assistance provided through SAAP and the Transitional Housing Manager Program.

The State Government has allocated additional State-only recurrent funds totalling \$14.8 million over four years to homelessness assistance. This has enabled allocation of an additional \$700 000 per year to expansion of transitional support and, from 2001-02, a major expansion of crisis support and accommodation in Victoria (increasing capacity from 650 to 830 places per night).”

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## Queensland Government comments

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The Department of Families has continued the implementation of responses to recommendations arising from the Commission of Inquiry into Abuse of Children in Queensland Institutions (Forde Inquiry). These include initiatives such as:

- increasing the number of direct service delivery and support staff, bringing the total to 169 additional staff employed since the Forde Inquiry. This will rise to over 250 by 2002-03;
- enhancing the capacity and number of community based child protection and family support services, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child and family services;
- implementation of a client complaint system; and
- improving responses to children and young people in alternative care and past residents of Queensland institutions.

Legislative reform continued with the proclamation of the Child Protection Regulation 2000 and further extension of the advocacy powers of the Commission for Children and Young People through the Commission for *Children and Young People Act 2000*. Reform of administrative appeals process for clients of the department continued with the proclamation of the *Children Services Tribunal Act 2000*.

A major project to reform the child protection service system commenced in June 2000. The reform, which is consistent with change occurring in other jurisdictions in Australia and overseas, includes the piloting of new tools and procedures to enhance child protection practice in a manner supported by contemporary research.

### *Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP)*

Following the signing of the SAAP IV Bilateral Agreement with the Commonwealth in October 2000, Commonwealth funds of \$2.178 million were approved to improve service access and responses to high needs groups across Queensland.

In 2000-01 funds were allocated to assist SAAP services with critical viability issues and to establish new services for homeless people in public spaces, single women's crisis accommodation in inner Brisbane, and an Indigenous service targeting women and children in Townsville. Funds were also allocated for crisis/medium term accommodation for young people in five regional locations. Recurrent funds were approved for 147 services to implement the Crisis Assistance and Supported Housing (CASH) Award, including an additional \$500 000 in the 2000-01 State Budget.

A training forum for Indigenous SAAP service providers was held in May 2001. Access and Equity Strategy and Practice Guidelines were distributed to assist with support of people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Queensland hosted a national government officers' forum with a focus on improving the interface between the child protection, juvenile justice and homelessness service systems for young people under 16 years.

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## Western Australian Government comments

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### *Child protection*

The joint response initiative between the WA Police and the Department for Community Development for the investigation of child abuse is now operating successfully throughout the metropolitan area and the State to improve services and outcomes for children. A tripartite agreement has been reached between police, Princess Margaret Hospital and the department to further improve the joint response for investigation of child abuse cases. Preliminary work has also begun on video recording of children's interviews in preparation for a pilot project at PMH.

### *Supported placements*

The Department for Community Development is conducting a high level review of its care for children services, provided directly and funded in the not-for-profit sector, to ensure they continue to meet the changing needs of the community and are based on the most recent research and examples of best practice.

The department has provided funding to the CREATE Foundation to establish a service in WA to provide mentoring for young people in care and who have left care and a voice for children and young people at a policy and systems level.

The pilot Foster Care Recruitment Service is currently being reviewed to determine future directions for the service. The department is progressively implementing the Looking After Children system State-wide, and a model for evaluation is being developed. Inter-agency planning for children with disabilities who are in care is a focus this year to ensure their needs are being met.

### *Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP)*

In June 2001 the Western Australian Minister for Family and Children's Services (now Department for Community Development) signed a Bilateral Agreement with the Commonwealth Minister for Family and Community Services to continue the program in Western Australia until 2005.

During 2000-01 the SAAP Service Standards were revised by a steering committee, which included sector representation. Implementation will take place in early 2002.

Phase two of the SAAP Interdepartmental Protocols Project was completed in June 2001. At 30 June 2001 this project has developed protocols between SAAP services and agencies working in the areas of housing, drug and alcohol, mental health, community services and Centrelink. Work is ongoing in relation to immigration and multicultural affairs. Phase three of the project will begin in 2001-02 focusing on the areas of justice and police and in the training of services to facilitate the implementation of existing protocols.

Family Safety Services are being established in six remote Aboriginal communities in the Kimberley and Pilbara region. The project is being implemented using a community development approach, which empowers the communities to identify their own needs and develop appropriate services.

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## South Australian Government comments

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### *Child protection*

South Australia's differential response system has improved outcomes for children and families and has lessened the investigatory focus of response. The centralised intake process has increased the consistency in intake, with the Aboriginal team providing culturally sensitive assessments. Inter-agency collaboration concerning children assessed to be in danger has been strengthened through joint family and youth services, police and child protection services training. Reports concerning children where family need is assessed to be the primary concern are not investigated, but rather family support services are provided by government and non-government service providers. Family and youth service interventions are targeted to children who are at risk of further harm. This is achieved by supporting families to provide safe, nurturing care for their children, and making application for Youth Court care and protection orders only in those situations where children's safety cannot be assured within the immediate or extended family. The practice knowledge developed through the Aboriginal Families Project at Port Augusta, engaging families with highly complex issues and supporting their solutions, is being transferred to other sites.

### *Supported placements*

Supported placement provision in SA is designed to ensure a continuum of placement outcomes from primary support to families (family preservation and reunification services); supplementing the care provided by birth families (respite and short term care provision) to providing care outside of the family for children and young people who can no longer remain with their birth family (long term placements: foster, relative or congregate care).

The Department of Human Services has commissioned a review into South Australia's Alternative Care System, the final report for which will be released in February 2002 for implementation in the 2002-03 financial year. Review findings will inform new directions in management, review and monitoring of the alternative care program, as well as the development of a range of alternative care and support services to meet current and future placement needs of children, young people and their families.

### *Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP)*

The SA Homeless Plan *More Than A Place To Live* will guide the implementation of SAAP IV. The plan places homelessness in a broader human services framework through building on the opportunity in SA for integrated cross-portfolio responses. Current strategic planning priorities include vulnerable adults in the inner city and family homelessness. In line with these, significant new initiatives include an inner city stabilisation facility to respond to substance abuse problems; a frail aged facility; expanded assertive outreach capacity; and a central telephone referral and assessment point for families.

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## Tasmanian Government comments

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### *Child protection — care and protection services*

An ongoing process of implementation of the *Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act 1997* continues. The aim is to promote early intervention and prevention with appropriate family supportive strategies being used in preference to statutory legal intervention, which requires greater integration of the various services required, those provided directly by government and those provided by the community sector, to respond effectively to the needs of vulnerable families with complex and multiple needs. Significant advances in changing the practice paradigm to one where children, young people and families have more direct involvement in proceedings and decision making have also occurred. The Tasmanian model of family group conferencing, using independent facilitators from the community, the setting up of advisory and consultative councils for children and young people through the Office of the Commissioner for Children, and the establishment of a branch of the CREATE Foundation have all contributed to widening the care and protection system.

### *Supported placements — out of home care*

Considerable progress has been made in out-of-home care, most notably the development of a clear strategic framework for out-of-home care services in Tasmania following the review undertaken in the previous year. This draws on evidence based models and fashions a continuum of care model appropriate for the needs of the Tasmanian community. It reduces the risk of marginalisation to the out-of-home care system by establishing strong link with preventative, more universal services, such as the family support and SAAP program areas and recognises both the changing role of carers and the growing importance of kinship care as the preferred option for many children at risk. To provide a more rigorous practice framework for inclusive outcome oriented case management of children in care, a commitment has been made to commence the introduction of Looking After Children (LAC) in Tasmania in the year 2001-02.

### *Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) services*

A major restructure of SAAP services in Tasmania aims to improve the outcomes for homeless people through an increased emphasis on early intervention; increased diversity and flexibility of assistance; the development of more effective pathways to stable accommodation through better linked services; and enhanced management and administration arrangements. This will be achieved in partnership with community based service providers. The Minister for Health and Human Services launched a policy document *The Integrated Continuum of Support*. This is a blue print for SAAP in Tasmania and describes a number of reforms aimed at improved services to homeless people and those at risk of homelessness. These reforms include the reallocation of resources between service types and geographic locations and the establishment of regional networks.

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## Australian Capital Territory Government comments

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### *Child protection and supported placements*

A critical task over the past year has been the continued implementation of the new *Children and Young People Act 1999* which commenced on 10 May 2000. The Act reflects an increased emphasis on family support and prevention services to assist children, young people and their families. The Act also recognises the importance of foster carers for the first time.

There has been ongoing bedding down of reforms in the substitute care sector. Major reform includes the introduction of the Looking After Children (LAC) system of guided practice right across the government and non-government sectors.

An Indigenous unit has been established to work directly with families and to provide a consultancy to other staff on Indigenous matters.

A major new initiative that bridges the gap between protection and support is the ACT Schools as Communities (SAC) Program. SAC uses a model of prevention and early intervention to provide support services from the non-stigmatising base of the local school. The program includes a team of community outreach professionals working across the educational, health, community services and business sectors. It seeks to make schools accessible sites for the provision of community services and to ensure that children and their families receive more effective case coordination. The project is based on the premise that cross sectoral partnerships, community development and active outreach services are critical in maintaining the safety and wellbeing of children and their families.

### *Supported Accommodation Assistance Program*

The high cost of service provision in the ACT may be explained by the low proportion of clients achieving independent living following SAAP support periods. Factors that are contributing to this include: continuing to have the lowest vacancy rate in Australia in the private rental market, decreasing numbers of public housing properties and the highest percentage of SAAP clients with no income and the lowest percentage obtaining an income.

During 2000-01 the ACT departments of Health, Housing and Community Care (DHHCC) and Education and Community Services (DECS) commenced a review of its largest service. The review will ensure that in the longer term, SAAP clients are supported to obtain and maintain appropriate alternative long term accommodation and there are improved outcomes for clients and decreasing cost of completed support periods.

The ACT is undertaking several projects to enhance its service purchasing decisions. These include collaborative projects on costings, improved data and quality standards.

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## Northern Territory Government comments



The Family and Children's Services Program (FACS) of the Department of Health and Community Services is responsible for child protection and out of home care services, and the administration of the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program.

### *Child protection and supported placements*

A series of child protection reforms were introduced during the year with the aims of:

- improving the quality and consistency of decision making at intake, by way of the adoption of new screening tools;
- introduction of a risk assessment framework for casework practice;
- introduction of case auditing and an overhaul of existing quality assurance arrangements; and,
- enhancing the marketing of the service, including installation of a toll free reporting phone line and new information and promotion materials for consumers.

Out-of-home placements are primarily provided by registered foster parents across the Territory. Group home placements are funded for children and young people unable to be placed in foster care. FACS purchases recruitment and support services from the two Aboriginal and Islander Child Care agencies to provide Indigenous foster and facility based care for indigenous children.

### *Supported Accommodation Assistance Program*

At 30 June 2001 there were 34 service outlets funded under SAAP in the NT. Services are located in the five main population centres, and provide assistance to a range of clients, including a significant proportion of Indigenous clients, many of whom are from rural and remote areas.

The high proportion of Indigenous SAAP clients in the NT (45 per cent) compared with the national average (16 per cent) presents particular challenges for the program. The Northern Territory Aboriginal Family Violence Strategy has recently been evaluated. The evaluation report makes clear that family violence can be dealt with in a community development context and in terms of an immediate crisis response as well as through intervention and prevention measures. An action plan based on these principles is being developed. When planning the way in which SAAP IV growth funding should be distributed, the NT took into account the need to fund culturally appropriate and Indigenous-specific services.



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## 15.12 Definitions

### Child protection services

Table 15.3 Terms

<i>Term</i>	<i>Definition</i>
Care and protection orders	<p>Legal orders or administrative/voluntary arrangements involving the community services department, issued in respect of an individual child who is deemed to be in need of care and/or protection. Community services department involvement may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• total responsibility for the welfare of the child (for example, guardianship);</li><li>• responsibility to oversee the actions of the person or authority caring for the child; and</li><li>• responsibility to provide or arrange accommodation or to report or give consideration to the child's welfare.</li></ul> <p>The order may have been from a court, children's panel, Minister of the Crown, authorised community services department officer or similar tribunal or officer.</p> <p>Care and protection orders are categorised as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• finalised guardianship and finalised custody orders sought through a court;</li><li>• finalised supervision and other finalised court orders which give the department some responsibility for the child's welfare (excluding interim orders);</li><li>• interim and temporary orders (including orders that are not finalised); and</li><li>• administrative or voluntary arrangements with the community services department, for the purpose of child protection.</li></ul> <p>Children are counted only once, even if they are on more than one care and protection order.</p>
Child	A person aged 0–17 years.
Child at risk	A child for whom no abuse or neglect can be substantiated but there are reasonable grounds to suspect the possibility of prior or future abuse or neglect, and for whom it is considered that continued departmental involvement is warranted.
Child concern reports	Reports to community services departments regarding concerns about a child, as distinct from notifications of child abuse and neglect. The distinction between the two differs across and within jurisdictions.
Indigenous person	Person of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent, who identifies as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander and is accepted as such by the community with which they are associated.
Investigation	An investigation of child abuse and neglect which involves identifying harm or risk of harm to the child, determining an outcome and assessing protective needs. It includes the interviewing or sighting of the subject child where it is practicable to do so.

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**Table 15.3 (Continued)**

<i>Term</i>	<i>Definition</i>
Investigation finalised	Where an investigation is completed and an outcome is recorded by 31 August.
Investigation not finalised	Where an investigation is commenced but an outcome is not recorded by 31 August.
Notification	Contact with an authorised department by persons or other bodies making allegations of child abuse or neglect or harm to a child.
Substantiation	Notification for which an investigation concludes that there is reasonable cause to believe that the child had been, was being, or is likely to be abused, neglected or otherwise harmed. It does not necessarily require sufficient evidence for a successful prosecution and does not imply that treatment or case management is, or is to be, provided.

## Out-of-home care

**Table 15.4 Terms**

<i>Term</i>	<i>Definition</i>
Child	A person aged 0–17 years.
Exited out-of-home care	Where a child does not return to care within two months.
Family based care	Home based care (see placement types).
Family group homes	Residential child care single dwelling establishments which have as their main purpose the provision of substitute care to children. They are typically run like family homes, with a limited number of children who eat together as a family group and are cared for around-the-clock by resident substitute parents.
Foster care	Care of a child who is living apart from their natural or adoptive parents in a private household, by one or more adults who act as 'foster parents' and are paid a regular allowance for the child's support by a government authority or non-government organisation. The authorised department or non-government organisation provides continuing supervision or support while the child remains in the care of 'foster parents'.
Foster parent	Any person who is being paid a foster allowance (or such a person's spouse) by a government or non-government organisation for the care of a child (excluding children in family group homes).
Guardian	Any person who has the legal and ongoing care and responsibility for the protection of a child.
Indigenous person	Person of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent, who identifies as being an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and is accepted as such by the community with which they are associated. If Indigenous status is unknown, then a person is considered to be non-Indigenous.

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**Table 15.4 (Continued)**

<i>Term</i>	<i>Definition</i>
Nonrespite care	Out-of-home care for children for child protection reasons.
Other relative	Grandparent, aunt, uncle or cousin, whether the relationship is half, full, step or through adoption and can be traced through or to a person whose parents were not married to each other at the time of the child's birth. This category includes members of Aboriginal communities who are accepted by that community as being related to the child.
Out-of-home care	Overnight care, including placement with relatives (other than parents) where government makes a financial payment. It includes children in legal and voluntary placements (that is, children on and not on a legal order) but excludes placements made in disability services, psychiatric services, juvenile justice facilities or overnight child care services.
Placement types	Four main categories: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• facility based care (placement in a residential building where the purpose is to provide placement for children and where there are paid staff, including placements in family group homes);</li><li>• home based care (placement in the home of a carer who is reimbursed for expenses for the care of the child). There are three subcategories of home based care — foster care/community care, relative/kinship care and other;</li><li>• independent living (including private board); and</li><li>• other (including unknown).</li></ul>
Relatives/kin	Family members other than parents or a person well known to the child and/or family (based on a pre-existing relationship).
Respite care	Out-of-home care on a temporary basis for reasons other than child protection — for example, when parents are ill. It excludes emergency care provided to children who are removed from their homes for protective reasons.

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**Table 15.5 Descriptors**

<i>Descriptor</i>	<i>Definition</i>
Children in out-of-home care during the year	The total number of children who are in at least one out-of-home care placement at any time during the year. A child who is in more than one placement is counted only once.
Length of time in continuous out-of-home care	The length of time for which a child is in out-of-home care on a continuous basis. A return home of less than seven days is not considered to break the continuity of placement.
Safety in out-of-home care	The proportion of children in out-of-home care who were the subject of a child protection substantiation and the person believed responsible was living in the household (or was a worker in a residential care facility).

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**Table 15.6 Out-of-home care effectiveness indicators**

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<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Definition</i>
Stability of placement	<p>Numbers of placements for children who have exited out-of-home care and do not return within two months. Placements do not include respite or temporary placements lasting less than seven days. Placements are counted separately where there is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• a change in the placement type — for example, from a home based to a facility based placement; or</li><li>• within placement type, a change in venue, for example, and a change from one home based placement to a different home based placement.</li></ul> <p>A particular placement is counted only once, so a return to a previous placement is another placement.</p>

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## Supported accommodation and assistance

**Table 15.7 Terms**

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<i>Term</i>	<i>Definition</i>
Accommodation	Crisis or short term accommodation, medium to long term accommodation, and other SAAP funded accommodation (which comprises accommodation at hostels, motels and hotels, accommodation in caravans, community placements and other SAAP funded arrangements).
Agency	The body or establishment with which the State or Territory government or its representative agrees to provide a SAAP service. The legal entity has to be incorporated. Funding from the State or Territory government could be allocated directly (that is, from the government department) or indirectly (that is, from the auspice of the agency). The SAAP service could be provided at the agency's location or through an outlet at a different location.
Casual client	A person who is in contact with a SAAP agency and receives one-off assistance for a period of generally not more than one hour, and who does not establish an ongoing relationship with an agency.
Client	A person who receives supported accommodation or support
Crisis or short term supported accommodation	Supported accommodation for periods of generally not more than three months (short term) and for persons needing immediate short term accommodation (crisis).
Cross-target/multiple/general services	SAAP services targeted at more than one primary client group category — for example, SAAP services for single persons regardless of their gender.
Day support	Support only on a walk-in basis — for example, an agency that provides a drop-in centre, showering facilities and a meals service at the location of the SAAP agency.

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**Table 15.7 (Continued)**

<i>Term</i>	<i>Definition</i>
Homeless person	<p>A person who does not have access to safe, secure and adequate housing. A person is considered to not have access to such housing if the only housing to which the person has access:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• is damaged, or is likely to damage, the person's health; or</li> <li>• threatens the person's safety; or</li> <li>• marginalises the person through failing to provide access to adequate personal amenities or the economic and social supports that a home normally affords; or</li> <li>• places the person in circumstances which threaten or adversely affect the adequacy, safety, security and affordability of that housing; or</li> <li>• is of unsecured tenure.</li> </ul> <p>A person is also considered homeless if they are living in accommodation provided by a SAAP agency or some other form of emergency accommodation.</p>
Indigenous person	<p>Person who is of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Island descent, who identifies as being an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, and who is accepted as such by the community with which they are associated.</p>
Medium to long term supported accommodation	<p>Supported accommodation for periods over three months. Medium term is around three to six months and long term is longer than six months.</p>
Multiple service delivery model	<p>SAAP agencies that use more than one service delivery model to provide SAAP services — for example, crisis or short term accommodation and support, as well as day support (that is, the provision of meals).</p>
Non-English speaking background services	<p>Services that are targeted at persons whose first language is not English.</p>
Non-recurrent funds	<p>SAAP funds received for non-recurrent purposes, such as funds for research, a special one-off project or replacement of capital items (for example, furniture, motor vehicles).</p>
Non-SAAP accommodation places	<p>Accommodation places in the form of permanent beds (owned or managed by the agency) that use funds other than SAAP funds.</p>
One-off assistance	<p>Assistance provided to a person who is not a client, such as the provision of a meal, a shower, transport, money, clothing, telephone advice, information or a referral.</p>
Ongoing support period	<p>A support period for which, at the end of the reporting period, no support end-date and no after-support information are provided.</p>
Other special characteristics	<p>Primary or secondary characteristics that are not included in those of a service's primary client or group or in other categories of the secondary client group — for example, a service specifically targeted at homeless persons with a disability.</p>
Outlet	<p>A premise owned/managed/leased by an agency at which SAAP services are delivered. It excludes accommodation purchased using SAAP funds (for example, at a motel).</p>

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**Table 15.7 (Continued)**

<i>Term</i>	<i>Definition</i>
Outreach support services	Services that exist to provide support and other related assistance specifically to homeless people. These people may be isolated and able to receive services and support from a range of options that enhance flexibility for the client (for example, advocacy, life skills, counselling). Generalist support and accommodation services may also provide outreach support in the form of follow-up to clients where they are housed. In this context, support is provided 'off site'.
Providers	Agencies that supply support and accommodation services
Real expenditure	Actual expenditure adjusted for changes in prices. Adjustments are made using the GDP(E) price deflator and expressed in terms of final year prices.
Recurrent funding	Funding provided by the Commonwealth and State and Territory governments to cover operating costs, salaries and rent.
Referral	When a SAAP agency contacts another agency and that agency accepts the person concerned for an appointment or interview. A referral is not provided if the person is not accepted for an appointment or interview.
SAAP service	Supported accommodation, support or one-off assistance, that is provided by a SAAP agency and intended to be used by homeless persons.
Service delivery model	The mode or manner in which a service is provided through an agency. The modes of service delivery could be described as crisis or short term accommodation and support; medium to long term accommodation and support; day support; outreach support; telephone information and referral or agency support. An agency may deliver its services through one or more of these means of delivery.
Service provider	Worker or volunteer employed and/or engaged by a SAAP agency, who either directly provides a SAAP service or in some way contributes to the provision of a SAAP service. It includes persons such as administrative staff of an agency, whether paid or not paid.
Single men services	Services provided for males who present to the SAAP agency without a partner or children.
Single women services	Services provided for females who presented to the SAAP agency without a partner or children.
Support	SAAP services, other than supported accommodation, that are provided to assist homeless people or persons at imminent risk of becoming homeless, to achieve the maximum possible degree of self reliance and independence. Support is ongoing and provided as part of a client relationship between the SAAP agency and the homeless person.
Support period	The period that commences when a SAAP client establishes or re-establishes (after the cessation of a previous support period) an ongoing relationship with a SAAP agency. The support period ends when: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• support ceases because the SAAP client terminates the relationship with the SAAP agency; or</li> <li>• support ceases because the SAAP agency terminates the relationship with the SAAP client; or</li> </ul>

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**Table 15.7 (Continued)**

<i>Term</i>	<i>Definition</i>
Supported accommodation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• no support is provided to the SAAP client for a period of three months. A support period is to relevant to the provision of supported accommodation or support, not the provision of one-off assistance.</li> </ul> <p>Accommodation provided by a SAAP agency in conjunction with support. The accommodation component of supported accommodation is provided in the form of beds in particular locations or accommodation purchased using SAAP funds (for example, at a motel). Agencies that provide accommodation without providing support are considered to provide supported accommodation.</p>
Telephone information and referral	Support delivered via telephone without face-to-face contact. Support provided may include information and/or referral.
Total funding	Funding for allocation to agencies (not available at the individual client group level) for training, equipment and other administration costs.
Unmet demand	A homeless person who seeks supported accommodation or support, but is not provided with that supported accommodation or support. The person may receive one-off assistance.
Women escaping domestic violence services	Services specifically designed to assist women and women accompanied by their children, who are homeless or at imminent risk of becoming homeless as a result of violence and/or abuse.
Youth/young people services	Services provided for persons who are independent, and above the school-leaving age for the State or Territory concerned, and who present to the SAAP agency unaccompanied by a parent/guardian.

**Table 15.8 Indicators**

<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Definition</i>
Accommodation load (of agencies)	The number of accommodation days divided by the number of days the agency is operational during the reporting period, where the number of accommodation days equals the sum of accommodation days for all clients of an agency who are supported during the reporting period. The average accommodation load is the mean value of all agencies' accommodation loads. Support periods without valid accommodation dates are assigned the inter-quartile modal duration of accommodation for agencies of the same service delivery model in the same jurisdiction.
Caseload (of agencies)	The number of support days divided by the number of days the agency is operational during the reporting period, where the number of support days equals the sum of support days for all clients of the agency who are supported during the reporting period. The average caseload is the mean value of all agencies' caseloads. Support periods without valid support dates are assigned the inter-quartile modal duration of support for agencies of the same service delivery model in the same jurisdiction.

