

PART G

HOUSING

16 Housing

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

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

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

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

A negotiated four-year CSHA came into effect on 1 July 1999. A new performance framework for reporting under the CSHA was developed to reflect the national objectives of the agreement, to improve the quality of national performance information and to recognise the need for balanced reporting at the national and bilateral levels. Performance reporting for public and community housing based on the new national framework was presented for the first time in the 2001 Report.

Box 16.1 **Commonwealth State Housing Agreement (CSHA)**

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

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

Funding arrangements

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

Roles and responsibilities

Under the CSHA, the Commonwealth Government has responsibility for:

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

State and Territory governments have responsibility for:

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

Source: CSHA (1999).

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

The 2002 Report includes for the first time performance reporting on the Aboriginal Rental Housing Program (ARHP) based on the new national framework. This program provides government owned housing to Indigenous Australians.

Additional performance reporting for CRA has been included this year, with more information reported on the accessibility of CRA to special needs groups. Some time series data are also presented for public and community housing where definitions have not changed.

The data manuals and data reports for public and community housing and the ARHP are available from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare and may be accessed via the Institute's web site at www.aihw.gov.au (AIHW 2001a, 2001b and 2001c).

Housing services not covered

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

- the Crisis Accommodation Program under the CSHA, which provides capital funding for accommodation for homeless people;
- home purchase assistance and private rental assistance provided under the CSHA;
- community managed Indigenous housing;
- the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC)/Army Community Assistance Program, which provides new housing and improved infrastructure to Indigenous communities;
- non-CSHA programs, including those provided by the Commonwealth Department of Family and Community Services (DFaCS), the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) and ATSIC;
- CRA paid by the DVA or the Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs (DETYA);

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- Indigenous housing and infrastructure assistance provided by ATSIC, State and Territory governments, land councils and Indigenous community organisations; and
 - community housing not funded under the CSHA.

Supporting tables

Supporting tables for chapter 16 are provided on the CD-ROM enclosed with the Report. The files are provided in Microsoft Excel 97 format as \Publications\Reports\2002\Attach16A.xls and in Adobe PDF format as \Publications\Reports\2002\Attach16A.pdf.

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

16.1 Profile of housing and housing assistance

Service overview

The 1996 Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Population Census identified 6.5 million private households in Australia, where 'household' is classified as a person living alone or as a group of related or unrelated people who usually reside and eat together. Of these households, 69.0 per cent owned or were purchasing their own home, 20.3 per cent rented in the private sector, 5.3 per cent were in public rental accommodation and 0.5 per cent lived in community housing, with 4.9 per cent residing in other tenure types (table 16A.49).

The composition of Australian households is changing. There is an increasing number of smaller households, including a rising number of single person households. The proportion of single person Australian households increased from 13.6 per cent to 22.8 per cent between 1971 and 1996, while the proportion of households with four or more people fell from 42.0 per cent to 28.2 per cent over the same period (AIHW 1999b).

Why government provides housing assistance

Australia's private housing stock houses the majority of the population. Most Australian households are able to access accommodation either through owner occupation or by renting from a private landlord. Many households, however, face problems in acquiring or accessing suitable private accommodation for reasons of cost, discrimination, availability or adequacy. The price of rental dwellings can be prohibitive for lower income families. Further, stock may not be available in the private rental market for households with special accommodation needs. Housing assistance from Commonwealth, State and Territory governments can help these households.

Roles and responsibilities

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

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

Funding

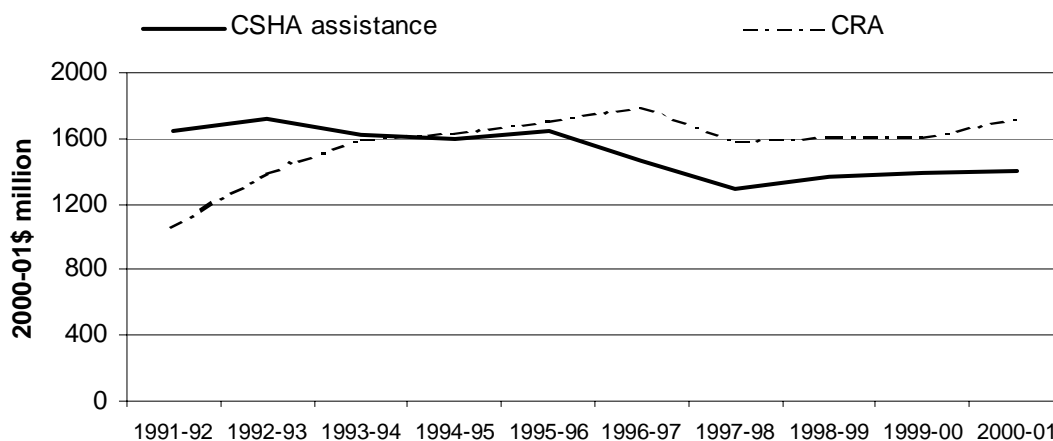
The Commonwealth Government provided over \$1.7 billion for CRA in 2000-01. The Commonwealth, State and Territory governments also provided over \$1.4 billion (contributing about 74 per cent and 26 per cent respectively) for housing programs under the CSHA in 2000-01. Public and community housing accounted for the majority of CSHA funding in 2000-01 (CSHA 1999).

Commonwealth Rent Assistance expenditure increased by approximately 61.8 per cent in real terms between 1991-92 and 2000-01, while expenditure on CSHA assistance declined by approximately 14.7 per cent over the same period (figure 16.1). Increased expenditure on CRA in 2000-01 was primarily the result of an increase in the maximum rate of CRA of 11.7 per cent over the year, including an 8.0 per cent real increase as compensation for the goods and services tax (GST) and a 1.0 per cent increase in the average number of customers each fortnight. Also contained in CSHA expenditure in 2000-01 was \$89.7 million of GST compensation paid to State and Territory governments (table 16A.56).

Given the capital-intensive nature of public housing, in addition to annual funding, assistance is provided through the use of approximately \$38 billion of housing stock owned by housing authorities (1999-2000 State and Territory financial statements). Reduced funding in any given year may not necessarily result in a decline in the level of housing stock provided for that year, although it may affect levels of maintenance and the ability to reconfigure stock, and may eventually result in fewer dwelling constructions or acquisitions.

Nationally, total government recurrent expenditure on public housing per person in the population in 2000-01 was approximately \$72.40. State and Territory recurrent expenditure on public housing per person in the population ranged from \$219.56 in the ACT to \$39.29 in Victoria in 2000-01. Including capital costs, total government expenditure on public housing per person in the population ranged from \$601.06 in the ACT to \$158.77 in Queensland. Average national total government expenditure on public housing per person in the population in 2000-01 was \$232.35 (table 16A.64).

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



^a Care needs to be taken in interpreting data because CRA is a demand-driven recurrent expenditure program, whereas CSHA expenditure includes a component for capital investment that has resulted in around \$38 billion of public housing assets that are continually used for housing assistance. ^b CSHA data are not comparable to data published before the 2001 Report. The data for 1991-92 to 1995-96 have been adjusted to enable comparability (see source document for further explanation). The data for 1996-97 are different from data published in some earlier years. Commonwealth CSHA expenditure differed from Commonwealth budgetary allocations for the three years from 1996-97 to 1998-99. Commonwealth allocations were \$1068 million in 1996-97, \$975 million in 1997-98 and \$967 million in 1998-99. Commonwealth expenditure was \$926 million in 1996-97, \$825 million in 1997-98 and \$898 million in 1998-99. This difference arose because some States and Territories chose CSHA funds as the source to offset their State Fiscal Contributions to the Commonwealth Government's debt reduction program, which was agreed at the 1996 Premiers' Conference. State Fiscal Contributions deducted from the CSHA allocations totalled approximately \$142 million in 1996-97, \$150 million in 1997-98 and \$70 million in 1998-99. For administrative simplicity, Queensland chose to meet its whole State Fiscal Contribution liability from CSHA funds, but subsequently directed other State funds to housing. Data include all CSHA expenditure. ^c Increased expenditure on CRA in 2000-01 was primarily the result of an increase in the maximum rate of CRA of 11.7 per cent over the year, including an 8.0 per cent real increase as compensation for the GST and a 1.0 per cent increase in the average number of customers each fortnight. CSHA expenditure in 2000-01 also contained \$89.7 million of GST compensation paid to State and Territory governments.

Source: CSHA (1999), DFACS (1999, 2000a, 2000b, 2001) and table 16A.56.

Size and scope

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

Box 16.2 Forms of housing assistance

Forms of CSHA housing assistance include:

- *public housing*: dwellings owned (or leased) and managed by State and Territory housing authorities to provide affordable rental accommodation. The CSHA is the main source of funding for public housing;
- *community housing*: rental housing provided for low to moderate income or special needs households managed by community based organisations which are at least partly subsidised by government. Community housing models vary across jurisdictions;
- *Aboriginal housing*: includes public rental housing targeted at Indigenous households and houses which are owned by Indigenous community housing organisations and community councils in urban, rural and remote areas. In addition to funding under the CSHA, Aboriginal housing is funded through the Community Housing Infrastructure Program administered by ATSIC. State and Territory governments also provide funding from their own resources;
- *crisis accommodation*: accommodation services to help people who are homeless or in crisis. Services are generally provided by non-government organisations and many are linked to support services funded through the SAAP. Sources of government funding include the Crisis Accommodation Program of the CSHA, which provides funding for accommodation, and SAAP funding for live-in staff, counselling and other support services;
- *home purchase assistance*: assistance provided by State and Territory governments to low to moderate income households to help with first home purchases or mortgage repayments; and
- *private rental assistance*: assistance provided by State and Territory governments to low income households experiencing difficulty in securing or maintaining private rental accommodation. This assistance may include ongoing or one-off payments to help households meet rent payments, one-off payments for relocation costs, guarantees or loans to cover the cost of bonds, and housing assistance advice and information services.

The chapter also reports on:

Commonwealth Rent Assistance: a non-taxable income support supplement paid by the Commonwealth Government to income support recipients or people who receive more than the base rate of Family Tax Benefit Part A who rent in the private rental market.

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

This chapter focuses on four forms of assistance: public housing, community housing, the ARHP and CRA. Commonwealth Rent Assistance is available only to people receiving income support payments or more than the base rate of Family Tax

Benefit Part A and is paid as a supplement to their other payments. Eligibility and assistance levels differ for each form of assistance. Eligibility for public and community housing tends to be consistent across jurisdictions. Eligibility for public and community housing is income tested but, unlike CRA, not limited to those receiving an income support payment or more than the base rate of Family Tax Benefit Part A. Access to public and community housing is restricted by the amount of housing stock available.

The level of assistance provided in public and community housing depends on the income of the household and the rental value of the property. Rent rebates are set to achieve an affordability outcome for low income tenants where tenants pay the lower of market rent or a maximum 25 per cent of their assessable income in rent. The amount of rent paid for a private rental dwelling represents the basis of CRA payments. Income supplements paid under CRA are set subject to a minimum rent threshold and cannot exceed a maximum rate, with both the minimum rent threshold and maximum rate varying according to family structure. Unlike public and community housing, affordability outcomes for households receiving CRA will vary with the rental value of the property and with the amount of private income and benefits the households receive.

Public housing

Public housing comprises those dwellings owned (or leased) and managed by State and Territory housing authorities. The CSHA is the main source of funding for public housing, which is also the largest program under the CSHA. A total of 346 000 households lived in public housing at 30 June 2001.

Public housing is available to people on low incomes and those with special needs. Although people with a disability represent 17 per cent of the total population aged between 15–64 years, 39 per cent of public housing tenants of this age group in 1998 were people with a disability (ABS 1999a, AIHW 1999b).¹

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

Public housing rents are generally set at market levels and rebates are granted to low income earners (so tenants should pay no more than 25 per cent of their

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

assessable income in rent), in order to provide affordable housing to people on low incomes. The proportion of total households residing in public housing ranged from 14.3 per cent in the NT to 3.4 per cent in Victoria in 1996 (table 16A.52). Information on the proportion of income paid in rent by public housing tenants is contained in table 16A.57.

Community housing

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

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

Funding for community housing is typically either fully or partly provided by governments to not-for-profit organisations or local government. Commonwealth funding for community housing amounted to 6.2 per cent (or \$64.0 million) of total CSHA funding provided by the Commonwealth in 2000-01. There were approximately 25 900 CSHA community housing dwellings in Australia at June 2001, or about 6.7 per cent of the total public and community housing stock supported under the CSHA (table 16A.15).

The community sector has played a small but increasingly important role in the provision of housing assistance within most jurisdictions. Less than 1 per cent of households in each State and Territory in 1996 lived in community housing, except in the NT (4.6 per cent) (table 16A.54).

The focus of this chapter is on community housing stock funded wholly or partly through the CSHA. However, a 1998 mapping study estimated that approximately 15 000 community housing dwellings (or 38 per cent of total community housing dwellings) across Australia at 30 June 1998 were funded and delivered through other means (AIHW 1999a). There is also likely to be additional community housing stock not identified through the study.

Box 16.3 **Models of community housing**

Community housing models vary across jurisdictions in terms of their scale, organisational structure, financing arrangements and the extent to which the community or government has management responsibility and ownership of the housing stock. Table 16A.53 lists the relevant community housing programs in each jurisdiction.

Some community housing models are:

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

Source: State and Territory governments (unpublished).

Aboriginal Rental Housing Program

Reporting on the ARHP is included for the first time in the 2002 Report. The framework for reporting on the ARHP is based on that used for public and community housing, although the appropriateness of some indicators is the subject of ongoing discussion. The ARHP data collection provides information on the provision of rental housing owned and managed by the State or Territory government and allocated to Indigenous households only. This includes dwellings managed by government Indigenous housing agencies for allocation to Indigenous tenants.

The ARHP is only one of a number of programs designed to provide housing assistance to Indigenous people. Indigenous Australians may also be eligible for assistance under Indigenous community managed housing (where tenancy management functions are carried out by community agencies) and the mainstream public and community housing programs, CRA, and other government housing programs (both Indigenous-specific and mainstream).

The ACT does not receive funding or administer any programs under the ARHP, while in the NT, ARHP funding is directed at community managed Indigenous housing. The NT government is unable to differentiate between the various funding sources because of its commitment under the CSHA Bilateral Agreement to specifically 'pool' all funds earmarked for Indigenous housing and associated infrastructure in the NT. The ACT and the NT therefore are not included in the ARHP data collection.

Commonwealth Rent Assistance

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

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

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

<i>Personal circumstances</i>	<i>Minimum rent to be eligible for CRA</i>	<i>Minimum rent to be eligible for maximum CRA</i>	<i>Maximum CRA</i>	<i>Average CRA paid^b</i>
Single, no children	78.00	195.33	88.00	65.00
Single, no children, sharer	78.00	156.27	58.70	48.00
Single, 1 or 2 children	102.62	240.01	103.04	77.00
Single, 3 or more children	102.62	257.93	116.48	91.00
Partnered, no children	127.00	237.40	82.80	66.00
Partnered, 1 or 2 children	151.90	289.29	103.04	76.00
Partnered, 3 or more children	151.90	307.21	116.48	86.00
Partnered, illness separated, no children	78.00	195.33	88.00	77.00
Partnered, temporarily separated, no children	78.00	188.40	82.80	84.00

^a Maximum rates and thresholds payable at 20 March 2001. ^b At March 2001.

Source: DFACS (unpublished).

As a national payment, CRA seeks to ensure clients who have the same household characteristics and who pay the same amount of rent (where that rent is below the threshold for maximum assistance) receive the same amount of assistance wherever they live. The maximum rate of assistance is received by 57 per cent of CRA recipients. This outcome and the national payment objective of CRA result in little variation in the average level of assistance across locations (table 16A.48) even though rents vary considerably by location (table 16A.51). At 30 June 2001, the average payment across Australia was \$66.03 per fortnight (or approximately \$1717 per year). On a capital city/rest of State or Territory basis, Sydney had the highest average CRA payment (\$70.78 per fortnight) at 30 June 2001. The lowest average CRA payment (\$59.63 per fortnight) was in other Australian Territories, comprising Jervis Bay, Christmas Island and Cocos (Keeling) Island. Excluding these Territories, the lowest average CRA payment (\$63.35 per fortnight) was in non-capital city Victoria (table 16A.48).

There were 976 333 income units — where an income unit is defined as either a single person or a couple with or without dependents² — receiving CRA at 30 June 2001 (table 16.2).

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

Table 16.2 Income units receiving CRA by income unit type, 30 June 2001^{a, b}

<i>Benefit type</i>	<i>Income units</i>	<i>Proportion of CRA recipients</i>	<i>Indigenous income units</i>	<i>Proportion of Indigenous CRA recipients</i>
	no.	%	no.	%
Single, no children	380 572	39.0	6 761	33.3
Single, no children, sharer	149 836	15.3	2 448	12.1
Single, 1 or 2 children	185 348	19.0	5 616	27.7
Single, 3 or more children	34 570	3.5	1 829	9.0
Partnered, no children	74 304	7.6	662	3.3
Partnered, 1 or 2 children	102 965	10.5	1 624	8.0
Partnered, 3 or more children	43 866	4.5	1 194	5.9
Partnered, illness separated, no children	1 921	0.2	26	0.1
Partnered, temporarily separated, no children	182	—	7	—
Unknown income unit	2 769	0.3	117	0.6
Total	976 333	100.0	20 284	100.0

^a Data are for CRA recipients who were clients of DFACS only. Data exclude those paid rent assistance by, or on behalf of, the DVA or DEYTA. Components may not sum to 100 per cent as a result of rounding. ^b An income unit is the basic unit used to determine eligibility for social security payments. Income units are analogous to family units with the distinction that non-dependent children and other adults living in the same household are treated as separate income units. Children are regarded as dependent until 16 years of age. Children aged 16–18 years may also be regarded as dependent if they are full time students, wholly or substantially dependent on another person and not in receipt of an income support payment. — Nil or rounded to zero.

Source: DFACS (unpublished).

The mix of clients by payment type reflects the fact that the proportion of social security recipients receiving CRA decreases with age. Approximately 48 per cent of income units aged 25–27 years received CRA in 2001, but this proportion declined to 37 per cent at age 34 years, 28 per cent at age 48 years, 20 per cent at age 59 years and less than 12 per cent at age 65 years or more. Clients aged under 25 years are less likely to receive CRA because single Youth Allowance clients without children must be entitled to the away-from-home rate to qualify for CRA. In most cases this means they have to live away from home for study or training.

Survey of CRA recipients

In July 1998, DFACS commissioned a national survey of CRA recipients with the aim of obtaining data on the housing consumption and social and economic circumstances of CRA recipients. The data collected in the survey enabled a more detailed social and housing profile of CRA recipients. A report on the key findings was published by DFACS in April 2001 and is available on the DFACS website at www.facs.gov.au (Wulff and Rees 1999).

At September–October 1998, the family situation of the majority of respondents indicated that 55.3 per cent were single with no dependants, 23.5 per cent were couples with or without children and 21.2 per cent were single with dependants. Approximately 79.8 per cent of respondents lived ‘independently’ (that is, the recipient is primarily responsible for housing costs) while 20.2 per cent lived in someone else’s house (includes those residing with parents or relatives and boarders or lodgers).

Recipients of CRA locate in different parts of metropolitan areas based on their lifecycle stage. The majority of CRA recipients were satisfied with both the condition and size of their dwelling, with satisfaction with dwelling condition ranging from 74 per cent for those living in someone else’s house to 55 per cent for couples with children. A more comprehensive summary was reported in the 2001 Report (SCRCSSP 2001a).

Diversity of State and Territory housing assistance operations

State and Territory governments have similar broad objectives for providing housing assistance. Individual jurisdictions, however, emphasise different objectives depending on their historical precedents and ways of interacting with community sector providers. These differences lead to a variety of policy responses and associated assistance products. It is important to be aware of all the housing assistance operations in each State and Territory when analysing performance information.

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

Public housing

- *Eligibility criteria for access to public housing.* Definitions of income and assets, and income and asset limits for access to public housing, vary across jurisdictions. At June 2001, income limits for a single person ranged from \$499 a week in SA to \$315 a week in Tasmania. In most cases, jurisdictions require that applicants are Australian citizens or permanent residents and do not own or part-own residential property. ‘Other’ asset limits for a single person household ranged from \$219 250 in SA (with the same definition as the Centrelink asset test threshold at 30 June 2001 for a single person who does not own their own home) to \$40 000 in the ACT (including cash and convertible assets but excluding household and personal effects). There are no ‘other’ asset limits in

NSW and Queensland, although NSW assesses liquid assets as part of a household's weekly income when determining eligibility. The minimum age for eligibility also differs — 18 years in Queensland and WA; 16 years in Tasmania and the ACT; 15 years in Victoria; and no set minimum age in NSW, SA and the NT. Applicants under the age of 18 in NSW, however, must demonstrate living skills to be eligible for housing. All jurisdictions require eligible applicants to be resident in the respective State or Territory.

- *Management of the waiting list.* All State and Territory governments have at least a two-segment waiting list ('priority' and 'wait turn'). Victoria, SA and the ACT have implemented more complex segmented waiting lists to categorise levels of priority, while Tasmania seeks to categorise levels of need. Segments are defined differently across jurisdictions, but generally reflect urgent need/homelessness and inability to access appropriate private market accommodation.
- *Term of tenure.* Most jurisdictions provide security of tenure after an initial probationary period. In Victoria, new tenants after November 1997 have their eligibility reviewed after five years. Tenants aged 65 years and over have lifetime tenure. In SA, tenants who applied after February 1998 and were housed after September 1999, who exceed set income limits over three consecutive years and who do not meet a needs test, are encouraged into home ownership. Those who do not take up this option are able to remain in public housing but are charged a rent premium on top of the market rent they would otherwise pay. The ACT has introduced limited tenure with five year reviews for tenancies commenced after 1 January 2001. In the NT, tenants are offered an initial three or six month probationary lease (depending on the circumstances). Those successfully completing a six month lease are then offered a two year lease, followed by a five year lease. At the end of each lease period, ineligible tenants are required to find alternative housing.
- *Rebated rent setting.* Rebated rents in all jurisdictions are based on the majority of households paying no more than 25 per cent of their assessable income in rent (the income-to-rent ratio). In recent years, NSW, Victoria, Queensland, WA and the ACT have introduced an income-to-rent ratio of 25 per cent for new tenants and the NT has introduced a ratio of 23 per cent. In SA, the income-to-rent ratio ranges from 19.5 per cent (18.5 per cent in country regions) up to 25 per cent. In 1999-2000, the income-to-rent ratio for tenants receiving a Centrelink Family Allowance was lower in most jurisdictions (ranging from 15 to 10 per cent). Definitions of assessable income vary across jurisdictions.
- *Rebated tenants.* The proportion of public housing tenants in receipt of a rebated rent in 2001 was 89.6 per cent in NSW, 88.9 per cent in Victoria, 91.4 per cent

in Queensland, 83.3 per cent in WA³, 83.8 per cent in SA, 88.7 per cent in Tasmania, 75.4 per cent in the ACT and 87.8 per cent in the NT. Nationally, 89.1 per cent of public housing tenants received a rebate.

- *Priority access.* The proportion of public rental allocations made on the basis of greatest need is shown in section 16.4.
- *Remote area concentrations.* The proportion of public housing in remote areas, based on the Rural Remote Classification System (known as RRMA), was below 2.0 per cent in NSW, Victoria, SA and Tasmania and was 3.8 per cent in Queensland, 12.1 per cent in WA and 30.8 per cent in the NT. There are no remote areas in the ACT. Nationally, 2.4 per cent of public housing was located in remote areas (table 16A.1). The proportions calculated exclude properties where details on the location are unavailable.
- *Rural area concentrations.* The proportion of public housing in rural (as distinct from remote) areas, based on RRMA classifications, was 17.9 per cent in NSW, 27.5 per cent in Victoria, 26.0 per cent in Queensland, 16.1 per cent in WA, 23.2 per cent in SA, 52.5 per cent in Tasmania, 0.1 per cent in the ACT and 1.3 per cent in the NT. Nationally, 21.8 per cent of public housing was located in rural (as distinct from remote) areas (table 16A.1). The proportions calculated exclude properties where details on the location are unavailable.

Community housing

- *Eligibility.* Eligibility for community housing is generally consistent with eligibility requirements for public housing in each jurisdiction.
- *Waiting list management.* In most jurisdictions there is no requirement for community housing organisations to segment waiting lists. In March 2000, SA introduced a segmented waiting list for community housing consistent with the segmented waiting list in place for public housing. Victoria has also introduced a segmented waiting list.
- *Proportion of community housing dwellings.* The proportion of community housing dwellings to total public and community housing dwellings at June 2001 was approximately 6.5 per cent in NSW, 12.0 per cent in Victoria, 7.4 per cent in Queensland, 6.3 per cent in SA, 1.9 per cent in Tasmania, 3.4 per cent in the ACT and 2.1 per cent in the NT. Data for WA are unavailable. Nationally,

³ The 83.3 per cent figure for WA has been calculated differently to those for other jurisdictions. With the introduction of the Valuer General's Office Market Rent System in WA, a decision was made to increase rent paid by full rent payers by no more than 7.5 per cent a year. As a consequence, a number of full rent payers now show as receiving a subsidy. The rent charged in these circumstances will increase each year until market rent is reached. If the proportion of rebated tenants in WA was calculated the same way as for other jurisdictions, the proportion would be 96.7 per cent.

community housing dwellings represented approximately 6.7 per cent of total public and community housing dwellings.

- *Remote area concentrations.* The proportion of community housing in remote areas was none (or negligible, at less than 2 per cent) in NSW, Victoria, SA and Tasmania, 13.7 per cent in Queensland, 11.2 per cent in WA and 10.0 per cent in the NT. There are no remote areas in the ACT. Nationally, 3.8 per cent of community housing was located in remote areas. These results may be affected by survey nonresponse. The proportions calculated exclude properties where details on the location are unavailable.
- *Rural area concentrations.* The proportion of community housing in rural (as distinct from remote) areas was 30.1 per cent in NSW, 22.6 per cent in Victoria, 44.3 per cent in Queensland, 22.4 per cent in WA, 11.7 per cent in SA, 95.2 per cent in Tasmania and 32.3 per cent in the NT. There was no community housing located in rural areas in the ACT. Nationally, 27.1 per cent of community housing was located in rural (as distinct from remote) areas (table 16A.15). These results may be affected by survey nonresponse; for example, the relatively low rate of return of survey forms by large providers in southern Tasmania is likely to overstate the proportion of providers in rural areas in Tasmania. The proportions calculated exclude properties where details on the location are unavailable.

Aboriginal Rental Housing Program⁴

- *Eligibility criteria for access to ARHP housing.* Once an applicant is confirmed as being Indigenous, eligibility for ARHP housing is consistent with eligibility requirements for public housing in NSW, SA and Tasmania, although applications outside the guidelines may be considered in Tasmania where extenuating circumstances exist. In Queensland, there are no income or age eligibility limits on ARHP housing as the program is aimed at addressing discrimination and a history of social disadvantage, and discrimination can occur regardless of income or age. Provided other eligibility criteria are met, applications from people living interstate and newly arrived interstate applicants are accepted, with waiting times commencing from the date applications are received. Applicants with previous debts to the Queensland Department of Housing are eligible to be placed on waiting lists for housing although housing is

⁴ The ACT does not receive funding or administer any programs under the ARHP. In the NT, ARHP funding is directed at community managed Indigenous housing. All Indigenous housing programs in the NT are community managed and administered and specific management issues, such as eligibility and waiting lists, are the responsibility of approximately 130 Indigenous housing organisations. The approaches of these organisations may differ significantly depending on the size of the organisations, socioeconomic circumstances of particular communities and cultural considerations.

not generally allocated until the debt is repaid, except in extenuating circumstances or where more than 75 per cent of the debt has been paid under agreed terms.

- *Management of the waiting list.* Management of waiting lists varies across jurisdictions for ARHP housing. In Queensland, ARHP housing is provided on a ‘wait turn’ basis, with provision for a small number of applicants to be housed ahead of turn in very urgent circumstances. Priority allocations are to represent no more than 10 per cent of annual allocations. South Australia has divided the ARHP housing waiting list into four categories, with ‘category one’ reflecting those in most urgent need of housing and ‘category four’ reflecting the least urgent housing need. In Tasmania, while the Housing Assessment System developed for public rental housing may be used as a guide, applications for ARHP housing are not subject to the allocation of points to determine overall housing need or relative priority. Assessments are undertaken by Aboriginal Customer Service Officers who consider an applicant’s claim against criteria such as ill health, medical requirements, and the affordability and adequacy of current housing. Priority may be given to applicants with children and applicants who may have their educational or employment opportunities enhanced by the provision of housing. Priority is determined and properties allocated by regional Aboriginal housing committees.
- *Term of tenure.* In Queensland, security of tenure is dependent on ARHP tenants meeting their responsibilities under the *Residential Tenancies Act (Qld)* (which involves paying their rent, maintaining the property and keeping the peace of the neighbourhood). In SA, security of tenure is the same as that for public housing. In Tasmania, tenants are signed either to a fixed term lease or to a lease of no fixed term, depending on their previous housing history. Tenure arrangements may be reviewed if, following family breakdown or death, a non-Indigenous person is the remaining tenant in an ARHP home.
- *Remote area concentrations.* ARHP dwellings⁵ are more likely to be located in rural or remote areas than public or community housing dwellings. The proportion of the ARHP dwellings located in remote areas was 6.6 per cent in NSW, 3.0 per cent in Victoria, 31.7 per cent in Queensland, 48.5 per cent in WA and 8.1 per cent in SA. No ARHP housing was located in remote areas of Tasmania. Nationally, 20.4 per cent of ARHP dwellings were located in remote

⁵ Aboriginal Rental Housing Program dwellings are defined as those rental housing dwellings owned and managed by government and allocated only to Indigenous Australians. These may be funded from ARHP funding or general grants. This specifically excludes community Indigenous housing stock managed by community agencies, even where purchased using ARHP funds (AIHW 2001c).

areas (table 16A.25). The proportions calculated exclude properties where details on the location are unavailable.

- *Rural area concentrations.* Across jurisdictions, the proportion of ARHP dwellings located in rural (as distinct from remote) areas was 51.8 per cent in NSW, 59.1 per cent in Victoria, 42.0 per cent in Queensland, 21.3 per cent in WA, 30.5 per cent in SA and 60.6 per cent in Tasmania. Nationally, 41.2 per cent of the ARHP dwellings were located in rural (as distinct from remote) areas (table 16A.25). The proportions calculated exclude properties where details on the location are unavailable.

Private rental markets

- *Capital city vacancy rates.* Vacancy rates in the private rental market at June 2001 ranged from 8.5 per cent in Darwin to 2.4 per cent in Hobart and Canberra. Tight private rental markets (vacancy rates below 3.0 per cent) were evident in Hobart and Canberra (table 16A.50).
- *Capital city median rents.* Median rents for three bedroom houses at June 2001 were highest in Darwin at \$240 per week and lowest in Hobart at \$160 per week. For two bedroom flats or units, median rents ranged from \$265 per week in Sydney to \$125 per week in Hobart (table 16A.51).

16.2 Policy developments in housing assistance

Housing ministers' Indigenous strategy to 2010

Following the Housing Ministers' Conference in May 2001, the Commonwealth, State and Territory housing ministers and the Commonwealth Minister for Reconciliation and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs affirmed their commitment to improving housing and environmental health outcomes for Indigenous Australians. Ministers agreed to further strengthen the role of the Indigenous community housing sector in providing housing.

Ministers agreed to work towards a number of desired outcomes for Indigenous housing:

- better housing that meets agreed standards and is appropriate to the needs of Indigenous Australians;
- better housing services that are well managed and sustainable;
- growth in the number of houses to address the backlog of Indigenous housing need and to deal with the emerging needs of a growing Indigenous population;

-
- greater involvement of Indigenous people in government planning, decision making and delivery of services;
 - greater effectiveness, efficiency and coordination of services, including a ‘whole of government’ approach with greater coordination of housing and housing related services; and
 - improved performance linked to accountability.

The full statement *Building a Better Future: Indigenous Housing to 2010* is available on the DFACS web site at www.facs.gov.au.

One implementation strategy agreed to by Housing ministers to achieve the desired outcomes was the implementation of the Agreement on National Indigenous Housing Information (AIHW 2000). This included development of a data collection to support national performance indicators and a national minimum data set and reporting systems to facilitate performance appraisal at the national, State and Territory, regional and local levels. Implementation of the agreement should improve the ability of the housing sector to provide national performance reporting and is expected to lead to improvements in performance reporting for Indigenous housing in future reports (Housing Ministers 2001).

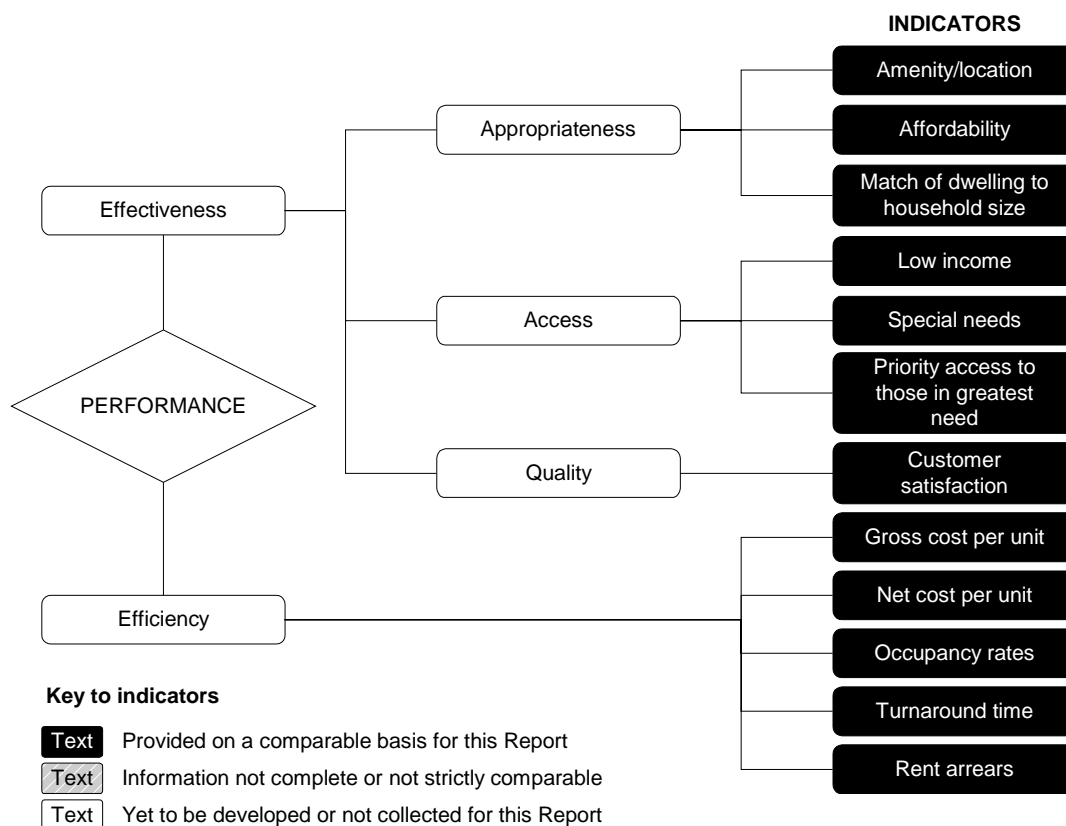
Renegotiation of the CSHA

The current CSHA is due to expire in 2003 and funding arrangements for housing assistance beyond this time are expected to be negotiated in 2002. The outcome of these negotiations may affect reporting in future years.

16.3 Framework of performance indicators

The framework of performance indicators for public and community housing and the ARHP in this chapter is based on the performance indicator framework developed for the 1999 CSHA (figures 16.2, 16.3 and 16.4). The CSHA framework reflects the Agreement’s national objectives as outlined in a number of guiding principles (CSHA 1999).

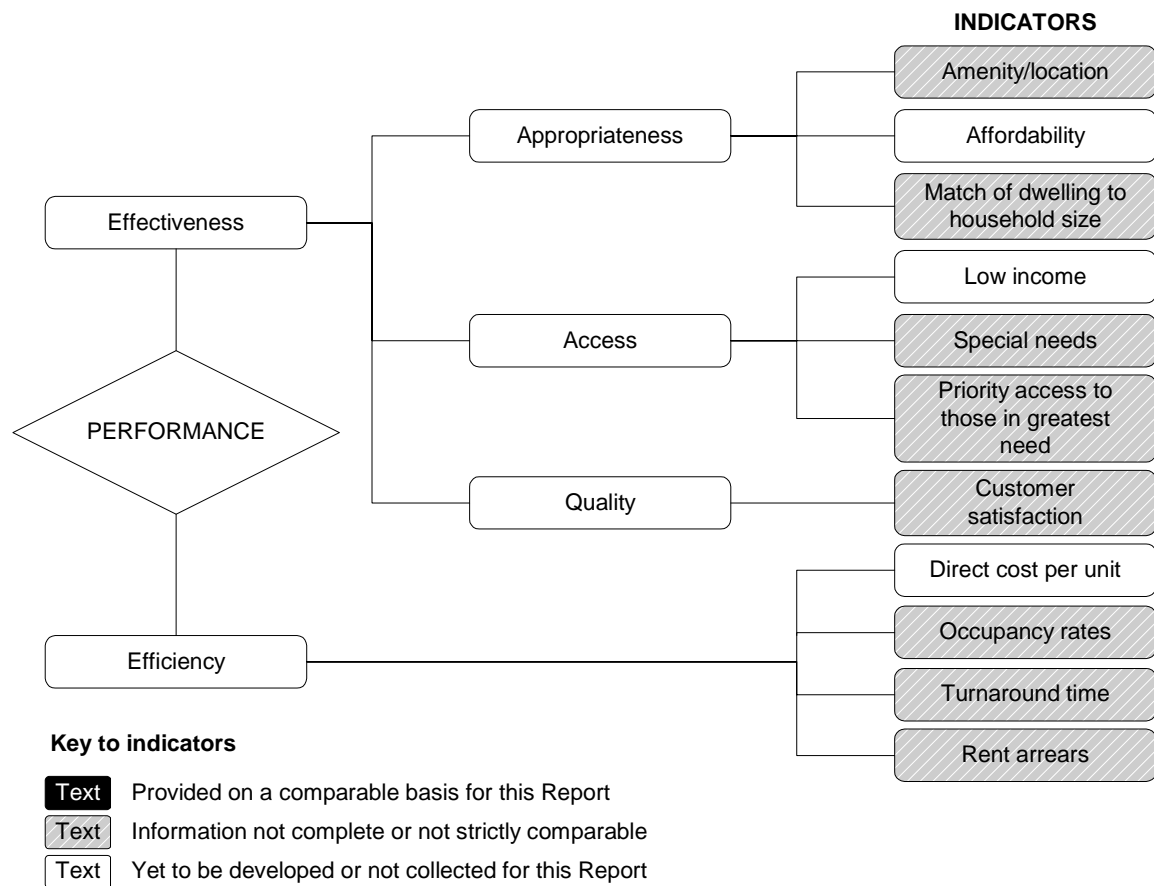
Figure 16.2 Performance indicators for public housing



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

Performance indicator data are reported against the new public housing and community housing frameworks for the second time this year, with some minor changes to the specifications of some indicators to provide greater clarity between indicators and to simplify some community housing indicators. Some additional information on affordability, and moderate overcrowding and underuse can be found in tables 16A.57, 16A.58 and 16A.59, and 16A.60, 16A.61 and 16A.62 respectively.

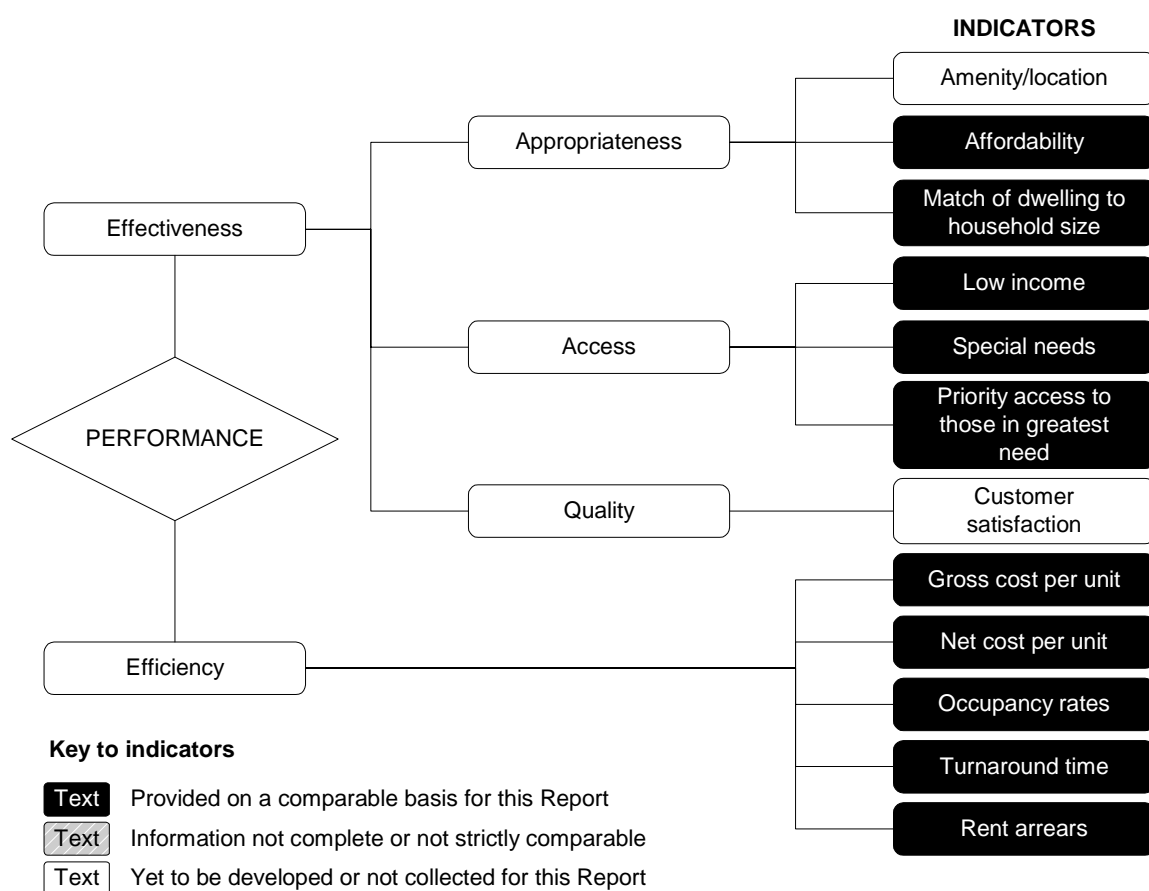
Figure 16.3 Performance indicators for community housing



As for other services, performance reporting this year is assessed in terms of effectiveness and efficiency. Comparable public housing data are presented for the full range of effectiveness and efficiency indicators in the performance measurement framework (figure 16.2).

It has not been possible to obtain nationally comparable performance information for community housing (figure 16.3) because current data standards and data collection capacity do not allow nationally comparable performance information to be reported in the community housing sector. Jurisdictions operate a variety of funding and asset management models (box 16.3) and they are not always managed by State or Territory housing authorities.

Figure 16.4 Performance indicators for the Aboriginal Rental Housing Program

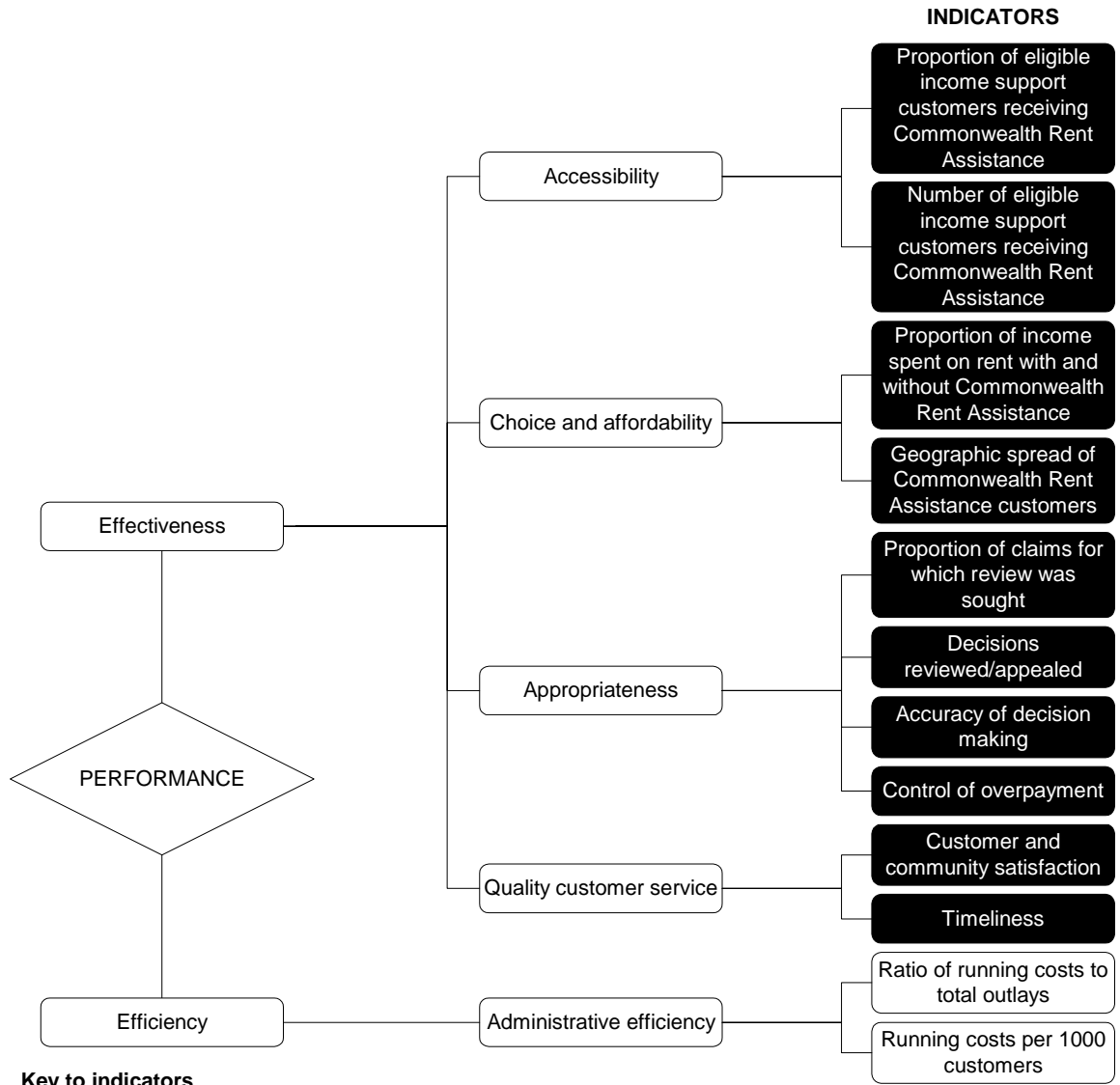


Performance reporting on the ARHP is included for the first time this year. The performance indicator framework for the ARHP is cognisant of the Agreement on National Indigenous Housing Information (figure 16.4) and uses the same framework as that used for reporting on public and community housing. It is not appropriate to make direct comparisons between the performance of public housing and the ARHP as a number of definitions differ. For example, the special needs indicator for public housing includes Indigenous households in the definition of ‘special needs’ households. To use this definition for the ARHP would result in 100 per cent of ARHP households being regarded as having ‘special needs’. The ARHP uses a more appropriate definition of ‘special need’. More information on the differences between public housing and the ARHP are discussed in section 16.4.

The performance indicators for CRA differ from those for public, community and ARHP housing because they have different objectives and delivery methods. The performance indicator framework for CRA (figure 16.5) is based on the objective

outlined in box 16.4. Definitions for all indicators are provided in tables 16.19 and 16.20.

Figure 16.5 Performance indicators for Commonwealth Rent Assistance



Key to indicators

- Text** Provided on a comparable basis for this Report
- Text** Information not complete or not strictly comparable
- Text** Yet to be developed or not collected for this Report

Box 16.4 Objective of Commonwealth Rent Assistance

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

Data are for CRA recipients who are clients of DFACS only. Data exclude those paid rental assistance by, or on behalf of, the DVA or DETYA. Comparable data are presented for all effectiveness indicators within the performance measurement framework. As data are not available, it is not possible to report on the efficiency indicators in this Report.

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

16.4 Key performance indicator results

Public housing

Different delivery contexts, locations and types of client may affect the performance of public housing reported in this chapter. The adoption of the new performance indicator framework is expected to lead to improvements in the comparability and usefulness of public housing indicators. Care needs to be taken in interpreting performance indicator results and the qualifications presented with the data need to be considered. Some descriptive information on public housing can be found in table 16A.1.

Effectiveness

Appropriateness

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

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

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

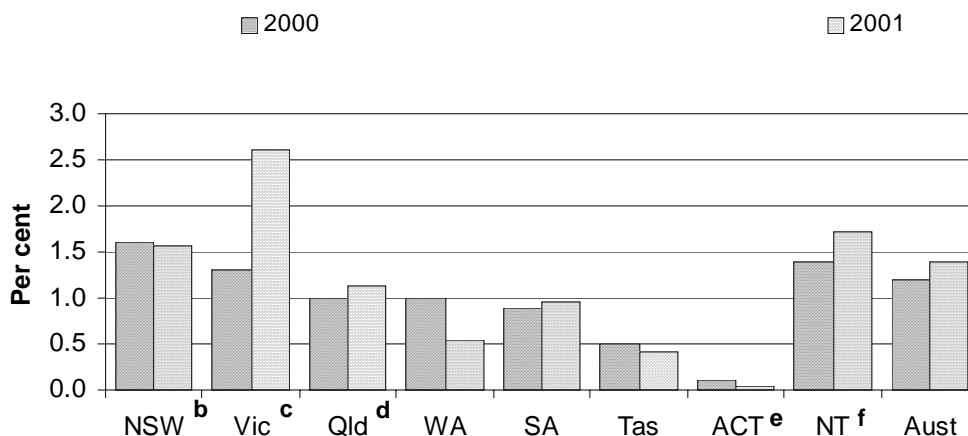
Source: AIHW (2001a).

Overcrowding is deemed to have occurred where two or more additional bedrooms are required to satisfy the proxy occupancy standard. The occupancy standards in table 16.3 may differ from the specific criteria used by State and Territory housing authorities to match households to dwelling types, affecting interpretation of this indicator.

Victoria had the highest proportion of overcrowded dwellings at June 2001, while the ACT had the lowest proportion. Overcrowded dwellings represented 1.4 per cent of public housing dwellings nationally (figure 16.6). More information on overcrowding can be found in table 16A.62.

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

Figure 16.6 Proportion of households in public housing with overcrowding at 30 June^a



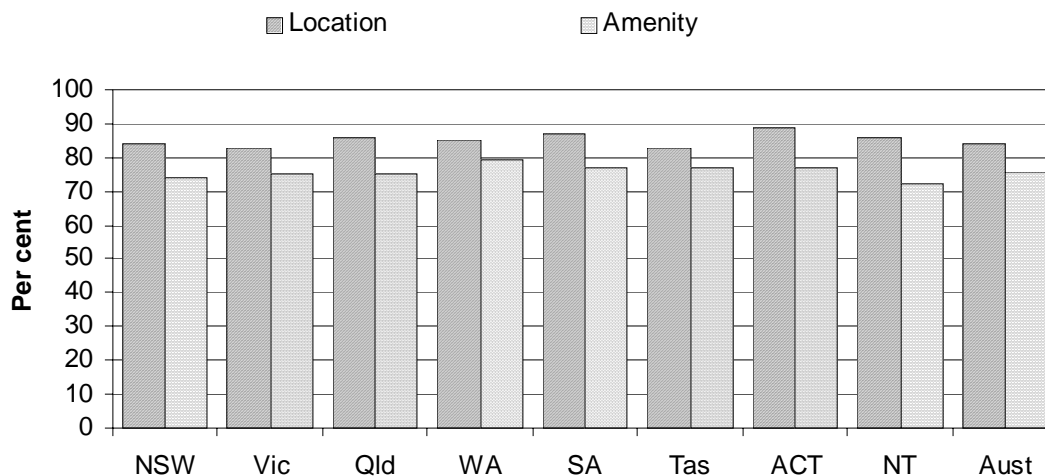
^a Includes rebated and non-rebated tenants where household composition is known. ^b Data for 2000 include data on extended family members which were not previously available. Counts for previous years are overestimates. For 2000-01, there are eight households with no household composition information. ^c Internal data show an increase of 0.1 per cent from 2000 to 2001 using consistent methodology. Victoria has serious concerns about the credibility and validity of this data item and performance indicator. ^d A more precise identification of multiple income group households was performed in 2000 relative to previous years. ^e In 2001 data exclude households where the relationship of household members was unknown (for example, a three tenant household where it is not known if the household consists of a couple and a single person, or three single people). ^f Data for 2001 exclude 189 multiple family households (3.3 per cent of households).

Source: table 16A.2.

Care needs to be taken in interpreting small differences in results. Further information on the sampling method is provided in attachment 16A. Appendix A outlines a method that can be used to test whether the difference between two sample proportions is statistically significant. This test may be required to assess the significance of differences between the survey estimates reported here.

The timing of the 2001 tenant survey has meant data are unable to be updated and results for 2000 are being reported again this year. There was little difference across jurisdictions in the proportion of tenants satisfied with the location or amenity of their dwelling in 2000 (figure 16.7).

Figure 16.7 Proportion of tenants satisfied with location or amenity aspects of their dwelling 2000^a



^a Care needs to be taken in interpreting small differences in the results that are affected by sample and estimate size.

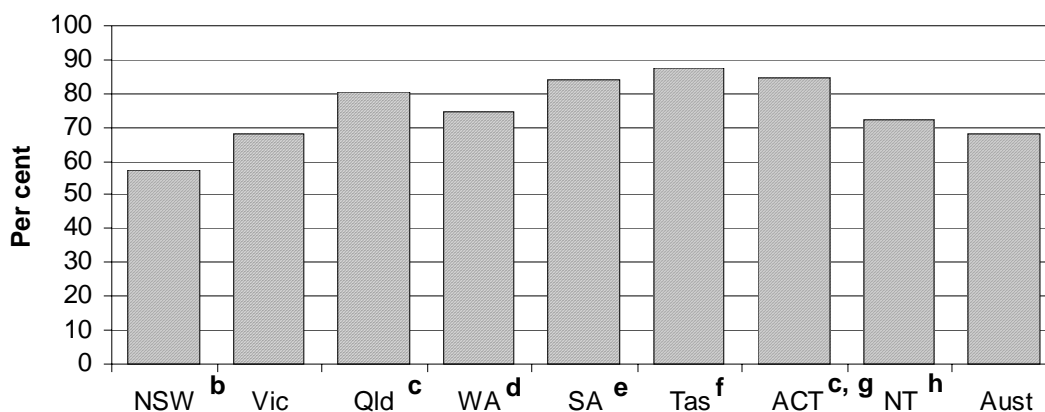
Source: tables 16A.13 and 16A.14.

These overall satisfaction results were obtained by surveying tenants about a number of aspects regarding the location and amenity of their dwellings. Tenants were asked whether particular aspects were important to them and, if so, whether they felt their needs were met. More information on this indicator can be found in tables 16A.13 and 16A.14. Information on tenant assessments of the condition of public housing stock can be found in table 16A.63.

The third measure of appropriateness is affordability, which measures the rent charged to tenants as a proportion of the market rent for each dwelling, adjusted for CRA. The rent charged in 2000-01 as a proportion of the market rate for each dwelling (adjusted for CRA) ranged from 87.7 per cent in Tasmania to 57.3 per cent in NSW (figure 16.8).

More information on affordability, measured as the proportion of household income spent on housing costs, can be found at table 16A.57.

Figure 16.8 Rent charged as a proportion of market rent, adjusted for CRA, 30 June 2001^a



^a Calculation of CRA entitlements is based on an estimate of the actual entitlements that a low income household would receive if they were in the private rental sector. In the 2001 Report, the calculation was based on an estimate of the average CRA payment for each State or Territory. ^b Market rents are the valuations applied to each property. The large increase during the year resulted from the Department's three-yearly rent review. The previous year's figure was based on the 1998 value. Information relating to CRA for rebated tenants only. Available data exclude information on relationships other than those to the household head. It is assumed that all children under 16 years are sons or daughters of the household head. ^c Market rents have not been globally adjusted to reflect the current market for a number of years, resulting in a reduced proportion of households paying less than market rent and a corresponding increase in the proportion of those paying market rent as a result of consumer price index rent rises. Consequently, the overall market rent value listed here would be somewhat less than the true value. ^d Excludes 1934 multiple family households (representing 6 per cent of households). ^e The decrease in total rents charged and market rent values is partly due to 1999-2000 data being based on rents for the week of 7 July 2000 rather than 30 June 2000. Market rents increased on 1 July 2000 and therefore 1999-2000 rents were overstated. Excludes 3113 multiple family households (representing 6.5 per cent of households). ^f Data for 2000-01 exclude the ARHP which was included in 1999-2000 data. Excludes 1261 multiple family households (represents 10 per cent of households). ^g In 2000-01, data exclude households where the relationship of household members was unknown (for example, a three tenant household where it is not known if the household consists of a couple and a single person, or three single people). ^h Includes only single family households (representing 96.7 per cent of households). Excludes 189 households.

Source: table 16A.7.

Access

Three performance indicators measure access to public housing assistance for those in need. The first measures the 'low income' and 'special needs (but not low income)' status of households receiving public housing assistance (table 16.4). There are two household income measures for the purpose of this indicator:

- 'low income A' households—those in public housing where all members of the household have incomes at or below the maximum pension rate (pension rates

have been selected for calculating this indicator because they are higher than allowance rates); and

- ‘low income B’ households—those in public housing that receive an income equivalent to that at which minimum government income support benefits are received.

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

The proportion of new tenancies allocated to ‘low income A’ households ranged in 2001-01 from 94.1 per cent in NSW to 49.1 per cent in WA. The proportion of new tenancies allocated to ‘low income A’ or ‘special needs (not low income)’ households varied from 97.3 per cent in NSW to 67.7 per cent in WA (table 16.4). Results for WA are affected by the use of gross household income rather than assessable income.

Table 16.4 Low income and special needs households as a proportion of all new households, 30 June 2001 (per cent)^a

NSW	Vic ^b	Qld	WA ^c	SA ^d	Tas ^e	ACT ^f	NT ^g	Aust ^h
<i>New ‘low income A’ households as proportion of all new households</i>								
94.1	90.8	90.0	49.1	89.3	84.6	nr	83.6	86.6
<i>New ‘low income A’ households or special needs (not low income households) as proportion of all new householdsⁱ</i>								
97.3	93.8	93.4	67.7	94.6	85.9	nr	nr	91.6

^a The introduction of a national ‘special needs’ definition has influenced changes in jurisdiction results. ^b Only includes single family households. Households with zero or missing income are also excluded. ^c The change in results this year is influenced by the use of gross household income and not assessable income. Only includes single family households, representing 94 per cent of households. Excludes 1934 multiple family households. ^d Excludes new allocations for 2000-01 who left public housing prior to 30 June 2001. Includes only single family households which represent 93.5 per cent of households. Excludes 3113 multiple family households. ^e Income and household composition calculated as at tenancy start date. Income source not taken into account and based on gross income only. ^f Data were available for only 4.3 per cent of households allocated housing and were therefore not reported (94.1 per cent and 100.0 per cent respectively were calculated for the indicators). ^g Excludes multiple family households. ^h While the ACT provided a complete data set, they were excluded from the national average due to data problems. ⁱ Data for the NT were not reported due to data problems (180 per cent was calculated for the indicator). This result is excluded from the national average. **nr** Not reported.

Source: table 16A.3.

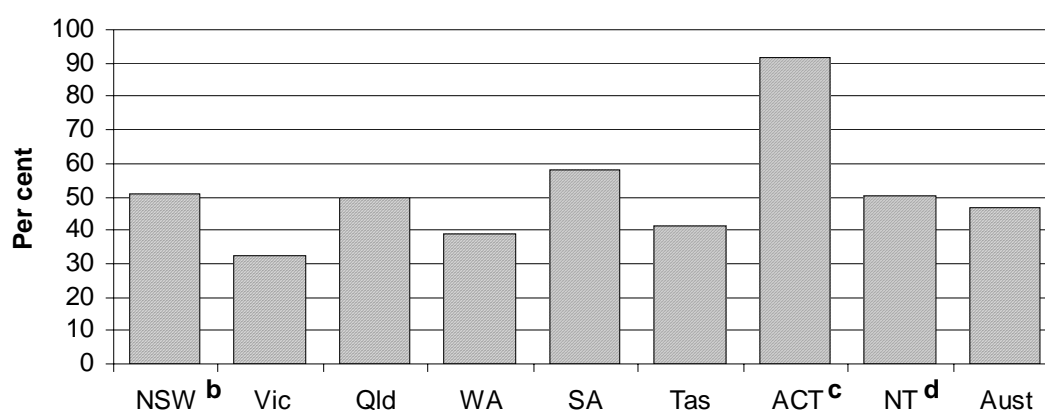
More information on ‘low income B’ households is contained in table 16A.3.

The second access indicator measures the proportion of new tenancies allocated to households with special needs. Special needs households are those that either have a household member with a disability, a principal tenant aged either 24 years or under or 75 years or more, or a household defined as being Indigenous. The specifications for this indicator have changed since the 2001 Report to improve consistency across

jurisdictions. In the 2001 data collection, each jurisdiction defined 'special needs' differently.

The proportion of new tenancies allocated to 'special needs' households in 2000-01 varied from 91.5 per cent in the ACT to 32.4 per cent in Victoria (figure 16.9).

Figure 16.9 **Proportion of new tenancies allocated to households with special needs, 2000-01^a**



^a The introduction of a national 'special needs' definition has influenced changes in jurisdiction results.

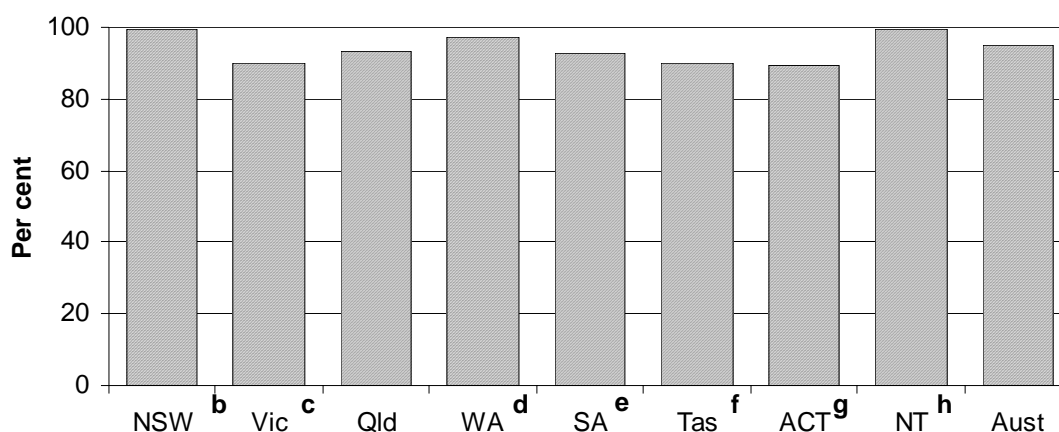
^b There are 80 new households without 'special needs' information. ^c Data represent only 36 per cent of households allocated housing. Special needs information is unknown for the remainder of households.

^d Special needs details are only recorded where they are known to exist. No record is kept if a household does not have special needs. Inclusion of all new households in the calculation (regardless of whether special needs status is known) means proportion could be understated. Excludes households with a disability as the NT data do not include a disability indicator.

Source: table 16A.5.

The proportion of all households that pay less than market rent or that were special needs households paying market rent in 2000-01 ranged from 99.5 per cent in NSW to 89.4 per cent in the ACT (figure 16.10).

Figure 16.10 Households that pay less than market rent or that are special needs households paying market rent as a proportion of all households, 30 June 2001^a



^a The introduction of a national 'special needs' definition has influenced changes in jurisdiction results. ^b There are 80 new households without 'special needs' information. ^c Low income information includes only single family households. Households with zero or missing income are also excluded. ^d The change in results this year is influenced by the use of gross household income and not assessable income. Includes only single family households, representing 94 per cent of households. There were 1934 multiple family households excluded. ^e Low income information excludes new allocations for 2000-01 who left public housing prior to 30 June 2001. Includes only single family households which represent 93.5 per cent of households. There were 3113 multiple family households excluded. Households with zero or missing income are also excluded. ^f Income and household composition calculated as at tenancy start date. Income source not taken into account and based on gross income only. ^g Data for low income details were available for only 4.3 per cent of households. Data on 'special needs' represent only 36 per cent of all households allocated housing. Special needs information is unknown for the remainder of households. ^h Special needs details are only recorded where they are known to exist. No record is kept if a household does not have special needs. Inclusion of all new households in calculation (regardless of whether special needs status is known) means proportion could be understated. Excludes households with a disability as the NT data do not include a disability indicator. Multiple family households were excluded.

Source: table 16A.4.

The third indicator of access measures the priority of access given to those in greatest need. 'Greatest need' households are defined as low income households that at the time of allocation were either homeless, in housing inappropriate to their needs, in housing that was adversely affecting their health or placing their life and safety at risk, or that had very high rental housing costs.

Table 16.5 shows the proportion of all new allocations that are allocated to applicants with 'greatest need' for applicants spending various time periods on the waiting list. Data are provided for tenants waiting for periods from under three months to more than two years. These numbers are not cumulative. The proportion of new allocations to those in greatest need varied for the year ending 30 June 2001, from 82.2 per cent in Tasmania to 4.7 per cent in Queensland (table 16.5).

Table 16.5 **Greatest need allocations as a proportion of all new allocations, 2000-01 (per cent)^a**

	NSW ^b	Vic ^c	Qld ^d	WA ^{c, e}	SA ^c	Tas ^f	ACT	NT	Aust
Total for year ending 30 June 2001	41.5	49.3	4.7	16.0	48.6	82.2	65.7	16.0	35.9
Proportion of greatest need allocations to new allocations with time to allocation:									
Under 3 months	79.6	68.0	8.6	25.1	59.8	82.8	83.4	34.9	58.9
3 < 6 months	64.9	48.8	5.4	31.9	66.3	83.2	65.5	30.8	46.3
6 months to < 1 year	41.6	44.3	4.8	14.3	57.8	71.6	37.3	5.1	27.8
1 < 2 years	19.0	16.8	2.3	3.1	19.5	76.5	4.3	6.0	10.1
2+ years	2.9	1.3	1.2	1.9	0.9	100.0	–	2.0	2.1

^a The waiting list time was clarified for the 2002 collection and refers to the time the applicant was eligible for 'greatest need' assistance to the date assistance commenced. If an applicant transfers between waiting list categories, only the time spent on the waiting list from when the applicant met the 'greatest need' definition was counted. The introduction of a national 'greatest need' definition this year has influenced changes in jurisdiction results. ^b Excludes those households paying very high rental housing costs due to data availability. Records with missing waiting time information are included in the total but could not be assigned into a breakdown group. ^c Households with missing application date or date housed or with application date after tenancy start were excluded. ^d The Queensland definition of those in 'greatest need' is those who are 'priority A' on the waiting list. This is an underestimation of the true 'greatest need' figure as the priority A flag is rarely used in low waiting time areas as a result of its administrative encumbrance. ^e Five new priority levels were introduced on 8 January 2001 (domestic violence, emergency housing, homelessness and medical and support needs) to improve data capacity. ^f Data for 1999-2000 reflect allocations to Category 1 applicants only. This year data report circumstances of applicants assisted against the greatest need national standard (not categories on waiting lists). The Tasmanian Housing Assessment System collects data about circumstances of applicants allowing reporting against the national standard (while most jurisdictions reported against category on waiting list, not housing circumstances). – Nil or rounded to zero.

Source: table 16A.6.

Quality

The quality of public housing is reported by surveying tenants about their overall satisfaction with housing provided. Satisfaction with the location and amenity aspects of public housing is reported under the appropriateness indicator (figure 16.7). The satisfaction outcomes for location and amenity influence the general satisfaction of public housing tenants. A more comprehensive discussion of customer satisfaction results is provided in the *National Social Housing Survey with Public Housing, November 2000* (Donovan Research 2000).

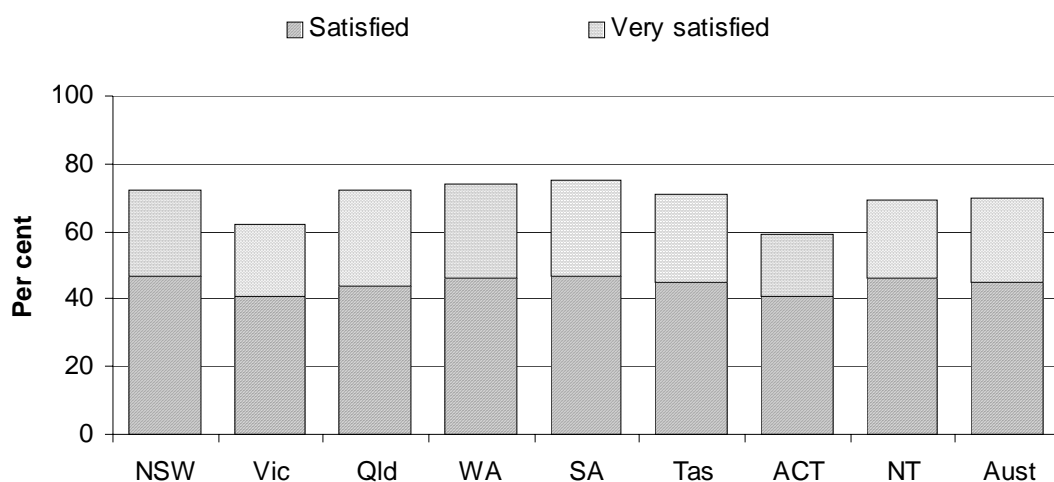
The timing of the 2001 tenant survey has meant data are unable to be updated and results for 2000 are being reported again this year.

- Nationally, 70 per cent of tenants were either satisfied or very satisfied with the housing provided. This proportion varied from 75 per cent in SA to 59 per cent in the ACT. This proportion increased in five jurisdictions between 1999 and 2000 and decreased in two. The largest changes occurred in WA, where the

proportion increased by 7 percentage points and Victoria, where the proportion decreased by 7 percentage points.

- The proportion of public housing tenants surveyed who were very satisfied with the housing provided was the same as or above the national average in NSW, Queensland, WA, SA and Tasmania in 2000 (figure 16.11).

Figure 16.11 **Tenant satisfaction, 2000^{a, b}**



^a Care needs to be taken in interpreting small differences in the results that are affected by sample and estimate size (see table 16A.12 for details of the sample size). ^b Calculated as simple numerical averages due to a lack of raw data.

Source: table 16A.12.

Efficiency

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

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

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

Box 16.5 Comparability of cost estimates

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

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

- Superannuation costs are included in cost estimates for housing services. This ensures comparability across jurisdictions. The SCRCSSP (1998) recommended costing superannuation on an accrual actuarial basis. There is an ongoing process to determine whether superannuation costs have been included in the costs of housing services on this basis.
- Depreciation costs are included in estimates of maintenance and depreciation costs per dwelling for both community and public housing. This year the Report documents differences in how depreciation is measured (table 16A.55).
- The user cost of capital is reported separately for public and community housing. The user cost of capital represents the opportunity cost to government of the funds tied up in housing assets. Excluding this cost lowers the reported costs per dwelling. Comparability will be improved by adding the reported user cost of capital to costs and ensuring debt servicing costs and State and Territory based capital asset charges are deducted from estimates of administration and operating costs per dwelling.
- Payroll tax is payable by government public and community housing authorities in all jurisdictions. The SCRCSSP (1999) recommended that no additional treatment was necessary to improve the cost comparability of the sector.

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

Sources: SCRCSSP (1998 and 1999).

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

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

funds to deliver services rather than investing them elsewhere or using them to retire debt.

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

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

The indicative user cost of capital for land per public housing dwelling was highest in the ACT (\$6249) and lowest in SA (\$2063) in 2000-01 for those jurisdictions where data were available. The full indicative cost of capital per dwelling ranged from \$10 383 in the ACT to \$4488 in Tasmania. These data were collected using a new method for the 2002 Report and consequently are not comparable to data in the 2001 Report (table 16.6).

Cost per dwelling is broken down into gross cost to government (administration and operating costs plus capital costs) and the net cost to government (which nets out rents received from tenants). This year, interest payments have been subtracted from other capital costs (that is, depreciation and indicative user cost of capital) to obtain the total capital cost, and full gross and net cost to government, rendering these data not comparable with previous reports. Interest payments are included in recurrent costs and reported capital costs must be reduced by the amount of interest payments to avoid double counting of capital costs once the indicative user cost of capital is included. Previously, it has not been possible to avoid this double counting. Asset data used to calculate the user cost of capital were collected in a different manner this year and therefore user cost of capital data are not comparable to those in previous reports.

The net cost to government per dwelling in 2000-01 ranged from \$12 255 in the ACT to \$5393 in SA. Some jurisdictions had difficulty separating costs for public housing from those for other housing assistance activities, so care needs to be taken in interpreting these results (table 16.6).

Table 16.6 Costs per dwelling, 2000-01 (dollars)^a

	NSW	Vic	Qld ^b	WA	SA	Tas ^c	ACT ^d	NTE	Aust
Total recurrent costs	3 851	2 906	3 772	3 931	4 166	6 206	5 751	6 827	3 918
Depreciation	1 367	1 263	1 461	1 159	746	911	907	1 135	1 218
Indicative user cost of capital									
– land ^f	4 795	3 470	2 756	3 424	2 063	na	6 249	3 609	3 599
– other assets ^f	5 379	5 069	3 715	4 058	2 677	na	4 134	4 540	4 328
– total assets	10 174	8 539	6 471	7 483	4 740	4 488	10 383	8 149	7 927
Interest payments ^g	474	–	325	623	889	931	545	2 281	489
Total capital costs	11 068	9 802	7 609	8 019	4 596	4 468	10 744	7 003	8 655
Full gross costs	14 919	12 708	11 380	11 950	8 762	10 675	16 495	13 830	12 573
Rent collected from tenants	3 417	3 542	3 394	3 228	3 369	3 090	4 240	4 259	3 441
Full net costs	11 502	9 166	7 986	8 722	5 393	7 584	12 255	9 570	9 132

^a Asset data used to calculate indicative user cost of capital were collected differently this year, so data are not directly comparable to that in previous reports. Issues surrounding the comparability of capital cost data are discussed in the Steering Committee research paper, *Asset Measurement in the Costing of Government Services* (SCRCSSP 2001b). ^b Dwellings are defined as the 'unit of accommodation to which a rental agreement can be made' and dwelling numbers here will exceed figures based on discreet dwelling structures. ^c Data for 2000-01 exclude direct costs of the ARHP. These costs were included in the 1999-2000 data. ^d There has been no netting off of income against expenditure, except for the calculation of the profit or loss on the disposal of real property assets. As ACT Housing made a net profit last year, this has no impact on the expenditure figure. Includes corporate costs such as the executive, finance and information technology areas, plus costs of reporting to external organisations, ministerial advice and other services to government. Excludes the written down value of properties sold, demolished or transferred during the year. Costs attributable to the management of Community Organisations Rental Housing Assistance Program properties are excluded this year, but were included last year. ^e It is not possible to extract some costs not directly relevant to the provision of public housing so the cost per dwelling is overstated. ^f It has not been possible for Tasmania to separate the indicative user cost of capital for land. ^g Interest payments are included in total recurrent costs, but they must be excluded from total capital costs and full gross and full net costs to avoid double counting of capital costs once indicative user cost of capital is included. In previous reports, it has not been possible to avoid this double counting, and as a result, data are not comparable to those in previous reports. **na** Not available. – Nil or rounded to zero.

Source: table 16A.11.

Care needs to be taken in comparing the full gross costs of public housing because there may be double counting for some jurisdictions. The user cost of capital is intended to capture all the costs of funding assets used to produce the services, but some of these costs (apart from interest payments) may already be included in reported operating costs.

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

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

In 2001, the Steering Committee completed a research project to assess the impact of asset measurement factors (such as depreciation and asset valuation methods) on the comparability of cost data in the Report. The results of this study are summarised in chapter 2. A brief summary of the results relating to housing is featured in box 16.6.

Box 16.6 Asset measurement in the costing of government services

Costs associated with non-current physical assets (such as depreciation and the user cost of capital) are potentially important components of the total costs of many services delivered by government agencies. Differences in the techniques for measuring non-current physical assets (such as valuation methods) may reduce the comparability of cost estimates across jurisdictions. In response to concerns regarding data comparability, the Steering Committee initiated a study: *Asset Measurement in the Costing of Government Services* (SCRCSSP 2001b). The aim of the study was to examine the extent to which differences in asset measurement techniques applied by participating agencies affect the comparability of reported unit costs.

The relative capital intensity associated with the provision of public housing increases the potential for differences in asset measurement techniques to have a material impact on total unit costs. The results of this study suggest, however, that the adoption under the CSHA of a uniform accounting framework has largely avoided this. The results are discussed in more detail in chapter 2.

Source: SCRCSSP (2001b).

The second indicator of efficiency measures the proportion of the housing stock occupied by households. The proportion of public rental stock occupied at 30 June 2001 was broadly similar across jurisdictions. The national average occupancy rate was 96.6 per cent (table 16.7).

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

Table 16.7 Housing stock occupancy rates at 30 June (per cent)

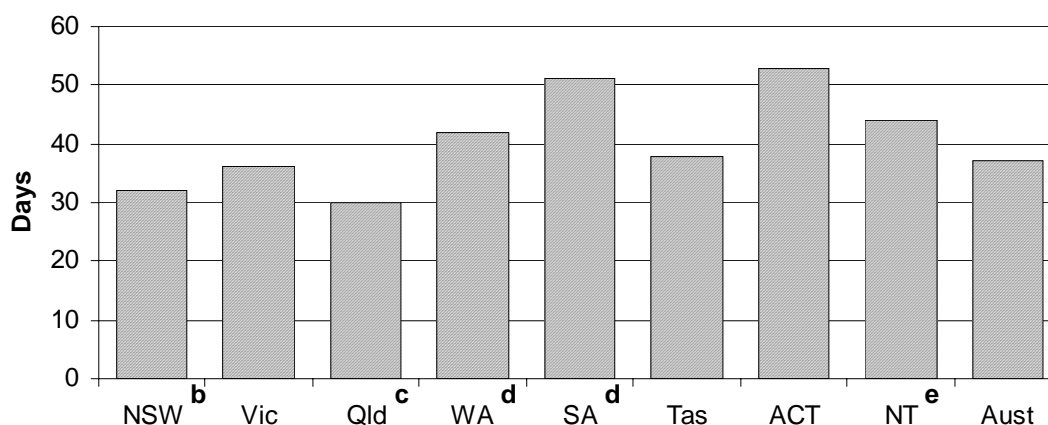
	NSW	Vic	Qld ^a	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT ^b	Aust
<i>Proportion of public housing dwellings occupied</i>									
2000	97.5	95.0	96.8	94.3	94.0	95.0	96.1	97.1	96.0
2001	98.2	96.2	96.6	95.6	94.4	94.3	95.7	95.2	96.6

^a Dwellings are defined as the 'unit of accommodation to which a rental agreement can be made' and dwelling numbers here will exceed figures based on discreet dwelling structures. ^b For 2000, data include dwellings leased under industry housing programs that revert to general public housing stock when unoccupied.

Source: table 16A.8.

The average number of days for vacant stock to be allocated in 2000-01 varied from 53 days in the ACT to 30 days in Queensland (figure 16.12). (Vacant stock includes stock vacated by tenants and newly constructed or acquired stock.) This indicator may be affected by changes in maintenance programs and some jurisdictions may have difficulty in excluding stock upgrades.

Figure 16.12 Average turnaround times, 2000-01^a



^a Excludes dwellings undergoing major redevelopment. This year, the indicator measures the number of times a dwelling was vacated and subsequently retenanted. Last year, the indicator measured the number of dwellings vacated and subsequently retenanted. ^b Excludes 938 properties with obvious date errors and 66 properties with a void status prior to 30 June 1999 as the data are considered erroneous. ^c The data source for this item has changed from 1999-2000. It is derived from tenancy information and does not distinguish between the different types of vacancy, nor does it contain information about the lead time for new dwellings to be occupied. Calculations using alternative data sources indicate that data limitations have only a minimal impact on the performance indicator. ^d Includes time vacant due to redevelopment. ^e Change in figure reported this year is a result of incorrect reporting of this data item in 1999-2000.

Source: table 16A.10.

The fourth efficiency indicator — total rent collected as a proportion of the rent charged — indicates the extent to which rent in arrears represents a financial burden to housing authorities. Differences in recognition policies, write-off practices, the

treatment of disputed amounts and the treatment of payment arrangements may affect the comparability of this indicator's reported results.

Rent collected as a proportion of the rent charged in 2000-01 varied from 101.4 per cent in WA and Tasmania to 97.4 per cent in the NT (table 16.8). Payment arrangements for rent in some jurisdictions mean that the rent collected over a 12 month period may be higher than rent charged over that period.

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

	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Vic</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>WA</i>	<i>SA</i>	<i>Tas^b</i>	<i>ACT</i>	<i>NT</i>	<i>Aust</i>
1999-2000	99.7	100.4	97.1	102.6	100.1	103.8	96.8	98.2	99.8
2000-01	100.0	99.6	99.4	101.4	98.6	101.4	98.2	97.4	99.7

^a Payment arrangements for rent in some jurisdictions mean that rent collected over a 12 month period may be higher than rent charged over that period. ^b Data for 2000-01 exclude the Aboriginal Rental Housing Program. These data were included in 1999-2000.

Source: table 16A.9.

Community housing

Community housing data have three sources:

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

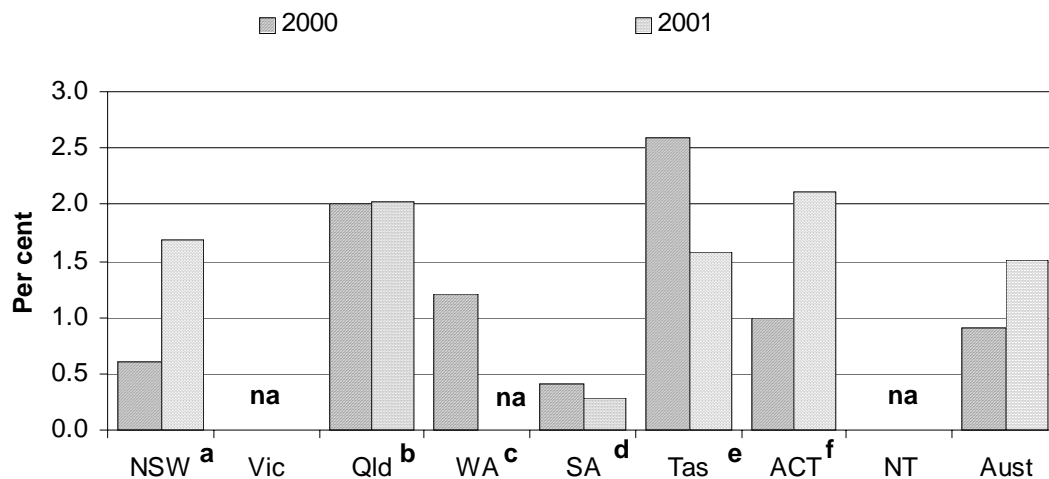
This chapter provides data on eight of the 11 performance indicators in the community housing framework. Satisfactory data were unavailable for reporting against the affordability, low income and direct cost per unit indicators. Community housing data are generally obtained by surveying community providers and can be influenced by survey response rates. This means care needs to be taken in making comparisons over time using community housing data. Some descriptive data on community housing are contained in table 16A.15. A list of State and Territory programs included in the community housing data collected is contained in table 16A.53.

Effectiveness

Appropriateness

This chapter reports two measures of appropriateness for community housing. As with public housing, the first is indicated by the match of rental dwellings to household size. For those jurisdictions able to provide data, Queensland and the ACT had the highest proportion of overcrowded dwellings (2.1 per cent) at 30 June 2001, while SA had the lowest (0.3 per cent) (figure 16.13). More information on overcrowding for community housing can be found in table 16A.60.

Figure 16.13 Overcrowding in community housing dwellings at 30 June



^a Data for 1999-2000 are based on full survey of 209 providers with response rate of 86 per cent. Data for 2000-01 are based on survey of 196 providers with 89 per cent response rate. ^b Data for 1999-2000 are from a mailout to 328 providers with a response rate of 59 per cent. Data for 2000-01 are from a mailout to 332 providers with a response rate of 60 per cent. ^c Data for 1999-2000 are mostly from a survey with a 25 per cent response rate but include some administrative data. Data not available for 2000-01. ^d Data for 1999-2000 are obtained from survey based on 2906 properties for which data available. The response rate to the survey was 97 per cent. In 2000-01, 94 per cent of household level surveys were returned and 87 per cent of waiting list surveys were returned. ^e Data for 1999-2000 are obtained from survey of 73 providers with a response rate of 25 per cent. Few survey forms were returned fully completed. Data for 2000-01 are based on survey of 73 providers with 16 per cent response rate. This figure represents responses from 104 households. The Housing Tasmania administrative data figure for number of dwellings is 260. ^f Data for 1999-2000 are from survey of 320 properties (out of total of 360) with 98 per cent response rate. Excludes crisis accommodation and privately leased properties. Not all community housing properties included. Survey includes 98 boarding house units. Data for 2000-01 represent 87 per cent of community housing in the ACT. This excludes 49 dwellings managed by 12 community housing organisations including three targeted providers. **na** Not available.

Source: table 16A.16.

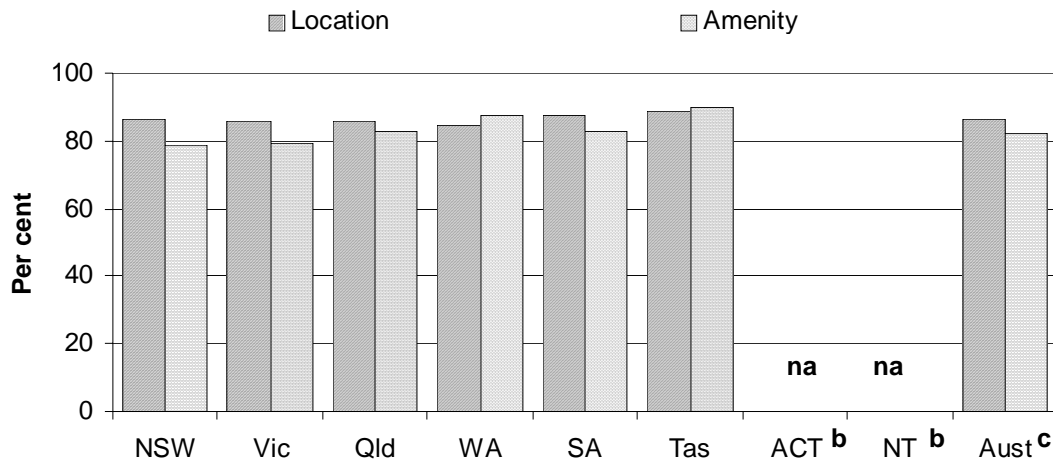
The second measure of the appropriateness of community housing assistance is provided by surveying tenants about the amenity and location of their dwellings (figure 16.14). As with public housing, the precision of survey estimates will

depend on the survey sample size and the sample estimate. Larger sample sizes result in higher precision, as do larger sample estimates; for example if 90 per cent of surveyed respondents chose an answer, there would be less uncertainty about the actual population's views than if 50 per cent of respondents chose it.

Care needs to be taken in interpreting small differences in results which are affected by sample and estimate size. Further information on the sampling method is provided in attachment 16A. Appendix A outlines a method that can be used to test whether the difference between two sample proportions is statistically significant. This test may be required to assess the significance of differences between the survey estimates reported here.

The proportion of tenants satisfied with the location of their dwelling did not differ significantly across jurisdictions. The proportion of tenants satisfied with the amenity of their dwelling ranged from 90.0 per cent in Tasmania to 78.8 per cent in NSW. Satisfaction levels were above average in Queensland, WA, SA and Tasmania (figure 16.14).

Figure 16.14 **Proportion of tenants satisfied with location or amenity aspects of their dwelling, 2001^a**



^a Care needs to be taken in interpreting small differences in the results that are affected by sample and estimate size (see attachment 16A for details of the sample size). ^b Data suppressed as a result of high relative standard errors but included in national total. ^c National total is an unweighted average. **na** Not available.

Source: table 16A.17 and 16A.18.

These overall satisfaction results were obtained by surveying tenants about a number of aspects of the location and amenity of their dwellings. Tenants were asked whether particular aspects were important to them and if so, whether they felt

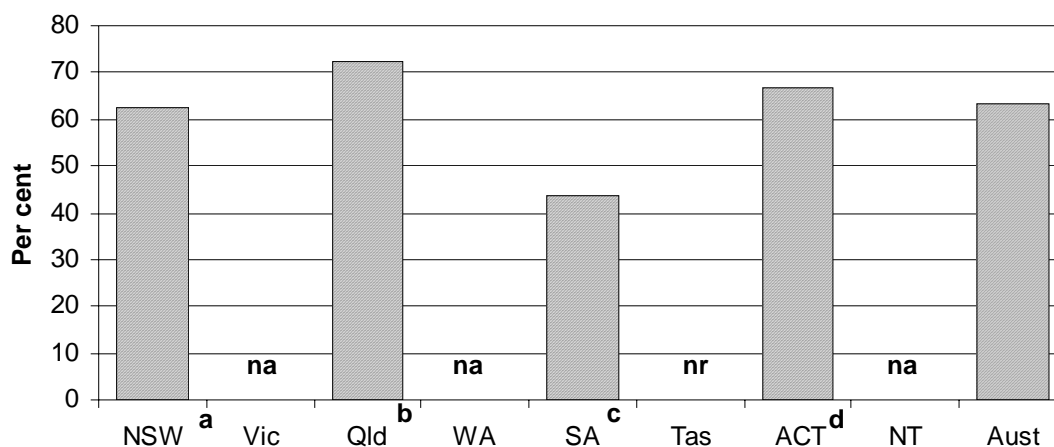
their needs were met. More information on this indicator can be found in tables 16A.17 and 16A.18.

Access

This chapter reports two measures of access to community housing assistance for those in need. The first of these measures is the proportion of new tenancies allocated to households with special needs. Special needs households are those that either have a household member with a disability, a principal tenant aged either 24 years or under or 75 years or more, or a household defined as being Indigenous.

The proportion of new tenancies allocated to ‘special needs’ households in 2000-01 varies for those jurisdictions able to provide data, from 72.5 per cent in Queensland to 43.8 per cent in SA (figure 16.15).

Figure 16.15 Proportion of new tenancies allocated to households with special needs, 2000-01



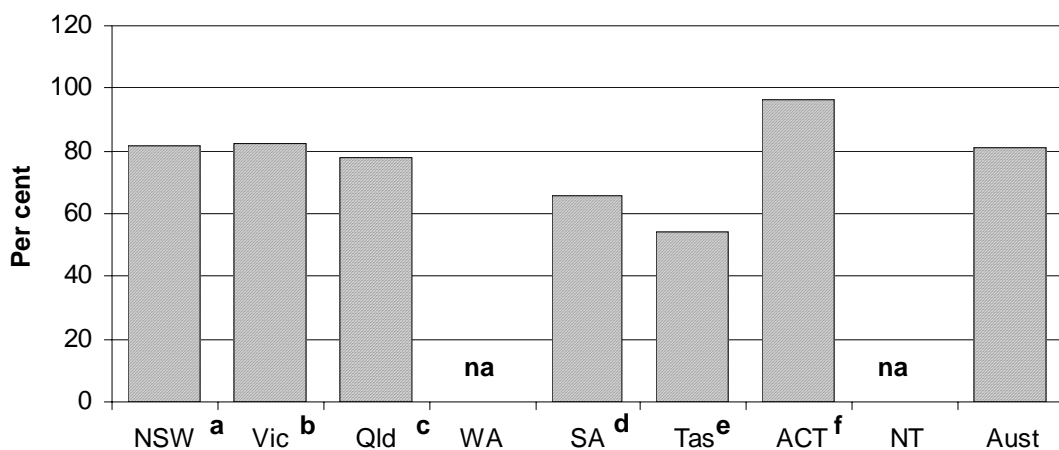
^a Data based on survey of 196 providers with 89 per cent response rate. Special needs includes Indigenous households, households with a disability, households with older or young principal tenants, non-English speaking background households, households with support needs and other categories nominated by providers. ^b Data from mailout to 332 providers with a response rate of 60 per cent. Reduction in figure reported is a result of the adoption of the national standard. ^c Based on survey data with 94 per cent of household level surveys returned and 87 per cent of waiting list surveys returned. Increase in figure is a result of improved data returns containing information about waiting list applicants. ^d Data represent 87 per cent of community housing in the ACT. This excludes 49 dwellings managed by 12 community housing organisations, including three targeted providers. **na** Not available. **nr** Not reported.

Source: table 16A.19.

The second indicator of access measures the proportion of new dwellings allocated to those in greatest need. ‘Greatest need’ households are defined as low income households that at the time of allocation were either homeless, in housing

inappropriate to their needs, in housing that was adversely affecting their health or placing their life and safety at risk, or those with very high rental housing costs. For those jurisdictions able to supply data, this proportion varied from 96.1 per cent in the ACT to 54.3 per cent in Tasmania (figure 16.16).

Figure 16.16 **Greatest need allocations as a proportion of all new allocations, 2000-01**



^a Data based on survey of 196 providers with 89 per cent response rate. ^b This is the first year Common Equity Housing Cooperatives (1554 properties) have been included in this collection. ^c Data from mailout to 332 providers with a response rate of 60 per cent. ^d Based on survey data with 94 per cent of household level surveys returned and 87 per cent of waiting list surveys returned. ^e Data based on survey of 73 providers with 16 per cent response rate. This figure represents responses from 104 households. The Housing Tasmania administrative data figure for number of dwellings is 260. ^f Data represent 87 per cent of community housing in the ACT. This excludes 49 dwellings managed by 12 community housing organisations, including three targeted providers. **na** Not available.

Source: table 16A.20.

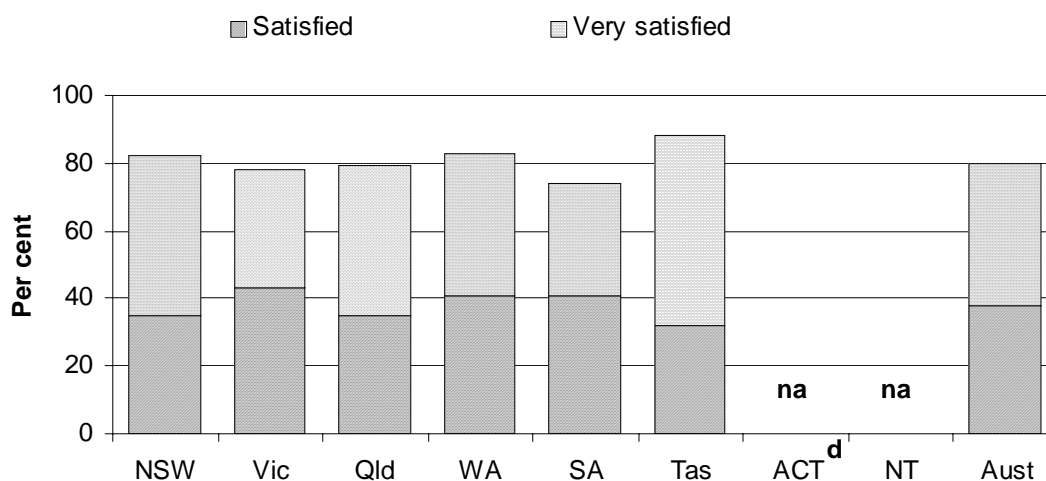
Quality

The quality of community housing is reported by surveying tenants about their overall satisfaction with their housing. Satisfaction with the location and amenity aspects of community housing is reported under the appropriateness indicator (figure 16.14). The satisfaction outcomes for these areas influence the general satisfaction of community housing tenants.

Nationally, 80 per cent of tenants were satisfied or very satisfied with their community housing dwellings and the services provided by their community housing organisation (including benefits derived from living in community housing and involvement in the organisation). For jurisdictions for which robust survey data were available, this proportion ranged from 88 per cent in Tasmania to 74 per cent

in SA. The proportion of community tenants who were satisfied or very satisfied was above the national average in NSW, WA and Tasmania (figure 16.17). The proportion of community housing tenants who were very satisfied was above the national average in NSW, Queensland and Tasmania (table 16A.21).

Figure 16.17 **Tenant satisfaction, 2001**^{a, b, c}



^a Care needs to be undertaken in interpreting small differences in the results that are affected by sample and estimate size (see attachment 16A for details of the sample size). ^b Categories do not add to 100 per cent because nonresponses and neutral responses are not included. ^c Comparisons may be influenced by a range of factors beyond quality of service, such as age profile of tenants. ^d Data suppressed as a result of high relative standard errors but included in national total. **na** Not available.

Source: table 16A.21.

Efficiency

This chapter reports three measures of efficiency for community housing. The first is the proportion of community housing occupied, which, at 30 June 2001 for those jurisdictions able to provide data, ranged from 100.0 per cent in the NT to 90.4 per cent in Tasmania (table 16.9).

The second efficiency measure is turnaround time, or the speed with which jurisdictions rent housing stock after it has been vacated or acquired. The average number of days for vacant stock to be allocated in 2000-01 varied for those jurisdictions able to provide data, from 55 days in Tasmania to 18 days in NSW (figure 16.18). This indicator may be affected by changes in maintenance programs and some jurisdictions may have difficulty excluding stock upgrades.

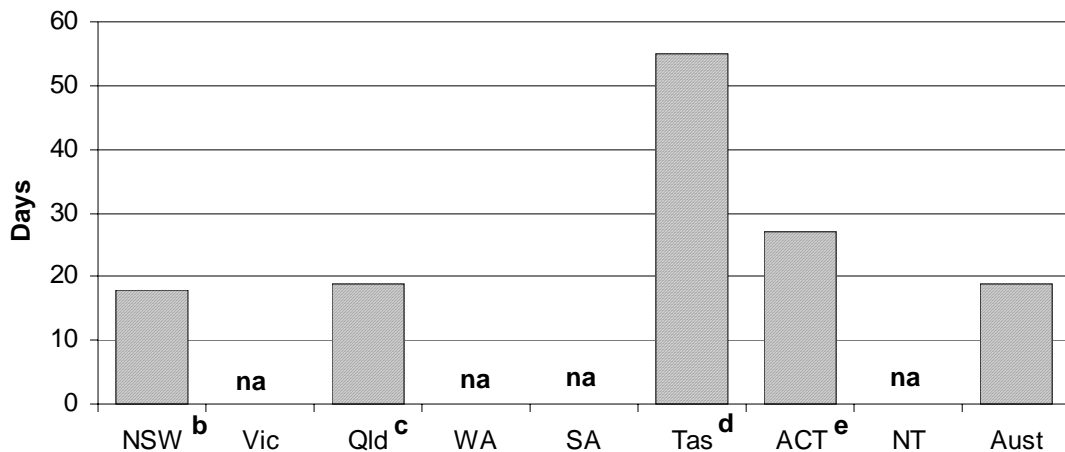
Table 16.9 Community housing occupancy rates at 30 June (per cent)

	NSW ^a	Vic ^b	Qld ^c	WA ^d	SA ^e	Tas ^f	ACT ^g	NT ^h	Aust
2000	98.5	95.0	94.3	99.9	94.7	96.2	89.1	na	96.6
2001	97.9	94.6	95.8	na	94.7	90.4	94.3	100.0	95.9

^a Data for 2000 from full survey of all 209 providers with a response rate of 86 per cent. Data for 2001 based on survey of 196 providers with 89 per cent response rate. ^b Data for 2000 exclude information on the Common Equity Rental Cooperatives. Based on administrative data. Data for 2001 include information on the Common Equity Rental Cooperatives. ^c Data for 2000 from mailout to 328 providers with a response rate of 59 per cent. Data for 2001 from mailout to 332 providers with a response rate of 60 per cent. ^d Data for 2000 mostly from a survey with a 25 per cent response rate but includes some administrative data. ^e Data for 2000 obtained from survey, based on 2906 properties for which data are available. The response rate to the survey was 97 per cent. Data for 2001 based on survey data with 94 per cent of household level surveys returned and 87 per cent of waiting list surveys returned. ^f Data for 2000 from survey of 73 providers with a response rate of 25 per cent. Few survey forms were returned fully completed. Data for 2001 based on survey of 73 providers with 16 per cent response rate. This figure represents responses from 104 households. The Housing Tasmania administrative data figure for number of dwellings is 260. ^g Data for 2000 from survey of 320 properties (out of total of 360) with 98 per cent response rate. Excludes crisis accommodation and privately leased properties. Not all community housing properties included. Survey includes 98 boarding house units. Data for 2001 represent 87 per cent of community housing in the ACT. This excludes 49 dwellings managed by 12 community housing organisations, including three targeted providers. ^h It is estimated that dwellings are fully occupied as a majority of organisations turn away people seeking accommodation. **na** Not available.

Source: table 16A.23.

Figure 16.18 Average turnaround times, 2000-01^a



^a Excludes dwellings undergoing major redevelopment this year. ^b Data based on survey of 196 providers with 89 per cent response rate. ^c Data from mailout to 332 providers with a response rate of 60 per cent. ^d Data based on survey of 73 providers with 16 per cent response rate. This figure represents responses from 104 households. The Housing Tasmania administrative data figure for number of dwellings is 260. ^e Data represent 87 per cent of community housing in the ACT. This excludes 49 dwellings managed by 12 community housing organisations, including three targeted providers. Includes 154 dwellings which are boarding house units. **na** Not available.

Source: table 16A.24.

The third measure of efficiency for community housing is the proportion of rent in arrears indicator. There was little variation in the rent collected as a proportion of

rent charged across jurisdictions at 30 June 2001 (table 16.10). As with public housing, payment arrangements for rent in some jurisdictions means that the rent collected over a 12 month period may be higher than rent charged over that period.

Table 16.10 Total rent collected as a proportion of total rent charged (per cent)^a

	NSW ^b	Vic ^c	Qld ^d	WA	SA	Tas ^e	ACT ^f	NT	Aust
1999-2000	100.3	na	97.1	100.4	na	98.8	100.7	na	99.4
2000-01	92.5	98.5	97.5	na	na	99.0	96.7	na	94.9

^a Payment arrangements for rent in some jurisdictions mean that rent collected over a 12 month period may be higher than rent charged over that period. ^b Data for 1999-2000 are from full survey of all 209 providers with a response rate of 86 per cent. Data for 2000-01 are based on survey of 196 providers with 89 per cent response rate. ^c Rent policy varies across programs. Rent information available only for Office of Housing owned or leased properties. Information on Common Equity Rental Cooperative properties and joint venture properties not available. Obtained from Office of Housing financial statements. ^d Data for 1999-2000 are from a mailout to 328 providers with a response rate of 59 per cent. Data for 2000-01 are from a mailout to 332 providers with a response rate of 60 per cent. ^e Data for 1999-2000 are from survey of 73 providers with a response rate of 25 per cent. Few survey forms were returned fully completed. Data for 2000-01 are based on survey of 73 providers with 16 per cent response rate. This figure represents responses from 104 households. The Housing Tasmania administrative data figure for number of dwellings is 260. Two respondents did not provide data for this indicator. ^f Data for 1999-2000 are from survey of 320 properties (out of total of 360) with 98 per cent response rate. Excludes crisis accommodation and privately leased properties. Not all community housing properties included. Survey includes 98 boarding house units. Data for 2000-01 represent 87 per cent of community housing in the ACT. This excludes 49 dwellings managed by 12 community housing organisations, including three targeted providers. **na** Not available.

Source: table 16A.22.

Aboriginal Rental Housing Program

Different delivery contexts, locations and types of client may affect the performance reported in this section. Care needs to be taken in interpreting performance indicator results and the qualifications presented with the data need to be considered. There may also have been some difficulties in separating Indigenous housing data from public housing data. Some descriptive data on the ARHP are included in table 16A.25.

As stated earlier, the ACT does not receive funding or administer any programs under the ARHP, while in the NT, ARHP funding is directed at community managed Indigenous housing. The NT Government is unable to differentiate between the various funding sources as a result of its commitment under the CSHA Bilateral Agreement to specifically 'pool' all funds earmarked for Indigenous housing and associated infrastructure in the NT. Consequently, the ACT and the NT are not included in the ARHP data collection. While Queensland administers a separate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Housing Program, this includes both ARHP funds and untied CSHA funds, and there is no separate reporting against the ARHP component of the programs funds.

As discussed in section 16.1, ARHP dwellings are more likely to be located in rural or remote areas than public or community housing dwellings. Nationally, 20.4 per cent of ARHP dwellings were located in remote areas and 41.2 per cent of ARHP dwellings were located in rural (as distinct from remote) areas (table 16A.25).

Effectiveness

Appropriateness

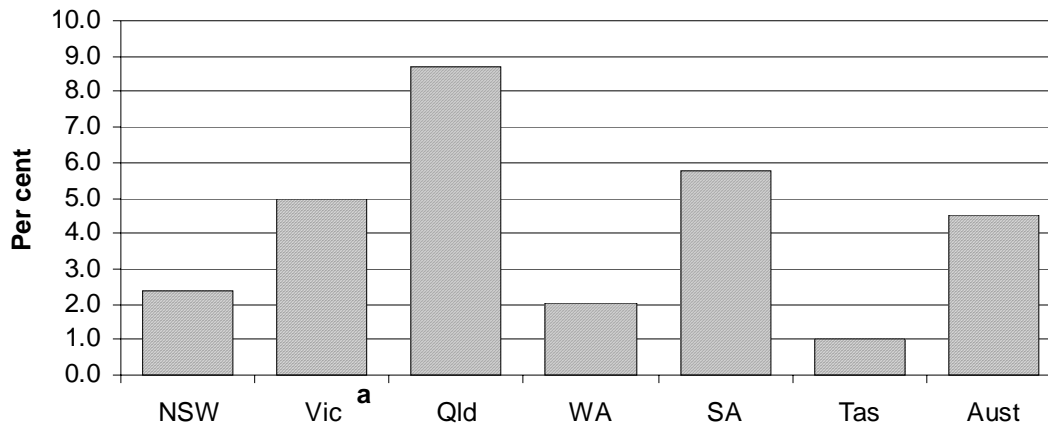
This chapter reports two measures of appropriateness for the ARHP. As with public and community housing, the first is indicated by the match of rental dwellings to household size. Queensland had the highest proportion of overcrowded dwellings at June 2001 (8.7 per cent), while Tasmania had the lowest (1.0 per cent) (figure 16.19).

Care needs to be taken in comparing performance with regard to overcrowding between public housing and the ARHP. There are two major factors that potentially result in a higher incidence of overcrowding in ARHP dwellings relative to public housing dwellings:

- differences in Indigenous housing arrangements; for example, several generations living in one house or the possibility of visitors having ‘right of access’ in some circumstances (Pholeros, Rainow and Torzillo 1993); and
- the influence of climate and culture (in rural areas people may live outside houses rather than inside) (Pholeros *et al.* 1993).

More information on overcrowding for the ARHP can be found in table 16A.61.

Figure 16.19 **Proportion of ARHP households with overcrowding, 30 June 2001**



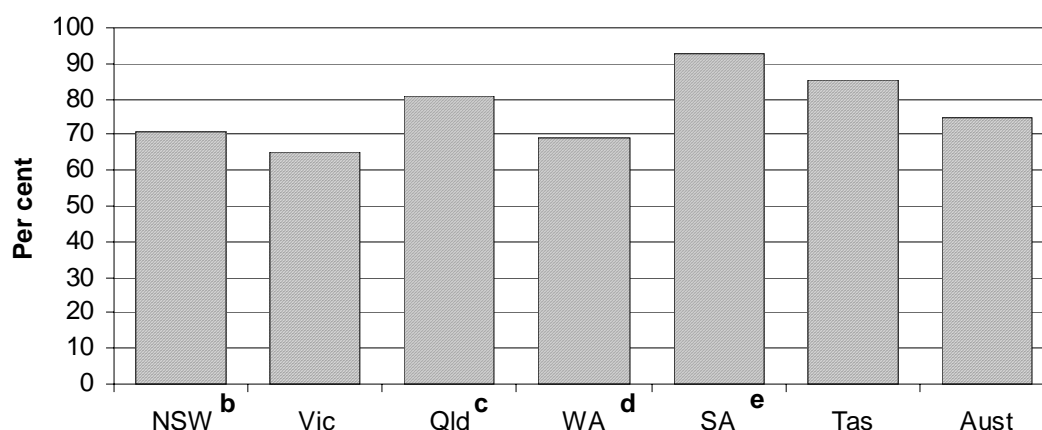
^a Internal data show an increase of 0.1 per cent from 1999-2000 to 2000-01 using consistent methodology. Victoria has serious concerns about the credibility and validity of this data item and performance indicator.

Source: table 16A.26.

The second measure of appropriateness is affordability, which measures the rent charged to tenants as a proportion of the market rent for each dwelling, adjusted for CRA. Variations in the definition of market rent will influence the results for this indicator.

The rent charged in 2000-01 as a proportion of the market rent for each dwelling (adjusted for CRA) for those jurisdictions able to provide data, ranged from 92.5 per cent in SA to 65.4 per cent in Victoria (figure 16.20). More information on the proportion of income paid in rent by ARHP tenants can be found in table 16A.59.

Figure 16.20 Rent charged for ARHP dwellings as a proportion of market rent, adjusted for CRA, 30 June 2001^a



^a Calculation of CRA entitlements has been based on an estimate of the actual entitlements that a low income household would receive if they were in the private rental sector. Last year's calculation was based on an estimate of the average CRA payment for each State and Territory. ^b For CRA information, no data are available on relationships other than those to the household head. It is assumed that all children under 16 years are sons or daughters of the household head. ^c Market rents for dwellings have not been globally adjusted to reflect the current market for a number of years. This has led to a gradual reduction in the proportion of households paying less than market rent, and a corresponding increase in the proportion paying market rent as a result of income increases. Consequently, the overall market rent value would also be somewhat less than the true value. ^d Only includes single family households, representing 89.7 per cent of households. Excludes 237 multiple family households. ^e The decrease in total rents charged and market rent values is partly due to 1999-2000 data being based on rents for the week of 7 July 2000 rather than 30 June 2000. Market rents increased on 1 July 2000 and therefore 1999-2000 rents were overstated.

Source: table 16A.31.

Access

Three performance indicators measure access to ARHP assistance for those in need. The first measures the low income and special needs (but not low income) status of households receiving ARHP assistance (table 16.11).

As with public housing, there are two household income measures for the purpose of this indicator:

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

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

The proportion of new tenancies allocated to 'low income A' households varied in 2000-01 from 91.3 per cent in NSW to 26.5 per cent in WA. The proportion of new tenancies allocated to 'low income A' or 'special needs (not low income)' households varied from 97.9 per cent in SA to 48.8 per cent in WA (table 16.11).

Table 16.11 Low income and special needs households as proportion of all new ARHP households, 30 June 2001 (per cent)^a

	NSW	Vic	Qld ^b	WA ^c	SA ^d	Tas	Aust
<i>New 'low income A' households as proportion of all new households</i>	91.3	80.0	81.4	26.5	88.9	76.8	72.8
<i>New 'low income A' households or special needs (not low income) households as proportion of all new households</i>	96.9	83.3	87.0	48.8	97.9	81.7	81.9

^a The introduction of a national definition of 'special needs' has influenced changes in jurisdiction results from last year. ^b Market rents have not been globally adjusted to reflect the current market for a number of years, leading to a reduced proportion of households paying less than market rent and a corresponding increase in the proportion of those paying market rent. ^c Only includes single family households. Excludes 237 multiple family households (or 51.9 per cent of households allocated housing). ^d Excludes new 2000-01 allocations that left ARHP housing prior to 30 June 2001.

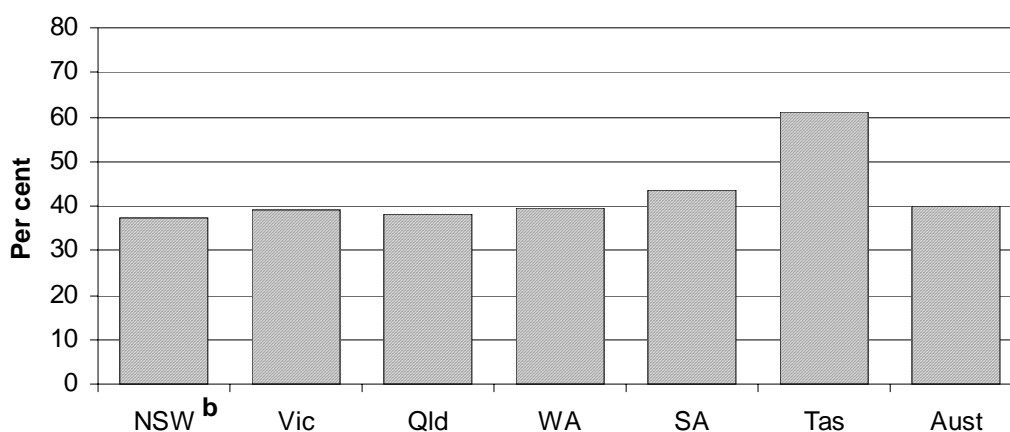
Source: table 16A.27.

Information on 'low income B' households is in table 16A.27.

The second indicator of access measures the proportion of new tenancies allocated to households with special needs. Special needs households are those that either have a household member with a disability or a principal tenant aged either 24 years or under or 50 years or more. The proportion of new tenancies allocated to 'special needs' households in 2000-01 varied from 61.0 per cent in Tasmania to 37.5 per cent in NSW (figure 16.21).

It is not appropriate to use this indicator to make comparisons between the performance of public housing and the ARHP. The special needs indicator for public housing includes Indigenous households in the definition of 'special needs' households. To use this definition for ARHP would result in 100 per cent of ARHP households being regarded as having 'special needs'. The ARHP uses a definition of 'special need' more appropriate to the program.

Figure 16.21 **Proportion of new ARHP tenancies allocated to households with special needs, 2000-01^a**



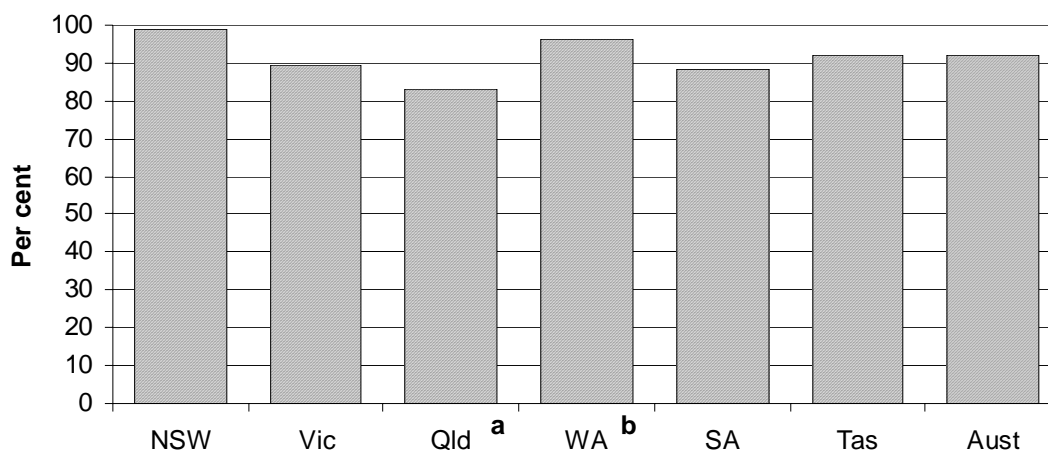
^a The introduction of a national definition of 'special needs' has influenced changes in jurisdiction results from last year. ^b There are 25 new households without special needs information.

Source: table 16A.29.

The proportion of all households that pay less than market rent or that are special needs households paying market rent in 2000-01 ranged from 99.0 per cent in NSW to 83.0 per cent in Queensland (figure 16.22).

The third indicator of access measures the priority of access given to those in greatest need. 'Greatest need' households are defined as low income households that at the time of allocation were either homeless, in housing inappropriate to their needs, in housing that was adversely affecting their health or placing their life and safety at risk, or that had very high rental housing costs.

Figure 16.22 Households that pay less than market rent or that are special needs households paying market rent as a proportion of all ARHP households, 30 June 2001



^a Market rents have not been globally adjusted to reflect the current market for a number of years, leading to a reduced proportion of households paying less than market rent and a corresponding increase in the proportion of those paying market rent as a result of consumer price index rent rises. Consequently, the overall market rent value as listed here would be somewhat less than the true value. ^b Only includes single family households. Excludes 237 multiple family households (or 51.9 per cent of households allocated housing).

Source: table 16A.28.

The proportion of new allocations to those in greatest need varied for the year ending 30 June 2001, from 52.4 per cent in SA to 1.4 per cent in Queensland (table 16.12). Table 16.12 shows the proportion of new allocations to applicants with greatest need for applicants spending various time periods on the waiting list. Data are provided for tenants waiting for periods from under three months to more than two years. These numbers are not cumulative.

It may not be appropriate to compare performance of public housing and the ARHP with regard to priority access to those in greatest need. In some jurisdictions, different priority allocation guidelines may be used to allocate ARHP housing. Further, where allocation is made at the community level, reasons for allocation may not be recorded in information management systems.

Table 16.12 **Greatest need allocations as a proportion of all new ARHP allocations, 2000-01 (per cent)^a**

	<i>NSW^b</i>	<i>Vic^c</i>	<i>Qld^d</i>	<i>WA^{c, e}</i>	<i>SA^c</i>	<i>Tas^f</i>	<i>Aust</i>
Total for year ending 30 June 2000	23.5	9.4	1.4	21.2	52.4	na	21.0
Proportion of greatest need allocations to new allocations with time to allocation:							
Under 3 months	58.5	11.5	2.8	27.5	63.0	na	36.3
3 < 6 months	14.8	13.3	–	28.2	64.7	na	22.9
6 months to < 1 year	8.2	20.0	–	24.3	42.3	na	15.2
1 < 2 years	–	–	1.2	10.1	36.0	na	6.6
2+ years	0.8	–	1.5	1.8	14.8	na	2.3

^a The introduction of a national definition of 'greatest need' has influenced changes in jurisdiction results. The waiting list time was clarified for this year's collection and refers to the time the applicant was eligible for 'greatest need' assistance to the date assistance commenced. If an applicant transfers between waiting list categories, only the time spent on the waiting list from when the applicant met the 'greatest need' definition was counted. ^b Included are some records with missing information on waiting times that could not be assigned into a breakdown group. ^c Households with missing application date or date housed or an application date greater than tenancy start were excluded. ^d The Queensland definition of those in 'greatest need' is those who are priority A on the waiting list. This is an underestimation of the true 'greatest need' figure as the priority A flag is rarely used in low waiting time areas as a result of its administrative encumbrance. ^e Five new priority levels were introduced on 8 January 2001 (domestic violence, emergency housing, homelessness, medical and support needs), which improved data capacity. ^f There is no determination of 'greatest need' in the allocation of ARHP properties and therefore no data are available. **na** Not available. – Nil or rounded to zero.

Source: table 16A.30.

Quality

The quality of housing provided under the ARHP is measured by surveying tenants about their overall satisfaction with housing provided. Survey data for the ARHP is unavailable for this year's Report, although WA and SA did undertake such surveys.

Efficiency

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

- administration costs (the cost of the administration offices of the property manager and tenancy manager);

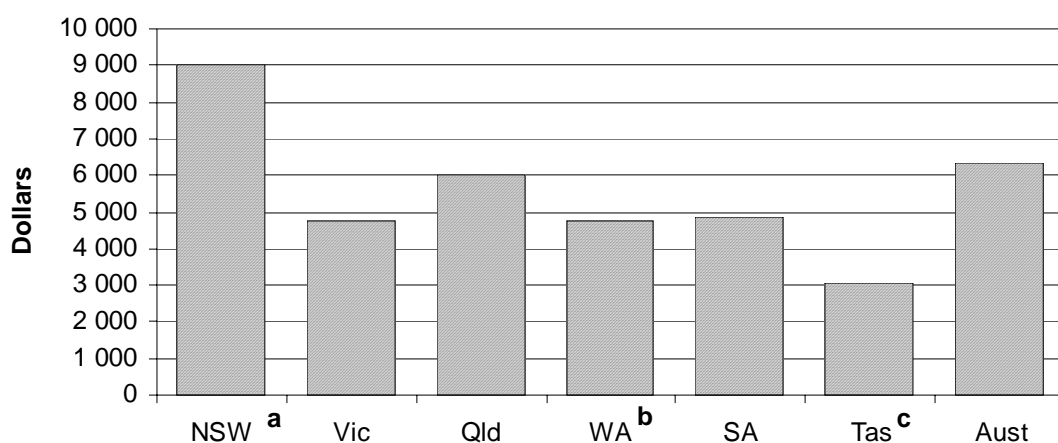
-
- operating costs (the costs of maintaining the operation of the dwelling, including repairs and maintenance, rates, the costs of disposals, market rent paid and interest expenses);
 - depreciation costs; and
 - the user cost of capital (the cost of the funds tied up in the capital used to provide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

Depreciation costs and the user cost of capital (capital costs) were unavailable for reporting on the ARHP. The cost per dwelling shown in figure 16.23 represents gross recurrent expenditure (that is, administration and operating costs) per ARHP dwelling. Rent received from tenants has not been deducted.

The gross cost per ARHP dwelling (excluding capital costs) for those jurisdictions able to provide data, ranged from \$8990 in NSW to \$3044 in Tasmania (figure 16.23).

As with other indicators, it is not appropriate to compare the gross cost per ARHP dwelling with the recurrent cost per dwelling for public housing (which would be the public housing equivalent of this indicator). There is greater scope for economies of scale regarding administration costs with public housing as the overall program is much larger. Aboriginal Rental Housing Program dwellings are also more highly concentrated in rural and remote areas and the cost of providing housing assistance is greater in these areas. The need to construct culturally appropriate housing (possibly requiring a higher standard of amenities such as communal cooking, laundry and toilet facilities) may also affect the cost per dwelling. Finally, different cost structures may apply to the programs. For example, construction of dwellings under the ARHP may involve a skills development element to allow for training of apprentices in rural areas.

Figure 16.23 **Gross cost per ARHP dwelling (excluding capital costs), 2000-01**



^a Costs increased as a result of the backlog of repairs and maintenance on Aboriginal Housing Office stock under several programs continuing until 2003-04. High costs for repairs and maintenance have been influenced by revised scheduled rates and the GST. ^b The increase in costs results from a rise in general rental costs, implementation of a tenant support initiative and more accurate apportionment of administrative costs between public housing and the ARHP. ^c In 1999-2000, reported in public housing data as ARHP and public housing costing figures could not be separately identified.

Source: table 16.35.

Care needs to be taken in interpreting the total cost of delivering housing. Administration costs and operating costs, for example, may not capture all costs incurred by government, so could understate the total costs of housing provision.

The second indicator of efficiency measures the proportion of the housing stock (including untenable dwellings) occupied by households. There was little variation across jurisdictions in the proportion of ARHP stock occupied at 30 June 2001, which averaged 95.8 per cent nationally (table 16.13).

Table 16.13 **ARHP stock occupancy rates, 30 June 2001**

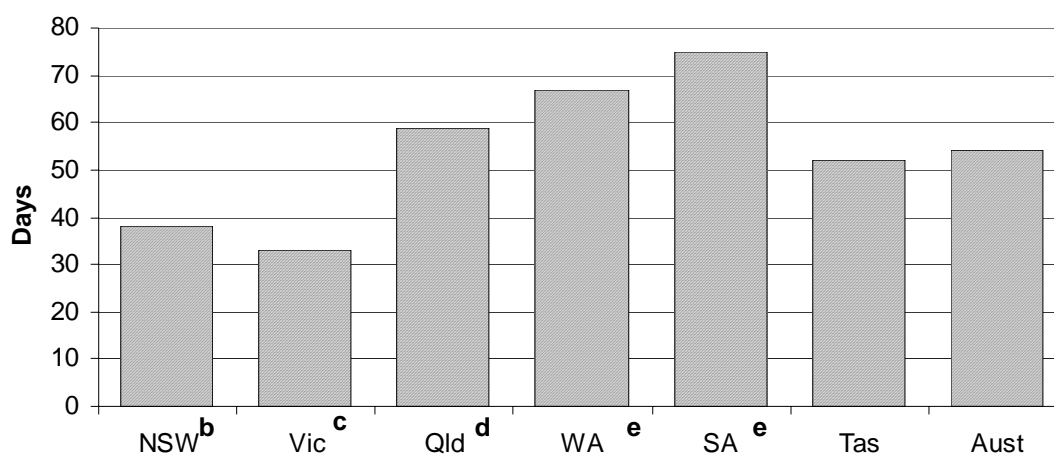
NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	Aust
98.0	95.4	94.0	96.0	94.3	93.1	95.8

Source: table 16A.32.

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

The average number of days for vacant stock to be allocated in 2000-01 varied from 75 days in SA to 33 days in Victoria (figure 16.24). (Vacant stock includes stock vacated by tenants and newly constructed or acquired stock.) This indicator may be affected by changes in maintenance programs and some jurisdictions may have difficulty excluding stock upgrades. Cultural factors may influence the turnaround time for ARHP dwellings relative to public housing dwellings. Following the death of a significant person, for example, a dwelling may need to be vacant for a longer period of time (Morel and Ross 1993).

Figure 16.24 Average ARHP turnaround times, 2000-01^a



^a Excludes dwellings undergoing major redevelopment. This year, the indicator measures the number of times a dwelling was vacated and subsequently retented. Last year, the indicator measured the number of dwellings vacated and subsequently retented. ^b Excludes 50 void properties with obvious date errors. ^c Improved asset management has influenced the decrease in this result as the amount of time a dwelling remains off line is minimised. ^d Calculated according to the definition. The data item is derived from tenancy information and does not distinguish between different vacancy types or contain information about the lead time of new dwellings to be occupied. Calculations using alternative data sources indicate that data limitations have only a minimal impact on the performance indicator. ^e Includes time vacant due to redevelopment.

Source: table 16A.34.

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

Rent collected as a proportion of the rent charged in 2000-01 varied from 101.1 per cent in WA to 94.8 per cent in Tasmania (table 16.14). Payment arrangements for rent in some jurisdictions mean that the rent collected over a 12 month period may be higher than rent charged over that period.

Table 16.14 Total rent collected for ARHP dwellings as a proportion of total rent charged (per cent), 2000-01^a

<i>NSW</i>	<i>Vic</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>WA^b</i>	<i>SA</i>	<i>Tas</i>	<i>Aust</i>
99.3	99.5	99.1	101.1	95.0	94.8	98.8

^a Payment arrangements for rent in some jurisdictions mean that rent collected over a 12 month period may be higher than rent charged over that period. ^b These figures increased in 2000-01 as water consumption costs were retrospectively deducted from rent paid during 1999-2000. This deduction covered more than one year. While this deduction occurred for 2000-01, it only related to the one year.

Source: table 16A.33.

Commonwealth Rent Assistance

Data for CRA recipients are for clients of DFACS only and are for the year to 30 June 2001. Data exclude those recipients paid rental assistance by, or on behalf of, the DVA or DETYA. Data are collected centrally by Centrelink and DFACS. Information on CRA recipients by benefit type is provided in table 16.15. Additional data are provided on Indigenous recipients for the first time this year.

Data are also provided for the first time this year on the geographic location of CRA recipients. Overall, 68.9 per cent of CRA recipients were located in metropolitan areas, 29.3 per cent were in rural (as distinct from remote) areas and 1.8 per cent were in remote areas (table 16A.39). Of Indigenous CRA recipients, 41.8 per cent were located in metropolitan areas, 46.4 per cent in rural (as distinct from remote) areas and 11.6 were in remote areas (table 16A.40).

Table 16.15 Income units receiving CRA by benefit type, 30 June 2001^a

<i>Benefit type</i>	<i>Income units^b</i>	<i>Proportion of CRA recipients</i>		<i>Proportion of Indigenous CRA recipients</i>	
		<i>no.</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>no.</i>	<i>%</i>
Newstart	227 204	23.3	6 938	34.2	
Parenting Payment, single	193 359	19.8	6 609	32.6	
Disability Support Pension	161 833	16.6	2 848	14.0	
Age Pension	153 454	15.7	643	3.2	
Youth Allowance	91 212	9.3	1 190	5.9	
Family Tax Benefit	84 098	8.6	1 156	5.7	
Parenting Payment, partnered	29 266	3.0	485	2.4	
Other qualifying payments	35 907	3.7	415	2.0	
Total	976 333	100.0	20 284	100.0	

^a Data are for CRA recipients who were clients of DFACS only. Data exclude those paid rental assistance by, or on behalf of, the DVA or DETYA. Components may not sum to 100 per cent as a result of rounding. ^b An income unit is the basic unit used to determine eligibility for social security payments. Income units are analogous to family units with the distinction that non-dependent children and other adults living in the same household are treated as separate income units. Children are regarded as dependent until 16 years of age. Children aged 16–18 years may also be regarded as dependent if they are full time students, wholly or substantially dependent on another person and not in receipt of an income support payment.

Source: DFACS (unpublished).

Effectiveness

Access

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

Commonwealth Rent Assistance is automatically paid once eligibility has been established. Important eligibility requirements are the receipt of an income support payment or more than the base rate of Family Tax Benefit Part A, and liability to pay rent. The only eligible clients who are not paid are those affected by recording errors or program errors.

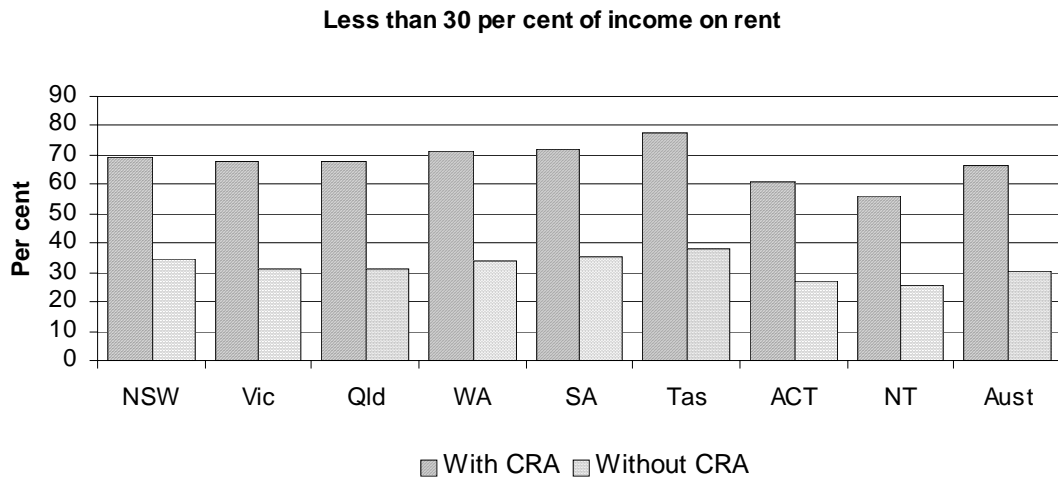
Over 976 000 income units (where income units are analogous to family units with the distinction that non-dependent children and other adults living in the same household are treated as separate income units) across Australia were receiving CRA at 30 June 2001, of whom approximately 2.1 per cent self identified as Indigenous. Nationally, the proportion of income units receiving CRA who identified as Indigenous was virtually identical to Indigenous representation in the overall community. The NT had the highest proportion of self identified Indigenous

people receiving the payment (13.2 per cent) in 2001, while Victoria had the lowest proportion (0.5 per cent) (table 16.16).

Choice and affordability

The affordability measure provides information on the proportion of recipients who spend more than 30 and 50 per cent of their income on rent with and without CRA, disaggregated by Indigenous and rural and remote status. Nationally, if CRA were not payable, 30.8 per cent of those income units currently receiving CRA would have spent less than 30 per cent of income on rent at 30 June 2001. Across jurisdictions, this proportion ranged from 37.8 per cent in Tasmania to 25.7 per cent in the NT. Including CRA (thereby reducing the rent paid by the amount of the assistance), the national proportion of income units who spent less than 30 per cent of income on rent increased to 66.6 per cent at 30 June 2001. Across jurisdictions, this proportion ranged from 77.8 per cent in Tasmania to 56.4 per cent in the NT (figure 16.25).

Figure 16.25 Recipients by proportion of income spent on rent with and without CRA, 30 June 2001



Source: table 16A.42.

Table 16.16 Income units receiving CRA by Indigenous status and geographic location, 30 June 2001

	<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>
<i>Non-Indigenous</i>										
Individual recipients	no.	318 738	203 922	236 373	81 083	66 486	23 006	8 290	5 572	956 049
In capital city	no.	174 645	146 193	101 489	62 384	51 958	10 207	8 290	4 114	559 280
In rest of State	no.	144 093	57 729	134 884	18 699	14 528	12 799	0	1 458	396 769
Share of all recipients	%	97.9	99.5	96.9	97.5	98.7	97.7	98.7	86.8	97.9
Non-Indigenous population, as a proportion of total population ^a	%	98.2	99.5	96.7	96.8	98.4	96.5	98.9	71.7	97.8
<i>Indigenous</i>										
Individual recipients	no.	6 922	1 047	7 612	2 049	899	532	105	847	20 284
In capital city	no.	1 698	552	2 217	1 029	542	189	105	511	6 843
In rest of State	no.	5 224	495	5 395	1 020	357	343	0	336	13 441
Share of all recipients	%	2.1	0.5	3.1	2.5	1.3	2.3	1.3	13.2	2.1
Indigenous population, as a proportion of total population ^a	%	1.8	0.5	3.3	3.2	1.6	3.5	1.1	28.3	2.2
Total individual recipients	no.	325 660	204 969	243 985	83 132	67 385	23 538	8 395	6 419	976 333

^a Based on low series population projections (ABS 1999b).

Source: DFACS (unpublished).

Similarly, if CRA was not payable, 71.7 per cent of income units across Australia would have spent less than 50 per cent of income on rent at 30 June 2001. Accounting for CRA payments, this proportion increases to 90.9 per cent (table 16A.42).

For the first time this year, data are also available on the proportion of income spent on rent with and without CRA by Indigenous Australians and Australians living in rural and remote areas. Nationally, if CRA was not payable, only 39.9 per cent of those Indigenous income units currently receiving CRA would have spent less than 30 per cent of income on rent at 30 June 2001. Across jurisdictions, this proportion ranged from 43.9 per cent in NSW to 31.5 per cent in the NT. Accounting for CRA payments (thereby reducing the rent paid by the amount of the assistance), the national proportion of Indigenous income units who spent less than 30 per cent of income on rent at 30 June 2001 increases to 74.7 per cent. Across jurisdictions, this proportion ranged from 78.7 per cent in NSW to 60.1 per cent in the NT (figure 16.26).

Figure 16.26 Indigenous recipients by proportion of income spent on rent with and without CRA, 30 June 2001



Source: table 16A.43.

Similarly, if CRA was not payable, 78.9 per cent of Indigenous income units across Australia would have spent less than 50 per cent of income on rent at 30 June 2001. Accounting for CRA payments, this increases to 94.4 per cent (table 16A.43).

Almost half of all postal areas contained between 70–150 income units receiving CRA per 1000 private dwellings at 30 June 2001. The majority of postal areas (70.8 per cent) contained fewer than 150 income units receiving the payment per

1000 private dwellings. Only 0.9 per cent of postal areas did not include any income units receiving the payment (table 16.17).

Table 16.17 Geographic spread of income units receiving CRA, 30 June 2001

	<i>no.</i>	<i>%</i>
Postal areas not containing CRA income units ^{a, b}	21	0.9
Postal areas containing CRA income units ^{a, c}		
< 70	558	23.5
70–150	1 101	46.4
151–200	387	16.3
201–250	142	6.0
251–300	82	3.5
300+	82	3.5
Total number of postal areas in 1996 Census	2 373	100.0

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

Source: DFACS (unpublished).

Information on the average CRA entitlement across locations is contained in table 16A.48.

Appropriateness

This chapter reports on four indicators of appropriateness relating to the review process for decisions about CRA availability:

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

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

A total of 183 people appealed to an authorised review officer in 2000-01, representing approximately 0.02 per cent of people receiving CRA. Approximately 55.7 per cent of finalised appeals to an authorised review officer and 58.3 per cent of finalised appeals to the Social Security Appeals Tribunal led to the original decision being affirmed. In the case of the Administrative Appeals Tribunal, there were no finalised appeals leading to the original decision being set aside or varied (table 16.18).

Table 16.18 Outcome of all CRA appeals finalised in 2000-01^a

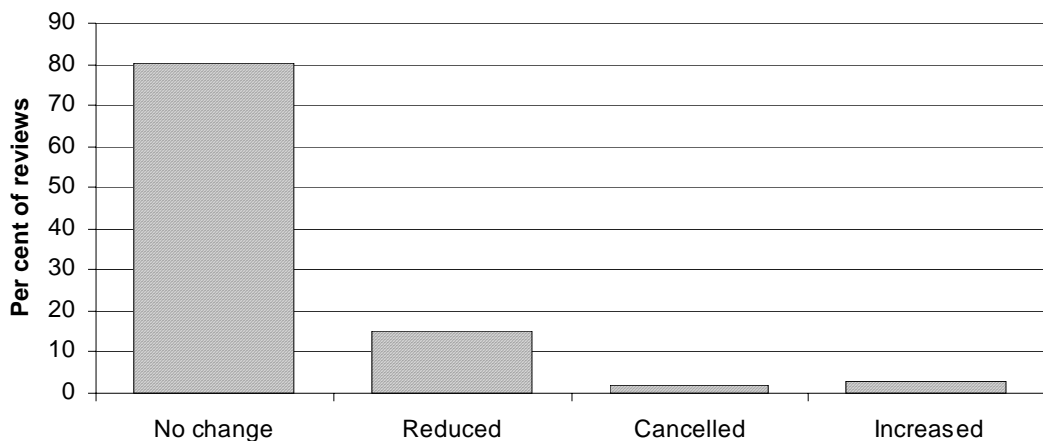
<i>Outcome</i>	<i>Appeals to ARO</i>		<i>Appeals to SSAT</i>		<i>Appeals to AAT</i>	
	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%
Original decision affirmed	102	55.7	14	58.3	1	16.7
Original decision set aside	54	29.5	6	25.0	–	–
Original decision varied	23	12.6	1	4.2	–	–
Appeal withdrawn/dismitted	4	2.2	3	12.5	5	83.3
Total finalised	183	100.0	24	100.0	6	100.0

^a ARO = Authorised Review Officer; SSAT = Social Security Appeals Tribunal; AAT = Administrative Appeals Tribunal. – Nil or rounded to zero.

Source: DFACS (unpublished).

Centrelink relies on risk based review activities to control overpayment, some of which are targeted at CRA. In total, Centrelink conducted 91 068 risk based reviews relating to CRA in 2000-01. Commonwealth Rent Assistance was cancelled in 1.9 per cent of cases, reduced in 14.9 per cent of cases and increased in 3.0 per cent of cases. For the vast majority (80.2 per cent), there was no change (figure 16.27).

Figure 16.27 CRA payments adjustments resulting from a risk based review, 2000-01



Source: table 16A.46.

Quality of customer service

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

- 76 per cent of clients were satisfied with the overall quality of Centrelink's people, services and information;
- 79 per cent of clients were satisfied with services delivered in person; and
- 75 per cent of clients were satisfied with services delivered over the telephone.

Data on the timeliness with which CRA applications are finalised are contained in table 16A.47.

Efficiency

It has not been possible to report the efficiency indicators for CRA this year as data are not available.

16.5 Future directions in performance reporting

Reporting of CRA

A draft revised performance measurement framework has been developed for proposed inclusion in the 2003 Report.

Further developing indicators and data

As the housing chapter data are already extensive, much of the work being undertaken is around filling the gaps in the data and improving reliability and comparability across jurisdictions.

The definitions used for the CSHA data collection are based on the National Housing Assistance Data Dictionary. It is anticipated that the National Housing Assistance Data Dictionary Version 2 will be finalised by the end of 2001. Version 2 will incorporate an expanded range of definitions, including definitions for both the private rent assistance and community housing CSHA data collections.

It is expected that use of the data dictionary will help to improve the uniformity and comparability of data across jurisdictions.

National standards for the CSHA have been developed for identifying applicants with special needs and applicants in greatest need of housing. These national standards will be trialled in the 2000-01 data collection. The national standards used in this collection will be reviewed to finalise changes to the national standards for future data collections.

Items for inclusion in a national community housing data repository will be trialled in 2000-01. The repository involves the collection and consolidation of community housing data into a nationally consistent data set. The data repository is intended to improve the reliability and comparability of national housing data. The range of items for inclusion in the trial will vary across jurisdictions. Although national compliance to a community housing data repository is still some time away, the inclusion of trial items for 2000-01 will assist this process.

16.6 Jurisdictions' comments

This section provides comments from each jurisdiction on the services covered in this chapter. 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).

Commonwealth Government comments

“ The Commonwealth negotiated a new and more comprehensive performance reporting framework with the States and Territories, under the 1999 CSHA. The *Report on Government Services* covers the core of national performance information, but reporting under the CSHA goes beyond this and includes in depth evaluation, much of it qualitative rather than quantitative, of specific initiatives at the jurisdiction level. The format of the *Housing Assistance Act Annual Report* is being modified to reflect this change in approach.

Rent Assistance performance information is reported separately from public and community housing performance information. Additional information has been provided this year on indigenous CRA recipients and rural remote locations. The maximum rate of CRA increased by 11.7 per cent over the year 2000-01, including an 8 per cent real increase in compensation for taxation reform.

The performance information framework used in this Report is better suited to the direct service provision rather than financial assistance. For this reason, new performance indicators have been developed for proposed inclusion next year, to improve reporting within this constraint. In addition, the indicators need to be interpreted with some caution as Rent Assistance is paid as a supplement to other income support payments, which have their own objectives.

Rent assistance is provided as a financial supplement and has the flexibility to cope with changing demand and provide customers with more choice about where they live and the quality of their housing. This choice can involve a trade-off with the consumer's after-housing income. Therefore, it is important to recognise that the rent assistance program has no specific benchmark for affordability. The adoption of an affordability benchmark would fail to recognise the element of choice exercised by customers who place a higher value on housing than others in comparable circumstances.

Only one source of funding for Indigenous-specific housing is reported on in this chapter. In addition to the \$91 million provided by the Commonwealth under the Aboriginal Rental Housing Program, ATSIC provides around \$120 million through the Community Housing and Infrastructure Program for housing activities, and in 2000-01, the States and Territories contributed \$100 million to Indigenous-specific housing.

The relevance of mainstream public housing performance indicators to Indigenous-specific housing programs needs to be considered. Some indicators are useful, such as crowding, costs and need. However, key performance indicators should include housing management and maintenance, housing management skills development and surrogate measures for health improvements, such as housing functionality and condition. Performance reporting associated with the implementation of the Housing Ministers' statement of future directions, *Building a Better Future: Indigenous Housing to 2010* will provide a more complete picture. Each jurisdiction will report annually to Housing Ministers on progress in implementing the objectives and strategies of the document.”

New South Wales Government comments

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House prices and rents in Sydney and coastal NSW continue to increase, and remain significantly higher on average than any other part of Australia, a fact supported by the data showing that average Commonwealth Rent Assistance payments for Sydney are the highest in Australia. At the same time there has been a continuing loss of low cost rental stock and alternative sources of affordable accommodation, such as boarding houses.

Demand for housing assistance remains high. However the performance indicators for effectiveness and efficiency for 2001-02 show that NSW has continued a steady improvement in meeting this demand.

Both the NSW Department of Housing and the Aboriginal Housing Office (AHO) have continued to address the backlog of maintenance work to bring all of their Government-owned stock up to acceptable standards. Considerable progress was made in 2000-01 towards completing a condition audit of the Department's and AHO's dwellings, providing a clearer information base on which to plan for eliminating the backlog. The condition audit was due for completion early in 2001-02. In the Department of Housing, the priority on improving the physical standard of dwellings has been complemented by a program of community renewal work on housing estates, the establishment of a dedicated Community Renewal Unit in the Department and the development of an Estates Strategy.

In addition, the Department achieved improved outcomes in targetting public housing to people with low incomes and/or special needs, higher occupancy rates and improved rent collection performance in 2001-02.

The NSW Government remains committed to supporting and expanding both community and Aboriginal housing as viable alternatives to public housing. The first national reporting on the Aboriginal Rental Housing Program (which, being restricted to housing provision in rural and remote areas, represents only a part of overall Indigenous housing programs managed by the Aboriginal Housing Office in NSW) indicates that NSW is performing well in comparison with average data for Australia overall in delivering the ARHP effectively and efficiently, with relatively low overcrowding, high targetting to low income and special needs households, and higher than average allocations to those in greatest need in the ARHP.

In community housing, the tenant satisfaction survey indicated that NSW achieved above-average proportions of tenants who were satisfied or very satisfied with the quality of their housing. NSW also achieved the lowest turnaround time (18 days) for renting vacant stock.

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Victorian Government comments

“ The housing market in Melbourne experienced strong increases in property prices and private rentals, which placed pressure on low income households. Tight conditions in affordable private rental markets led to a lower level of exits from public housing, and consequently a lower level of new allocations. Responsiveness for greatest needs allocations was, however, improved.

Victoria expanded social housing but at a very modest rate. This expansion was despite an environment of continued real decline in CSHA receipts (excluding GST compensation). While fewer properties were added than in previous years, total social housing stock numbers in Victoria grew by 566 properties to 74 774 public rental and community housing properties.

Continued growth, however, will rely on innovation and partnerships which build on the Victorian Government's commitment of \$94.5 million additional funding for social housing over three years. Fifty partnership projects have now been announced as part of this initiative. When fully implemented, the Victorian government injection of funds over and above the CSHA will enable 800 more units to be brought into the social housing system than would have been possible with CSHA funds alone.

In the year 2000-01, expenditure on property improvements and upgrades increased by nearly 30 per cent to \$150 million and this is expected to continue at this level and be supplemented by expenditure on redevelopments. This strategy aims to improve living conditions on older estates, particularly high rise estates in inner Melbourne and older estates in regional centres in Victoria.

Victoria's performance on most CSHA performance indicators is good. Recurrent costs per public rental dwelling are significantly lower than all other jurisdictions. This provides scope for the quality of services to be assessed and improved. Together with improvements to stock condition, this action can be expected to lift performance in other important areas eg tenant satisfaction.

Victoria is still seeing the effects of previous policies of tightly targetted assistance and as a result, there are pressures on tenancy management costs and some estates are facing social issues. Initiatives to improve services to tenants and help bring about more successful tenancies are being developed. In addition, policy reviews are continuing, with a view to improving access and equity in the system. Major redevelopment projects in inner Melbourne and regional Victoria have commenced. Neighbourhood renewal projects in the Latrobe Valley and Wendouree West will be the first of a number of housing initiatives to from part of a wider thrust to build cohesive communities and reduce inequalities.

A Victorian Homelessness Strategy Working Report, *Building Solutions for Individuals and Families Who Experience Homelessness*, was released during the year. Pilot projects for people being released from prison, or juvenile justice facilities and homeless people with a serious mental health issue will proceed.”

Queensland Government comments

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The Queensland Department of Housing is committed to ensuring that all Queenslanders have access to safe, secure, appropriate and affordable housing in diverse, cohesive and sustainable communities. This commitment identifies a broader role for the Department in Queensland's housing system, and a shift towards diversifying the products we offer and the way we deliver and manage them.

Our commitment to improving people's lives through housing has seen some significant achievements during the past financial year. In particular, foundations have been laid to support our endeavor to seek innovative solutions to housing through increasing the range of affordable housing options. For example, State Cabinet has endorsed the Affordable Housing in Sustainable Communities Strategic Plan. This plan sets out actions to:

- improve and enhance existing forms of government housing assistance;
- identify and engage new stakeholders, mechanisms and resources; and
- develop initiatives to influence and improve the functioning of the housing system as a whole.

The Department is also improving people's lives in rural and remote communities through the relocation of surplus housing stock in Central Queensland mining towns to other high demand rural and remote areas. The provision of housing in these regions results in community stability and provides an injection into the community's economy which in turn contributes to the town's continuing survival.

Another innovative solution to gain in-principle endorsement was the creation of the Brisbane Housing Company. This not-for-profit company will be designed to deliver social housing to lower-income households in Brisbane and is expected to begin operations in 2002-03.

The Department is working with central agencies to develop a framework to analyse its products and services and align them with housing need. The expectation is that the Department will be in a better position to determine where resources should be directed, balancing scarce resources, housing need and appropriate housing solutions.

The Department has initiated discussions with other agencies to identify practical ways within existing programs to address homelessness. The result will be improved program operations which overcome existing unintended consequences, which may result in homelessness in some situations.

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Western Australian Government comments

“ The end of the financial year saw the end of the Ministry of Housing, which from 1 July 2001 became the Department of Housing and Works.

Home ownership remains a high priority for Western Australia. The Department of Housing and Works assists people on low to moderate incomes to realise their dream of home ownership through safe, affordable loan schemes. During the year these schemes helped 4377 households with home finance, providing 1035 loans for building new homes and 3342 to buy established homes. The effect of these loan approvals is an injection of \$407 million into the State's housing industry to create and maintain employment for Western Australians.

Homelessness emerged as an issue during the year and the Department responded in a significant way by providing a helpline backed up by bricks and mortar. After six weeks of operation, 460 calls had been received and 130 people housed in public housing.

Cooperation with other agencies continued during the year to assist tenants experiencing difficulty in managing their tenancies. During the year about \$1 million was spent on the Special Housing Assistance Program, with eight agencies receiving funding for 11 programs to assist families throughout the State. Issues that affect tenancies include non-payment of rent, property standards and anti-social behaviour. Many tenancies are saved by these partnership arrangements with community support agencies. Work also continued with the State Department for Community Development to provide family support programs to people whose tenancies may be in jeopardy. These programs combine to reduce the number of failed tenancies and the need to seek emergency relief from government or community-based agencies.

To achieve its objective in providing low cost, high quality rental accommodation, the Department regularly consults with housing industry groups such as the Housing Industry Association and the Master Builders' Association, and professional associations such as the Royal Australian Institute of Architects. During 2000-01, 1406 accommodation units were completed or purchased in the combined Departments' main rental, Community Housing and Aboriginal Housing programs.”

South Australian Government comments

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

Although the Aboriginal Housing Authority (AHA) was formally established in October 1998, it became fully operational during 2000-01. This was the result of all AHA assets, staff and programs being transferred from the South Australian Housing Trust (SAHT) in February 2000. The AHA has seen growth in its housing provision programs, the public rental program, and the Community Housing Program (formerly the Rural and Remote Housing Program). This has been achieved by a range of initiatives including purchases from the open market, a new build and major upgrade program and the transfer of 30 properties per year from the SAHT in accordance with a three-year agreement.

A considerable proportion of public and Indigenous housing stock in South Australia was developed during the 1950s and 1960s with a focus on providing small three bedroom houses on large blocks for working families. Much of this ageing stock is located on the urban fringe and in regional communities and often does not meet contemporary needs. During the year there was a continued focus on asset management strategies aimed at reducing concentrations of social disadvantage through urban regeneration, home renovation, new build, sales and transfers to community and Aboriginal housing.

A new program called 'Better Neighbourhoods' was in the initial stages of development during the year. This program aims to replace ageing low amenity dwellings in higher demand areas with new, more appropriate housing stock.

The first full year of operation of the new housing policies that target housing assistance to those in greatest need was 2000-01. The new eligibility and wait list management arrangements have been successfully introduced and these have significantly increased allocations to those in the highest need categories. A similar arrangement is in place in community housing.

To ensure the ongoing attainment of successful tenancies, sustainable communities and service integration, the structure of public housing regional offices has been realigned to provide a greater focus on linking services and supports to customers with high and/or complex needs. Additionally, a range of pilot projects with a focus on sustaining tenancies and service integration became fully operational in 2000-01.

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

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Tasmanian Government comments

“ The provision of social housing in Tasmania aims to contribute to improving health and wellbeing outcomes for people on low incomes, recognising the role that affordable, appropriately located housing plays in enabling tenants to access social and economic opportunities, and the support networks they need. Activity during 2000-01 continued to support strategic realignment of the portfolio to be more responsive to the need of an increasingly diverse client base, and emphasised community capacity building in areas where there is a high density of public rental housing.

During the year, Housing Tasmania implemented a range of capital and policy responses to achieve community and Agency outcomes. These are reflected in the development of a Youth Housing Strategy, the purchase and construction of homes for people with a disability or limited mobility, revised Domestic Violence policy, and the sales incentive program 'Streets Ahead', specifically designed to assist low-income earners to achieve home ownership. Housing Tasmania has also worked in partnership with other divisions of the Department of Health and Human Services, to improve housing outcomes through the integration of SAAP and Housing Assessment System processes.

Building on the success of programs such as Clarendonvale Connect, Ravenswood Walk Tall and Bridgewater/Gagebrook Urban Renewal Program, capacity building activities have commenced in Shorewell in the State's north west. The success of these programs has also fostered opportunities in areas of lower public housing density. Initiatives such as 'Eating with Friends' have encouraged people living alone to meet and interact with others, and Fire Expos held around the State have encouraged the participation of local communities.

Local development teams were implemented in each service area and continue to promote opportunities for community housing, partnerships and local solutions to local issues. The transfer of homes to the Red Shield Housing Association also continued during the year, with the target expected to be achieved by December 2001.

Progressing the State Government commitment to Indigenous self-determination, Housing Tasmania appointed an Aboriginal Housing Manager to work toward establishment of an Aboriginal Housing Unit, an Aboriginal Housing Authority, and development of an Aboriginal Housing bilateral agreement. It is anticipated that in excess of 330 homes funded under the Aboriginal Rental Housing Program will be transferred to the Housing Authority.”

Australian Capital Territory Government comments

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The ACT has a relatively high proportion of public housing stock compared with other jurisdictions (10 per cent compared to 5 per cent nationally). Because of this and the relatively small population base (310 800), total government expenditure in the ACT was \$601 per person, compared with \$232 per person nationally. However, this significant investment in public housing affects the efficiency performance indicator, cost per unit of public housing, through its impact on the indicative user cost of capital. The higher total user cost of capital in the ACT (\$10 383) compared with the national average (\$7927) also reflects the high cost of land in the ACT.

Much of the public housing stock in the ACT is in poor condition, with many large flat complexes being over 40 years old. Accordingly, the rejuvenation and restructuring of the ACT's public housing stock continued to be a high priority in 2000-01. The restructuring process will take some years to complete, given the size of the portfolio and the condition of much of the stock. The redevelopment and upgrading processes have, in the past, been partly funded from the proceeds of asset sales. As a result, there has been a reduction in stock levels. The use of this source of funding is a consequence of the continued decline in funding under the 1999 CSHA, as well as of internalising the cost of rental rebates.

Public housing in the ACT is increasingly targeted and as a result there has been an increase in the number of tenants and applicants with complex needs. Approximately 66 per cent of all allocations were to those in the greatest need category, compared to a 36 per cent national average. This was, in part, due to the implementation of a segmented waiting list on 1 January 2001. Other pricing, tenure and eligibility reforms were also implemented on this date. The increasing number of vulnerable public housing tenants will receive improved case management through the introduction of Specialist Tenancy Managers and will be better integrated with their communities through a recently announced Linkages program.

The community housing sector in the ACT is relatively small, but expanding. A current review of Community Housing is looking at financing options, sector development, and tenancy, property and regulatory issues.

The ACT does not receive any ARHP funding. However, the ACT Government is working with ATSIC and the Commonwealth Government to develop a Trilateral Agreement on Indigenous Housing to improve housing outcomes for Indigenous people in the ACT. A viability study exploring Indigenous housing options is currently underway.

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Northern Territory Government comments

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Targets set in April 1998 with the introduction of Housing 2003 (a five-year revitalisation program) have largely been achieved. There have also been many accomplishments against the strategies and objectives of the Commonwealth State Housing Bilateral Agreement 1999–2003. These include:

- review and amendment of the priority housing policy;
- review of the appeals mechanism;
- construction of seniors' villages at Coconut Grove and Tambling Terrace;
- wait times continue to reduce in most areas;
- number of ineligible tenants in public housing further reduced;
- commencement of a revised bond assistance scheme with wider eligibility criteria and more generous assistance levels; and
- consultative forums with the community progressing work on key priorities.

The NT has seen a pleasing improvement in overall tenant satisfaction in the National Social Housing Survey with Public Housing demonstrating effectiveness of changes introduced and improvement in the services provided.

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

All Indigenous specific housing programs in the NT are community managed and administered. On 30 June 2001, approximately 130 Indigenous housing organisations were managing 5 820 permanent dwellings for 46 750 Indigenous people in 700 discrete Indigenous communities.

Under this framework, in 2000-01, ARHP contributed 46 per cent of IHANT's funding. Using a needs model as a basis for allocations under its Construction Program, IHANT allocates funds to the seven ATSIC Regional Councils in the Territory, who in turn make allocations to those communities most in need. During 2000-01 the IHANT Construction Program oversaw the construction (or major refurbishment) of 181 houses, thereby better housing 1450 people.

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

The Northern Territory Government is committed to positioning housing services and assistance as part of the human services network.

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16.7 Definitions

Public, community and ARHP housing

Table 16.19 Terms

<i>Term</i>	<i>Definition</i>
Administration costs	Costs incurred for direct salaries; payroll and other taxes; superannuation; compensation; accrued leave; training; accommodation; vehicles; marketing; information systems; printing; stationery; postage; telephone expenses; uniforms; travel expenses; office expenses; office equipment; collection fees; management fees; rent; grants and subsidies; expenditure incurred by other government agencies on behalf of the public housing agency; contracted public housing management services; and overheads (corporate services/unallocated expenses). Accrual data are used wherever possible.
Affordability	The level of housing affordability within the public housing (or community housing) sectors, measured as the rent charged as a proportion of the market rent for each dwelling (adjusted for Commonwealth Rent Assistance).
Amenity/location	The amenity of public rental housing stock, measured as the percentage of tenants expressing different degrees of satisfaction in relation to the amenity and location of their dwelling.
Appropriate	The size of a dwelling, or the number of bedrooms a household is deemed to require based on the number of adults and children residing in it, as determined by the proxy occupancy standard (table 16.3).
Assessable income	The income used in the assessment of eligibility for public housing rebate assistance. For the purposes of this Report, assessable income includes Commonwealth Rent Assistance (if applicable) and rent contributions from non-tenant, adult household members. Actual definition may vary across jurisdictions.
Community housing rental dwelling	Includes properties covered by the Commonwealth State Housing Agreement. Excludes properties for which the tenancy management functions are undertaken and administered under the Public Rental Housing Program, the Aboriginal Rental Housing Program or transitional/emergency accommodation for people who are homeless and in crisis (Crisis Accommodation Program).
Customer satisfaction	The percentage of customers expressing different degrees of satisfaction in relation to various service aspects of their dwelling.
Depreciation costs (as per the Australian Accounting Standards 13–17)	Depreciation calculated on a straight-line basis at a rate that realistically represents the useful life of the asset.
Direct costs	Total administration costs and costs of maintaining the operation of dwellings.
Disability (as per the ABS Survey of Disability Ageing and Carers)	Any restriction or lack of ability (resulting from an impairment) to perform an action in the manner or within the range considered normal for a human being.

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Table 16.19 (Continued)

<i>Term</i>	<i>Definition</i>
Dwelling	A structure or a discrete space within a structure intended for people to live in or where a person or group of people live. Thus, a structure that people actually live in is a dwelling regardless of its intended purpose, but a vacant structure is only a dwelling if intended for human residence. A dwelling may include one or more rooms used as an office or workshop, provided the dwelling is in residential use.
Greatest need	Applicants with one or more of the following characteristics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • homelessness; • exiting a crisis service; • under a case management plan; or • classified as priority one on waiting list.
Household	A group of people who usually reside and eat together. Operationally, a household is defined as either: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a one-person household—a person who makes provision for their own food or essentials for living without combining with any other person to form part of a multi-person household; or • a multi-person household—a group of two or more people, living within the same dwelling, who make common provision for food and other essentials for living. The people in the group may pool their incomes and have a common budget to a greater or lesser extent; they may be related or unrelated or a combination.
Income unit	One person or a group of related people within a household who share command over income. The allowable relationships in the definition of income unit are restricted to marriage (registered or <i>de facto</i>) and parent and dependent child who usually reside in the same household. Operationally, an income unit is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a married couple (registered or <i>de facto</i>) or sole parent, and dependent children only; or • married couple only (registered or <i>de facto</i>) with no dependent children present; or • a person in a private dwelling who is not related to any other household member either by marriage (registered or <i>de facto</i>) or by a parent/dependent child relationship. (Defined differently for CRA).
Indigenous household	A household with one or more members (including children) who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islanders.
Low income household	A household whose members are assessed as having a low income according to the following definitions. Households are assigned an income status based on total household gross income and the composition of the household. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'low income A' households are those in public housing for which all household members have incomes at or below the maximum pension rate. • 'low income B' households are those in public housing that receive an income at a level equivalent to that at which minimum government income support benefits are received (at the pensioner rate).

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Table 16.19 (Continued)

<i>Term</i>	<i>Definition</i>
Maintenance costs	Costs incurred to maintain the value of the asset or to restore an asset to its original condition. The definition includes: day-to-day maintenance reflecting general wear and tear; cyclical maintenance, performed as part of a planned maintenance program; and other maintenance, such as repairs as a result of vandalism.
Market rent	Aggregate market rent that would be collected if the public rental housing properties were available in the private market.
Match of dwelling and household size	The percentage of dwellings where dwelling size is inappropriate, calculated as the percentage of occupied public (or community) dwellings with overcrowding based on the following definition of <i>overcrowding</i> : two or more additional bedrooms are required to satisfy the proxy occupancy standard. To derive the number of households in this category, every household is assigned a proxy occupancy status based on the size of the dwelling — that is, the number of bedrooms; the number of adults; the number of children; and the family relationships of household members.
New household	Households allocated from the waiting list (excluding transfers).
Occupancy rate	The use of rental housing stock as measured by the occupancy rate of the stock, where 'occupied' is defined as tenantable dwellings occupied by tenants who have a public housing tenancy agreement with the relevant State housing authority.
Occupied dwelling	Tenantable dwellings occupied by tenants who have a public or community housing tenancy agreement with the relevant State housing authority.
Overcrowding	Where two or more additional bedrooms are required to meet the proxy occupancy standard.
Priority access to those in greatest need	The proportion of new allocations to those in greatest need in the following timeframes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • under three months; • three months to under six months; • six months to under one year; • one year to less than two years; • two years or more; and • total.
Proportion of income paid in rent	A measure of housing affordability within the public housing (or community housing) sectors, calculated as the percentage of assessable household income spent on housing costs — that is, the number of rebated public rental households (or community housing households) paying X per cent of assessable income on rent at 30 June, divided by the total number of rebated public rental households (or community housing households) occupying public (or community) housing, multiplied by 100. 'X' is defined as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 0–20 per cent; • 21–25 per cent; • 26–30 per cent; or • greater than or equal to 31 per cent. Previously reported as a performance indicator.

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Table 16.19 (Continued)

<i>Term</i>	<i>Definition</i>
Proxy occupancy standard	The standard used to determine overcrowding/underuse. The standard used in the public and community housing collections is based on the Canadian model. (For further discussion on measuring household bedroom requirements, see Foard, <i>et al.</i> 1994).
Public rental dwelling	Includes only public rental properties covered by the Commonwealth–State Housing Agreement. Excludes properties administered under Community Rental Housing, the Aboriginal Rental Housing Program or transitional/emergency accommodation for people who are homeless and in crisis (Crisis Accommodation Program—CAP).
Relocated household	Households, either rebated or market renters, who relocate (transfer) from one public or community rental dwelling to another public or community rental dwelling.
Rent arrears	Total rent actually collected as a percentage of total rent charged.
Rent charged	The amount in dollars that households are charged based on the actual rents they are expected to pay. The rents charged to tenants may or may not have been received.
Rent collected	The actual rent received from tenants.
Special needs household	A household that has a member(s) with a disability, a principal tenant aged either 24 years or under or 75 years or more (50 years or more for the ARHP) or, except for the ARHP, a household defined as being Indigenous.
Special needs but not low income	Where a household member(s) has a special need but the household income is assessed as not being 'low income' according to a household income cut-off value.
Tenantable dwelling	Dwellings where maintenance has been completed, whether occupied or unoccupied at 30 June 2000. All occupied dwellings are tenantable.
Tenant or tenant household	The usual members of a household occupying a public or community rental housing dwelling where there is a tenancy agreement with the housing authority. A tenant household either receives rebated assistance or pays the market rent as determined by the agency.
Total gross household income	The value of gross weekly income from all sources (before deductions for income tax, superannuation etc.) for all household members expressed as dollars per week. The main components of gross income are current usual wages and salary, income derived from self employment, government pensions, benefits and allowances, and other income comprising investments and other regular income.
Turnaround time	The time taken to use vacant stock.
Underutilisation	Where there are two or more bedrooms additional to the number required in the dwelling to satisfy the proxy occupancy standard.
Untenantable dwelling	Dwellings not currently occupied by a tenant where maintenance has been either deferred or not completed at 30 June.
Waiting list applicant	A household that has applied for public or community rental housing assistance and is deemed eligible but has not yet received the assistance. Includes current public housing tenants who are applicants for assistance other than that currently received (for example, transfer applicants).

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Table 16.19 (Continued)

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

Source: AIHW (2001a, 2001b, 2001c).

Commonwealth Rent Assistance

Table 16.20 Terms

<i>Term</i>	<i>Definition</i>
Accuracy of decision making	Centrelink procedure and accuracy check results for each of the main relevant payment types (Family Allowance and other income support payments). Although it does not relate directly to the program, CRA is included in the accuracy check. The results should therefore be indicative of the accuracy of decisions about CRA. Separate figures are provided for new claims and reviews. Data exclude procedural errors that do not affect payments, as indicated by the checking officer.
ARO	Administrative review officer.
Control of overpayment	The number of reviews conducted targeted at CRA and their outcomes — that is, the number and value of any increases in assistance, decreases in assistance and overpayments detected. Although the reviews are targeted at CRA, they may also result in variations to the primary payment.
Customer and community satisfaction surveys	Surveys not specific to CRA that may be broadly indicative of the views of CRA recipients. This measure provides information about overall customer satisfaction with service delivery, customer service centre staff and call centre staff (the Centrelink telephone service).
Decisions reviewed/appealed	Number of CRA appeals to authorised review officers (the Social Security Appeals Tribunal and the Administrative Appeals Tribunal). Numbers relate to all cases finalised in the last financial year and show whether the decisions are favourable to the individual customer.
Eligible income support clients	Clients in receipt of an income support payment or more than the minimum rate of family allowance. Commonwealth Rent Assistance is automatically paid once eligibility is established. The only eligible clients who are not paid are those affected by Centrelink errors in recording information or by program errors.
Geographic spread of CRA customers	A point-in-time indicator comparing the number of income units receiving CRA within a particular postcode with the number of private dwellings in that postcode (obtained from the 1996 Census).

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Table 16.20 (Continued)

<i>Term</i>	<i>Definition</i>
Income units	The basic units used to determine eligibility for social security payments. Income units are analogous to family units with the distinction that non-dependent children and other adults living in the same household are treated as separate income units. Children are regarded as dependent until 16 years of age. Children aged 16–18 years may also be regarded as dependent if they are full time students, wholly or substantially dependent on another person and not in receipt of an income support payment. (Defined differently for public and community housing).
Number of eligible income support customers receiving CRA	A point-in-time indicator, supplied for both individuals and income units. Individuals are counted as receiving Commonwealth Rent Assistance (CRA) if they are recorded as a current customer at the date data is extracted from the system and as having been paid CRA in the preceding fortnight. Income units are counted if either member of a couple meets that condition. In a small number of cases, a person may have ceased to be eligible for CRA at the extract date (for example, because they stopped paying rent) but are still counted if CRA was paid in the last fortnight.
Proportion of claims for which review was sought	The number of customers seeking a review by an administrative review officer as a proportion of the number of customers receiving CRA. The number of customers receiving CRA is used as a proxy for the number of claimants. There is no formal claim for CRA, and all details needed to determine eligibility are recorded for all customers. Consequently, it is not possible to identify persons who have sought assistance, but were unsuccessful. Therefore, the number of customers receiving CRA may be the most appropriate proxy for claimants.
Proportion of income spent on rent with and without CRA	A point-in-time indicator, measuring the proportion of income units spending less than (a) 30 per cent, and (b) 50 per cent of their income on rent, both with and without CRA. The proportion of income spent on rent is calculated as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • with CRA: rent minus CRA/total income from all sources, excluding CRA; or • without CRA: rent/total income from all sources, excluding CRA.
Ratio of running costs to total outlays for the CRA program	Total running costs for the CRA program as a proportion of total outlays.
Rent	Amounts payable as a condition of occupancy of a person's home. Includes site fees for a caravan, mooring fees and payment for services provided in a retirement village. Rent encompasses not only a formal tenancy agreement, but also informal agreements between family members, including the payment of board or board and lodgings. Where a person pays board and lodgings and is unable to separately identify the amount paid for lodgings, two-thirds of the payment is deemed to be for rent. There is no requirement that rent be paid; a person whose rent is in arrears may remain eligible for assistance provided Centrelink is satisfied that the liability is genuine.
Running costs per 1000 CRA customers	Total running costs for the CRA program per 1000 CRA customers.

(Continued on next page)

Table 16.20 (Continued)

<i>Term</i>	<i>Definition</i>
Timeliness	<p>The timeliness of new claim processing for primary payments (Family Allowance and other income support payments). A substantial proportion of new claimants will be eligible for CRA. These measures will provide some indication of the timeliness for CRA.</p> <p>For each payment type, a standard has been agreed with Centrelink that a specified proportion of claims will be finalised within an agreed period; for example, 80 per cent of Age Pension claims are to be finalised within 28 days of receipt. For each of the main payment types, details will be provided of both the agreed timeliness standard and the actual performance achieved over the full financial year. This information will be supplemented by a table showing the cumulative proportion of claims finalised by the number of weeks since lodgement.</p>
Total income from all sources	<p>Income received by the customer or partner, excluding income received by a dependent. Includes regular social security payments and any maintenance and other private income taken into account for income testing purposes. Excludes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • one-time payments; • arrears payments; • advances; • Employment or Education Entry Payments; • Mobility Allowance; • Maternity Allowance; and • Child Care Assistance Rebate. <p>In most cases, private income reflects the person's current circumstances. Taxable income for a past financial year, or an estimate of taxable income for the current financial year, is used where the income unit receives more than the minimum rate of family allowance but no other income support payment.</p>

Source: DFACS (unpublished).

