
15 Protection and support services

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

This chapter reports on:

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

A profile of child protection and out-of-home care services appears in section 15.1. A framework of performance indicators is outlined in section 15.2 and data are discussed in section 15.3. Future directions in child protection and out-of-home care performance reporting are outlined in section 15.4.

A profile of supported accommodation and assistance services funded under the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) appears in section 15.5. A framework of performance indicators for these services is outlined in section 15.6 and data are discussed in section 15.7. Future directions in SAAP performance reporting are discussed in section 15.8.

Jurisdictions' comments on both child protection and out-of-home care services, and supported accommodation and assistance services are reported in section 15.9. Definitions of data descriptors and indicators are provided in section 15.10. A list of supporting tables is provided in section 15.11. Supporting tables are identified in references throughout this chapter by an 'A' suffix (for example, table 15A.3 is table 3 in the attachment). Supporting tables are provided on the CD-ROM enclosed with the Report. Section 15.12 lists references used in this chapter.

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

Service overview

Child protection services

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

- receiving and responding to reports of concern about children or young people, including investigation and assessment where appropriate
- providing support services (directly or through referral), where harm or a risk of significant harm is identified, to strengthen the capacity of families to care safely for children
- initiating intervention where necessary, including applying for a care and protection order through a court and, in some situations, placing children or young people in out-of-home care to secure their safety
- ensuring the ongoing safety of children and young people by working with families to resolve protective concerns
- working with families to reunite children (who were removed for safety reasons) with their parents as soon as possible (in some jurisdictions, restoration may occur in voluntary placements as well)
- securing permanent out-of-home/alternative care when it is determined that a child is unable to be returned to the care of his or her parents, and working with young people to identify alternative supported living arrangements where family reunification is not possible.

Research suggests that children and families who come into contact with the protection and support system often share common social and demographic characteristics. Families with low incomes or that are reliant on pensions and benefits, those that experienced alcohol and substance abuse, or a psychiatric disability, and those that have a family history of domestic violence are over-represented in the families that came into contact with the protection and support system (Department of Human Services 2002). Studies have also highlighted the high incidence of child abuse and neglect within Indigenous communities, compared with non-Indigenous communities. These studies include the final report of the WA Inquiry into Response by Government Agencies to

Complaints of Family Violence and Child Abuse in Aboriginal Communities (Gordon Report 2002), which found high levels of violence and child abuse within Aboriginal communities in WA. The report also found that the incidence of child abuse and family violence in Aboriginal communities was significantly under-reported and that a lack of trust between Aboriginal communities and government agencies was a significant barrier to complaints of violence and abuse being lodged. The report found that greater coordination across government agencies, more training for staff and more and better resources and services were required. The WA government is implementing recommendations arising from the Inquiry.

Out-of-home care services

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

Out-of-home care services are either home-based care (for example, foster care, care with the child’s extended family or other home-based arrangements), facility-based care (for example, community residential care) or independent living (which is often intensively supported) as a transition to full independence or supported placements. Across jurisdictions, there has been a shift away from the use of facility-based (or residential) care towards foster care and other forms of home-based care, including relative/kinship care. Intensive family support services are increasingly perceived as an alternative to the removal of the child from his or her home for child protection reasons (box 15.1).

Box 15.1 Intensive family support services

Intensive family support services are specialist services, established in each jurisdiction, that aim to:

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

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

- are funded or established explicitly to prevent the separation of, or to reunify, families

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Box 15.1 (Continued)

- provide a range of services as part of an integrated strategy focusing on improving family functioning and skills, rather than providing a single type of service
- are intensive in nature, averaging at least four hours of service provision per week for a specified short term period (usually less than six months)
- generally receive referrals from a child protection service.

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

Expenditure data indicate that recurrent expenditure on intensive family support services across all jurisdictions was at least \$104.3 million in 2004-05 (table 15A.21). Tables 15A.21–24 provide additional information about families and children who were involved with intensive family support services during 2004-05.

A complementary suite of services not currently included in this Report, but intended for inclusion in future Reports, are known as child protection treatment and support services. These are targeted to at-risk families where there are concerns about the safety and wellbeing of children. They may be less intensive in nature and include services that strengthen family relationships in response to concerns about the welfare of a child and may have either an early intervention or support reunification orientation.

Child protection treatment and support services provide educational services, clinical services including counselling, group work and other therapeutic interventions, and domestic violence services, where the child is the direct recipient of the service and s/he is, has, or is likely to become, a client of child protection.

Source: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) (unpublished).

Roles and responsibilities

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

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

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

A range of appointments, schemes and charters have been introduced by jurisdictions in recent years, to enable additional protection for clients of the child protection system. Examples of these are listed in box 15.2.

Box 15.2 Initiatives in place to enable additional protection for clients

NSW The Commission for Children and Young People initiates and influences broad and positive change for children and young people. The Office of the Children's Guardian promotes the best interests and rights of all children in out-of-home care, through accreditation and monitoring of out-of-home care agencies to ensure services are of the highest standard.

Vic The Child Safety Commissioner promotes child safe practices and environments across the community. The Advocate for Children in Care works within the Commissioner's office and monitors the quality of out-of-home care services. A charter of rights for children in care is being developed.

Qld The Commission for Children and Young People and the Child Guardian provides a Community Visitor Scheme, investigates complaints and undertakes systemic monitoring and auditing of services. A Departmental complaints system has also been established in the Department of Child Safety.

WA A charter of rights for children and young people is under development in partnership between government and non-government organisations.

SA The Office of the Guardian monitors and assesses care, and advocates for, and advises on, the circumstances and needs of children and systemic issues affecting the quality of out-of-home care.

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Box 15.2 (Continued)

Tas The Commissioner for Children's functions include promoting the rights and wellbeing of children, examining the policies, practices and services provided for children and any laws affecting the health, welfare, care, protection and development of children.

ACT The Office of the Community Advocate's functions include monitoring the provision of services, and protecting and acting as an advocate for the rights of children and young people. The Official Visitors' role is to investigate complaints made by or on behalf of children and young people in institutions or shelters concerning their care. The Commissioner for Human Rights and Discrimination ensures the rights of children and young people are upheld.

Source: State and Territory governments (unpublished).

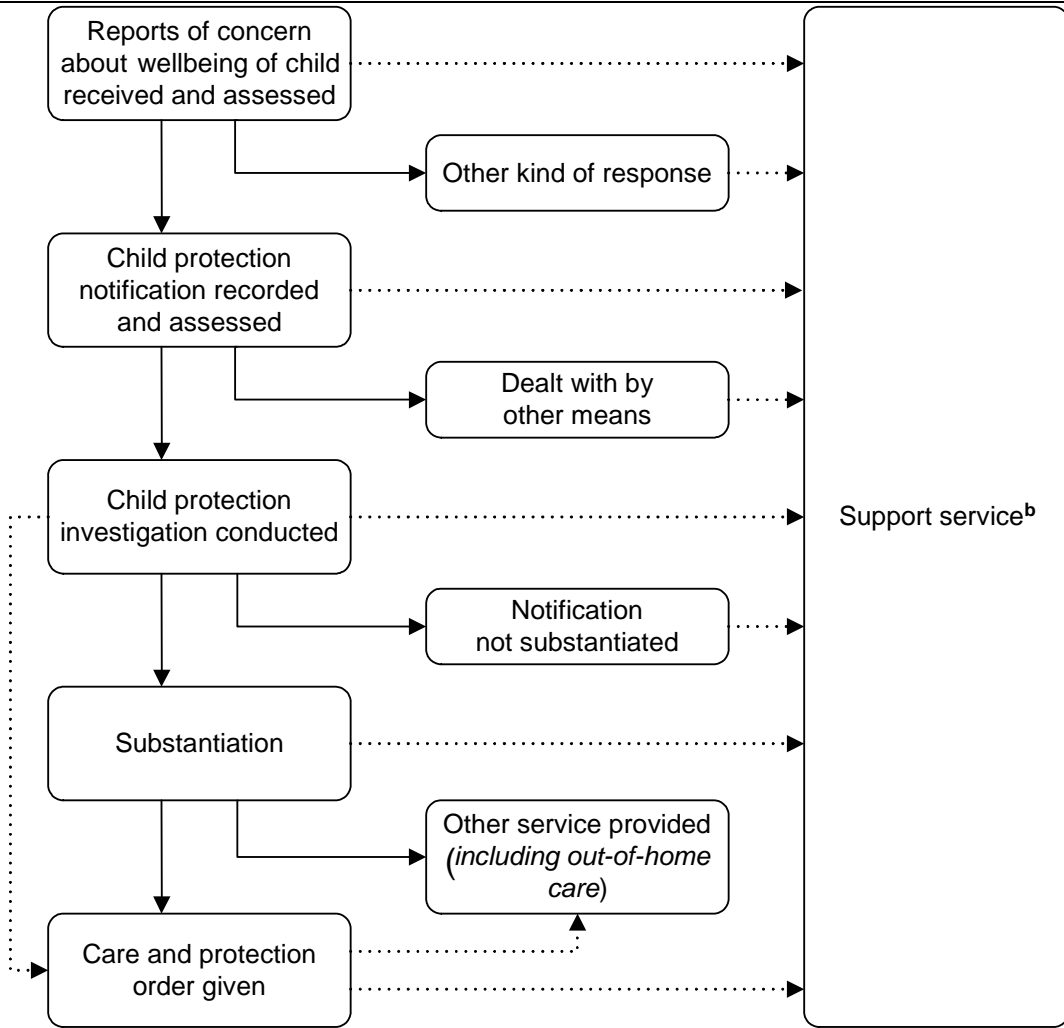
Size and scope

The child protection system

Child protection legislation, policies and practices vary across jurisdictions, but the broad processes in child protection systems are similar (figure 15.1).

State and Territory community services departments are advised of concerns about the wellbeing of children through reports to these departments. Reports may be made by people mandated to report (such as medical practitioners, police services and school teachers and principals) or by other members of the community. These reports are assessed and classified as child protection notifications, child concern reports, or matters requiring some other kind of response. The most common sources of notification for finalised investigations in 2004-05 were police, school personnel, hospital/health centres, parents and guardians, other relatives, non-government organisations and friends/neighbours (AIHW 2006).

Figure 15.1 The child protection system^a



^a Dashed lines indicate that clients may or may not receive these services, depending on need. ^b Support services include family support or family preservation services provided by community service departments and referrals to other agencies.

Notification

Jurisdictions count notifications at different points in the response to a report, ranging from the point of initial contact with the source of the report to the end of a screening and decision making process. This means the number of notifications is not strictly comparable across jurisdictions.¹

All jurisdictions except Victoria, Tasmania, the ACT and the NT screen incoming reports before deciding whether they will be designated and counted as a notification, thus reducing the proportion of reports that become notifications. WA undertakes a further screening process designed to differentiate between reports about harm/maltreatment and child and family concerns. This reduces the number of notifications, as only reports about child harm/maltreatment are included in this Report.

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

Although notifications are defined differently across jurisdictions, 160 021 children aged 0–16 years were the subject of child protection notifications in 2004-05. Nationally, the rate of notifications per 1000 children in the population aged 0–16 years was 35.3 in 2004-05 (table 15A.8).

Data on the number of notifications are collected very early in the child protection process and often before the agency has full knowledge of the child's family circumstances. This lack of full knowledge and the inherent difficulties in identifying Indigenous status mean it is not possible to report reliable data on the number of notifications by Indigenous status.

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

Substantiation

The criteria for substantiation vary across jurisdictions. In the past, child protection legislation and policy focused on the identification and investigation of narrowly defined incidents that were broadly grouped as types of abuse or neglect. Across all jurisdictions, however, the focus is shifting away from the actions of parents and guardians, toward the desired outcomes for the child, the identification and investigation of actual and/or likely harm to the child, and the child's needs.

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

Nationally, 33 871 children aged 0–16 years were the subject of a substantiation in 2004-05. The rate of children who were the subject of a substantiation per 1000 children in the population aged 0–16 years was 7.5 (table 15A.8).

Nationally, 4887 Indigenous and 28 984 non-Indigenous children were the subject of a substantiation in 2004-05. The rate of children who were the subject of a substantiation per 1000 children in the population aged 0–16 years was 24.0 for Indigenous children and 6.7 for non-Indigenous children (table 15A.8).

Care and protection orders

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

Nationally, 25 065 children aged 0–17 years were on care and protection orders at 30 June 2005. The rate of children on care and protection orders per 1000 children in the population aged 0–17 years was 5.2 (table 15A.8).

Nationally, 5564 Indigenous and 19 501 non-Indigenous children were on care and protection orders at 30 June 2005. The rate of children on care and protection orders per 1000 children in the population aged 0–17 years was 25.8 for Indigenous children and 4.3 for non-Indigenous children (table 15A.8).

Out-of-home care

Out-of-home care is one of a range of services provided to families and children where there is a need to provide safe care for a child. The services are intended to maintain the child within the family if possible, and to place a child in out-of-home care only if this will improve the outcome for the child. If it is necessary to remove the child from his or her home, then placement with the wider family or community is sought where possible, particularly in the case of Indigenous children (AIHW 2006). Continued emphasis is being placed on improving case planning and case management processes to facilitate the safe return home of children in out-of-home care and to maximise case workers' contact time with children and families.

Nationally, 23 695 children were in out-of-home care at 30 June 2005. The rate of children in out-of-home care per 1000 children in the population aged 0–17 years was 4.9 (table 15A.11).

Nationally, 5678 Indigenous children and 18 017 non-Indigenous children were in out-of-home care at 30 June 2005. The rate of children in out-of-home care per 1000 children in the population aged 0–17 years was 26.4 for Indigenous children and 3.9 for non-Indigenous children (table 15A.11).

Funding

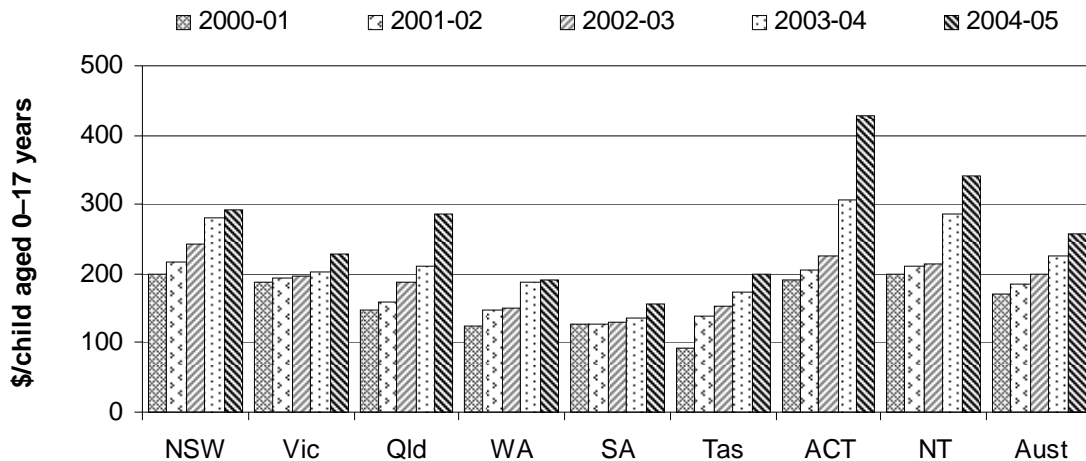
Recurrent expenditure on child protection and out-of-home care services was at least \$1230.8 million across Australia in 2004-05 — a real increase of \$147.1 million (13.6 per cent) from 2003-04. Nationally, out-of-home care services accounted for the majority (61.9 per cent, or \$762.0 million) of this expenditure. Some jurisdictions have difficulty in separating expenditure on child protection from expenditure on out-of-home care services (table 15A.1).

Nationally, real recurrent expenditure per child aged 0–17 years on child protection and out-of-home care services was \$256 in 2004-05 (figure 15.2). Real recurrent expenditure per child aged 0–17 years increased in all jurisdictions between 2003-04 and 2004-05.

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

expenditure on some services may be included for some jurisdictions, but not for others.

Figure 15.2 Real recurrent expenditure on child protection and out-of-home care services (2004-05 dollars)



Source: State and Territory governments (unpublished); table 15A.1.

15.2 Framework of child protection and out-of-home care services performance indicators

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

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

The aims of child protection services are to:

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

The aim of out-of-home care services is to provide quality care for children and young people aged 0–17 years who cannot live with their parents for reasons of safety or family crisis.

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

The performance indicator framework shows which data are comparable in the 2006 Report. For data that are not considered directly comparable, the text includes relevant caveats and supporting commentary. Chapter 1 discusses data comparability from a Report-wide perspective (see section 1.6). The performance indicator framework and those indicators that are comparable in the 2006 Report are shown in figure 15.3.

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

Different delivery contexts, locations and types of client may affect the equity/access, effectiveness and efficiency of child protection services. Appendix A contains detailed statistics that may assist in interpreting the performance indicators.

Outputs

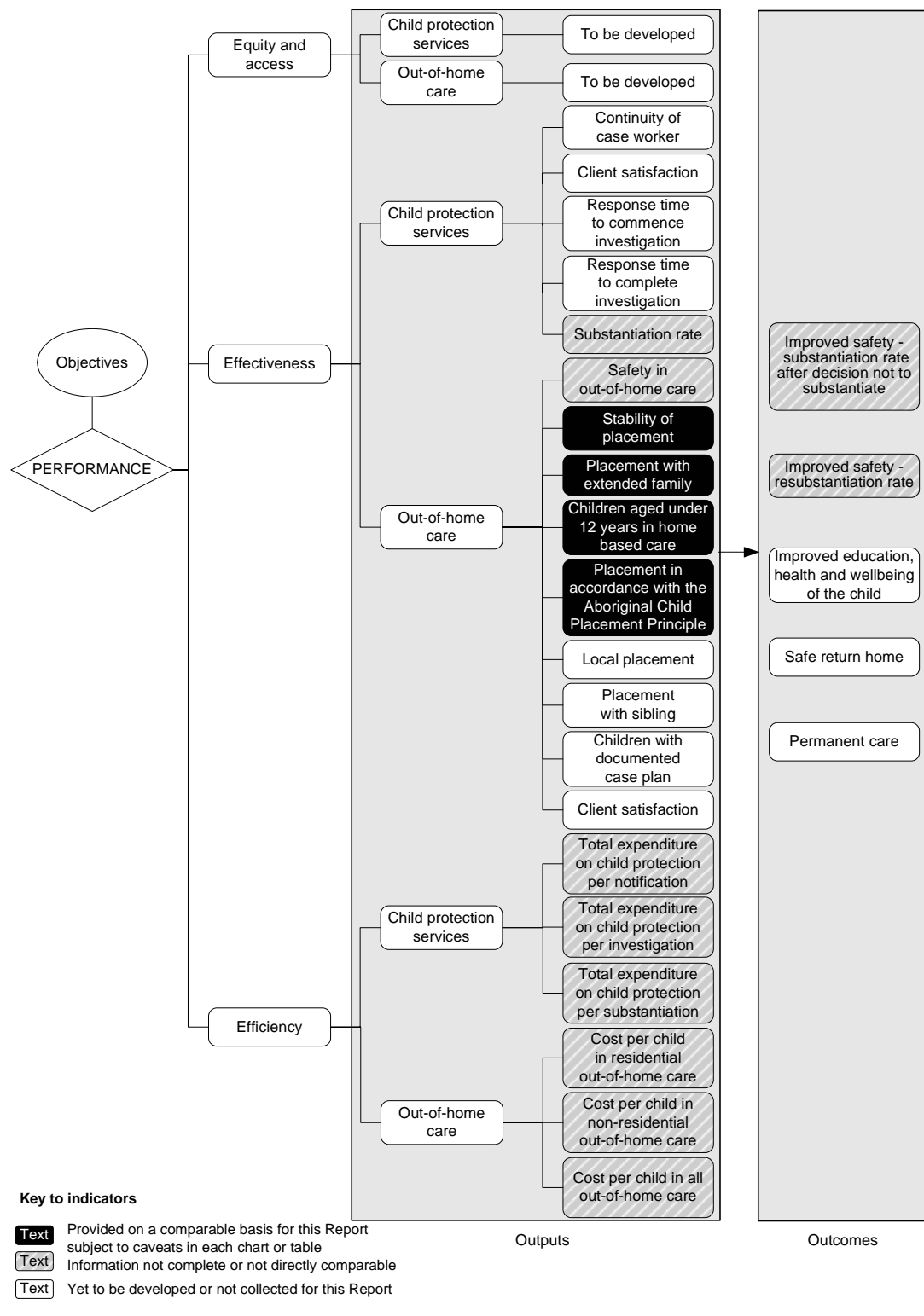
Equity and access

The Steering Committee has identified equity and access as a key area for further development in future reports (box 15.4).

Box 15.4 Access to child protection and out-of-home care services by different groups

These will be output indicators of governments' objective to ensure that all clients have fair and equitable access to services on the basis of relative need and available resources. These indicators are under development and data are currently not collected.

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



Effectiveness

Child protection services — continuity of case worker

The Steering Committee has identified ‘continuity of case worker’ as an output indicator of the effectiveness of child protection services (box 15.5). No data on this indicator were available for the 2006 Report.

Box 15.5 Continuity of case worker

‘Continuity of case worker’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to ensure child protection services are delivered in an effective manner. The turnover of workers is a frequent criticism of the quality of child protection services. Effective intervention requires a productive working relationship between the worker and the child and family.

Data are currently not collected for this indicator. The Steering Committee has identified this indicator for development and reporting in future.

Child protection services — client satisfaction

The Steering Committee has identified ‘client satisfaction’ as an output indicator of the effectiveness of child protection services (box 15.6).

Box 15.6 Client satisfaction

Client satisfaction is an indicator of governments’ objective to provide high quality services that meet the needs of recipients.

Data are currently not collected for this indicator. The Steering Committee has identified this indicator for development and reporting in future.

Box 15.7 provides examples of steps taken in seven jurisdictions to monitor, assess and promote client satisfaction in relation to child protection and out-of-home care.

Box 15.7 **Developments in client satisfaction**

- NSW* An evaluation of the Early Intervention Program is planned. This program targets vulnerable families with children aged 0–8 years. A sample of families and children receiving services will be surveyed during the evaluation to ascertain whether they are satisfied the program is meeting their needs.
- Vic* A survey of child protection clients and families in 2001 was designed to gather information on the clients' and families' experience of child protection, in order to enhance future service delivery, and to improve client and family outcomes. The survey findings identified a range of specific strengths in child protection practice, including that in the majority of cases, child protection intervention improved the safety and life circumstances of young people. The survey also identified a range of areas for practice improvement.
- Qld* CREATE is currently funded to engage a sample of children and young people through surveys and activities to assess how child protection practices are affecting them. The results of these will be followed by workshops that present findings to staff and suggest strategies for improvement. New practices are also being introduced that more actively involve children in case planning, for example, seeking feedback from children and young people on their satisfaction with family group meetings process and outcomes.
- WA* Children and young people provided with leaving care services are surveyed on a range of matters including their service plan, satisfaction with the service, satisfaction with the time it took to provide the service and the extent to which the young person and his/her family were provided with care and safety.
- Tas* A 2004 survey targeted at children, young people, and families involved in Family Group Conferencing determined that this program is valued by clients of all ages and supported the continued use of external facilitators to ensure independence in the conferencing process. An out-of-home care consultation process found feedback from young people with out-of-home care experience to be critical in identifying focal points for service and system improvements.
- ACT* CREATE released a report in July 2004 based on qualitative interviews of children and young people in out-of-home care in the ACT. This report recommended the development of a charter of rights for children and young people in care in the ACT. The Government will develop a charter in consultation with children and young people.
- NT* A participation survey of children and young people in care was funded in 2005 and an evaluation of case worker attitudes was also undertaken. As a result, it is expected that future out-of-home care training for staff will be undertaken in order to increase the participation of young people in care planning.

Source: State and Territory governments (unpublished).

Child protection services — response time to commence investigation

The Steering Committee has identified ‘response time to commence investigation’ as an output indicator of the effectiveness of child protection services (box 15.8).

Box 15.8 Response time to commence investigation

‘Response time to commence investigation’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to minimise the risk of harm to the child by responding to notifications of possible child protection incidents and commencing investigations in a timely manner.

Data are currently not collected on this indicator. The Steering Committee has identified this indicator for development and reporting in future.

Child protection services — response time to complete investigation

The Steering Committee has identified ‘response time to complete investigation’ as an output indicator of the effectiveness of child protection services (box 15.9).

Box 15.9 Response time to complete investigation

‘Response time to complete investigation’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to minimise the risk of harm to the child by responding to notifications of possible child protection incidents and completing investigations in a timely manner.

Data are currently not collected on this indicator. The Steering Committee has identified this indicator for development and reporting in future.

Child protection services — substantiation rate

‘Substantiation rate’ is included as an output indicator of effectiveness of child protection services (box 15.10).

Box 15.10 Substantiation rate

The 'substantiation rate' is included as an indicator of governments' objective to target investigations to those notifications where a substantive child abuse/neglect incident has occurred. It also provides an indication of the extent to which government has avoided the human and financial costs of an investigation where no harm has occurred.

This indicator is defined as the proportion of finalised investigations where harm or risk of harm was substantiated.

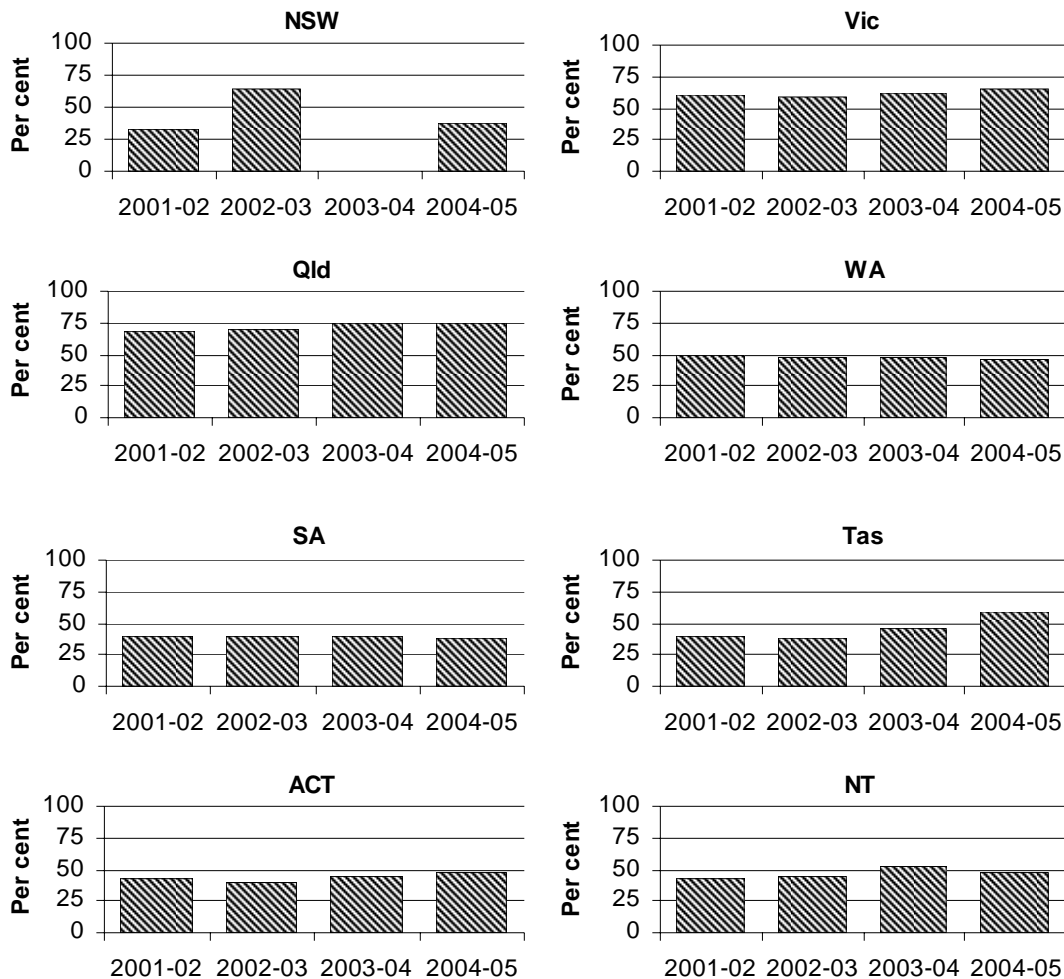
The substantiation rate should be neither 'very high' nor 'very low'. A very low substantiation rate may suggest that notifications and investigations are not accurately targeted at appropriate cases, with the undesirable consequence of distress to families and undermining the chances that families will voluntarily seek support. Very low substantiation rates may also indicate that the scarce resources of the child protection system are being overwhelmed and that screening should be tightened. A very high substantiation rate may indicate that either some appropriate cases are being overlooked at notification and investigation or that the criteria for substantiation are bringing 'lower risk' families into the statutory system.

Finalised investigations that were substantiated may fluctuate because of policy, funding and practice change, such as better targeting of investigative resources, the impact of mandatory reporting or other factors such as increased community awareness and willingness to notify suspected instances of child abuse, neglect or harm.

Data that are comparable across jurisdictions are not available for this indicator because definitions of substantiation vary across jurisdictions, but data are comparable within each jurisdiction over time unless otherwise stated (figure 15.4).

Due to the difficulties in identifying the source of annual fluctuations in substantiation rates, changes over time within jurisdictions are more appropriately used to prompt further analysis, rather than used as definitive performance information.

Figure 15.4 Proportion of finalised child protection investigations that were substantiated^{a, b}



^a Data are not comparable across jurisdictions because definitions of substantiation vary significantly. Consequently, rates should not be compared across jurisdictions. ^b NSW child protection data are not comparable over time because of computer system changes in 2002-03 and 2003-04. NSW was able to provide limited data for 2003-04 due to the introduction of its current new client information system.

Sources: AIHW Child protection notifications, investigations and substantiations, Australia data collection (unpublished); tables 15A.33, 15A.50, 15A.67, 15A.84, 15A.101, 15A.118, 15A.135 and 15A.152.

Out-of-home care — safety in out-of-home care

‘Safety in out-of-home care’ is included as an output indicator of effectiveness. (box 15.11).

Box 15.11 Safety in out-of-home care

'Safety in out-of-home care' is included as an indicator of governments' objective to provide children who are under the care of the State with a safe home environment. The indicator reflects the safety of clients in care situations.

This indicator is defined as the proportion of substantiations where those responsible for harm or risk were carers or other people living in households providing out-of-home care.

A low proportion of substantiations is desirable.

Five jurisdictions (Qld, WA, SA, Tas and ACT) provided 2004-05 data on the incidence of child protection substantiations where the person believed responsible for harm or risk to the child was either the carer or another person living in the household providing out-of-home care. WA provided data on abuse by foster carers or workers in placement services, but not abuse by others living in the household (table 15A.20).

Out-of-home care — stability of placement

'Stability of placement' is included as an output indicator of effectiveness (box 15.12).

Box 15.12 Stability of placement

'Stability of placement' is an indicator of governments' objective to provide high quality services that meet the needs of recipients on the basis of relative need and available resources.

This indicator is defined as the number of placements that a child has had during a period of continuous out-of-home care.

A low number of child placements (one or two) per period of care is desirable, but must be balanced against other placement quality indicators, such as placements in compliance with the Aboriginal Child Placement Principle, local placements and placements with siblings.

Children may have multiple placements for good reasons, (for example, an initial placement followed by a longer term placement) or it may be desirable to change placements to achieve better child-family compatibility. It is not desirable for a child to stay in an unsatisfactory or unsupportive placement. Also, older children are more likely to have multiple placements as they move towards independence and voluntarily seek alternate placements.

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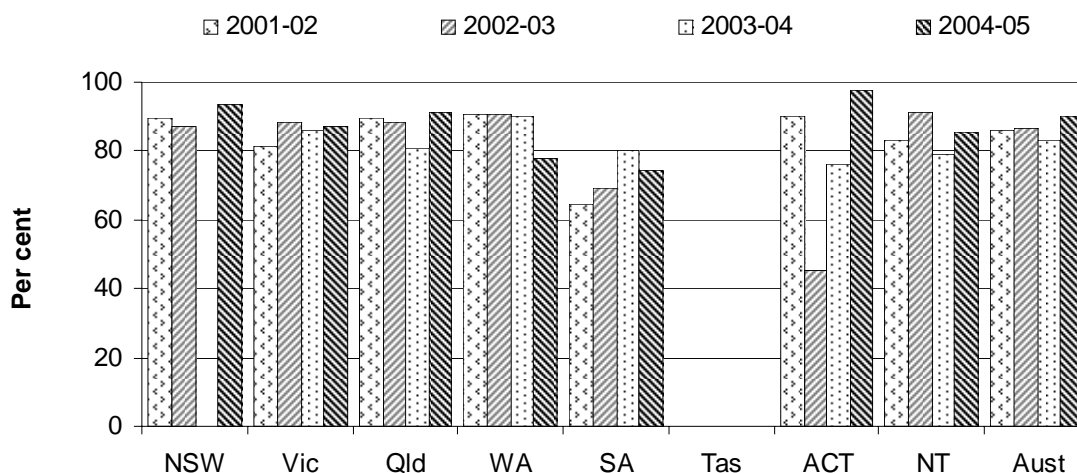
Box 15.12 (Continued)

Data are collected only for children who are on orders and who exit care during the reporting period. There are limitations to counting placement stability using an exit cohort rather than entry cohort longitudinal data, because the sample is biased to children from recent entry cohorts with relatively short stays in care, and these children are likely to have experienced fewer placements.

For children placed away from their family for protective reasons, stability of placement is an important indicator of service quality, particularly for those children who require long term placements. Data were collected on the number of different placements for children on a care and protection order who exited out-of-home care in 2004-05. Data were grouped according to the length of time in care (less than 12 months and 12 months or more).

Nationally, for all jurisdictions able to provide data, 90.3 per cent of the children on a care and protection order who exited care after less than 12 months experienced only one or two placements in 2004-05. This proportion varied across jurisdictions (figure 15.5).

Figure 15.5 Proportion of children on a care and protection order exiting care after less than 12 months, who had 1 or 2 placements^{a, b, c, d}

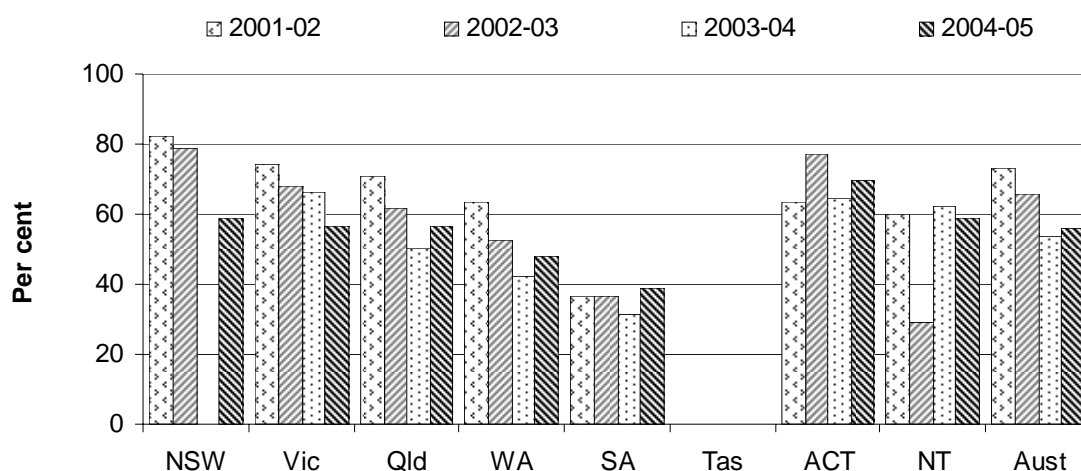


^a Data refer to children exiting care during the relevant financial year. ^b Refer to footnotes in the source tables for information about what each jurisdiction's data include. ^c NSW child protection data from 2002-03 onwards are not comparable with data for previous years. NSW was able to provide limited data for 2003-04 due to the introduction of a new client information system. ^d Data for Tasmania were not available.

Source: AIHW Children in out-of-home care, Australia data collection (unpublished); tables 15A.19, 15A.42, 15A.59, 15A.76, 15A.93, 15A.110, 15A.127, 15A.144 and 15A.161.

Across jurisdictions, children who had been in out-of-home care longer tended to have had more placements. The proportion of children exiting care in 2004-05 after 12 months or more who had experienced one or two placements (for all jurisdictions where these data were available) was 55.9 per cent nationally but varied across jurisdictions (figure 15.6).

Figure 15.6 Proportion of children on a care and protection order exiting care after 12 months or more, who had 1 or 2 placements^{a, b, c, d}



^a Data refer to children exiting care during the relevant financial year. ^b Refer to footnotes in the source table for information about what each jurisdiction's data include. ^c NSW child protection data from 2002-03 are not comparable with data for previous years. NSW was able to provide limited data for 2003-04 due to the introduction of a new client information system. ^d Data for Tasmania were not available.

Source: AIHW Children in out-of-home care, Australia data collection (unpublished); tables 15A.19, 15A.42, 15A.59, 15A.76, 15A.93, 15A.110, 15A.127, 15A.144 and 15A.161.

Out-of-home care — placement with extended family

'Placement with extended family' is an output indicator of effectiveness. (box 15.13).

Box 15.13 Placement with extended family

'Placement with extended family' is an indicator of governments' objective to provide services that meet the needs of the recipients on the basis of relative need and available resources. Placing children with their relatives or kin is generally the preferred out-of-home care placement option. This option is generally associated with better long term outcomes due to increased continuity, familiarity and stability for the child. Relatives are more likely to have or form long term emotional bonds with the child. Placement with familiar people can help to overcome the loss of attachment and belonging that can occur when children are in placed out-of-home care.

This indicator is defined as the proportion of all children in out-of-home care who are placed with relatives or kin who receive government financial assistance to care for that child.

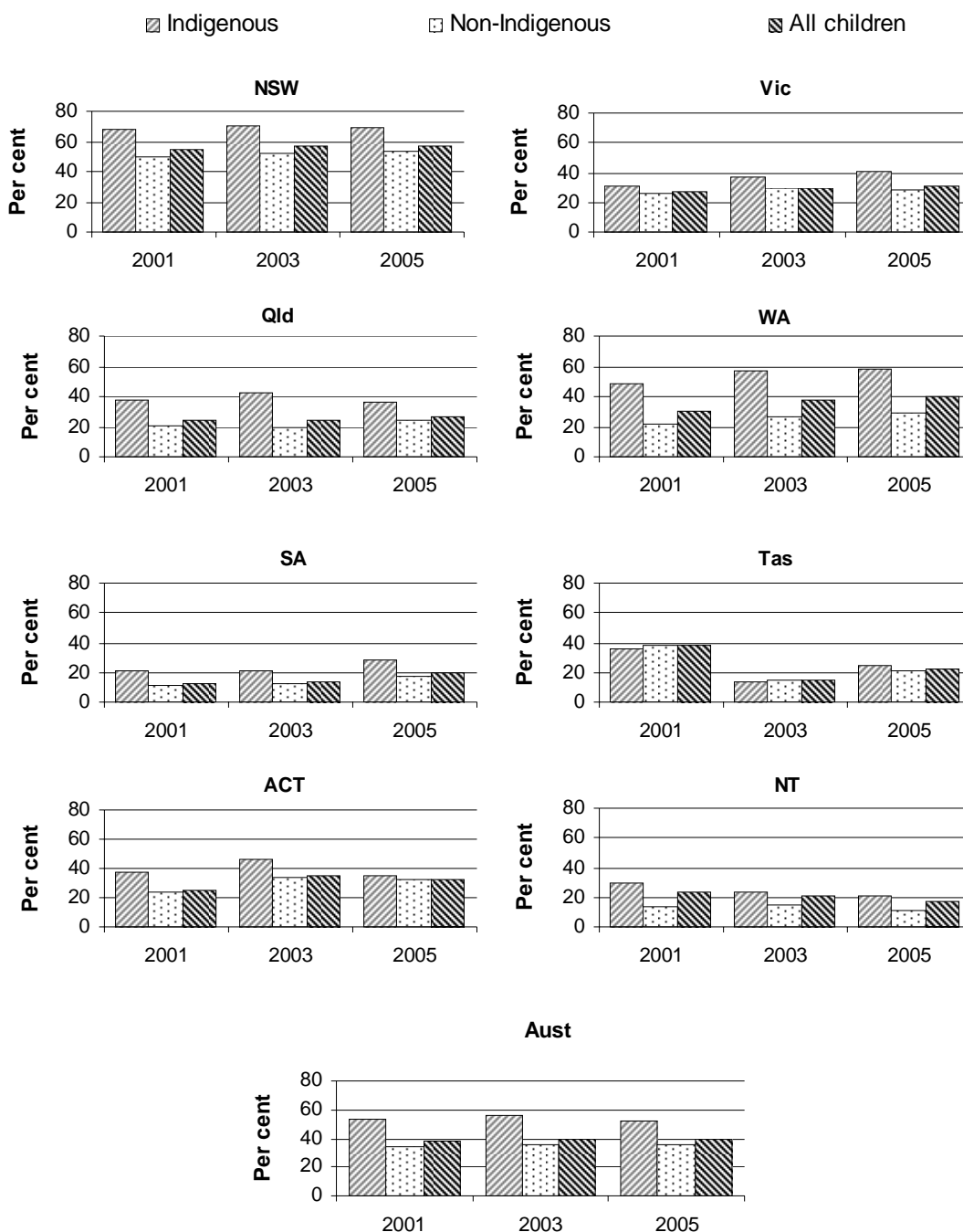
A reasonably high rate for this indicator is considered desirable.

This needs to be considered with other factors in the placement decision.

Placements with extended family may not always be the best option. Long standing family dynamics may undermine the pursuit of case goals such as reunification, and the possibility of intergenerational abuse needs to be considered. In addition, depending on the individual circumstances of children, it may be more important to have a local placement that enables continuity at school, for example, rather than a distant placement with relatives.

The proportion of children placed with relatives or kin at 30 June 2005 was greater for Indigenous children than for non-Indigenous children in all jurisdictions (figure 15.7).

Figure 15.7 Proportion of children in out-of-home care placed with relatives/kin, by Indigenous status, 30 June 2005



Source: AIHW Children in out-of-home care, Australia data collection (unpublished); tables 15A.16, 15A.39, 15A.56, 15A.73, 15A.90, 15A.107, 15A.124, 15A.141 and 15A.158.

Out-of-home care — children aged under 12 years in home-based care

‘Children aged under 12 years in home-based care’ is an output indicator of effectiveness (box 15.14).

Box 15.14 Children aged under 12 years in home-based care

'Children aged under 12 years in home-based care' is an indicator of governments' objective to provide services which meet the needs of the recipients. Placing children in home-based care is generally considered to be in their best interests, particularly for younger children. Children will generally make better developmental progress (and have more ready access to normal childhood experiences) in family settings rather than in residential care.

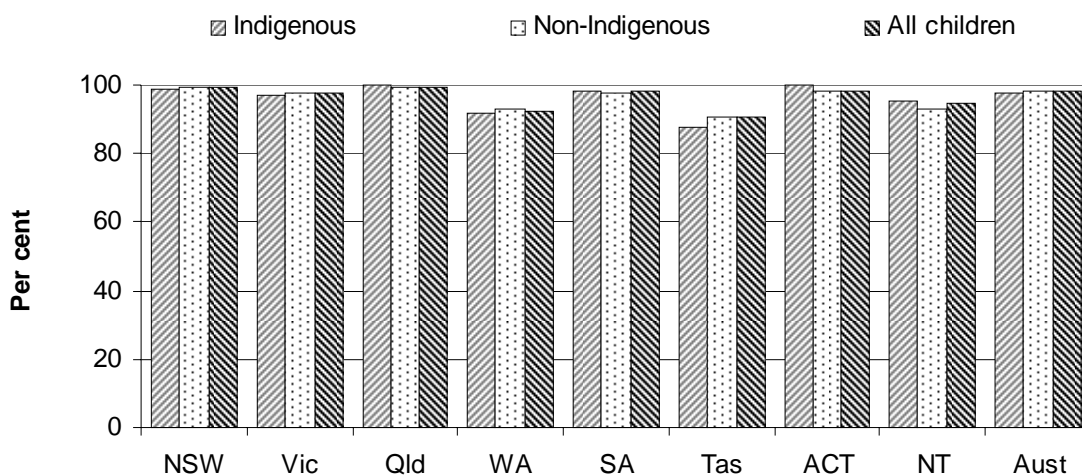
This indicator is defined as the number of children less than 12 years of age placed in home-based care divided by the total number of children under 12 years in out-of-home care.

A high rate for this indicator is considered desirable.

This indicator should be interpreted in conjunction with other placement indicators.

The proportion of all children aged under 12 years in care who were placed in home-based care (excluding family group homes) at 30 June 2005 was 98.2 per cent nationally and exceeded 90 per cent in all jurisdictions. In all jurisdictions the proportion of Indigenous children aged under 12 years who were placed in home-based care was broadly similar to that of non-Indigenous children (figure 15.8).

Figure 15.8 Proportion of children aged under 12 years in out-of-home care and in a home based placement, by Indigenous status, 30 June 2005^a



^a Family group homes are not classified as being home based care.

Source: AIHW (unpublished) Children in out-of-home care, Australia data collection; table 15A.18.

Out-of-home care — placement in accordance with the Aboriginal Child Placement Principle

‘Placement in accordance with the Aboriginal Child Placement Principle’ is an output indicator of effectiveness (box 15.15).

According to the Aboriginal Child Placement Principle (NSW Law Reform Commission 1997), the following hierarchy or placement preference should be pursued in protecting the safety and welfare of Indigenous children:

- placement with the child’s extended family (which includes Indigenous and non-Indigenous relatives/kin)
- placement within the child’s Indigenous community
- placement with other Indigenous people.

All jurisdictions have adopted this principle, either in legislation or policy.

Box 15.15 Placement in accordance with the Aboriginal Child Placement Principle

‘Placement in accordance with the Aboriginal Child Placement Principle’ is included as an indicator of governments’ objective to protect the safety and welfare of Indigenous children while maintaining the cultural ties and identity of Indigenous children in out-of-home care. Placing Indigenous children in circumstances consistent with the Aboriginal Child Placement Principle is generally considered to be in their best interests.

This indicator is defined as the number of Indigenous children placed with the child’s extended family, Indigenous community or other Indigenous people, divided by the total number of Indigenous children in out-of-home care. Data are reported separately for children placed (i) with extended family, (ii) with other Indigenous carer, and (iii) not placed with extended family or other Indigenous carer.

A high proportion of children placed in accordance with the principle is desirable.

This is one factor among many that must be considered in the placement decision.

The proportion of Indigenous children in out-of-home care at 30 June 2005 who were placed in accordance with the principle varies across jurisdictions (figure 15.9).

Figure 15.9 Placement of Indigenous children in out-of-home care, 30 June 2005^{a, b, c}



^a Excludes Indigenous children living independently and those whose living arrangements were unknown. ^b 'Placed with other Indigenous carer' includes those living in Indigenous residential care. ^c Data for Tasmania and the ACT relate to a small number of Indigenous children (78 and 60 respectively) in care at 30 June 2005.

Source: AIHW Children in out-of-home care, Australia data collection (unpublished); table 15A.17.

Out-of-home care — local placement

The Steering Committee has identified 'local placement' as an output indicator of the effectiveness of out-of-home care services (box 15.16).

Box 15.16 Local placement

Local placement is an indicator of governments' objective to provide services which meet the needs of the recipients.

This indicator is defined as the proportion of children attending the same school after entering care. Data will be provided for 3 and 12 months after entering care.

A placement close to where a child lived prior to entering out-of-home care is believed to enhance the stability, familiarity and security of the child. It enables some elements of the child's life to remain unchanged (for example, they can continue attending the same school and retain their friendship network). It may also facilitate family contact if the child's parents continue to live nearby.

(Continued on next page)

Box 15.16 (Continued)

This indicator should be balanced against other quality indicators. This is one factor among many that must be considered in the placement decision. For example, placement with a sibling or relative might preclude a local placement. Also, a child might move from a primary to a secondary school.

A high rate of 'local placement' is desirable.

Data on this indicator were not available for the 2006 Report.

Out-of-home care — placement with sibling

The Steering Committee has identified 'placement with sibling' as an output indicator of the effectiveness of out-of-home care services (box 15.17).

Box 15.17 Placement with sibling

'Placement with sibling' is an indicator of governments' objective to provide services which meet the needs of the recipients.

Placement of siblings together promotes stability and continuity. It is a long standing placement principle that siblings should be placed together, where possible, in the interests of their emotional wellbeing. Children are likely to be more secure and have a sense of belonging within their family when placed with siblings.

This indicator is defined as the proportion of children who are on finalised orders and in out-of-home care at 30 June who have siblings also on orders and in out-of-home care, who are placed with at least one of their siblings.

A high rate of placement with siblings is desirable.

This is one factor among many that must be considered in the placement decision. In circumstances of sibling abuse, or when a particular child in a family has been singled out as the target for abuse or neglect, keeping siblings together might not be appropriate.

Data on this indicator were not available for the 2006 Report.

Out-of-home care — children with documented case plan

The Steering Committee has identified 'children with documented case plan' as an output indicator of the effectiveness of out-of-home care services (box 15.18).

Box 15.18 Children with documented case plan

'Children with documented case plan' is an indicator of governments' objective to provide services that meet the needs of the recipients.

Case planning is essential to structured and purposeful work to support children's optimal development. Case plans outline intervention goals such as improved parent-child attachments, reunification or other forms of permanency, and set out the means to achieve these goals, such as frequency of family contact and any remedial or special services considered appropriate for the individual child. Case plans also allow for the monitoring of a child's time in care.

This indicator is defined as the proportion of children on a finalised guardianship or custody order and in out-of-home care who have a documented case plan.

A high rate is desirable because all children should have a case plan. The quality of the case plan must also be considered. The mere existence of a case plan does not guarantee that appropriate case work is occurring that meets the child's needs.

Data on this indicator were not available for the 2006 Report.

Out-of-home care — client satisfaction

The Steering Committee has identified 'client satisfaction' as an output indicator of the effectiveness of out-of-home care services (box 15.19).

Box 15.19 Client satisfaction

Client satisfaction is an output indicator of governments' objective to provide high quality services that meet the needs of recipients.

Data are currently not collected on this indicator. The Steering Committee has identified this indicator for development and reporting in future.

Some information on jurisdictions' development of initiatives which may assist to measure client satisfaction in the future are included on pages 15.14-15.

Efficiency

Understanding the efficiency of the child protection systems that they administer helps State and Territory governments to identify the key cost drivers of their systems and to weigh the efficacy of options for addressing child protection issues.

Challenges in reporting efficiency for child protection systems

Reporting comparable and meaningful efficiency data for child protection services is problematic for a number of reasons, including:

- *different systems and priorities across jurisdictions* — child protection systems in Australia have evolved independently under the auspices of State and Territory governments (section 15.1). This has resulted in variations in the processes and emphases placed on different service delivery paradigms (the different approaches to diversionary options, for example, see figure 15.1)
- *limitations of current information systems* — in most jurisdictions, it is difficult to identify explicit resources expended on child protection services, out-of-home care services and other support services for families. This is due in part to the historic structure of information systems and the embedding of the government agencies responsible for child protection issues within larger community services departments. Table 15A.4 identifies the level of consistency in expenditure data across jurisdictions.

In response to these difficulties, in April 2002, the Review initiated a project to develop a method for annual reporting of efficiency data for a national framework of protection and support pathways (box 15.20).

Box 15.20 The pathways project

The pathways project developed and tested a model that will ultimately allow jurisdictions to calculate more meaningful, comparable and robust efficiency measures (the 'pathways method'). The model is based on a top-down application of the activity-based costing method. A set of eight national pathways has been developed as a high level representation of the services that a protection and support client could receive in any jurisdiction. Each pathway consists of common activity groups for which an operational and non-operational resource allocation can be made. These activity groups act as the 'building blocks' for each of the pathways. The aggregate cost of each activity group within the pathway will allow for the unit cost of an individual pathway to be determined. The activity groups are:

- receipt and assessment of initial information about a potential protection and support issue
- provision of generic/non-intensive family support services
- provision of intensive family support services
- secondary information gathering and assessment
- provision of short term protective intervention and coordination services

(Continued on next page)

Box 15.20 (Continued)

- seeking a court order
- provision of longer term protective intervention, support and coordination services
- provision of out-of-home care services.

Before reporting against the activity groups can be undertaken with confidence, further refinement of activity group definitions and counting rules is required. Development work, including further data testing in these areas will continue. Implementation of the model has the potential to significantly improve the quality of national reporting of protection and support services efficiency measures.

Source: SCRCSSP (2003).

Refinement of counting rules, data testing and changes to information systems will be necessary before full reporting is possible for all jurisdictions. Partial reporting against the framework is anticipated for the 2007 Report.

Child protection services proxy efficiency indicators

Proxy indicators are included as output indicators of efficiency for child protection services (box 15.21).

Box 15.21 Child protection services efficiency indicators

Three child protection efficiency measures are included as output (efficiency) indicators of governments' objective to maximise the benefit to the community through the efficient use of taxpayer resources: 'total expenditure on child protection per notification', 'total expenditure on child protection per investigation', and 'total expenditure on child protection per substantiation'.

These indicators are defined, respectively, as:

- the total expenditure on all child protection activities divided by the number of notifications
- the total expenditure on all child protection activities divided by the number of investigations
- the total expenditure on all child protection activities divided by the number of substantiations.

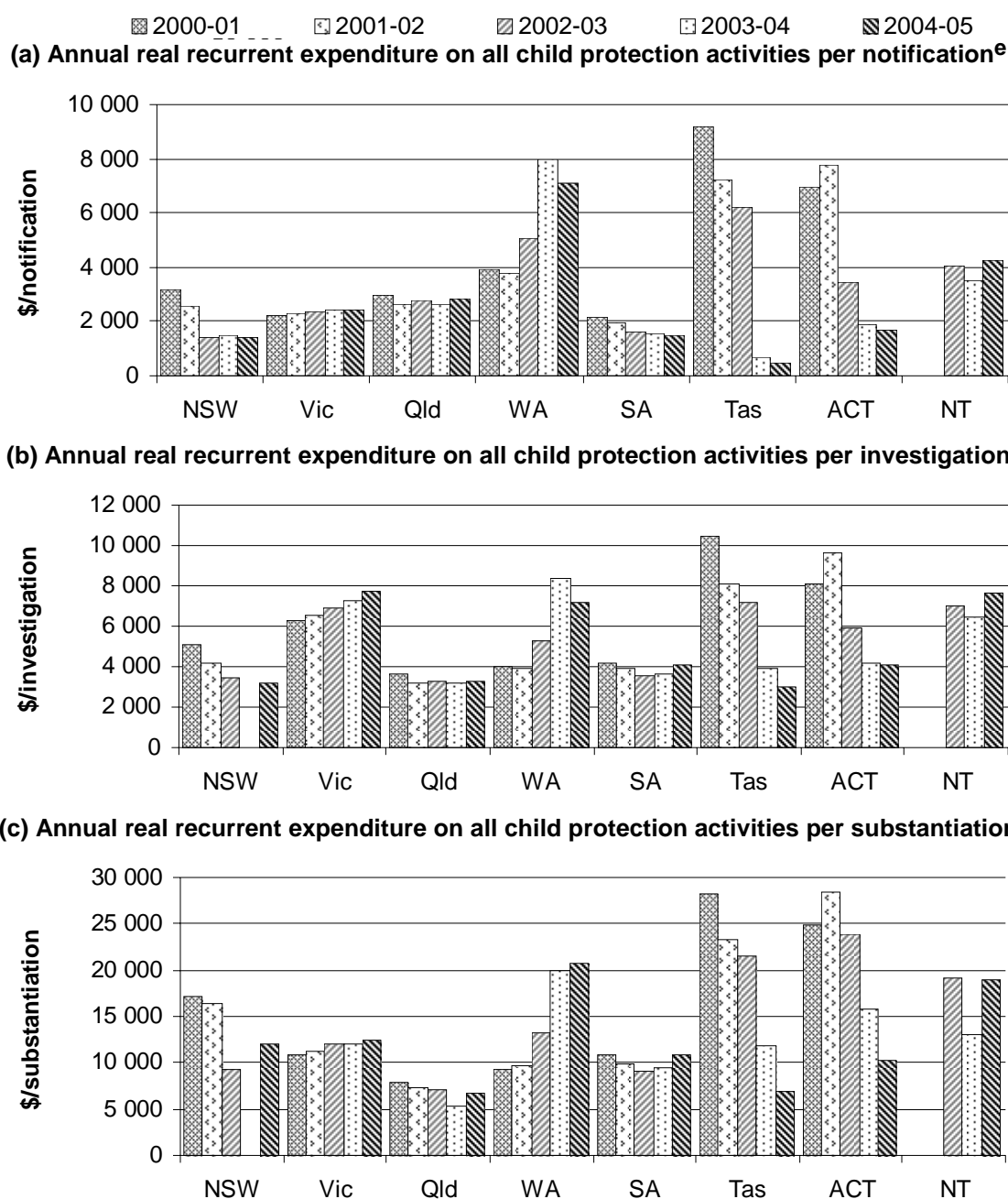
Lower expenditure per notification/investigation/substantiation suggests more efficient services but may indicate lower quality or different service delivery models.

These indicators do not represent unit costs and need to be interpreted with care. Also, they cannot be added together to determine overall child protection efficiency indicators.

These measures are imperfect proxy indicators. They are included as interim measures only, and will be replaced by a more robust method under development. Better efficiency indicators would relate expenditure on particular child protection activities to a measure of output of those activities. Work is in progress to develop an activity-based costing method that will allow this type of reporting from existing information systems.

Total expenditure on child protection per notification, child protection per investigation and child protection per substantiation from 2000-01 to 2004-05 varied between jurisdictions. Some jurisdictions were unable to provide data for all years (figure 15.10).

Figure 15.10 Child protection efficiency indicators (2004-05 dollars)^{a, b, c, d}



^a Real expenditure based on ABS gross domestic product price deflator (2004-05 = 100) (table A.26).

^b These data cannot be interpreted as the 'expenditure per notification', 'expenditure per investigation' or 'expenditure per substantiation' because each is based on the total expenditure of all child protection activities. Differences across jurisdictions reflect the quantity of the three activities rather than a difference in unit costs. ^c NSW child protection data from 2002-03 onwards are not comparable with data for previous years. NSW was able to provide limited data for 2003-04 due to the introduction of a new client information system. ^d NT was unable to provide data for 2000-01 and 2001-02. ^e Information for Tasmania from 2003-04 should not be compared with previous years because of a change in recording practices that has been adopted as a result of centralisation of the intake service. Now every call regarding a child is recorded as a notification, whereas previously, child protection workers made the decision locally about whether the call was a notification based on the risk to the child.

Source: State and Territory governments (unpublished); table 15A.2.

Out-of-home care proxy efficiency indicators

Proxy indicators are included as output indicators of efficiency for out-of-home care efficiency (box 15.22).

Box 15.22 Out-of-home care efficiency indicators

Three out-of-home care efficiency measures are included as output (efficiency) indicators of governments' objective to maximise the benefit to the community through the efficient use of taxpayer resources: 'cost per child in residential out-of-home care', 'cost per child in non-residential out-of-home care', and 'cost per child in all out-of-home care'.

These indicators are defined respectively as:

- the total annual expenditure on residential out-of-home care divided by the number of children in residential out-of-home care at 30 June
- the total annual expenditure on non-residential out-of-home care divided by the number of children in non-residential out-of-home care at 30 June
- the total annual expenditure on all out-of-home care divided by the number of children in all out-of-home care at 30 June

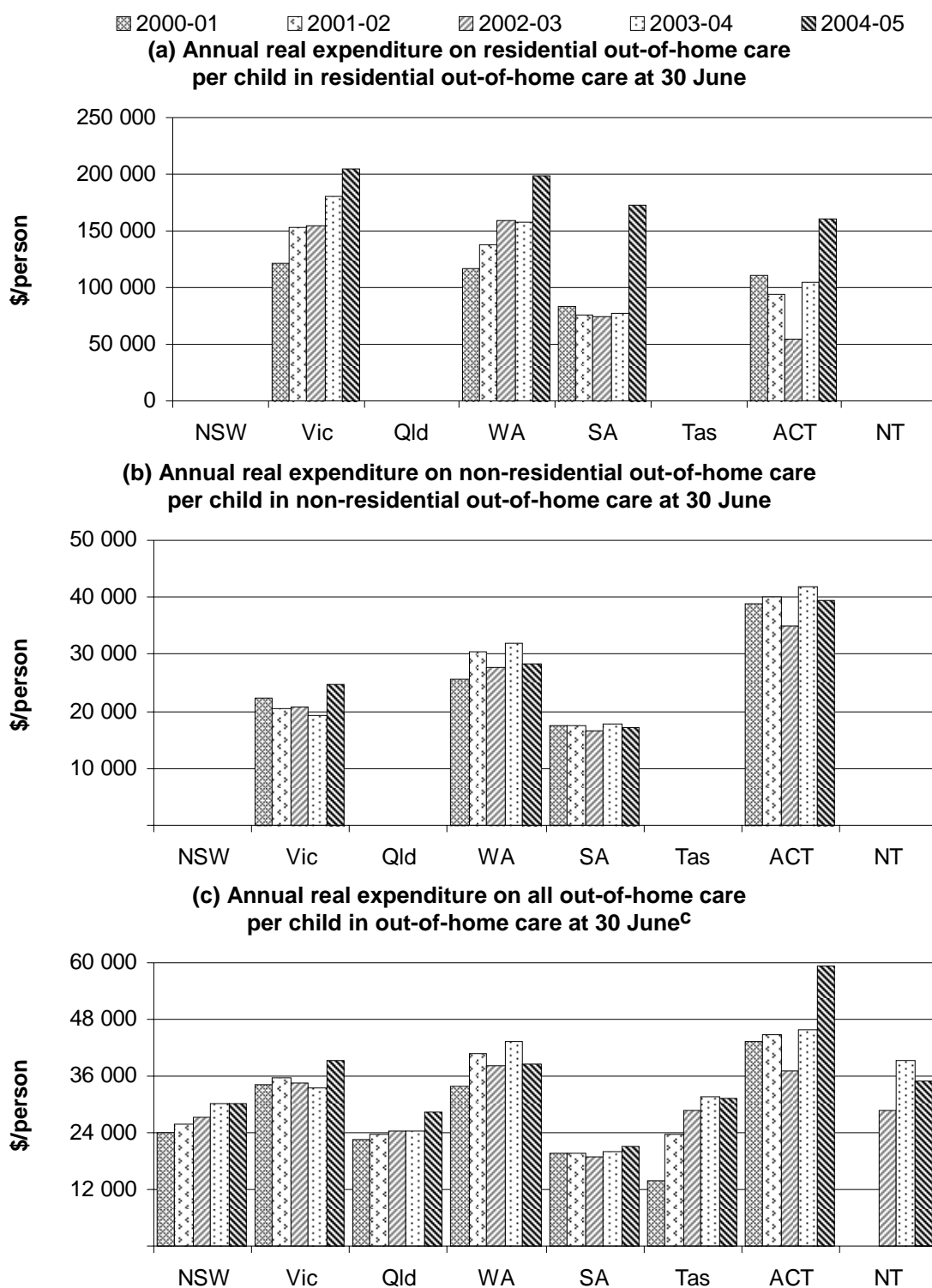
Low expenditure per child in care suggests more efficient services but may also indicate lower service quality.

These indicators should be interpreted with care because they do not represent unit cost measures. Expenditure per child in care at 30 June overstates the cost per child because significantly more children are in care during a year than at a point in time. In addition, the indicator does not reflect the length of time that a child spends in care.

Better efficiency indicators would relate expenditure on particular out-of-home care activities to a measure of output of those activities. Work is currently in progress to develop an activity based costing method which will allow this type of reporting from existing information systems.

Victoria, WA, SA and the ACT were able to separate expenditure on out-of-home care into residential care and non-residential care and this annual expenditure to 30 June for 2000-01 to 2004-05 varied across jurisdictions (figures 15.11a and 15.11b). All jurisdictions provided data on total expenditure on out-of-home care per child in care to 30 June for 2000-01 to 2004-05, which varied across jurisdictions (figure 15.11c).

Figure 15.11 Out-of-home care efficiency indicators (2004-05 dollars)^{a, b}



^a Real expenditure based on ABS gross domestic product price deflator (2004-05 = 100) (table A.26). ^b ACT data are affected by the higher subsidy levels for carers, higher award costs in the ACT due to a more recently negotiated agreement, and the effect of a small number of children in care with special high support needs. ^c NT were unable to provide data for 2000-01 and 2001-02.

Source: State and Territory governments (unpublished); table 15A.3.

Outcomes

Improved safety — substantiation rate after decision not to substantiate

‘Substantiation rate after decision not to substantiate’ is an outcome indicator of child protection and out-of-home care services (box 15.23). This indicator partly reveals the extent to which an investigation has not succeeded in identifying the risk of harm to a child who is subsequently the subject of substantiated harm.

Box 15.23 Improved safety — substantiation rate after decision not to substantiate

‘Improved safety — substantiation after decision not to substantiate’ is an outcome indicator of governments’ objective to reduce the risk of harm to children by appropriately assessing notifications of possible child protection incidents. It also provides a measure of the adequacy of intervention offered to children in terms of protecting them from further harm.

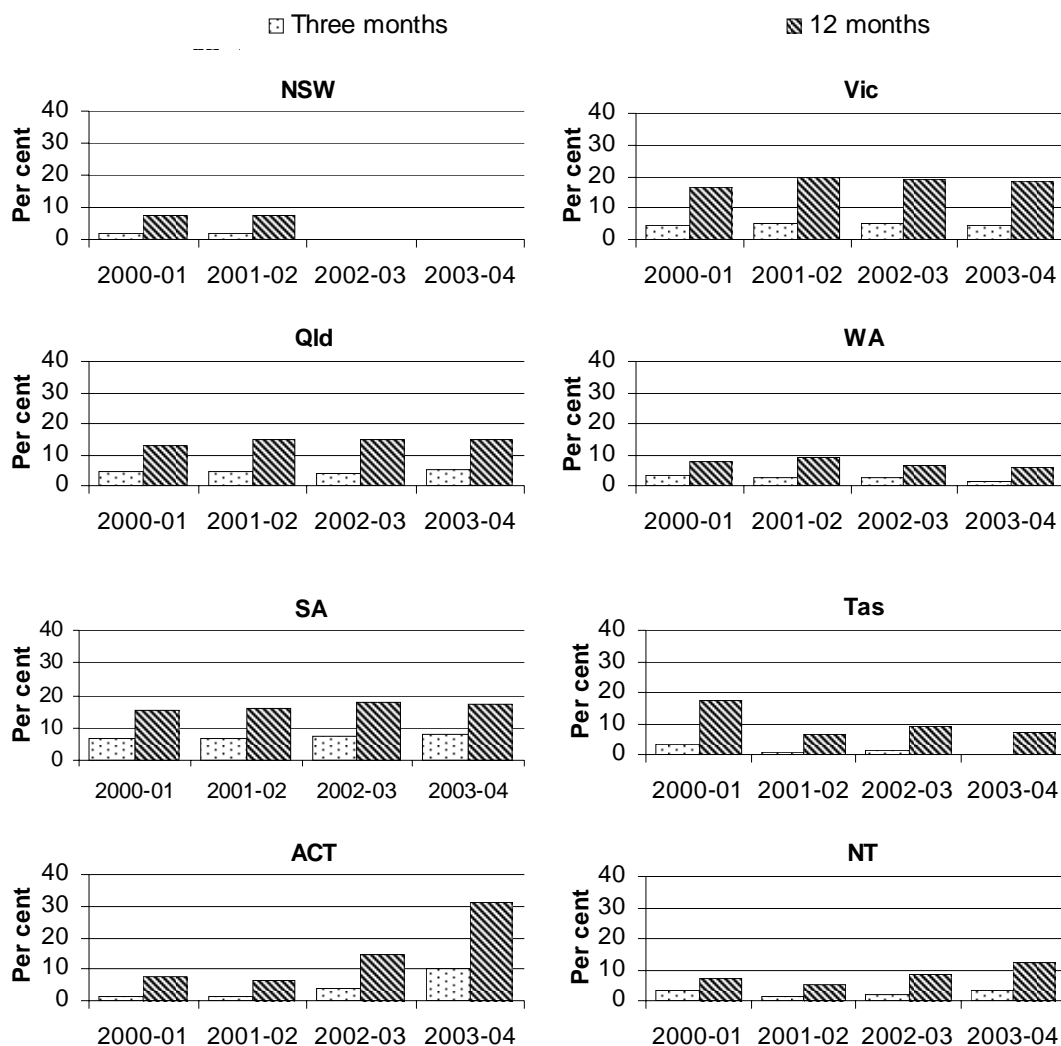
This indicator is defined as the proportion of children who were the subject of an investigation in the previous financial year that led to a decision not to substantiate, and who were later the subject of a substantiation within three or 12 months of the initial decision not to substantiate.

A low rate for this indicator is desirable.

Reported results may be affected by the finalisation of investigations, factors beyond the control of child protection services, or a change in circumstances after the initial decision not to substantiate was made. A demonstrable risk of harm might not have existed in the first instance. In addition, this indicator does not distinguish between subsequent substantiations which are related to the initial notification (that is, the same source of risk of harm), and those which are unrelated to the initial notification (that is, a different source of risk of harm).

Data that are comparable across jurisdictions are not available for this indicator because definitions of substantiations vary across jurisdictions. Data are comparable within each jurisdiction over time until 2002-03. Data for 2003-04 are based on a different counting rule to previous years (figure 15.12).

Figure 15.12 Improved safety — resubstantiation rate within 3 and/or 12 months after a decision not to substantiate^{a, b, c}



^a Data are not comparable across jurisdictions because definitions of substantiation vary significantly. Consequently, rates cannot be compared across jurisdictions. ^b NSW was able to provide limited data for 2003-04 due to the introduction of a new client information system. As this indicator is calculated using two years of data, 2002-03 rates are also not available for NSW. ^c The counting rule for this indicator has been changed since previous Reports, which may have resulted in a lowering of the rate for some jurisdictions in 2003-04. Therefore care should be taken when comparing 2003-04 with previous years.

Source: AIHW Child protection notifications, investigations and substantiations, Australia (unpublished); tables 15A.31, 15A.48, 15A.65, 15A.82, 15A.99, 15A.116, 15A.133 and 15A.150.

Improved safety — resubstantiation rate

The ‘resubstantiation rate’ is an outcome indicator of child protection and out-of-home care services (box 15.24).

Box 15.24 Improved safety — resubstantiation rate

‘Resubstantiation rate’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to reduce the risk of harm and to prevent the recurrence of abuse and neglect or harm to children. This indicator also partly reveals the extent to which intervention by child protection services has succeeded in preventing further harm.

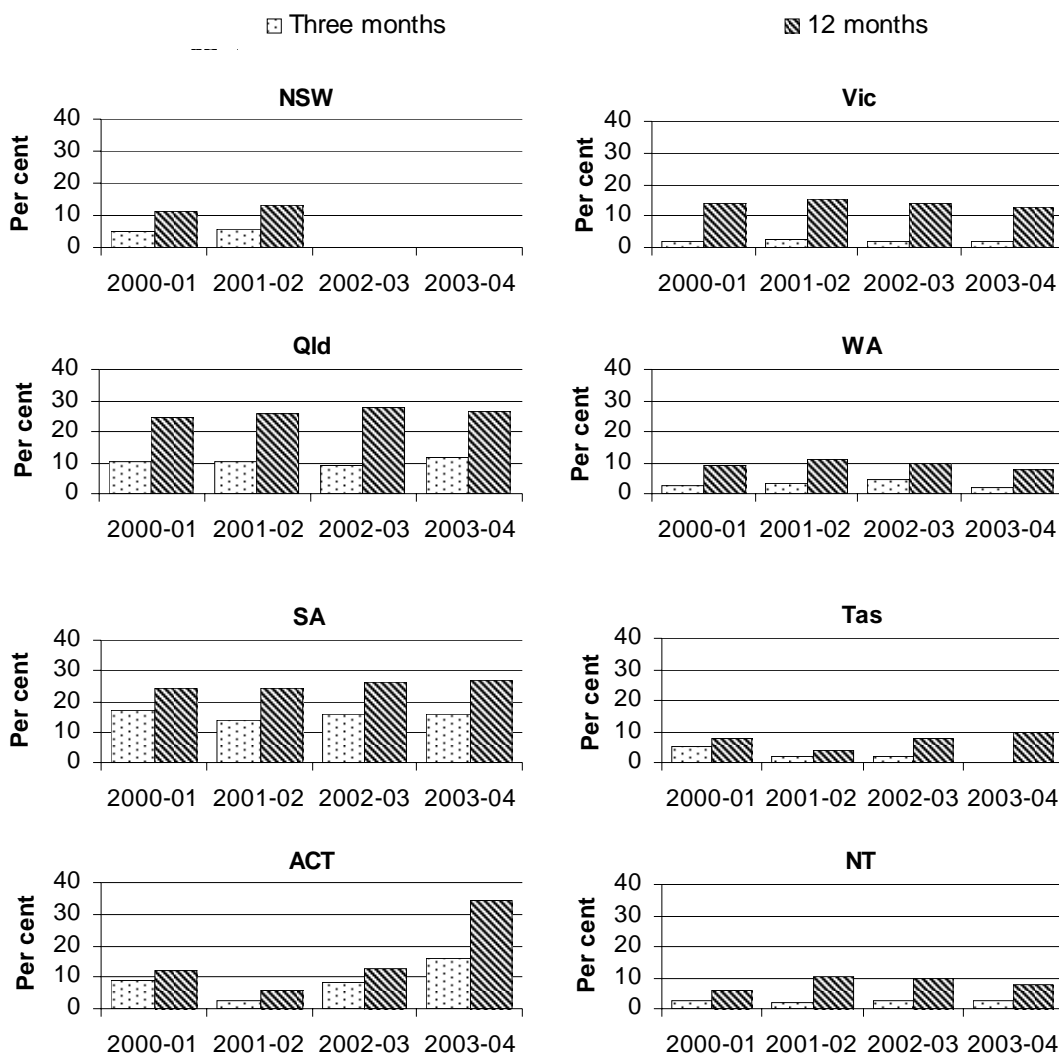
This indicator is defined as the proportion of children who were the subject of a substantiation in the previous financial year, who were subsequently the subject of a further substantiation within the following three or 12 months.

A low rate for this indicator is desirable.

Reported results may be affected by the finalisation of investigations, factors beyond the control of child protection services, such as changes in the family situation (for example, illness, unemployment or a new partner). In addition, this indicator does not distinguish between subsequent substantiations that are related to the initial notification (that is, the same source of risk of harm) and those that are unrelated to the initial notification (that is, a different source of risk of harm).

Data that are comparable across jurisdictions are not available for this indicator because definitions of substantiations vary across jurisdictions. Data are comparable within each jurisdiction over time until 2002-03. Data for 2003-04 are based on a different counting rule to previous years (figure 15.13).

Figure 15.13 Improved safety — resubstantiation rate within 3 and/or 12 months after a substantiation^{a, b, c}



^a Data are not comparable across jurisdictions because definitions of substantiation vary significantly. Consequently, rates cannot be compared across jurisdictions. ^b NSW was able to provide limited data for 2003-04 due to the introduction of a new client information system. As this indicator is calculated using two years of data, 2002-03 rates are also not available for NSW. ^c The counting rule for this indicator has been changed since previous Reports, which may have resulted in a lowering of the rate for some jurisdictions in 2003-04. Therefore care should be taken when comparing 2003-04 with previous years.

Source: AIHW Child protection notifications, investigations and substantiations, Australia data collection (unpublished); tables 15A.32, 15A.49, 15A.66, 15A.83, 15A.100, 15A.117, 15A.134 and 15A.151.

Improved education, health and wellbeing of the child

‘Improved education, health and wellbeing of the child’ has been identified as an outcome indicator for development for future Reports (box 15.25).

Box 15.25 Improved education, health and wellbeing of the child

‘Improved education, health and wellbeing of the child’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to maximise children’s life chances by ensuring children in care have their educational, health and wellbeing needs met.

Data are currently not collected on this indicator. The Steering Committee has identified this indicator for development and reporting in future.

Safe return home

‘Safe return home’ has been identified as an outcome indicator for further development for future Reports (box 15.26).

Box 15.26 Safe return home

‘Safe return home’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to remove the risk of harm to the child while maintaining family cohesion. For children who cannot be protected within their family and are removed from home, often the best outcome is when effective intervention to improve their parents’ skills or capacity to care for them enables them to return home.

Data are currently not collected on this indicator. The Steering Committee has identified this indicator for development and reporting in future.

Permanent care

‘Permanent care’ has been identified as an outcome indicator for further development for future Reports (box 15.27).

Box 15.27 Permanent care

‘Permanent care’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to provide appropriate care for children who cannot be safely reunified with their families. Appropriate services are those that minimise the length of time before stable, permanent placement is achieved.

Data are currently not collected on this indicator. The Steering Committee has identified this indicator for development and reporting in future.

15.4 Future directions in child protection and out-of-home care services performance reporting

Improving national child protection data

Between 2000 and 2003, the National Child Protection and Support Services (NCPASS) Data Working Group, under the auspices of the National Community Services Information Management Group, reviewed the reporting framework used to collect the national child protection data. The review aimed to establish the feasibility of updating the national reporting framework so the national data:

- more accurately reflect the current responses of states and territories to child protection and child concern reports
- are more comprehensive
- have increased consistency and comparability.

The review resulted in the development of a broader framework to count responses to calls received by community services departments about the safety and wellbeing of children. The responses include those that occur outside the formal child protection system. The new framework incorporates data elements such as the provision of advice and information, the assessment of needs, and the provision of general and intensive family support services.

The AIHW, in conjunction with the NCPASS, has developed data dictionaries to support the new reporting framework. These dictionaries have undergone initial data testing and it is envisaged that they will be used by jurisdictions to provide unit record data. This will provide more detailed child protection and out-of-home care data than is currently available with aggregated data. It is anticipated that the outcomes of the new framework will provide additional data for the 2007 and 2008 Reports.

15.5 Profile of supported accommodation and assistance services

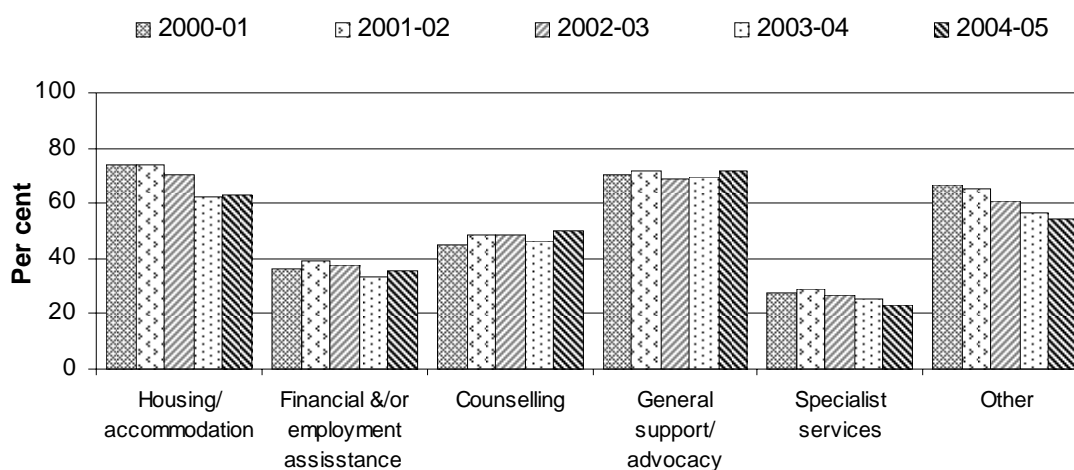
Service overview

Supported accommodation and assistance services aim to assist people who are homeless or at imminent risk of becoming homeless as a result of a crisis, including women and children escaping domestic violence.

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

Nationally, in 2004-05, housing and accommodation services were provided in 62.7 per cent of support periods. Financial and employment assistance (35.6 per cent), counselling (50.0 per cent), general support and advocacy (72.0 per cent), and specialist services (23.2 per cent) were also commonly provided. Agencies may provide more than one type of service during a single support period (figure 15.14).

Figure 15.14 **Services received during a SAAP support period^a**



^a Totals may not add to 100 per cent because agencies may provide more than one type of service during a single support period.

Source: SAAP National Data Collection Agency (NDCA) Administrative Data and Client Collections (unpublished); table 15A.163.

Size and scope

Support services funded by SAAP are provided by agencies to a range of groups, such as homeless families, single men, single women, young people, and adults and children escaping domestic violence. At least 1291 agencies are funded under the SAAP program, and most target principally one client group. Services were delivered in 2004-05 by agencies targeting:

- young people (36.4 per cent of agencies)
- women escaping domestic violence (22.5 per cent)
- families (9.3 per cent)
- single men (7.1 per cent)
- single women (3.8 per cent)
- multiple client groups (20.9 per cent) (table 15A.164).

Agencies also vary in their service delivery model. The most common models in 2004-05 were the provision of medium term to long term supported accommodation (36.3 per cent) and the provision of crisis or short term supported accommodation (34.8 per cent). Agencies also provided services other than accommodation, such as outreach support (5.0 per cent of agencies), day support (1.9 per cent), and telephone information and referral (1.3 per cent). A further 13.2 per cent of agencies provided multiple services and 1.9 per cent provided agency support (table 15A.165).

Families and children in crisis (such as those escaping domestic violence or experiencing homelessness) are often subject to considerable stress, violence and transience, all of which have a negative impact on children. As a result, some children assisted by SAAP have also had contact with child protection and out-of-home care services or have been subject to a current or past order. In 2003-04, it is estimated that 33 per cent of SAAP clients were women escaping domestic violence. Of the 52 700 accompanying children accessing SAAP, 66 per cent were children who accompanied a female parent or guardian escaping domestic violence (AIHW 2005).

Close links also exist between SAAP services and other forms of housing assistance reported in the Housing chapter (chapter 16), which focuses on the performance of government in providing public, Indigenous and community housing under the Commonwealth State Housing Agreement (CSHA) and the Commonwealth Rent Assistance (CRA) program. In particular, the Housing chapter includes data on accommodation funded under the Crisis Accommodation Program. This is a special purpose program under the CSHA which provides funding to State and Territory

housing authorities to support SAAP agencies, by providing accommodation to SAAP clients (figure 16.2 and table 16.2). Some individuals and families utilise both SAAP services and services described in the Housing chapter, as people tend to move from homelessness to social housing.² In 2004-05, for example, approximately 18.1 per cent of former SAAP clients had moved to public housing (figure 15.29).

Roles and responsibilities

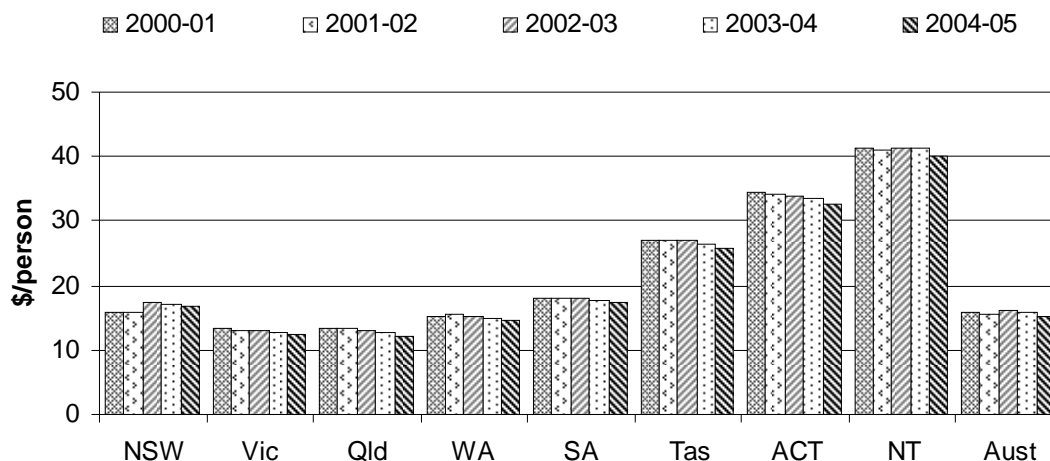
The Australian, State and Territory governments jointly fund SAAP, which was established in 1985 to consolidate a number of existing programs. The State and Territory governments have responsibility for the day-to-day management of SAAP, including the distribution of funding to SAAP funded agencies.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

Funding

Recurrent funding of SAAP services was \$309.9 million in 2004-05, of which the Australian Government contributed 56.4 per cent and the states and territories contributed 43.6 per cent (table 15A.166). Recurrent SAAP funding per person in the total population in 2004-05 was \$15 nationally. This figure varied across jurisdictions (figure 15.15).

² Social housing is generally understood to include public and community housing. For further information on these forms of housing assistance, see chapter 16, box 16.2.

Figure 15.15 **Real recurrent SAAP funding per person in the residential population (2004-05 dollars)^{a, b, c}**



^a Includes total recurrent allocations (including State and Territory level allocations for program administration). ^b The total population figure is not indicative of the demand for these services. ^c Real expenditure is based on the ABS gross domestic product price deflator 2004-05 = 100 (table A.26).

Source: Department of Family and Community Services (DFaCS) (unpublished); table 15A.168.

15.6 Performance indicator framework of supported accommodation and assistance services

The performance indicator framework is based on the shared government objectives for SAAP services (box 15.28).

Box 15.28 Objectives for SAAP services

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

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

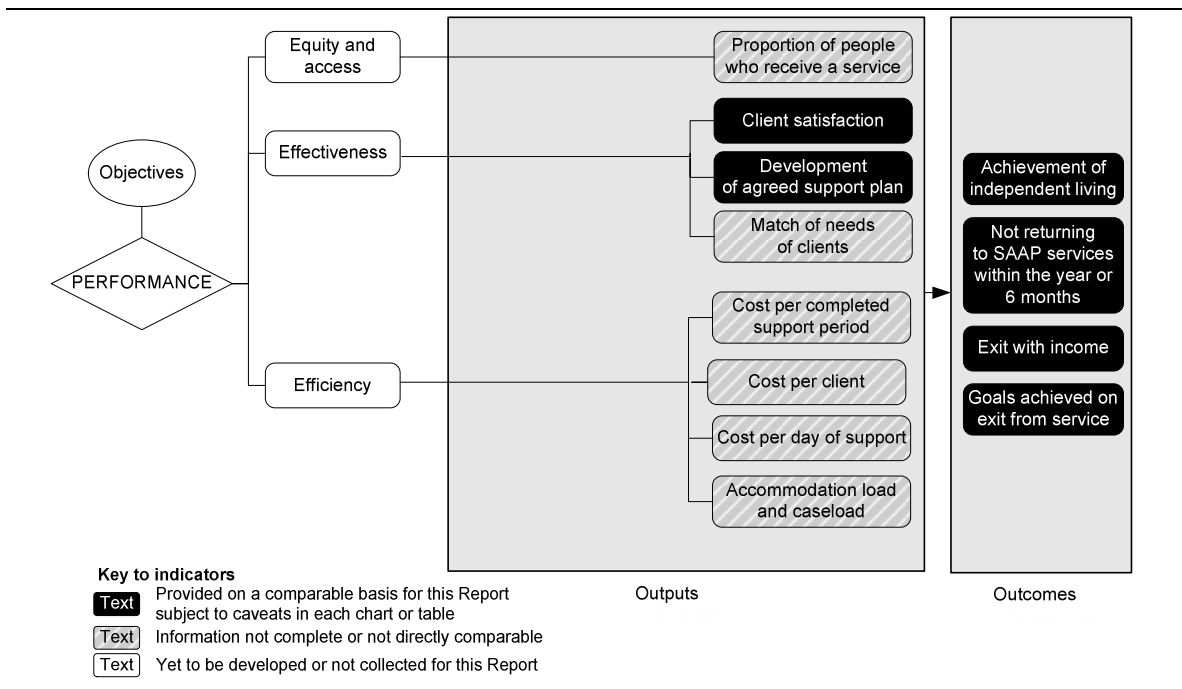
SAAP services should be provided in an equitable and efficient manner.

The performance indicator framework provides information on equity, efficiency and effectiveness, and distinguishes the outputs and outcomes of SAAP services (figure 15.16). This is consistent with the general performance indicator framework

and service process diagram (figures 1.2 and 1.3, chapter 1) on which the Steering Committee has agreed.

The performance indicator framework shows which data are comparable in the 2006 Report (figure 15.16). For data that are not considered directly comparable, the text includes relevant caveats and supporting commentary. Chapter 1 discusses data comparability from a Report-wide perspective (see section 1.6).

Figure 15.16 Performance indicators for SAAP services



In the 2006 Report, there are a number of improvements in reporting performance of SAAP services. New data with improved quality and comparability have been introduced for the outcome indicator ‘proportion of people who receive a service’. This includes new data on daily turn-away rate of adults and unaccompanied children requesting immediate SAAP accommodation, and directly comparable data for the equity measure of access to SAAP accommodation services by special needs groups of people. New data for the outcome indicator ‘exit with income’ are also introduced to report the income status of SAAP clients who specially requested assistance with obtaining/maintaining their source of income. Data for the outcome indicator ‘goals achieved on exit from service’ are also included in the Report for the first time.

15.7 Key supported accommodation and assistance performance indicator results

The data collection for SAAP allows for the measurement of the number of clients and of the number and types of services provided to clients, but is subject to some limitations (box 15.29).

Box 15.29 Information needs to be considered when analysing SAAP data

The following information needs to be considered when analysing SAAP data.

- Informed consent is an essential component of the integrity of the data. The principle of client/consumer rights (which underpins informed consent) recognises that clients do not receive services under a mandatory order. They have the right to accept or reject the services offered, as they have the right to provide or not provide information while receiving SAAP services.
- Clients consented to provide personal details for the SAAP client collection for 87 per cent of support periods in 2004-05. A weighting system has been developed to adjust for agency non-participation (93 per cent of agencies participated in the client collection) and non-consent.

Outputs

Equity and access

Proportion of people who receive a service

'Proportion of people who receive a service' is an output (equity and access) indicator of SAAP services (box 15.30).

Box 15.30 Proportion of people who receive a service

‘Proportion of people who receive a service’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to ensure all Australians have equitable access to SAAP services on the basis of relative need. The indicator measures the extent to which the demand for assistance is met or unmet. Unmet demand occurs when a homeless person seeking supported accommodation, or support, cannot be provided with that assistance (although one-off assistance may be provided).

Two measures of the proportion of people who receive services are reported for all SAAP clients: daily turn-away rate of requests for accommodation and total unmet demand for accommodation.

Daily turn-away rate of requests for accommodation is defined as the daily average number of people whose valid requests for immediate accommodation were unmet, divided by the daily average total number of people who made valid requests for immediate accommodation.

Total unmet demand for accommodation is defined as the daily average total number of people whose requests for immediate accommodation were unmet, divided by the daily average number of people who made requests for immediate accommodation, and those who were continuing their accommodation from the previous day.

A measure of equity in providing access to SAAP accommodation is reported for two special needs groups of people, Indigenous people and people from non-English speaking backgrounds. This measure compares the representation of people from these two groups among all people whose valid requests for SAAP accommodation were unmet with their representation among people whose requests for SAAP accommodation were met.

A higher proportion of valid requests receiving assistance is desirable.

Supported accommodation and assistance services target homeless people in general, but access by special needs groups (such as Indigenous people and people from non-English speaking backgrounds) is particularly important.

Data for assessing access to SAAP services are sourced from the Demand for Accommodation Collection and the Client Collection. The Demand for Accommodation Collection measures the levels of met and unmet demand for SAAP accommodation by collecting information about requests for accommodation by individuals or groups over two weeks each year. These data are used in conjunction with Client Collection data to calculate the ‘turn-away’ rate for demand for SAAP accommodation.

The Demand for Accommodation Collection collects data on ‘valid unmet requests’ for immediate accommodation. ‘Valid unmet requests’ excludes requests made at an agency, where the person or group is determined to be inappropriate for the agency,

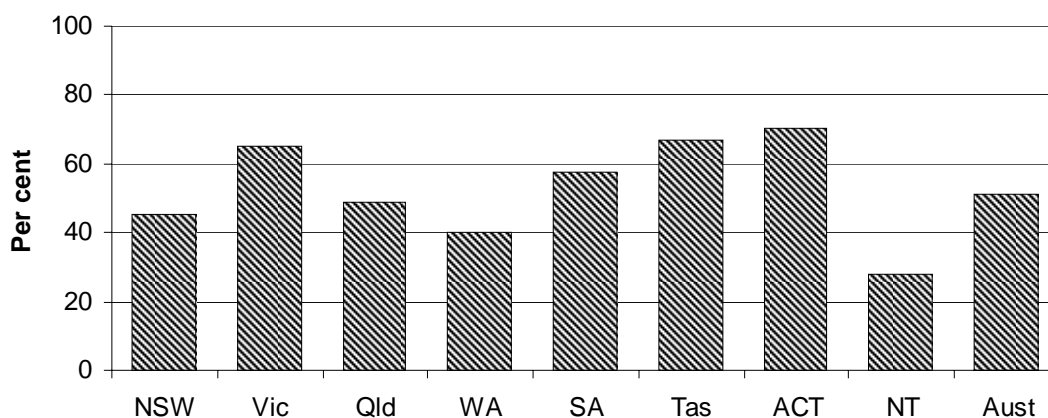
where there is no fee-free accommodation available, or where proffered assistance is refused. For the Client Collection, the accommodation status of a client on a particular day is based on the reported periods of accommodation within a support period.

As only data from agencies that participated in both the Client Collection and the Demand for Accommodation Collection are used for the calculations, data included in this Report may understate activities of SAAP agencies. Additionally, the two week sample period over which data are collected may not be representative of the eventual success of clients accessing SAAP services over the full year (see notes to tables 15A.169-170).

Data for 'proportion of people who receive a service' in this Report are not comparable with those in previous Reports as they are based on different data collections.

Data on proportions of people with valid requests for SAAP accommodation who were turned away are included for the first time in this Report. Nationally, in 2002-03, 51.0 per cent of adults and unaccompanied children requesting immediate SAAP accommodation were turned away. The proportion varied across jurisdictions (figure 15.17).

Figure 15.17 Daily turn away rate of adults and unaccompanied children requesting immediate SAAP accommodation, December 2002 and May 2003^{a, b, c}

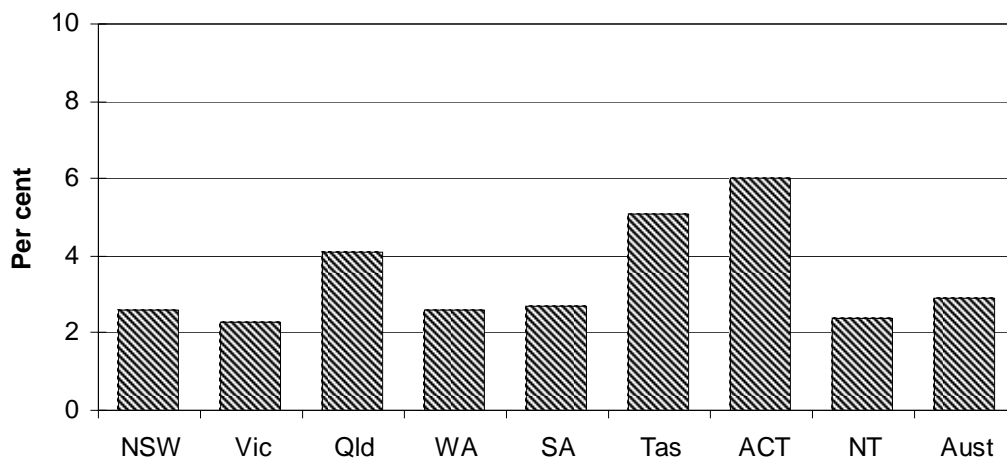


^a Data are sourced from new collections and are only available for 2002-03. ^b A two-week Demand for Accommodation Collection is conducted annually to gather information about homeless people who are not accepted as clients of SAAP agencies. The collection for 2002-03 data was held between 9-15 December 2002 and 7-13 May 2003. ^c See notes to table 15A.169 for more detailed data caveats.

Source: AIHW (2004); table 15A.169.

Nationally, the number of adults and unaccompanied children who made valid requests for SAAP accommodation but could not be accommodated accounted for 2.9 per cent of the total demand for SAAP accommodation in 2002-03. This proportion varied across jurisdictions. Total demand for SAAP accommodation is measured by the total number of people who made requests for immediate SAAP accommodation, and those who were continuing their accommodation from the previous day (figure 15.18).

Figure 15.18 Total unmet demand for SAAP accommodation by adults and unaccompanied children, December 2002 and May 2003^{a, b, c}



^a Data are sourced from new collections and are only available for 2002-03. ^b A two-week Demand for Accommodation Collection is conducted annually to gather information about homeless people who are not accepted as clients of SAAP agencies. The collection for 2002-03 data was held between 9–15 December 2002 and 7–13 May 2003. ^c See notes to table 15A.170 for more detailed data caveats.

Source: AIHW (2004); table 15A.170.

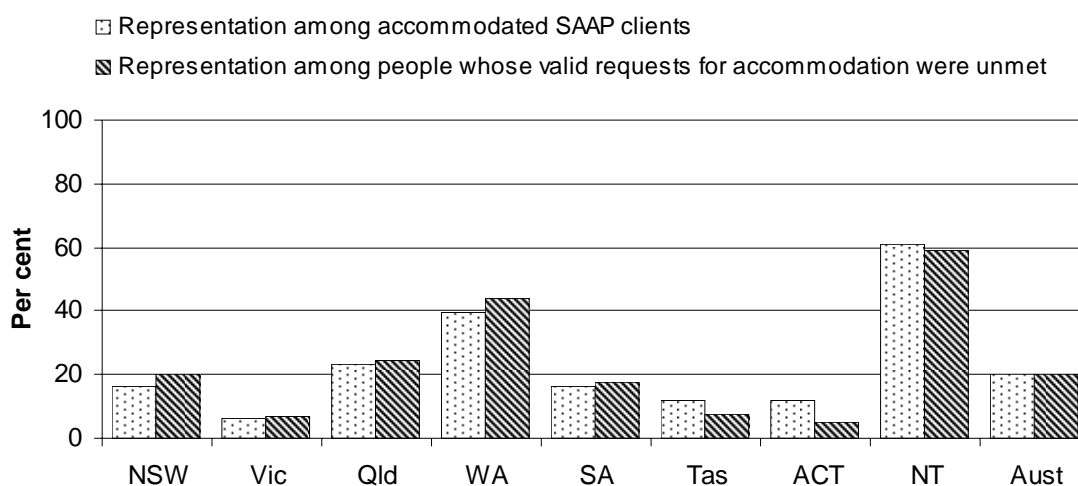
A measure of equity in access to SAAP services by special needs groups of people is reported respectively for Indigenous people and people from non-English speaking backgrounds. This measure compares the representation of people from these two groups among all people whose valid requests for SAAP accommodation were unmet with their representation among all people whose requests had been met (accommodated SAAP clients).³

Nationally, Indigenous people made up 20.1 per cent of all people whose valid requests for accommodation did not result in accommodation assistance in 2004-05

³ In previous Reports, this measure compared the proportion of people from these two groups who could not be accommodated with their representation among all SAAP clients (including accommodated and not accommodated). This Report presents, for the first time, data for a direct comparison focusing on accommodation. Therefore, these data are not comparable to those in previous Reports.

— a proportion similar to that of Indigenous clients among all accommodated SAAP clients (20.4 per cent). This result varied across jurisdictions (figure 15.19).

Figure 15.19 Proportion of Indigenous people among all accommodated SAAP clients and among people whose valid requests for accommodation were unmet, 2004-05^a

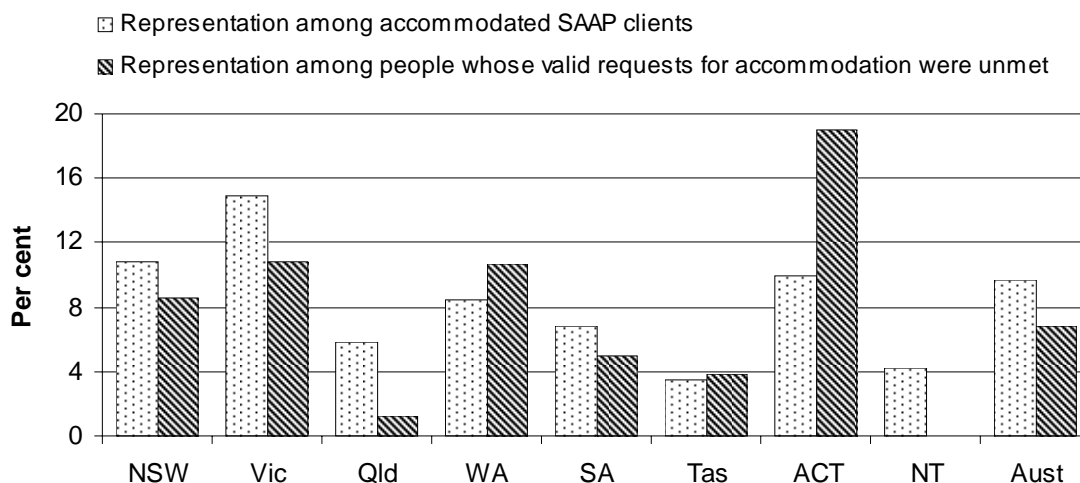


^a See notes to table 15A.171 for details of data definitions.

Source: SAAP NDCA Client and Demand for Accommodation Collections (unpublished); table 15A.171.

Nationally, the proportion of people from non-English speaking backgrounds among all people whose valid requests for accommodation did not result in accommodation assistance was 6.8 per cent in 2004-05 — lower than that of people from non-English speaking backgrounds among all accommodated SAAP clients (9.7 per cent). This result varied across jurisdictions (figure 15.20).

Figure 15.20 **Proportion of people from non-English speaking backgrounds among all accommodated SAAP clients and among people whose valid requests for accommodation were unmet, 2004-05^a**



^a See notes to table 15A.172 for details of data definitions.

Source: SAAP NDCA Client and Demand for Accommodation Collections (unpublished); table 15A.172.

Requests for SAAP services were not met for a number of reasons in 2004-05, including a lack of available accommodation (the main reason that 63.6 per cent of potential clients were not provided with services), no vacancies at the referral agency (22.2 per cent), and insufficient staff (1.2 per cent) (table 15A.178).

Effectiveness

Client satisfaction

'Client satisfaction' is an output (effectiveness) indicator of SAAP services (box 15.31).

Box 15.31 Client satisfaction

'Client satisfaction' is an indicator of governments' objective to provide high quality services that meet the needs of SAAP recipients.

The indicator is defined as the proportion of clients whose overall satisfaction with the assistance they had received from the SAAP service was either 'good' or 'really good'.

A higher proportion suggests greater client satisfaction with the overall SAAP service.

Data for the client satisfaction indicator are sourced from the national SAAP client satisfaction survey, which is scheduled to be conducted periodically. As a result,

new data for this indicator are not available for this Report. Data on client satisfaction relating to a four week period beginning 11 November 2003 were included in the 2005 Report (pp. 15.47-48; Colmar Brunton Social Research 2004).

Development of agreed support plan

‘Development of agreed support plan’ is an output (effectiveness) indicator of SAAP services (box 15.32).

Box 15.32 Development of agreed support plan

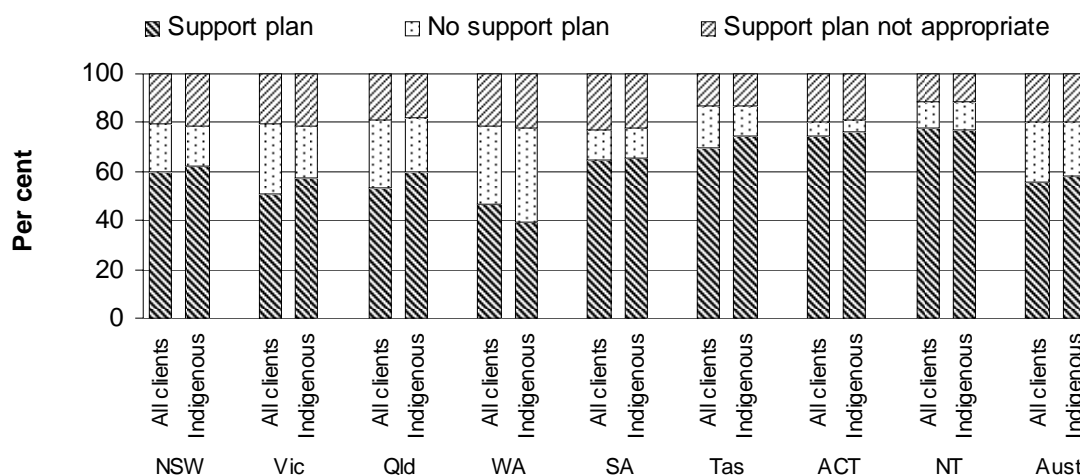
‘Development of agreed support plan’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to provide high quality services that are appropriately targeted to meet the needs of SAAP clients.

This indicator is defined as the number of support periods with an agreed support plan divided by the total number of support periods. Data are reported for all SAAP clients, and separately for Indigenous people.

A higher proportion of support periods with agreed support plans is desirable. In some instances, however, a support plan may be judged to be inappropriate (such as when a support period is short term).

Nationally, there was an agreed support plan for 55.8 per cent of support periods for all clients in 2004-05 (compared with 58.6 per cent for Indigenous clients). This proportion varied across jurisdictions (figure 15.21).

Figure 15.21 Support periods, by the existence of a support plan, 2004-05^a



^a See notes to tables 15A.173-174 for more details.

Source: SAAP NDCA Administrative Data and Client Collections (unpublished); tables 15A.173-174.

Match of needs of clients

'Match of needs of clients' is an output (effectiveness) indicator of SAAP services (box 15.33).

Box 15.33 Match of needs of clients

'Match of needs of clients' is an indicator of governments' objective to ensure that SAAP services meet their client's individual needs. This is a measure of appropriateness. The range of services needed is broad (ranging from meals to laundry facilities to long-term accommodation), so the effect of not providing these services varies.

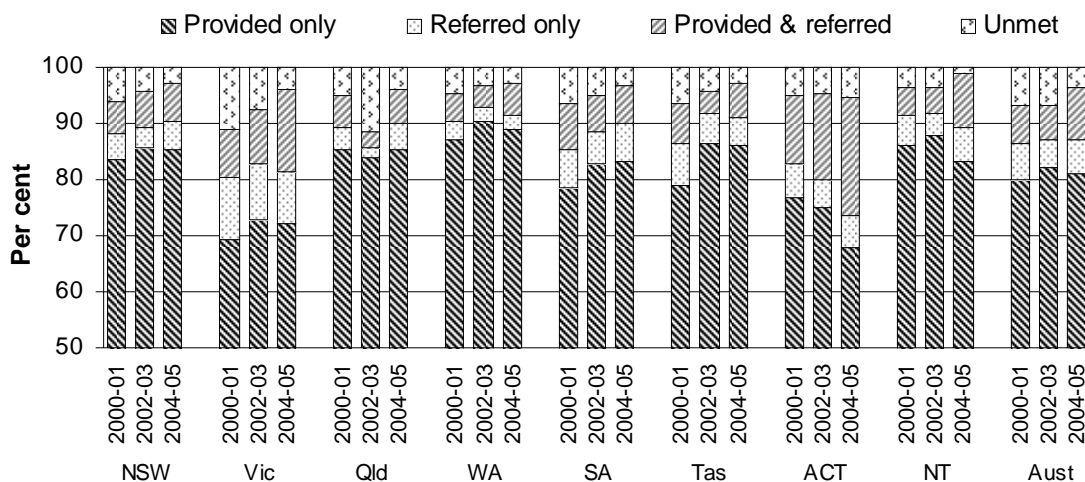
This indicator is defined as the number of clients who were provided with the services they needed and clients who were referred to another agency, divided by the total number of SAAP clients.

Data are reported for all SAAP clients, and separately for Indigenous people and people from non-English speaking backgrounds.

A higher proportion of clients who received services they needed, or who were referred to another agency, is desirable.

Nationally, the proportion of clients who received needed services (including services provided by the agencies and/or who were referred to another agency) was 96.6 per cent in 2004-05 (figure 15.22).

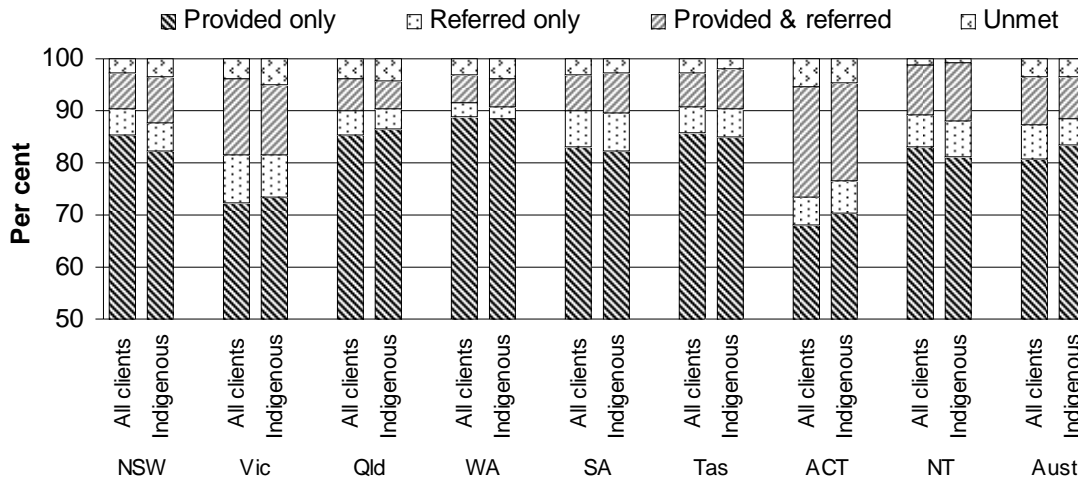
Figure 15.22 SAAP clients, by met and unmet support needs



Source: SAAP NDCA Administrative Data and Client Collections (unpublished); table 15A.175.

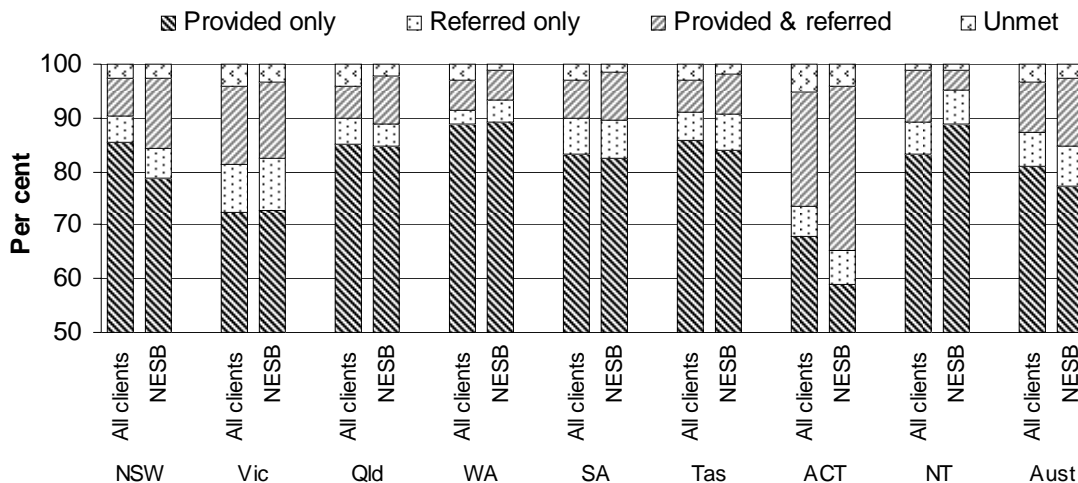
The proportions for Indigenous clients (96.7 per cent) and clients from a non-English speaking background (97.3 per cent) who received needed services in 2004-05 were similar to that for all clients. This proportion varied across jurisdictions (figures 15.23 and 15.24).

Figure 15.23 Indigenous clients, by met and unmet support needs, 2004-05



Source: SAAP NDCA Administrative Data and Client Collections (unpublished); tables 15A.175-176.

Figure 15.24 Clients from non-English speaking backgrounds, by met and unmet support needs, 2004-05



NESB = Non-English speaking background.

Source: SAAP NDCA Administrative Data and Client Collections (unpublished); tables 15A.175 and 15A.177.

Efficiency

Across jurisdictions, there are varying treatments of expenditure items (for example, superannuation) and different counting and reporting rules for generating financial data. Results reported on efficiency indicators may reflect these differences.

Cost per completed support period

‘Cost per completed support period’ is an output (efficiency) indicator of SAAP services (box 15.34).

Box 15.34 Cost per completed support period

‘Cost per completed support period’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to maximise the availability and quality of services through the efficient use of taxpayer resources. This is a proxy indicator of efficiency, measuring government inputs per unit of output (unit cost).

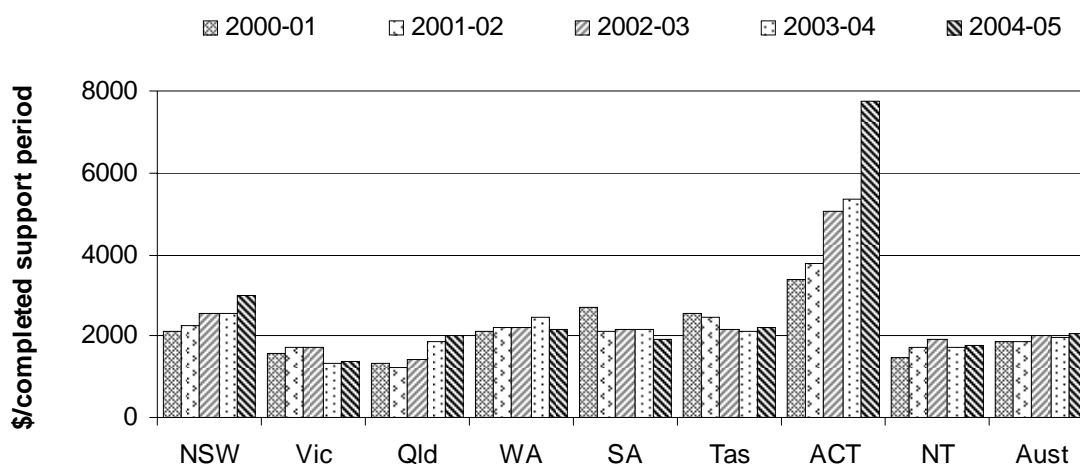
This indicator is defined as total expenditure on SAAP services divided by the number of completed support periods (excluding casual and potential clients, and accompanying children).

A lower cost per completed support period is desirable, but may also indicate lesser service quality.

Unit cost analyses include only expenditure by service delivery providers. Unit cost indicators should also include administration costs borne by State and Territory departments in administering services, but this is not yet possible. In addition, capital costs are excluded because capital funding for SAAP is provided under the Commonwealth State Housing Agreement through a special purpose program (the Crisis Accommodation Program).

The recurrent cost per completed support period (excluding casual and potential clients, and accompanying children) averaged \$2080 nationally and varied across jurisdictions in 2004-05 (figure 15.25).

Figure 15.25 Real recurrent cost per completed support period (2004-05 dollars)^a



^a See notes to table 15A.179 for detailed data caveats.

Source: SAAP NDCA Administrative Data and Client Collections(unpublished); table 15A.179.

Cost per client

‘Cost per client’ is an output (efficiency) indicator of SAAP services (box 15.35).

Box 15.35 Cost per client

‘Cost per client’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to maximise the availability and quality of services through the efficient use of taxpayer resources. This is a proxy indicator of efficiency, measuring government inputs per unit of output (unit cost).

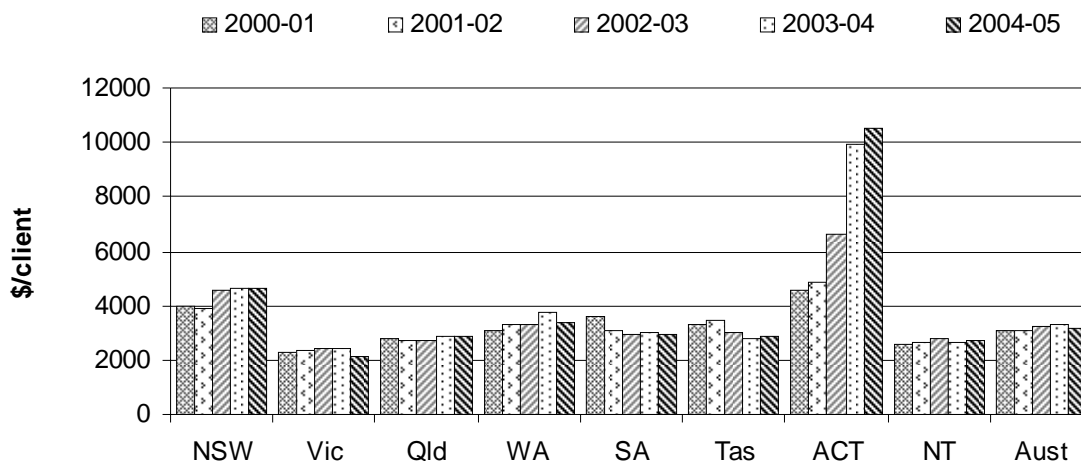
This indicator is defined as total expenditure on SAAP services divided by the number of clients accessing a bed or place over the year.

A lower cost per client is desirable, but may also indicate lesser service quality.

Unit cost analyses include only expenditure by service delivery providers. Unit cost indicators should also include administration costs borne by State and Territory departments in administering services, but this is not yet possible. In addition, capital costs are excluded because capital funding for SAAP is provided under the Commonwealth State Housing Agreement through a special purpose program (the Crisis Accommodation Program).

Nationally, the recurrent cost per client accessing SAAP services was \$3190 and varied across jurisdictions in 2004-05 (figure 15.26).

Figure 15.26 Real recurrent cost per client accessing SAAP services (2004-05 dollars)^a



^a See notes to table 15A.180 for detailed data caveats.

Source: SAAP NDCA Administrative Data and Client Collections (unpublished); table 15A.180.

Cost per day of support

‘Cost per day of support’ is an output (efficiency) indicator of SAAP services (box 15.36).

Box 15.36 Cost per day of support

‘Cost per day of support’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to maximise the availability and quality of services through the efficient use of taxpayer resources. This indicator provides a proxy indicator of efficiency, measuring government inputs per unit of output (unit cost).

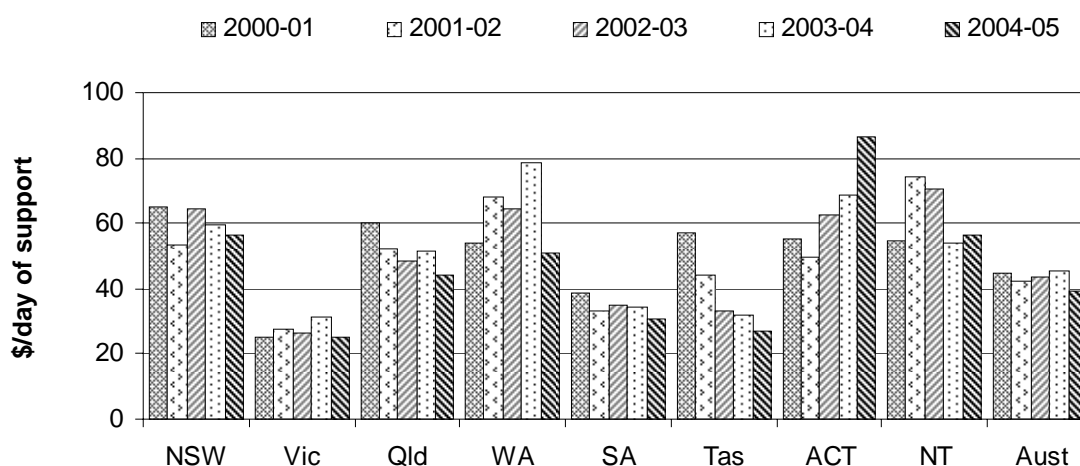
This indicator is defined as total expenditure on SAAP services divided by the number of days of support for SAAP clients receiving support and/or supported accommodation (excluding casual and potential clients, and accompanying children).

A lower ‘cost per day of support’ is desirable, but may also indicate lesser service quality.

Unit cost analyses include only expenditure by service delivery providers. Unit cost indicators should include administration costs borne by State and Territory departments in administering services, but this is not yet possible. In addition, capital costs are excluded because capital funding for SAAP is provided under the Commonwealth State Housing Agreement through a special purpose program (the Crisis Accommodation Program).

The recurrent cost per day of support for SAAP clients averaged \$39 nationally and varied across jurisdictions in 2004-05 (figure 15.27).

Figure 15.27 Real recurrent cost per day of support for homeless clients (2004-05 dollars)^a



^a See notes to table 15A.181 for detailed data caveats.

Source: SAAP NDCA Administrative Data and Client Collections (unpublished); table 15A.181.

Accommodation load and caseload

‘Accommodation load’ and ‘caseload’ are output (efficiency) indicators of SAAP services (box 15.37).

Box 15.37 Accommodation load and caseload

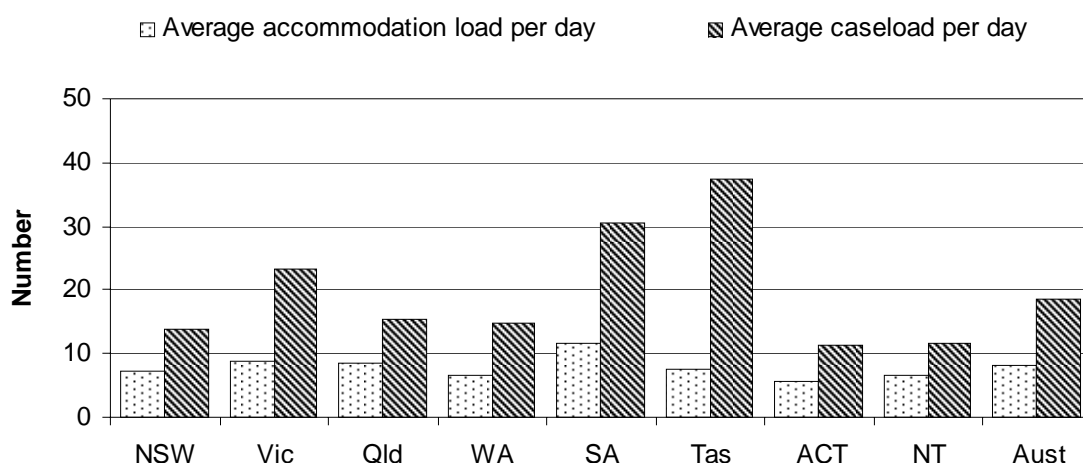
‘Accommodation load’ and ‘caseload’ are indicators of governments’ objective to maximise the availability and quality of services through the efficient use of taxpayer resources. Average accommodation load and caseload are output indicators of efficiency, and they indicate levels of output by agencies.

The average accommodation load is defined as the average number of people accommodated per day per agency. The average caseload is defined as the average number of people being supported per day per agency.

Higher loads may mean greater efficiency or, alternatively, a lesser quality service. Accommodation load and caseload are likely to be affected by the size of the agencies funded under the SAAP Program.

In 2004-05, the national average daily accommodation load and caseload per agency were 8.1 and 18.5 respectively, and this efficiency output varied across jurisdictions (figure 15.28).

Figure 15.28 **Average accommodation load and caseload per day, 2004-05^a**



^a See notes to table 15A.182 for descriptions of how accommodation load and caseload were estimated.
 Source: SAAP NDCA Administrative Data and Client Collections (unpublished); table 15A.182.

Outcomes

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

Achievement of independent living

'Achievement of independent living' is an outcome indicator of SAAP services. Data are reported separately for clients' success in achieving independent housing and employment (box 15.38).

Box 15.38 Achievement of independent living

'Achievement of independent living' is an indicator of governments' objective to enable clients to participate as productive and self-reliant members of society at the end of their support period. Two indicators of independent living are reported: achievement of independent housing and achievement of employment.

Achievement of independent housing is defined as the number of clients achieving independent housing at the end of a support period, divided by the total number of completed support periods.

Achievement of employment is defined as the number of SAAP clients who were unemployed before SAAP support, but achieved employment after SAAP support, divided by the total number of clients who were unemployed before SAAP support.

These two indicators relate to relatively short term outcomes — that is, outcomes for clients immediately after their support period. Longer term outcomes are important, but more difficult to measure.

Higher proportions of these achievements are desirable.

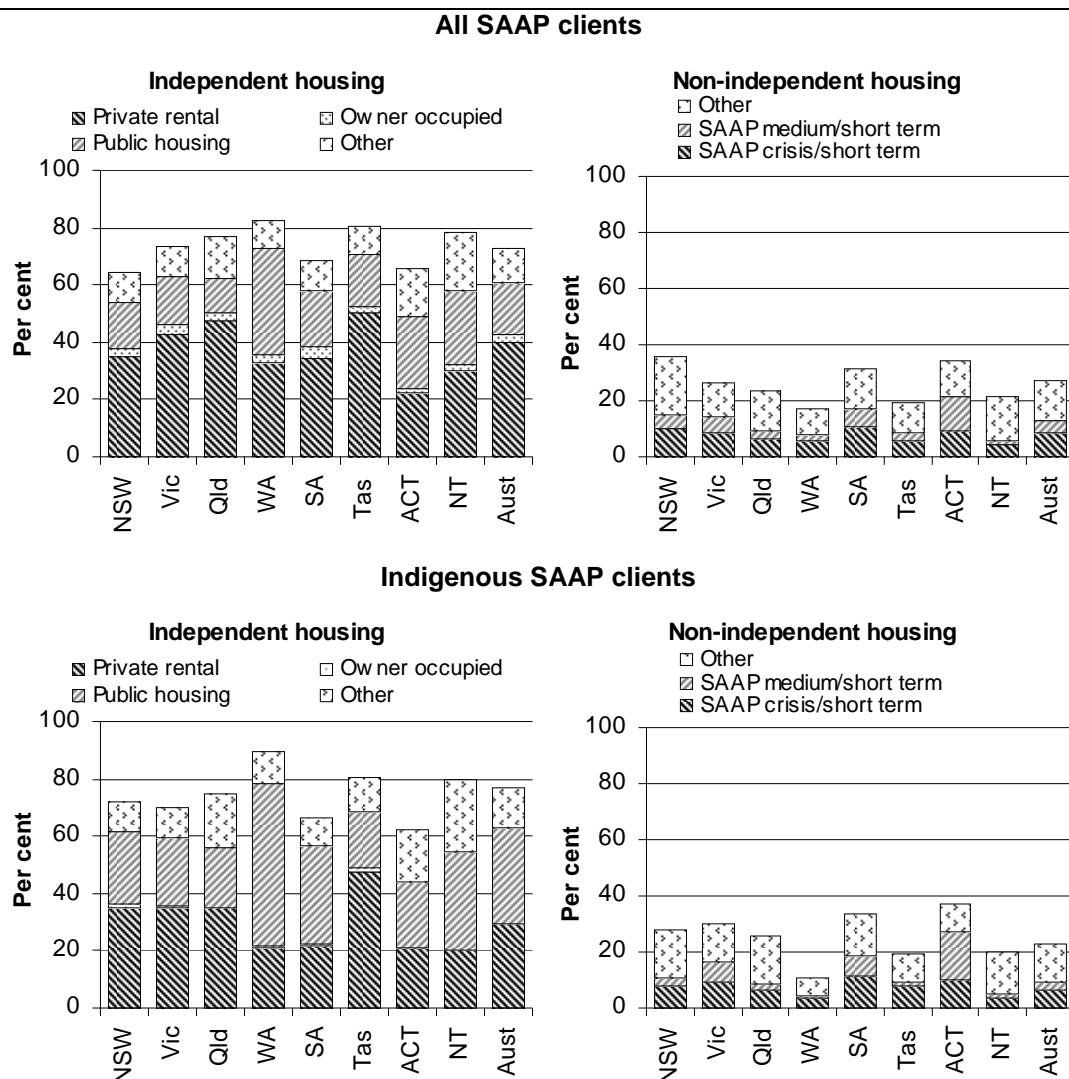
Independent living — housing

Nationally, 72.6 per cent of clients achieved independent housing at the end of a support period in 2004-05. This included clients who moved or returned to private rental housing (40.0 per cent), to public housing (18.1 per cent), and those in owner occupied housing (3.0 per cent) (figure 15.29).

Among Indigenous clients, on a national basis, 77.0 per cent achieved independent housing at the end of a support period in 2004-05, including those who moved or returned to private rental housing (29.1 per cent), to public housing (33.4 per cent), and to owner occupied housing (0.6 per cent) (figure 15.29).

Clients who did not achieve independent housing at the end of a support period in 2004-05 included those who moved to, or continued to live in, short to medium term SAAP accommodation and other forms of non-independent accommodation (figure 15.29).

Figure 15.29 Accommodation type on exit from SAAP support, 2004-05^a



^a 'Other' independent housing may include living rent free in a house or flat. 'Other' non-independent housing may include: SAAP funded accommodation at hostels, hotels or community placements; non-SAAP emergency accommodation; car, tent or squat; and an institutional setting.

Source: SAAP NDCA Administrative Data and Client Collections (unpublished); tables 15A.183-184.

Independent living — employment

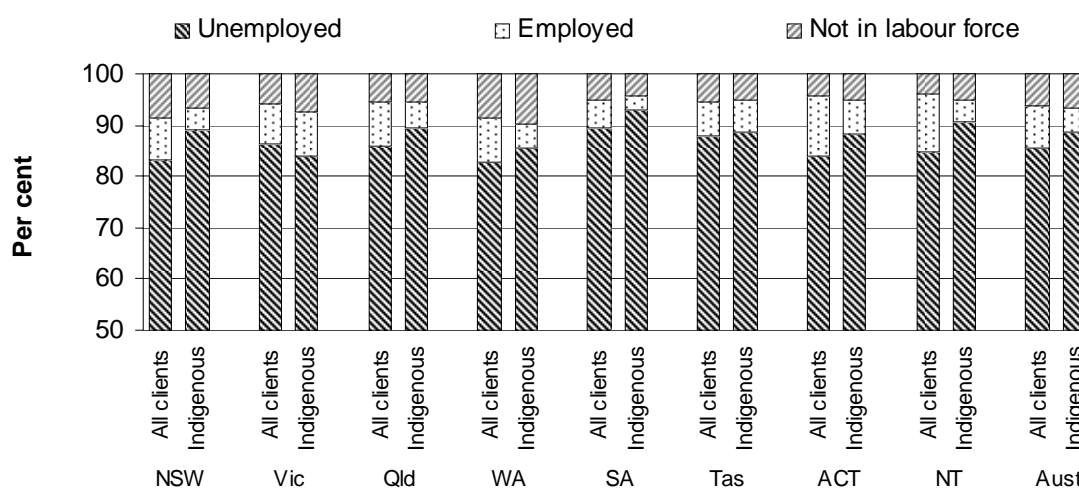
Nationally, 9.0 per cent of support periods in 2004-05 involved clients who were employed before support, while 26.6 per cent involved clients who were previously unemployed. These proportions varied across jurisdictions (table 15A.185).

Of the clients who were unemployed when entering SAAP, approximately 8.1 per cent were employed at the end of the support period (2.7 per cent full time, 1.7 per cent part time and 3.8 per cent on a casual basis), 85.5 per cent remained

unemployed and 6.4 per cent were not in the labour force (figure 15.30 and table 15A.186).

Among Indigenous clients who were unemployed when entering SAAP in 2004-05, about 4.8 per cent were employed at the end of the support period (1.4 per cent full time, 1.1 per cent part time and 2.2 per cent on a casual basis), 88.7 per cent remained unemployed and 6.5 per cent were not in the labour force (figure 15.30 and table 15A.187).

Figure 15.30 Changes in labour force status after SAAP support, by Indigenous status 2004-05^a



^a Data are for people who were unemployed when entering SAAP services.

Source: SAAP NDCA Administrative Data and Client Collections (unpublished); tables 15A.186-187.

Not returning to SAAP services within the year or six months

‘Not returning to SAAP services within the year or six months’ is an outcome indicator of SAAP services (box 15.39).

Box 15.39 Not returning to SAAP services within the year or six months

'Not returning to SAAP services within the year or six months' is an indicator of governments' objective to enable clients to participate independently in society at the end of their support period.

Two indicators of not returning to SAAP services are reported: achieving long term self-reliance and independence and achieving medium term independence.

Achieving long term self-reliance and independence is defined as the number of clients not returning to SAAP services within the year, divided by the total number of SAAP clients.

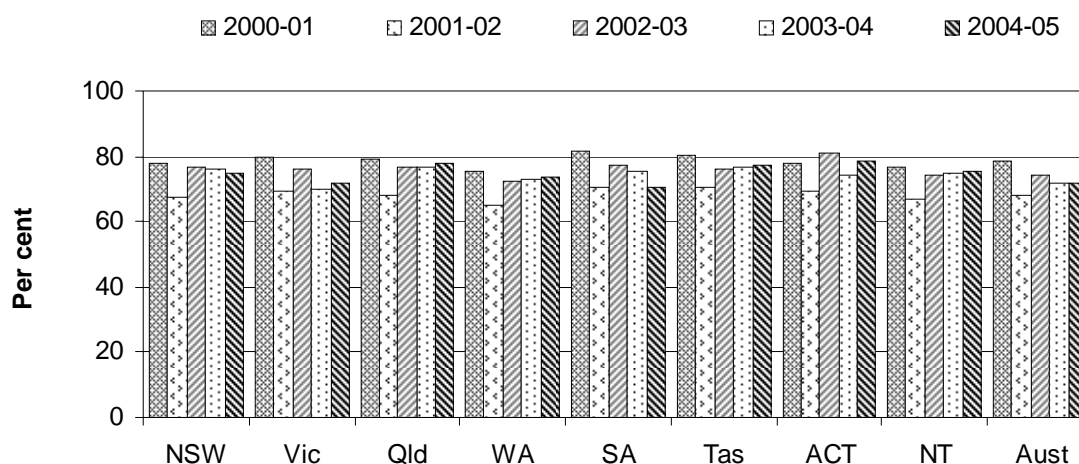
Achieving medium term independence is defined as the number of clients who exit to independent housing and do not return to SAAP within six months, divided by the total number of SAAP clients.

A higher proportion of clients not returning to the program within the year or six months is desirable.

It may be appropriate for some clients to receive more than one support period in a given period of time (for example, moving from crisis accommodation to medium term accommodation). One group that makes multiple use of SAAP is single adults, especially older single men. A number of SAAP clients who need long term assistance may access SAAP services a number of times before their needs are met on a permanent basis.

Nationally, 71.9 per cent of SAAP clients who exited a SAAP service during 2004-05 did not return to a SAAP agency within the year (figure 15.31). The proportion for Indigenous clients was similar (70.8 per cent) (table 15A.189).

Figure 15.31 Proportion of former clients who did not return to a SAAP service within 12 months of exiting the program^a



^a Data from 2001-02 are based on estimated support periods per client, rather than on observed support periods per client as reported in previous Reports.

Source: SAAP NDCA Administrative Data and Client Collections (unpublished); table 15A.188.

Estimates of clients exiting SAAP support to independent housing and not returning to SAAP within six months are affected by the data issues discussed in box 15.29. Current estimates may not represent all clients — for example, at the national level, only 62.3 per cent of clients provided information on their accommodation after exiting at least one support period in 2004-05 (table 15.1). Given the potential for data bias, these estimates should be interpreted with care.

Table 15.1 Indicative estimates of clients who exited SAAP to independent housing and did not return within six months, 2004-05^a

Unit	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Aust
Clients who provided information on accommodation after exit from support									
no.	13 100	25 300	9 000	5 200	4 800	2 200	900	1 900	62 500
As a proportion of total clients									
%	57.0	72.5	54.2	61.2	53.9	51.2	64.3	67.9	62.3
Clients recorded as exiting to independent accommodation and not returning within six months									
no.	5 300	12 500	3 700	2 500	1 700	1 200	400	1 100	28 400
Indicative estimates of clients exiting to independent housing and not returning within six months									
%	40.5	49.4	41.1	48.1	35.4	54.5	44.4	57.9	45.4

^a See notes to table 15A.190 for more details of how the estimates were calculated and data caveats.

Source: SAAP NDCA Administrative Data and Client Collections (unpublished); table 15A.190.

Strategies are being implemented to improve the quality of these data, including improving client consent rates and the collection of exit information. It is

anticipated that eventually data will be sufficiently robust to allow comparative performance assessment.

Exit with income

‘Exit with income’ is an outcome indicator of SAAP services (box 15.40).

Box 15.40 Exit with income

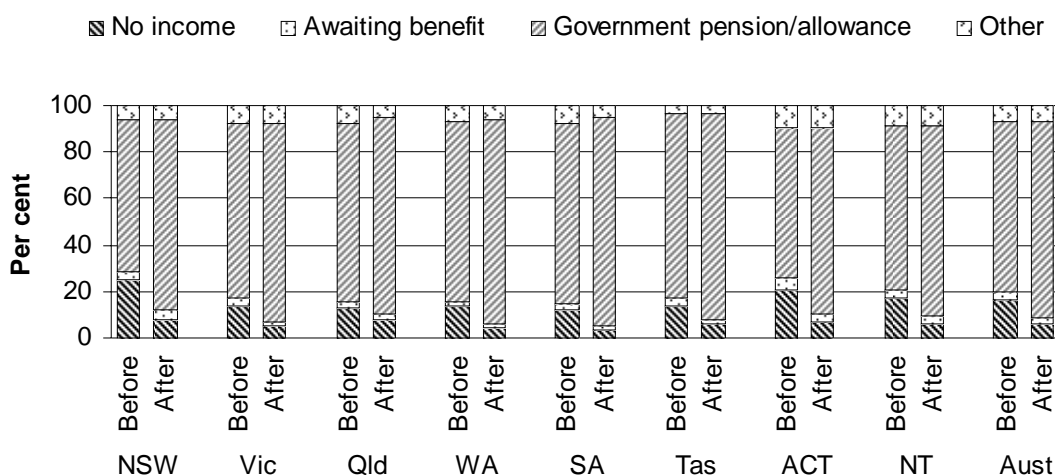
‘Exit with income’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to enable clients to participate independently in society at the end of their support period. A client’s independence and self-reliance is enhanced when the client experiences a positive change in income source (for example, from having no income support to obtaining some income, including wages and/or benefits) on exit from SAAP services.

This indicator is defined as the number of clients who requested income assistance and exited SAAP with an income source, divided by the total number of clients who requested income assistance.

A higher proportion of clients who requested income assistance and exited SAAP with an income source is desirable.

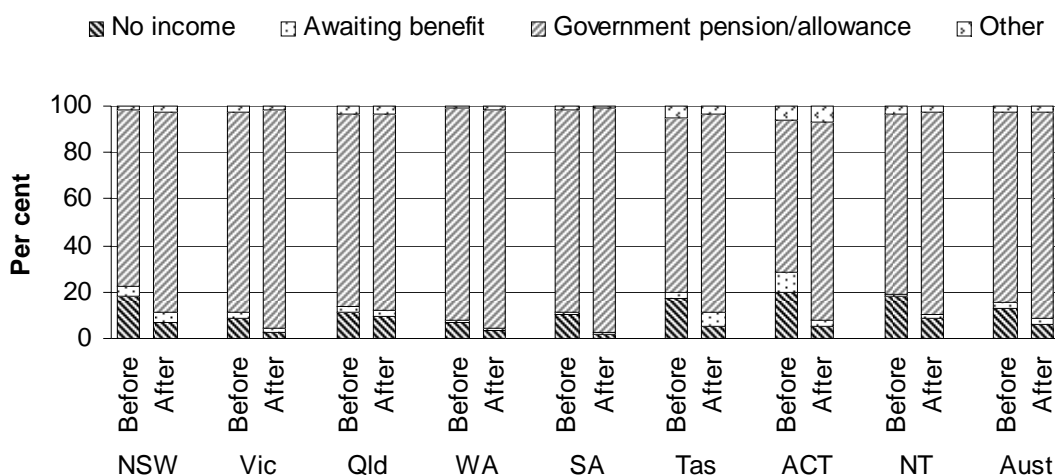
Nationally, the proportion of clients who did not have income and requested income assistance was 6.1 per cent after SAAP assistance in 2004-05 — a 10.1 per cent decrease from 16.2 per cent before SAAP assistance (figure 15.32). The proportion of Indigenous clients who did not have income and requested income assistance also decreased after SAAP assistance nationally (5.9 per cent compared with 12.6 per cent before SAAP assistance) (figure 15.33). Both before and after the SAAP assistance, the income source for the majority of SAAP clients is a government pension/allowance (figures 15.32 and 15.33).

Figure 15.32 Source of income immediately before/after SAAP support of clients who needed assistance to obtain/maintain a pension or benefit, 2004-05



Source: SAAP NDCA Administrative Data and Client Collections (unpublished); table 15A.191.

Figure 15.33 Source of income immediately before/after SAAP support of Indigenous clients who needed assistance to obtain/maintain a pension or benefit, 2004-05



Source: SAAP NDCA Administrative Data and Client Collections (unpublished); table 15A.192.

Goals achieved on exit from service

‘Goals achieved on exit from service’ is an outcome indicator of SAAP services (box 15.41). Data for this indicator are included for the first time in this Report.

Box 15.41 Goals achieved on exit from service

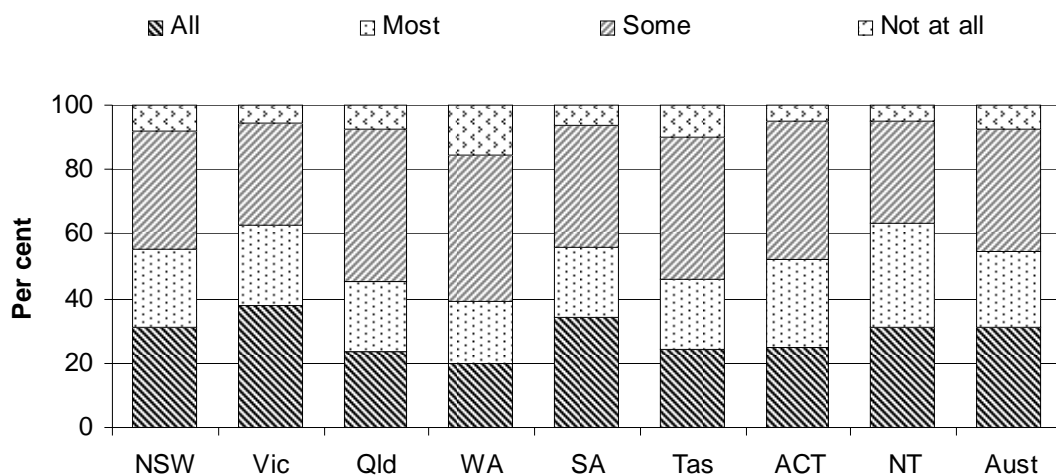
'Goals achieved on exit from service' is an indicator of governments' objective to ensure SAAP services meet the needs and expectations of users.

This indicator is defined as the number of clients whose case management goals are fully or mostly achieved by the end of the support period, divided by the total number of clients with case management goals in a given period.

A high proportion of achieved goals is desirable.

Nationally, case management goals were fully or mostly achieved by the end of the supported period for 54.8 per cent of clients in 2004-05 (figure 15.34).

Figure 15.34 Goals achieved on exit from SAAP services, 2004-05



Source: SAAP NDCA Client and Administrative Data Collections (unpublished); table 15A.193.

15.8 Future directions in supported accommodation and assistance performance reporting

Developing measures for client satisfaction and SAAP outcomes

'Client satisfaction' is an important indicator of quality. A national SAAP client satisfaction survey was conducted in 2003, and results from the survey were first used for SAAP performance reporting in the 2005 Report. Similar surveys to measure the level of SAAP client satisfaction are expected to be conducted in future and results will be reported when available.

Further development of outcome measures for SAAP services, in particular measuring self-reliance and independence of SAAP clients, is also in progress. This will provide opportunities for further reporting of outcome indicators for SAAP services in future Reports.

Improving data and information collection

A new SAAP core data set (CDS) was introduced on 1 July 2005. The new CDS contains revised questions to improve data quality and a new statistical linkage key which is used in a number of other national data sets. The statistical linkage key will facilitate linkage with other national data, particularly for longitudinal data analyses.

The SAAP Management and Reporting Tool (SMART) was upgraded at the same time as the new CDS. The SMART is currently used by over 55 per cent of SAAP agencies for electronic data collection. With built-in data collection and security settings as well as customised functions for users, the upgraded software will enable agencies to manage activities more efficiently and improve the coverage and quality of SAAP data for future Reports. The software will be further developed and expanded to be a full case management tool for SAAP agencies.

Enhanced SAAP performance reporting

SAAP performance reporting has been progressively streamlined and improved over the life of the SAAP IV agreement. Enhanced performance reporting will be incorporated in the SAAP V agreement and will be an important source of information on SAAP performance for future Reports.

15.9 Jurisdictions' comments

This section provides comments from each jurisdiction on the services covered in this chapter. Appendix A contains data that may assist in interpreting the performance indicators presented in this chapter. These data cover a range of demographic and geographic characteristics, including age profile, geographic distribution of the population, income levels, education levels, tenure of dwellings and cultural heritage (including Indigenous and ethnic status).

Australian Government comments

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2004-05 was the last year of the fourth Supported Accommodation Assistance Program Agreement (SAAP) between the Australian Government and the states and territories. The Australian Government has provided \$175 million to SAAP in 2004-05 and \$833 million over the five years of SAAP IV to 2004-05. Total Australian and State and Territory funding under SAAP IV was \$1.4 billion.

During 2004-05 the report of the evaluation of SAAP IV was presented to the Community Services ministers. The evaluation found SAAP IV to be an effective, appropriate and efficient program. Subsequently, the Australian Government in partnership with the States and Territories worked on the development of the next iteration of SAAP, the SAAP V Agreement. The SAAP V multilateral agreement was signed in October 2005 and it incorporates a new performance framework. Development work in 2004-05 led to the determination of three priorities under SAAP V: pre-crisis intervention, improved linkages, and better post-crisis transition support.

Work was also undertaken to introduce a new SAAP data set including the Statistical Linkage Key, and improved information systems for agency data reporting and performance and outcome measurement. During the year, a number of large research projects were completed which shed light on major issues facing agencies such as measurement of client satisfaction and measurement and assessment of the complex needs of SAAP clients. A number of other small research projects have informed SAAP of the characteristics, needs of clients and agency practice at regional and local level.

In 2004-05 the Australian Government committed \$10.4 million in new funding for the Household Organisational Management Expenses (HOME) Advice Program. This program builds on the success of the Family Homelessness Prevention Pilots. This pilot has delivered very strong results for families at risk of becoming homeless.

In 2004-05, almost 4700 young people were assisted through Reconnect services. Reconnect is an Australian Government program which assist young people who are homeless or at risk of being homeless. The aim of this early intervention program is to improve the level of engagement of homeless young people aged between 12 and 18, or those at risk of homelessness, with their family, with work, with education or training and with the community.

Also in 2004-05, almost 800 young people received the Transition to Independent Living Allowance (TILA). TILA is a one-off allowance of up to \$1000 in goods and services for young people exiting care, exiting juvenile justice, Indigenous kinship care, or other informal out-of-home care arrangements and who are moving to independent living.

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New South Wales Government comments

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Child protection and supported placements

In 2004, the Department of Community Services (DoCS) commenced a review of the Interagency Guidelines for Child Protection Intervention under the auspices of a Child Protection Senior Officers Group. The Guidelines form a foundation for good cross-agency practice in child protection in NSW and are well recognised and embedded in the practitioner community. The new Guidelines which are scheduled for completion in mid-2006 will take account of the new focus on prevention and early intervention as well as the significant growth in demand for child protection services.

In 2004-05 DoCS continued its program of research and development and design of improved models of care and support to better address the needs of children and young people in out-of-home care (OOHC). Enhancements include funding of additional intensive foster and residential care placements for children and young people with high needs, and recruitment of additional caseworkers and psychologists for Intensive Support teams for children and young people with high needs. Additional funds were allocated this year to expand foster care services for Aboriginal children and young people. Funding was provided to the Social Policy Research Centre for their Availability of Foster Carers report, and My Life Story Book was published and distributed for use with children in OOHC.

The business process for the inter-country adoption program was streamlined and cost recovery was introduced. The accreditation provision for inter-country and local adoption providers was put in place.

Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP)

In 2004-05 the key focus in NSW was on completing initiatives identified in the SAAP IV Agreement. These included a review of the Parramatta Men's Coalition and the Reconfiguration of Inner City of Sydney SAAP Services. The ongoing SAAP reform project in NSW accomplished new models of service, moving away from institutionalised care and placing stronger emphasis on retaining skills and encouraging self reliance through an independent living model at Campbell House.

SAAP provided funding for the commencement of the Domestic Violence Intervention Court Model strategy, in South West Sydney and Wagga. The funding was used to employ advocates to support and work with victims referred by Police. An evaluation of four safe houses in Orana Far West and Bourke Women's Refuge commenced in partnership with the Aboriginal community.

Negotiation of the SAAP V Multi-lateral Agreement has been a high priority. The new Agreement requires focus on the core issues of financial viability in the service system, and improved pre and post crisis support and service linkages. The Multilateral Agreement commenced on 30 November 2005. Focus will now shift to negotiating a Bilateral Agreement to be implemented by the end of January 2006.

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Victorian Government comments

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Child protection and supported placements

Legislation is currently passing through the Victorian Parliament that continues the child and family reform process commenced in 2002. This reform process has three aims: First to provide more assistance to families earlier so that the need for subsequent child protection involvement is diminished. Second, where children cannot remain in their parent's care, to put in place concerted efforts to reunite them safely with their family. Finally, where children cannot safely return home, to work to maximise stability for the child. The proposed legislation places children's best interests at its core and puts in place a range of measures designed to improve outcomes for children. These include:

- mechanisms to support strengthened earlier intervention
- stability planning requirements and timelines
- mechanisms to promote Aboriginal children's cultural and spiritual identity and development by, wherever possible, maintaining and building their connections to their Aboriginal family and community.

Informed by contemporary research on the child's development, Victoria's reform process is producing pleasing results with demand for front-end child protection services (notifications, investigations and substantiations) stabilising in recent years.

Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP)

Victoria has continued to implement new directions for the provision of homelessness assistance under the Victorian Homelessness Strategy during 2004-05. 34 900 people were provided with assistance through SAAP services. In addition, Housing Information and Referral services, accommodation through over 3500 transitional properties and Housing Establishment Funds (\$6.7 million), were also provided to people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. A number of homelessness agencies undertook a trial of the Homelessness Assistance Standards prior to their finalisation for implementation across the sector during 2005-06.

Activities under the Youth Homelessness Action Plan continued to be implemented including four demonstration projects aimed at addressing the needs of young people who are homeless and parenting, same sex attracted young people, young people who self harm and accommodation models for young Indigenous people. The support for young Indigenous people leaving care was also implemented.

The Housing and Community Building Division in conjunction with Department of Victorian Communities, Department of Justice, Victoria Police and Office for Children were successful in gaining funding (\$35.1 million over four years) to implement the Integrated response to family violence from 2005-06.

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Queensland Government comments

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Child protection and supported placements

Since the establishment of the new Department of Child Safety in September 2004, 85 of the 110 Crime and Misconduct Commission recommendations and 14 of the Foster Care Audit recommendations have been fully implemented.

Greater access to support for carers and children in care with complex and extreme needs has been provided through enhanced therapeutic and support services with funding allocated for 140 and 220 new or enhanced alternative care places in 2004-05 and 2005-06 respectively. A suite of Structured Decision Making tools and an accompanying Child Safety Practice Manual have been introduced to promote consistent practice and improve child safety outcomes in Queensland. Further legislative reforms were passed by Parliament in August 2005 with these amendments due to commence no later than April 2006. Key amendments relate to regulation of voluntary placements and carers, refinement of the Indigenous child placement principle, and Indigenous entity consultation.

The Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect (SCAN) team system has been strengthened with membership now including core representation from the Departments of Child Safety (Lead agency), Queensland Health, Education and the Arts, Queensland Police Service and a recognised Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander entity. Twenty SCAN teams are now operational around the State.

Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP)

Data in the 2006 Report reflect a general picture in Queensland of population growth, and increased demand for SAAP services. They also reflect the lack of additional SAAP funding to meet this need. Queensland's small share of Commonwealth SAAP funding has meant that Queensland's SAAP expenditure per person in the residential population is the lowest of any jurisdiction. The Queensland Government has responded by increasing its commitment to SAAP by more than 50 per cent (\$55 million in new funding for SAAP over the course of SAAP V).

This includes funding for a statewide information and referral service, integrated service hubs, early intervention services and additional accommodation for homeless families, young people and clients with complex needs — consistent with the new strategic directions for SAAP. Queensland will work with the Australian government and jurisdictions on indicator development, evaluation and reporting frameworks for these new services and strategic directions.

The Report also indicates continued high levels of access of SAAP services by Indigenous people and people from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse communities. It also shows that the SAAP services system is responding to this increased demand. Responsiveness by Queensland SAAP services to client need will be further enhanced through SAAP V through the implementation of Community Service Standards and Accreditation system.

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Western Australian Government comments

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Child protection and supported placements

The Department for Community Development is planning for the implementation of the *Children and Community Services Act 2004* and the *Working with Children (Criminal Record Checking) Act 2004* in 2006.

The *Children and Community Services Act 2004* supports a model that recognises the capacity of families to care safely for their children and provides a strong framework of intervention for children who are in need of protection.

The Department is currently exploring with indigenous communities a capacity building approach to child protection, a central element of which is the valuing of relationship based practice.

The implementation of a Central Carer Register ensures Department and funded agency carers are appropriately screened, assessed and registered. Mandatory preparation training for all general and relative foster carers was introduced.

Independent consultants were engaged to quality assure the systems, processes and practices aimed at protecting children in care. The report highlighted significant strengths as well as areas where improvements were required. The Government's response *Protecting Children in Care: A Way Forward* identifies the actions taken to enhance the safety and well being of children in care.

Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP)

2004-05 was the final year of the SAAP IV Agreement. The negotiation of the SAAP V Multilateral Agreement between the State and Australian Government was a significant process in 2004-05.

The Department initiated a number of projects during 2004-05 including:

- SAAP V Project to better understand cost pressures and sector trends affecting existing SAAP services over an extended period
- a project to investigate the use of support plans and extent of implementation of SAAP Service Standards
- a project to improve access for people with diverse sexuality and gender identity in SAAP services is providing training, support, resources and coaching and will be visiting a number of metropolitan and country locations across WA
- a review of four funded services for young people in the Perth inner city area to ensure the most appropriate mix of services is available to meet the needs of at risk young people, resulting in changes to ensure services are delivered effectively to young people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

The SAAP State Advisory Committee conducted four regional forums to better understand issues and service delivery needs across the State and completed two major reports on services for children in SAAP and how services meet the needs of clients with high and complex needs.

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South Australian Government comments

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Child protection and supported placements

South Australia's Keeping them Safe child protection reform agenda has facilitated an across-government commitment to supporting children, young people and their families, and to providing effective, appropriate interventions, reforming work practices and culture, establishing collaborative partnerships and improved accountability across government.

In 2004-05, significant progress on the reform agenda has been achieved through strengthening collaboration and cooperation across government departments. Amongst the new initiatives are the 'Strong Families, Safe Babies' intervention project for high risk infants, therapeutic and counselling treatment services for children, an additional ten emergency care houses, and a process of ensuring timely responses to the needs of children under the Guardianship of the Minister (the Rapid Response across-government agreement).

Amendments to the *Children's Protection Act, 1993* (the Keeping them Safe Bill) have been drafted. The proposed amendments contain new objects and principles to reflect a stronger focus on the child. The Bill provides for building community capacity to protect children through child safe environments, and extends the interpretation of 'at risk' to more truly reflect the extent of harm to a child. The Bill formalises mechanisms for independent monitoring and review of the care and protection system to help safeguard the interests of children.

Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP)

A comparative evaluation of transitional accommodation property management models was completed in June 2005. Consideration of the recommendations and appropriate service response is being undertaken by the Housing Management Council.

With the changes to the SAAP National Data Collection and the introduction of a core data set and a more robust statistical linkage key effective from 1 July 2005, a number of Familiarisation Sessions were conducted by the SAAP National Data Collection Agency (NDCA) in Adelaide. Ongoing discussions are being held with assessment and referral agencies in order to maximise their participation in the data collection.

South Australia has been involved in the SAAP NDCA's efforts to enhance the usefulness of electronic data collection instrument for agencies.

In conjunction with the University of South Australia a research project on 'Getting out and staying out: Pathways to independent living: best practice, critical interventions and strategies for addressing homelessness in South Australia' was completed and funded by the Department through AHURI Southern. Detailed analysis of SAAP data complemented this research.

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Tasmanian Government comments

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Child protection and supported placements

On 31 March 2005 Tasmania proclaimed the *Family Violence Act 2004*. The introduction of the legislation has significantly increased notifications from Tasmania Police as it has amended the definition of a child at risk of abuse and neglect to include a child affected by family violence.

A number of initiatives have been progressed during the financial year. These include further development of an information management system to record details of notifications and investigations; the introduction of Step by Step, the NSW assessment framework, and Shared Stories, Shared Lives, a complementary training package for carers, the development of a formal kinship care program, introduction of cottage care, the development of an information kit for young people leaving care, and ongoing implementation of Looking After Children.

These initiatives were informed by a report that was published by the Ombudsman's Office in November 2004 on a review of claims made by adults that they were abused while in State care as children. The purpose of the review was to acknowledge the experiences of claimants in State care. This involved an assessment of claims as well as the provision of support, counselling services, access to personal files and in some instances provision of ex gratia payments.

Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP)

During 2004-05, the final year of the initial SAAP IV agreement, Tasmania commissioned a consultant to undertake a Tasmanian Evaluation of SAAP IV. The evaluation will both review what has been achieved over the term of SAAP IV, what remains outstanding, what requires further development, and what were the unanticipated outcomes, and will help position Tasmania to address homelessness in this state in the post SAAP-IV environment. The final report from the consultant was provided in November 2005.

The State commenced work on a Homelessness Pathways project. This has brought together extensive information from Australian and international literature regarding how people become homeless. The project has identified common pressure points where people are likely to become homeless and has involved consultations with a wide range of service systems to establish whether the identified pressure points are valid in the Tasmanian context, to confirm the extent of the activity in this regard, and to identify any significant gaps in the existing service systems within the State.

In continuing to improve the standard of service delivery Tasmania is undertaking a project to implement the Quality Improvement Council's core organisational standards within SAAP services.

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Australian Capital Territory Government comments



Child protection and supported placements

The 2004-05 period has seen a significant increase in the number of child protection reports received, as well as an increase in the demand for out-of-home care placements. To meet this increased demand, new funding agreements for foster care agencies have been established, and a greater range of residential services for children have been developed.

During the period, the ACT Government continued with implementation of the recommendations and reforms agreed to in the Government response to The Territory as Parent – Review of the Safety of Children in Care in the ACT and of ACT Child Protection Management (25 May 2004). Some of the achievements of the implementation to date include:

- establishment of a new Office for Children Youth and Family Support (Office) structure (within the Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services) that aligns functions and client groups. This new Office has been centralised into one metropolitan location.
- the Office has recruited a number of experienced, professional child protection workers, more than doubling the number of frontline workers.
- on 3 January 2005, the Department established the Institute for Child Protection Studies – a partnership between the Office and the Australian Catholic University to promote best practice in the care and protection of children and young people in the ACT.

Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP)

The ACT Government continued to strengthen its response to homelessness in 2004-05, providing a recurrent funding allocation of \$381 000 (indexed over three years) to the Canberra Emergency Accommodation Service. This initiative, in addition to ACT Government funding of \$3.1 million (from the 2003-04 allocation of \$13.4 million over four years), increased ACT Government funding to the SAAP by 86 per cent.

Innovation and sector reform were ongoing features of the period, as the implementation of Breaking the Cycle — the ACT Homelessness Strategy facilitated cross-sectoral links and service collaboration. Reform of Ainslie Village, the ACT's largest and most expensive SAAP provider continues, with the site transitioning to a community housing model which better reflects the site's provision of longer-term accommodation.

Housing affordability in the ACT places particular pressures on the public housing system, with lengthy waiting periods for priority allocation impacting on people's transition from SAAP. Length of support periods are affected accordingly, although a longer period of support contributes to a more effective outcome for clients, as they are supported to resolve the causal and consequential factors of their homelessness.



Northern Territory Government comments

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Child protection and supported placements

The Northern Territory Government continued the development of the Family and Children's Services Reform Agenda in 2005. Increased funding commenced in December 2003 with the intent of improving child protection services and systems over a period of 5 years. Parts of the increased funds have been used to build on the child protection workforce and to ensure quality of care for children in out-of-home care. The tailoring of services to some of the highest needs children in out-of-home care by means of a specialist carer model has also commenced.

Other initiatives resulted in the employment of additional Indigenous apprentices and cadets to further strengthen the Indigenous Family and Children's Services workforce.

A new Intensive Family Preservation service commenced in July 2005, providing intensive family support to 30 families annually. It will provide a strengths based model as a strategy to keep families together and prevent admissions to the Out of Home care system.

Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP)

This year saw the continuing consolidation of SAAP IV and integration with other Northern Territory cross government initiatives including the Community Harmony Project and the Northern Territory Domestic and Aboriginal Family Violence Strategy.

The trend of Indigenous people being over represented in SAAP in the Northern Territory has not changed. More than 80 per cent of clients receiving assistance from refuges for women and children escaping family violence were Indigenous women with the exception of one service in Darwin where more than 50 per cent were Indigenous.

In recognition of the damage caused to children who witness family violence Women's refuges are increasingly developing programs for children.

Interestingly one youth service in Darwin has identified an increase in the number of young families presenting with only 58 per cent of their clients presenting as single people. The rest were either couples with or without children, sole parents or other family structures.

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15.10 Definitions of key terms and indicators

Child protection and out-of-home care services

Care and protection orders

Legal orders or administrative/voluntary arrangements involving the community services department, issued in respect of an individual child who is deemed to be in need of care and/or protection. Community services department involvement may include:

- total responsibility for the welfare of the child (for example, guardianship)
- responsibility for overseeing the actions of the person or authority caring for the child
- responsibility for providing or arranging accommodation, or reporting or considering the child's welfare.

The order may have been from a court, children's panel, minister of the Crown, authorised community services department officer or similar tribunal or officer.

Care and protection orders are categorised as:

- finalised guardianship and finalised custody orders sought through a court
- finalised supervision and other finalised court orders that give the department some responsibility for the child's welfare (excluding interim orders)
- interim and temporary orders (including orders that are not finalised)
- administrative or voluntary arrangements with the community services department, for the purpose of child protection.

Children are counted only once, even if they are on more than one care and protection order.

Child

A person aged 0–17 years.

Child at risk

A child for whom no abuse or neglect can be substantiated but where there are reasonable grounds to suspect the possibility of prior or future abuse or neglect, and for whom continued departmental involvement is considered warranted.

Child concern reports

Reports to community services departments regarding concerns about a child, as distinct from notifications of child abuse and neglect. The distinction between the two differs across and within jurisdictions.

Children in out-of-home care during the year

The total number of children who are in at least one out-of-home care placement at any time during the year. A child who is in more than one placement is counted only once.

Exited out-of-home care

Where a child does not return to care within two months.

Family based care

Home-based care (see 'placement types').

Family group homes	Residential child care single dwelling establishments that have as their main purpose the provision of substitute care to children. They are typically run like family homes, with a limited number of children who eat together as a family group and are cared for around the clock by resident substitute parents.
Foster care	Care of a child who is living apart from his or her natural or adoptive parents in a private household, by one or more adults who act as 'foster parents' and are paid a regular allowance by a government authority or non-government organisation for the child's support. The authorised department or non-government organisation provides continuing supervision or support while the child remains in the care of foster parents.
Foster parent	Any person (or such a person's spouse) who is being paid a foster allowance by a government or non-government organisation for the care of a child (excluding children in family group homes).
Guardian	Any person who has the legal and ongoing care and responsibility for the protection of a child.
Indigenous person	Person of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent who identifies as being an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and is accepted as such by the community with which he or she is associated. If Indigenous status is unknown, then a person is considered to be non-Indigenous.
Investigation	An investigation of child abuse and neglect that involves identifying harm or risk of harm to the child, determining an outcome and assessing protective needs. It includes the interviewing or sighting of the subject child where practicable.
Investigation finalised	Where an investigation is completed and an outcome is recorded by 31 August.
Investigation not finalised	Where an investigation is commenced but an outcome is not recorded by 31 August.
Length of time in continuous out-of-home care	The length of time for which a child is in out-of-home care on a continuous basis. A return home of less than seven days is not considered to break the continuity of placement.
Non-respite care	Out-of-home care for children for child protection reasons.
Notification	Contact with an authorised department by persons or other bodies making allegations of child abuse or neglect, or harm to a child.
Other relative	A grandparent, aunt, uncle or cousin, whether the relationship is half, full, step or through adoption, and can be traced through or to a person whose parents were not married to each other at the time of the child's birth. This category includes members of Aboriginal communities who are accepted by that community as being related to the child.
Out-of-home care	Overnight care, including placement with relatives (other than parents) where the government makes a financial payment. Includes care of children in legal and voluntary placements (that is, children on and not on a legal order) but excludes placements made in disability services, psychiatric services, juvenile justice facilities and overnight child care services.

Placement types	<p>Four main categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • facility-based care (placement in a residential building where the purpose is to provide placement for children and where there are paid staff, including placements in family group homes) • home-based care (placement in the home of a carer who is reimbursed for expenses for the care of the child). The three subcategories of home-based care are foster care/community care, relative/kinship care and other • independent living (including private board) • other (including unknown).
Relatives/kin	Family members other than parents, or a person well known to the child and/or family (based on an existing relationship).
Respite care	Out-of-home care on a temporary basis for reasons other than child protection — for example, when parents are ill. Excludes emergency care provided to children who are removed from their homes for protective reasons.
Safety in out-of-home care	The proportion of children in out-of-home care who are the subject of a child protection substantiation, where the person believed responsible for the child abuse, neglect or harm is living in the household (or was a worker in a residential care facility).
Stability of placement	<p>Number of placements for children who have exited out-of-home care and do not return within two months. Placements exclude respite or temporary placements lasting less than seven days. Placements are counted separately where there is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a change in the placement type — for example, from a home-based to a facility-based placement • within placement type, a change in venue or a change from one home-based placement to a different home-based placement. <p>A particular placement is counted only once, so a return to a previous placement is another placement.</p>
Substantiation	Notification for which an investigation concludes there is reasonable cause to believe that the child has been, is being or is likely to be abused, neglected or otherwise harmed. It does not necessarily require sufficient evidence for a successful prosecution and does not imply that treatment or case management is, or is to be, provided.

Supported accommodation and assistance

Accommodation	Crisis or short term accommodation, medium term to long term accommodation, and other SAAP funded accommodation (which comprises accommodation at hostels, motels and hotels, accommodation in caravans, community placements and other SAAP funded arrangements).
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Accommodation load (of agencies)	The number of accommodation days divided by the number of days for which the agency is operational during the reporting period, where the number of accommodation days equals the sum of accommodation days for all clients of an agency who are supported during the reporting period. The average accommodation load is the mean value of all agencies' accommodation loads. Support periods without valid accommodation dates are assigned the interquartile modal duration of accommodation for agencies of the same service delivery model in the same jurisdiction.
Agency	The body or establishment with which the State or Territory government or its representative agrees to provide a SAAP service. The legal entity has to be incorporated. Funding from the State or Territory government could be allocated directly (that is, from the government department) or indirectly (that is, from the auspice of the agency). The SAAP service could be provided at the agency's location or through an outlet at a different location.
Caseload (of agencies)	The number of support days (the sum of support days for all clients of the agency who are supported during the reporting period) divided by the number of days for which the agency is operational during the reporting period. The average caseload is the mean value of all agencies' caseloads. Support periods without valid support dates are assigned the interquartile modal duration of support for agencies of the same service delivery model in the same jurisdiction.
Casual client	A person who is in contact with a SAAP agency and receives one-off assistance for generally not more than one hour, and who does not establish an ongoing relationship with an agency.
Client	A person who receives supported accommodation or support.
Crisis or short term supported accommodation	Supported accommodation for periods of generally not more than three months (short term), and for persons needing immediate short term accommodation (crisis).
Cross-target/multiple/general services	SAAP services targeted at more than one primary client group category — for example, SAAP services for single persons regardless of their gender.
Day support	Support provided only on a walk-in basis — for example, an agency that provides a drop-in centre, showering facilities and a meals service at the location of the SAAP agency.
Homeless person	<p>A person who does not have access to safe, secure and adequate housing. A person is considered to not have such access if the only housing to which he or she has access:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is damaged, or is likely to damage, the person's health • threatens the person's safety • marginalises the person by failing to provide access to adequate personal amenities or the economic and social supports that a home normally affords • places the person in circumstances that threaten or adversely affect the adequacy, safety, security and affordability of that housing • is of unsecured tenure. <p>A person is also considered homeless if living in accommodation provided by a SAAP agency or some other form of emergency accommodation.</p>

Indigenous person	A person who is of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Island descent, who identifies as being an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, and who is accepted as such by the community with which they are associated.
Medium term to long term supported accommodation	Supported accommodation for periods over three months. Medium term is around three to six months and long term is longer than six months.
Multiple service delivery model	SAAP agencies that use more than one service delivery model to provide SAAP services — for example, crisis or short term accommodation and support, as well as day support (that is, the provision of meals).
Non-English speaking background services	Services that are targeted at persons whose first language is not English.
Non-recurrent funds	SAAP funds received for non-recurrent purposes, such as funds for research, a special one-off project or replacement of capital items (for example, furniture and motor vehicles).
Non-SAAP accommodation places	Accommodation places in the form of permanent beds (owned or managed by the agency) that use funds other than SAAP funds.
One-off assistance	Assistance provided to a person who is not a client, such as the provision of a meal, a shower, transport, money, clothing, telephone advice, information or a referral.
Ongoing support period	A support period for which, at the end of the reporting period, no support end date and no after-support information are provided.
Other special characteristics	Primary or secondary characteristics that are not included in those of a service's primary client or group, or in other categories of the secondary client group — for example, a service specifically targeted at homeless persons with a disability.
Outlet	A premise owned/managed/leased by an agency at which SAAP services are delivered. Excludes accommodation purchased using SAAP funds (for example, at a motel).
Outreach support services	Services that exist to provide support and other related assistance specifically to homeless people. These clients may be isolated and able to receive services and support from a range of options that enhance their flexibility (for example, advocacy, life skills and counselling). Generalist support and accommodation services may also provide outreach support in the form of follow-up to clients where they are housed. In this context, support is provided 'off site'.
Providers	Agencies that supply support and accommodation services.
Real expenditure	Actual expenditure adjusted for changes in prices. Adjustments are made using the GDP(E) price deflator and expressed in terms of final year prices.
Recurrent funding	Funding provided by the Australian, State and Territory governments to cover operating costs, salaries and rent.
Referral	When a SAAP agency contacts another agency and that agency accepts the person concerned for an appointment or interview. A referral is not provided if the person is not accepted for an appointment or interview.

SAAP service	Supported accommodation, support or one-off assistance that is provided by a SAAP agency and intended to be used by homeless persons.
Service delivery model	The mode or manner in which a service is provided through an agency. The modes of service delivery could be described as crisis or short term accommodation and support; medium term to long term accommodation and support; day support; outreach support; telephone information; and referral or agency support. An agency may deliver its services through one or more of these means of delivery.
Service provider	A worker or volunteer employed and/or engaged by a SAAP agency, who either directly provides a SAAP service or in some way contributes to the provision of a SAAP service. Includes administrative staff of an agency, whether paid or not paid.
Single men services	Services provided for males who present to the SAAP agency without a partner or children.
Single women services	Services provided for females who present to the SAAP agency without a partner or children.
Support	SAAP services, other than supported accommodation, that are provided to assist homeless people or persons at imminent risk of becoming homeless to achieve the maximum possible degree of self-reliance and independence. Support is ongoing and provided as part of a client relationship between the SAAP agency and the homeless person.
Support period	<p>The period that commences when a SAAP client establishes or re-establishes (after the cessation of a previous support period) an ongoing relationship with a SAAP agency. The support period ends when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • support ceases because the SAAP client terminates the relationship with the SAAP agency • support ceases because the SAAP agency terminates the relationship with the SAAP client • no support is provided to the SAAP client for a period of three months. <p>A support period is relevant to the provision of supported accommodation or support, not the provision of one-off assistance.</p>
Supported accommodation	Accommodation provided by a SAAP agency in conjunction with support. The accommodation component of supported accommodation is provided in the form of beds in particular locations or accommodation purchased using SAAP funds (for example, at a motel). Agencies that provide accommodation without providing support are considered to provide supported accommodation.
Telephone information and referral	Support delivered via telephone without face-to-face contact. Support provided may include information and/or referral.
Total funding	Funding for allocation to agencies (not available at the individual client group level) for training, equipment and other administration costs.
Unmet demand	A homeless person who seeks supported accommodation or support, but is not provided with that supported accommodation or support. The person may receive one-off assistance.

Women escaping domestic violence services

Services specifically designed to assist women and women accompanied by their children, who are homeless or at imminent risk of becoming homeless as a result of violence and/or abuse.

Youth/young people services

Services provided for people who are independent and above the school leaving age for the State or Territory concerned, and who present to the SAAP agency unaccompanied by a parent/guardian.

15.11 Supporting tables

Supporting tables are identified in references throughout this chapter by an 'A' suffix (for example, table 15A.3 is table 3 in the attachment). Supporting tables are provided on the CD-ROM enclosed with the Report. The files containing the supporting tables are provided in Microsoft Excel format as \Publications\Reports\2006\Attach15A.xls and in Adobe PDF format as \Publications\Reports\2006\Attach15A.pdf. The files containing the supporting tables can also be found on the Review web page (www.pc.gov.au/gsp). Users without access to the CD-ROM or Internet can contact the Secretariat to obtain the supporting tables (see contact details on the inside front cover of the Report).

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