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# 15 Protection and support services

Protection and support services aim to assist individuals and families who are in crisis or experiencing difficulties that hinder personal or family functioning. 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.

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## 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 experience 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 some 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

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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, and Family violence among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (AIHW 2006a), which found that Indigenous families across Australia experienced high levels of violence, compared with non-Indigenous families.

### *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
- 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

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**Box 15.1 (Continued)**

- 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 \$119.8 million in 2005-06. This expenditure has increased in real terms each year from \$64.0 million in 2001-02 (table 15A.21). This represents an average annual increase in expenditure of 16.9 per cent over this four year period. Tables 15A.21–24 provide additional information about families and children who were involved with intensive family support services during 2005-06.

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).

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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. Part of his role is to monitor the quality of out-of-home care services. A charter of rights for children in care is near completion.

*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 in care has been developed in consultation with children and young people in care and non-government organisations. The Advocate for Children in Care provides advocacy and complaints management services for children and young people in care. A Standards Monitoring Unit was established in April 2006 to develop and monitor standards for protection and care.

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**Box 15.2 (Continued)**

- 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.
- Tas** The Commissioner for Children's functions include promoting the rights and well-being 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 ACT Public 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 Public Advocate must refer systemic issues concerning young people to the Human Rights Commission for consideration. 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.
- NT** A review of the NT Community Welfare Act has resulted in draft legislation which is before the NT Legislative Assembly. Children's Commissioner and child death review functions are being considered.

*Source:* State and Territory governments (unpublished).

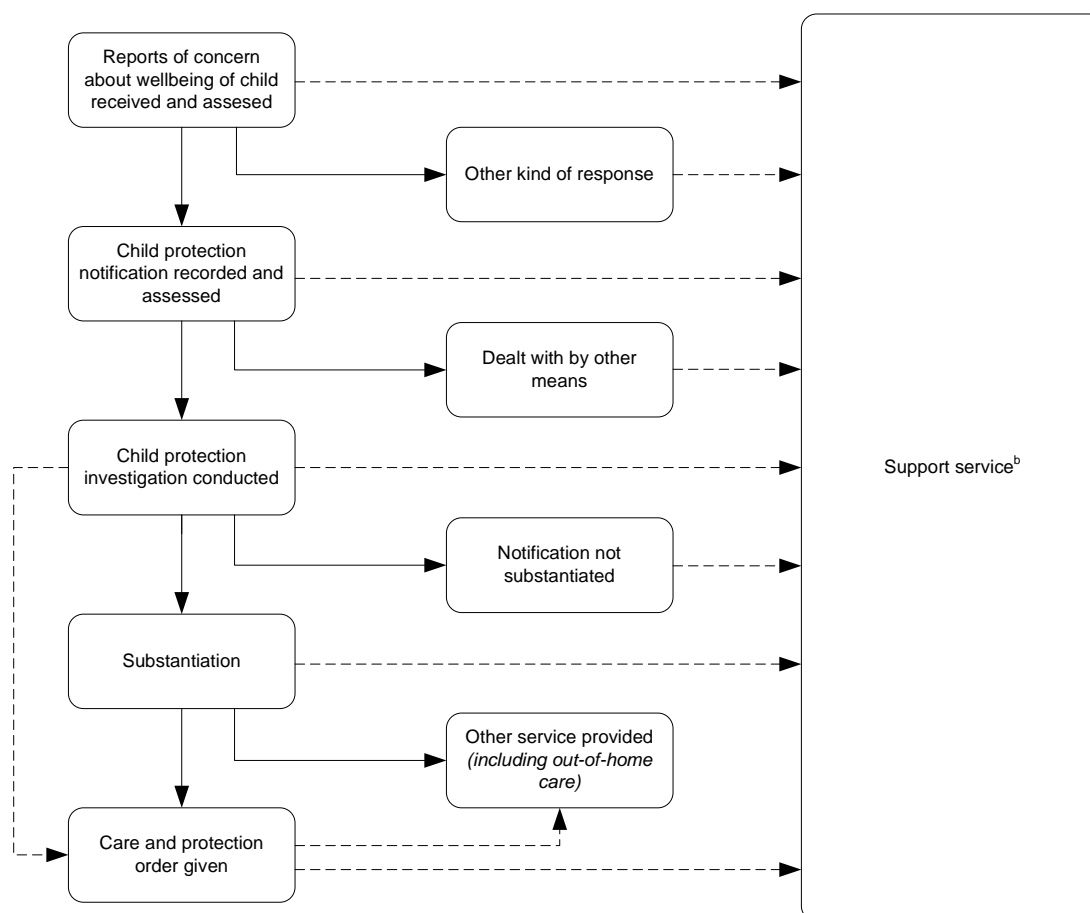
## **Size and scope**

### *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 school personnel, police, parents and guardians, other relatives and friends, and neighbours (AIHW 2006b).

Figure 15.1 The child protection system<sup>a</sup>



<sup>a</sup> Dashed lines indicate that clients may or may not receive these services, depending on need. <sup>b</sup> 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.<sup>1</sup>

All jurisdictions except Victoria, Tasmania, the ACT and the NT screen incoming reports before deciding whether they will be counted as a notification, thus reducing

<sup>1</sup> Child protection services, care and protection orders and out-of-home care relate to children aged 0–17 years. Rates of children 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.

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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 further reduces the number of notifications, as only reports about child harm/maltreatment are included in this Report.

In all jurisdictions, notifications are investigated, 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).

Nationally, 165 586 children aged 0–16 years were the subject of child protection notifications in 2005-06, although notifications are defined differently across jurisdictions. Nationally, the rate of notifications per 1000 children in the population aged 0–16 years was 36.5 in 2005-06 (table 15A.8). The total number of notifications for each jurisdiction for 2005-06 (including cases where a child is the subject of more than one child protection notification) is identified in table 15A.5.

Data on the number of notifications are collected early in the child protection process and often before the agency has full knowledge of the child's family circumstances. This lack of information and the inherent difficulties in identifying Indigenous status mean that data on the number of notifications by Indigenous status (table 15A.8) need to be interpreted with care due to low reliability.

### *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.



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Nationally, 34 336 children aged 0–16 years were the subject of a substantiation in 2005-06. The rate of children who were the subject of a substantiation per 1000 children in the population aged 0–16 years was 7.6 (table 15A.8). The number and rate of children aged 0-16 years who were the subject of a substantiation has increased since 2001-02. Nationally, 25 313 children were the subject of a substantiation in 2001-02, which represented a rate of 5.7 per 1000 children in the population aged 0-16 years (SCRCSSP 2003a).

Nationally, 6033 Indigenous and 28 303 non-Indigenous children were the subject of a substantiation in 2005-06. The rate of children who were the subject of a substantiation per 1000 children in the population aged 0–16 years was 29.5 for Indigenous children and 6.5 for non-Indigenous children (table 15A.8). The total number of substantiations for 2005-06 (including cases where a child is the subject of more than one substantiation) is identified at table 15A.5.

### *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, 27 188 children aged 0–17 years were on care and protection orders at 30 June 2006. The rate of children on care and protection orders per 1000 children in the population aged 0–17 years was 5.6 (table 15A.8). The number and rate of children aged 0-17 years who were the subject of a care and protection orders has increased since 2001-02. At 30 June 2002, 20 557 children were the subject of a care and protection order, which represented a rate of 4.3 per 1000 children in the population aged 0-17 years (SCRCSSP 2003a).

Nationally, 6520 Indigenous and 20 668 non-Indigenous children were on care and protection orders at 30 June 2006. The rate of children on care and protection orders per 1000 children in the population aged 0–17 years was 29.9 for Indigenous children and 4.5 for non-Indigenous children (table 15A.8). Further information on children on care and protection orders is included in the attachment tables to this Report. Table 15A.6 identifies the number of children admitted to and discharged from care and protection orders by Indigenous status, 2005-06. Table 15A.7 identifies the number of children on care and protection orders at by type of order and Indigenous status at 30 June 2006.

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## *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 place a child in out-of-home care only if this will improve the outcome for the child and only when it is not possible to maintain the child within their family. 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 2006b). 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, 25 454 children were in out-of-home care at 30 June 2006. The rate of children in out-of-home care per 1000 children in the population aged 0–17 years was 5.3 (table 15A.11). The number and rate of children aged 0–17 years in out-of-home care has increased since 2001-02. At 30 June 2002, 18 880 children were in out-of-home care, which represented a rate of 4.0 per 1000 children in the population aged 0–17 years (SCRCSSP 2003a).

Nationally, 6497 Indigenous children and 18 957 non-Indigenous children were in out-of-home care at 30 June 2006. The rate of children in out-of-home care per 1000 children in the population aged 0–17 years was 29.8 for Indigenous children and 4.1 for non-Indigenous children (table 15A.11). Further information on children in out-of-home care is included in the attachment tables to this Report. Table 15A.12 identifies the number of children in out-of-home care by Indigenous status and placement type as at 30 June 2006. Table 15A.13 identifies the number of children in out-of-home care by Indigenous status and whether on a care and protection order as at 30 June 2006. Table 15A.14 identifies the number of children in out-of-home care by Indigenous status and length of time in continuous out-of-home care as at 30 June 2006. Table 15A.15 identifies the number of children who exited care during the year 2005-06 by Indigenous status and length of time spent in care.

## **Funding**

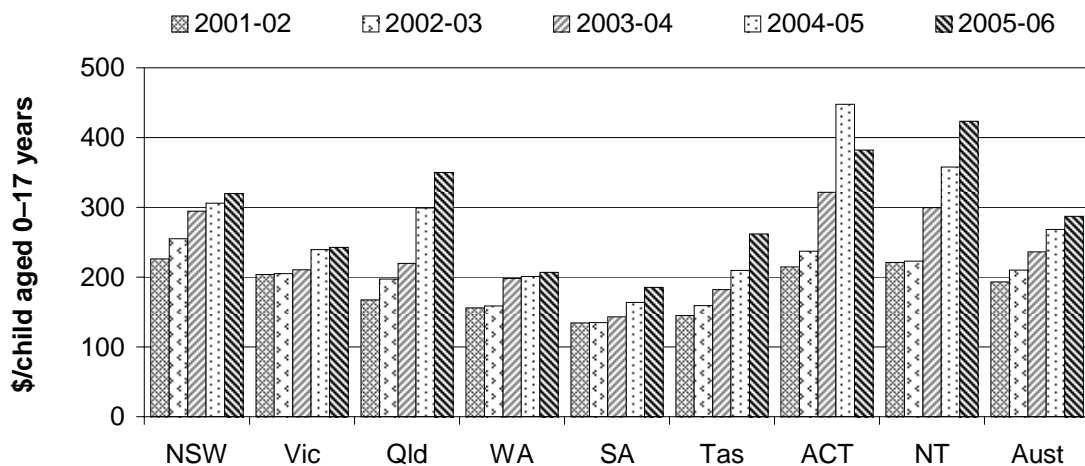
Recurrent expenditure on child protection and out-of-home care services was at least \$1.4 billion across Australia in 2005-06 — a real increase of \$96.2 million (7.5 per cent) from 2004-05. Nationally, out-of-home care services accounted for the majority (61.9 per cent, or \$857.8 million) of this expenditure. Some jurisdictions have difficulty in separating expenditure on child protection from expenditure on out-of-home care services. Nationally, annual real expenditure on

child protection and out-of-home care services has increased by \$453.9 million from \$930.9 million since 2001-02, an average annual increase over the four year period of 10.4 per cent (table 15A.1).

Nationally, real recurrent expenditure per child aged 0–17 years on child protection and out-of-home care services was \$287.11 in 2005-06 (figure 15.2). Real recurrent expenditure per child aged 0–17 years increased in all jurisdictions between 2001-02 and 2005-06 and has increased nationally each year since 2001-02. In 2001-02 the real recurrent expenditure per child aged 0–17 years was \$193.24 (table 15A.1). This represents an average annual increase over the four year period of 10.4 per cent.

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 calculation of expenditure. 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 (2005-06 dollars)**



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

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

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.

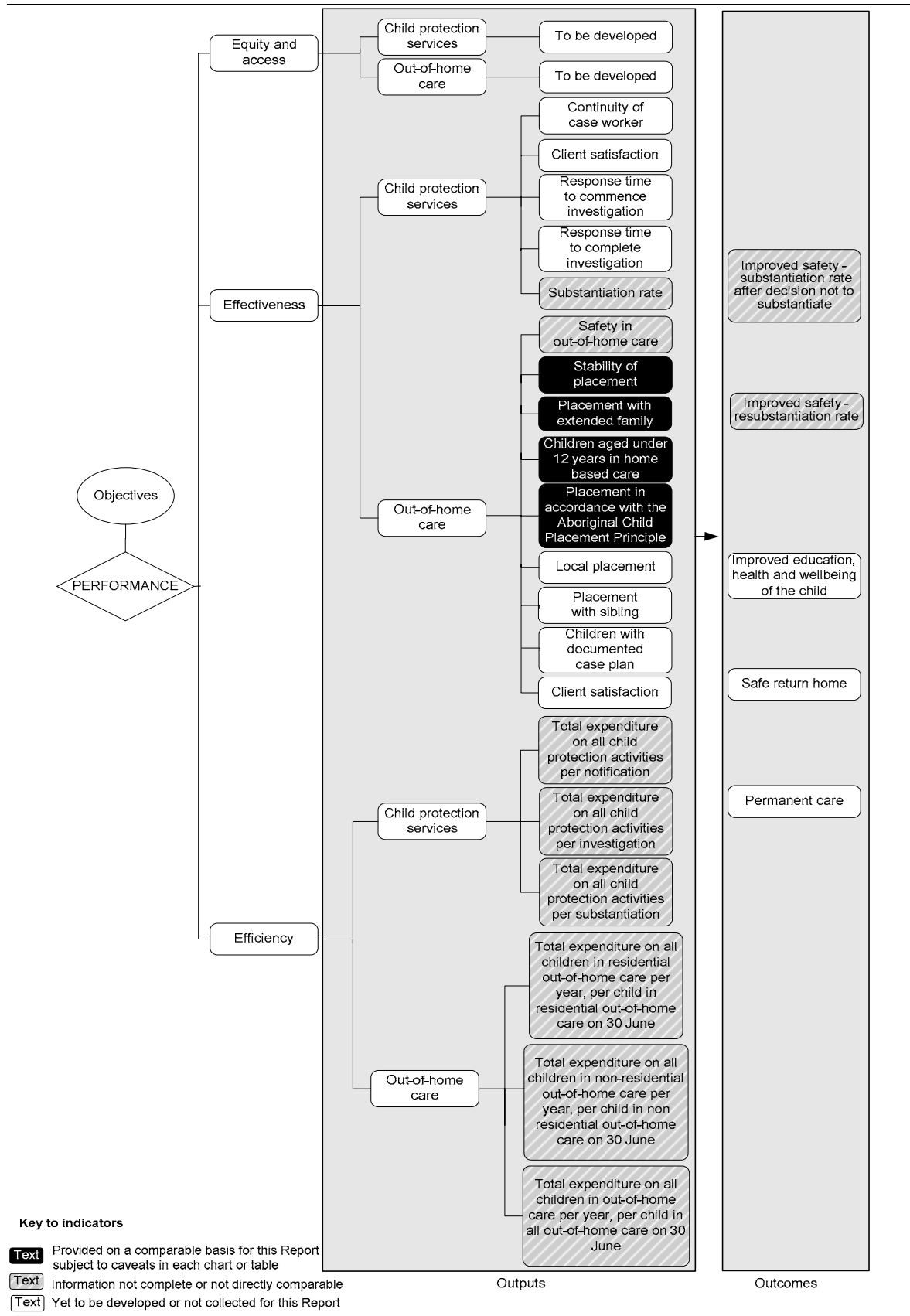
Child protection and out-of-home care services should be provided in an efficient and effective manner.

The performance indicator framework shows which data are comparable in the 2007 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 2007 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.

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



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In the 2007 Report, experimental data is included for the first time in relation to the ‘pathways’ project. This project develops an activity-based costing methodology to calculate efficiency indicators for child protection and out-of-home care services. The existing proxy indicators will remain in place until the pathways project is further developed.

## **Outputs**

### *Equity and access*

Equity and access indicators are 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 equity groups**

These will be 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.

### *Effectiveness*

#### *Child protection services — continuity of case worker*

‘Continuity of case worker’ is an output indicator of the effectiveness of child protection services (box 15.5).

**Box 15.5 Continuity of case worker**

‘Continuity of case worker’ is an output 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. This indicator has been identified for development and reporting in future. Data, however, were not available for the 2007 Report.

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*Child protection services — client satisfaction*

‘Client satisfaction’ is an output indicator of the effectiveness of child protection services (box 15.6).

**Box 15.6 Client satisfaction**

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

This indicator has been identified for development and reporting in future. Data, however, were not available for the 2007 Report.

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.

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### 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* In December 2005 and February 2006, the Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian undertook a survey of children and young people in care. The survey sought their views on their current placement, their Child Safety Officer and the child protection system in general. It is anticipated that these surveys will be conducted regularly. CREATE is funded to engage samples of children and young people to gain more information about how child protection services affect them. This information is provided back to the Department.
- WA* Children and young people provided with leaving care services were surveyed on a range of matters including satisfaction with the service, the extent to which they learnt new skills, their confidence to manage in the future and the extent to which they were supported in regard to care and safety. Questions relating to client-focused service delivery were included in the survey for the first time in 2005-06.
- 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 work attitudes was also undertaken. As a result, out-of-home care core training for staff has been restructured to incorporate the participation of young people in care planning.

*Source:* State and Territory governments (unpublished).



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*Child protection services — response time to commence investigation*

‘Response time to commence investigation’ is 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 output 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.

This indicator has been identified for development and reporting in future. Data, however, were not available for the 2007 Report, although progress is underway to implement measures and definitions for future Reports.

*Child protection services — response time to complete investigation*

‘Response time to complete investigation’ is 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 output 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.

This indicator has been identified for development and reporting in future. Data, however, were not available for the 2007 Report, although progress is underway to implement measures and definitions for future Reports.

*Child protection services — substantiation rate*

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

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**Box 15.10 Substantiation rate**

The 'substantiation rate' is an output 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.

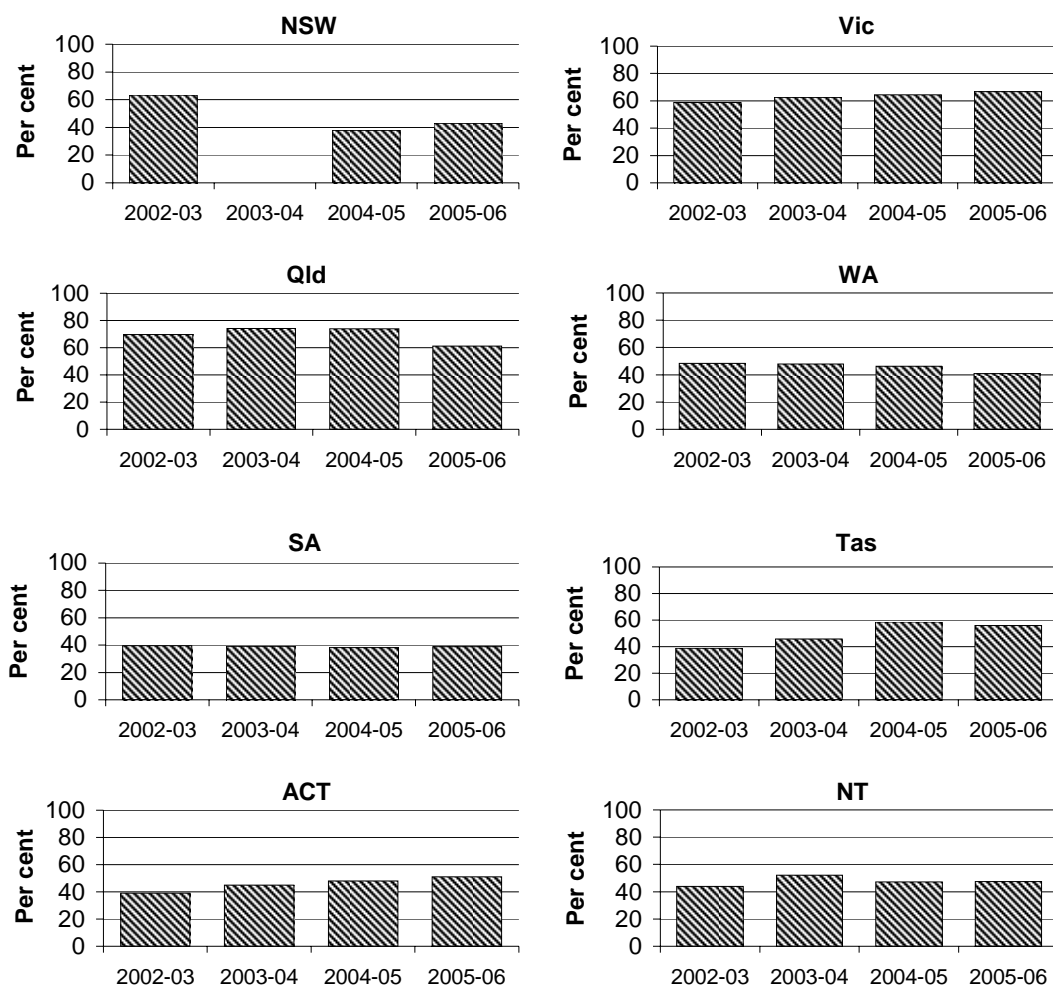
The substantiation rate should be neither 'very high' nor 'very low'. A very low substantiation rate may suggest that notifications and investigations are not accurately targeted at appropriate cases, with the undesirable consequence of distress to families and undermining the chances that families will 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<sup>a, b</sup>



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

Source: 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 an output indicator of effectiveness (box 15.11).

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**Box 15.11 Safety in out-of-home care**

‘Safety in out-of-home care’ is an output 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.

Four jurisdictions (Qld, WA, SA and ACT) provided 2005-06 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 an output indicator of effectiveness (box 15.12).

**Box 15.12 Stability of placement**

‘Stability of placement’ is an output 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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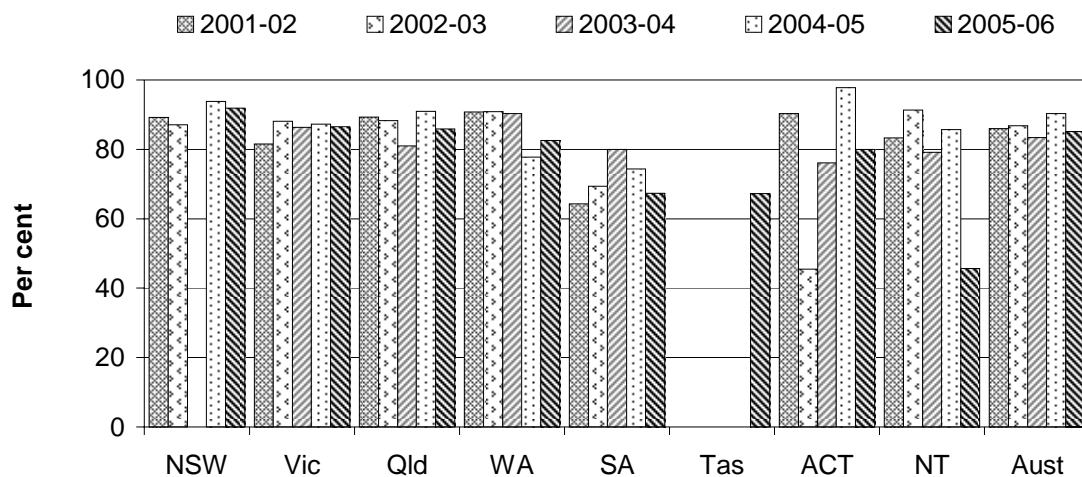
**Box 15.12 (Continued)**

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 2005-06. Data were grouped according to the length of time in care (less than 12 months and 12 months or more).

Nationally, 85.1 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 2005-06. 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<sup>a, b, c, d</sup>**

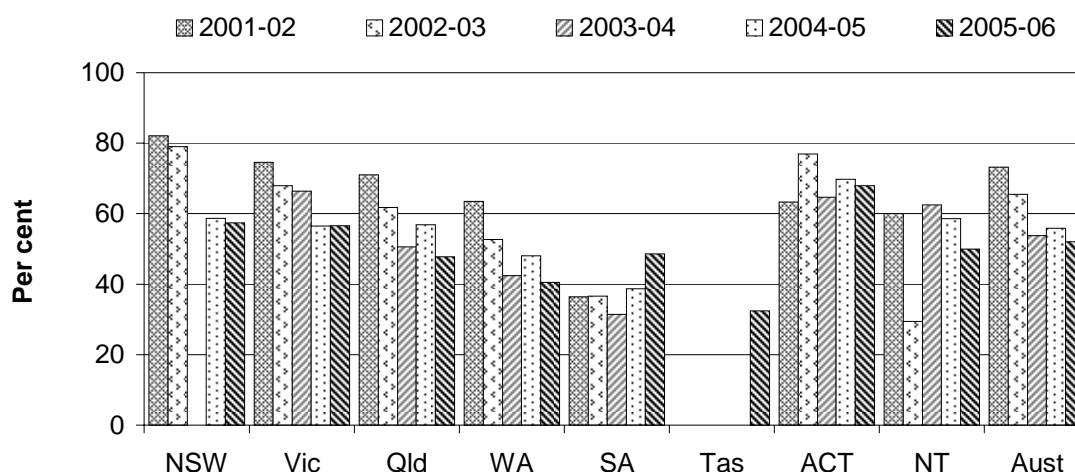


<sup>a</sup> Data refer to children exiting care during the relevant financial year. <sup>b</sup> Refer to footnotes in the source tables for information about what each jurisdiction's data include. <sup>c</sup> NSW child protection data from 2002-03 onwards are not comparable with data for previous years. NSW was unable to provide data for 2003-04 due to the introduction of a new client information system. <sup>d</sup> Data for Tasmania were not available prior to 2005-06.

Source: AIHW *Children in out-of-home care, Australia* data collection (unpublished); table 15A.19.

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 2005-06 after 12 months or more who had experienced one or two placements was 52.0 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<sup>a, b, c, d</sup>**



<sup>a</sup> Data refer to children exiting care during the relevant financial year. <sup>b</sup> Refer to footnotes in the source table for information about what each jurisdiction's data include. <sup>c</sup> NSW child protection data from 2002-03 are not comparable with data for previous years. NSW was unable to provide data for 2003-04 due to the introduction of a new client information system. <sup>d</sup> Data for Tasmania were not available prior to 2005-06.

Source: AIHW *Children in out-of-home care, Australia* data collection (unpublished); table 15A.19.

### *Out-of-home care — placement with extended family*

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

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**Box 15.13 Placement with extended family**

'Placement with extended family' is an output indicator of governments' objective to provide services that meet the needs of the recipients on the basis of relative need and available resources.

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.

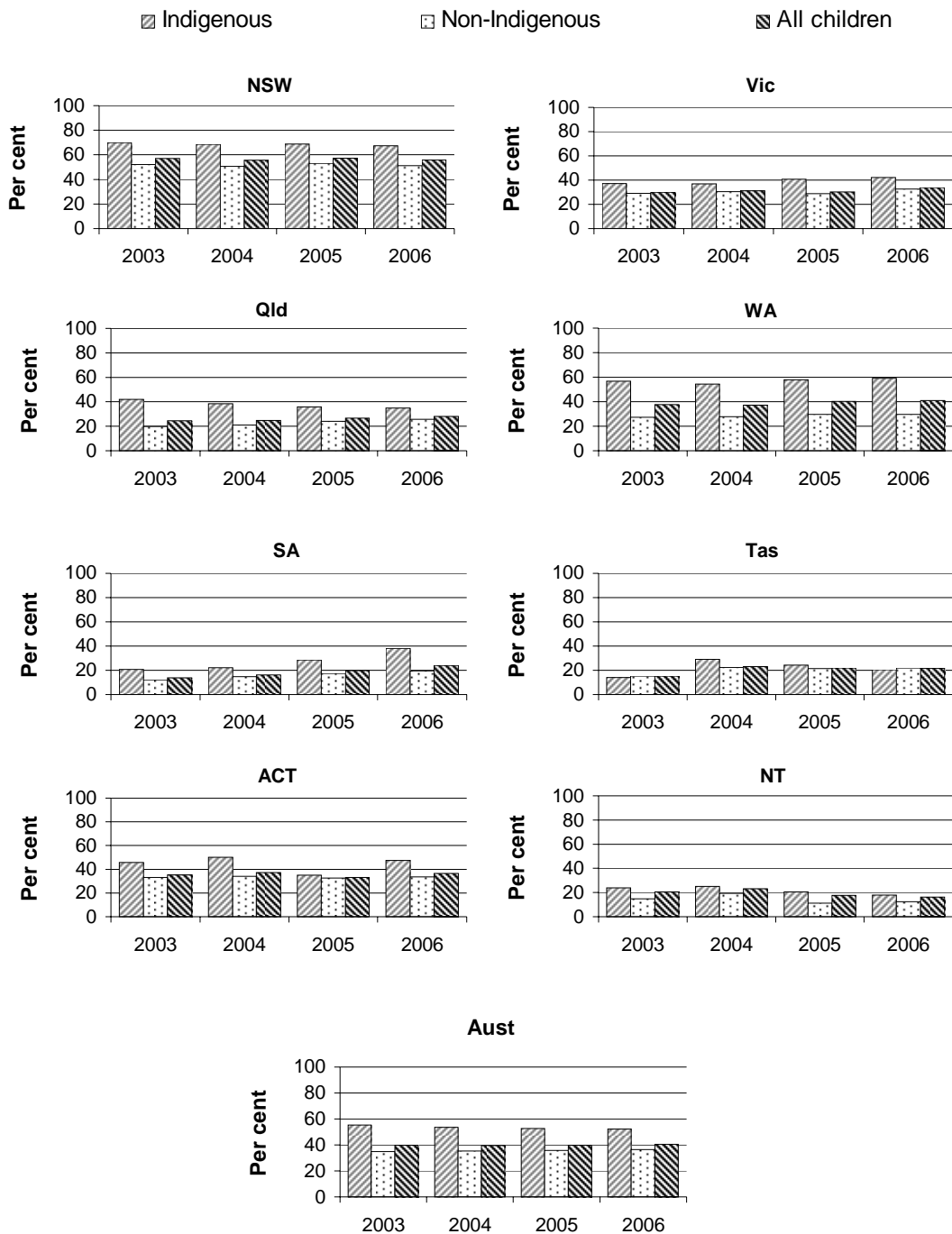
This needs to be considered with other factors in the placement decision.

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.

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 2006 was greater for Indigenous children than for non-Indigenous children in most jurisdictions and nationally (figure 15.7).

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



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.



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*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 output indicator of governments’ objective to provide services which meet the needs of the recipients. This indicator is defined as the number of children under 12 years of age placed in home-based care divided by the total number of children under 12 years in out-of-home care.

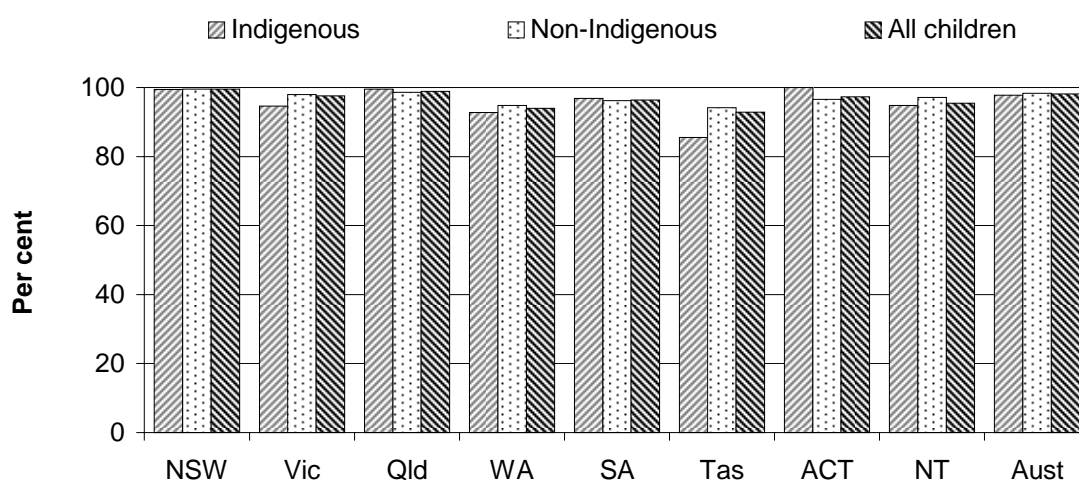
A high rate for this indicator is considered desirable.

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 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 2006 was 98.1 per cent nationally and exceeded 92 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 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 2006<sup>a</sup>**



<sup>a</sup> Family group homes are not classified as being home based care.

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

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*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 an output 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.

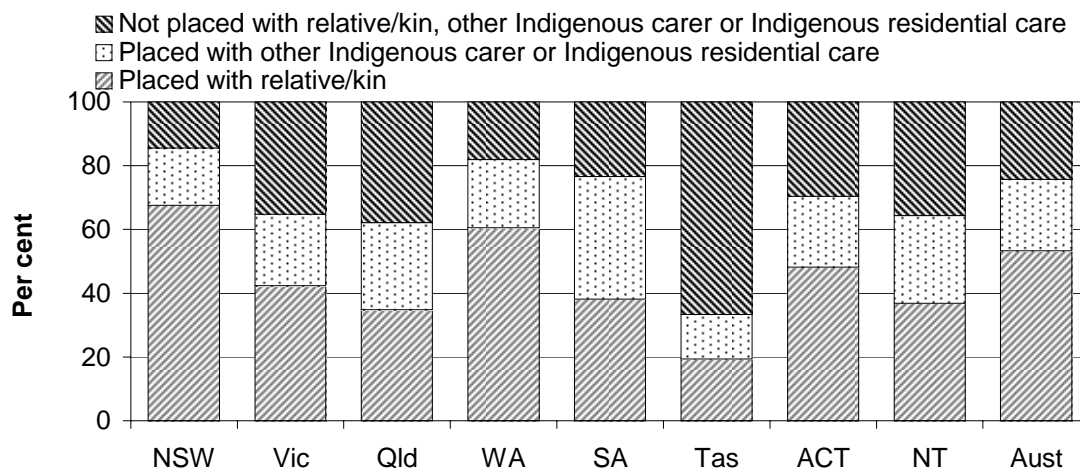
This indicator is defined as the number of Indigenous children placed with the child’s extended family, Indigenous community or other Indigenous people, divided by the total number of Indigenous children in out-of-home care. Data are reported separately for children placed (i) with relative/kin, (ii)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

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 2006 who were placed with Indigenous or non-Indigenous relatives or kin or with another Indigenous carer or in Indigenous residential care varies across jurisdictions (figure 15.9).

Figure 15.9 **Placement of Indigenous children in out-of-home care, 30 June 2006<sup>a, b, c</sup>**



<sup>a</sup> Excludes Indigenous children living independently and those whose living arrangements were unknown. <sup>b</sup> 'Placed with other Indigenous carer' includes those living in Indigenous residential care. <sup>c</sup> Data for Tasmania and the ACT relate to a small number of Indigenous children (98 and 82 respectively) in care at 30 June 2006.

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

### *Out-of-home care — local placement*

'Local placement' is an output indicator of the effectiveness of out-of-home care services (box 15.16).

#### **Box 15.16 Local placement**

Local placement is an output 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 out-of-home care. Data will be provided for 3 and 12 months after entering care.

A high rate of 'local placement' is desirable.

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.

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**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.

Data collections for local placement are being developed. Data, however, were not available for the 2007 Report.

*Out-of-home care — placement with sibling*

‘Placement with sibling’ is 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 output indicator of governments’ objective to provide services which meet the needs of the recipients.

This indicator is defined as the proportion of children who are on 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.

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 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 collections for placement with sibling are being developed. Data, however, were not available for the 2007 Report.

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

‘Children with documented case plan’ is an output indicator of the effectiveness of out-of-home care services (box 15.18).

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**Box 15.18 Children with documented case plan**

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

This indicator is defined as the proportion of children on an 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 and the mere existence of a case plan does not guarantee that appropriate case work is occurring that meets the child’s needs.

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.

Data collections for children with documented case plan are being developed. Data, however, were not available for the 2007 Report.

*Out-of-home care — client satisfaction*

‘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.

This indicator has been identified for development and reporting in future. Data, however, were not available for the 2007 Report.

Some information on jurisdictions’ development of initiatives which may assist to measure client satisfaction in the future is included on pages 15.15-16.

*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.

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### *Challenges in reporting efficiency for child protection systems*

Current efficiency data for child protection services has several limitations, 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 – such as different approaches to diversionary options (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.

As a result, cost allocations reflect the historic nature of information systems and do not necessarily provide an accurate reflection of the costs involved in provision of various child protection and out-of-home care services. This has limited reporting on efficiency to relatively poor proxy indicators (box 15.21).

In April 2002, the Review initiated a project to improve efficiency data for a national framework of protection and support pathways (box 15.20).

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### 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 which 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.

These activity groups and pathways will provide additional utility for jurisdictions in managing the business of child protection services. Implementation of the model has the potential to improve the quality of national reporting of protection and support services efficiency measures. Activity-based data can also result, over time, in measures of the cost savings associated with early intervention strategies.

The activity groups are:

- Activity Group 1 Receipt and assessment of initial information about a potential protection and support issue
- Activity Group 2 Provision of generic/non-intensive family support services
- Activity Group 3 Provision of intensive family support services
- Activity Group 4 Secondary information gathering and assessment
- Activity Group 5 Provision of short term protective intervention and coordination services
- Activity Group 6 Seeking a court order
- Activity Group 7 Provision of longer term protective intervention, support and coordination services
- Activity Group 8 Provision of out-of-home care services.

Detailed definitions of activity groups are included in section 15.10.

Before jurisdictional 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.

*Source:* SCRCSSP (2003b).

Some experimental results from the Pathways model, provided by some jurisdictions, are included in table 15.1. These data are preliminary and will be subject to further analysis and refinement. The data do not represent unit costs and should be interpreted with caution. Due to differing internal management systems across jurisdictions, there may be significant variation between jurisdictions in relation to specific activities or expenditures that are included in each activity group.

The data reflect a combination of allocation of direct costs (those costs which can be clearly identified by a jurisdiction to a particular activity group) and indirect costs (which form part of the overall expenditure base, but which cannot be identified in a specific activity group and hence have been allocated amongst the activity groups). These indirect allocations have been approximated by each jurisdiction amongst the eight activity groups.

Table 15.1 provides an approximation of the proportionate allocation of expenditure amongst the eight activity groups for each participating jurisdiction. The expenditure base used for the pathways project differs from the expenditure base used to calculate the existing proxy efficiency indicators for child protection and out-of-home care services (figures 15.10 and 15.11).

The proportion of expenditure allocated to Activity group 8 (Out-of-home care) is the most significant and varies from 41 per cent to 45 per cent across reporting jurisdictions. The proportion allocated to Activity group 3 (Provision of intensive family support services) is the lowest overall and is 4 per cent for each jurisdiction. The proportions allocated to Activity groups 1 (Receipt and assessment of initial information about a potential protection and support issue) and 6 (Seeking a court order) each accounted for less than 10 per cent across reporting jurisdictions.

**Table 15.1 Proportion of expenditure by activity group – experimental estimates (per cent)<sup>a, b, c, d</sup>**

	AG1	AG2 <sup>e</sup>	AG3	AG4	AG5	AG6	AG7	AG8	Total
Vic	3	24	4	5	4	7	8	44	100
SA	4	8	4	13	10	8	7	45	100
Tas	6	2	4	12	17	9	10	41	100

AG = Activity Group. AG1 Receipt and assessment of initial information about a potential protection and support issue. AG2 Provision of generic/non-intensive family support services. AG3 Provision of intensive family support services. AG4 Secondary information gathering and assessment. AG5 Provision of short term protective intervention and coordination services. AG6 Seeking a court order. AG7 Provision of longer term protective intervention, support and coordination services. AG8 Provision of out-of-home care services.

<sup>a</sup> Includes direct and indirect expenditure. <sup>b</sup> These experimental data have been derived from expenditure allocations in different years by the various participating jurisdictions, but may be applied indicatively to 2005-06. <sup>c</sup> These experimental percentage allocations are derived from total expenditure allocations which vary from totals used to derive costs presented elsewhere in the chapter. <sup>d</sup> Totals may not add to 100 as a result of rounding. <sup>e</sup> Expenditure items included in calculating proportional expenditure for Activity Group 2 may vary across jurisdictions.

Source: Victoria, SA and Tasmanian governments (unpublished).

These data will continue to be refined for future Reports, along with further developments to enable full implementation of the pathways project. Development of unit costs is anticipated for the 2008 Report.



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### *Child protection services proxy efficiency indicators*

There are several proxy indicators of efficiency for child protection services (box 15.21).

#### **Box 15.21 Child protection services proxy efficiency indicators**

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

These indicators are imperfect proxy indicators and need to be interpreted with care.

Because each of these proxy indicators is based on total expenditure on child protection activities, they do not represent, and cannot be interpreted as, unit costs for notifications, investigations or substantiations.

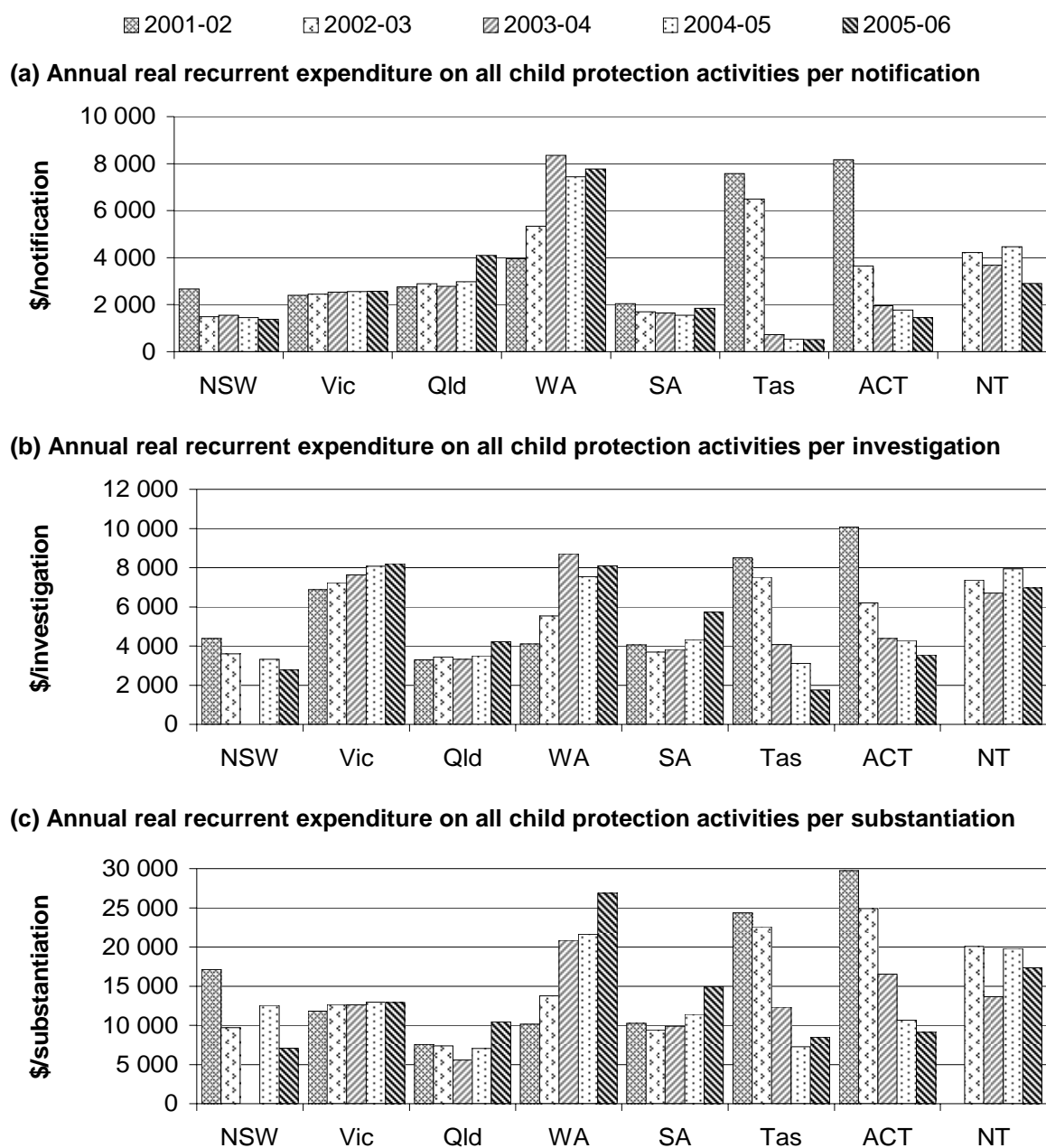
These proxy indicators cannot be added together to determine overall cost of child protection services.

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

These measures are included as interim measures only, and will be replaced by a more robust method under development (box 15.20). 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 all child protection activities per notification, all child protection activities per investigation and all child protection activities per substantiation from 2000-01 to 2004-05 varied between jurisdictions (figure 15.10).

Figure 15.10 Child protection efficiency indicators (2005-06 dollars)<sup>a, b, c, d, e</sup>



<sup>a</sup> Real expenditure based on ABS gross domestic product price deflator (2005-06 = 100) (table AA.26).

<sup>b</sup> These data are derived from proxy indicators and cannot be interpreted as the unit costs for 'expenditure per notification', 'expenditure per investigation' or 'expenditure per substantiation' because each is based on the total expenditure of all child protection activities. They cannot be added together to derive a total cost for child protection activities. Differences across jurisdictions reflect the quantity of the three activities rather than a difference in unit costs. <sup>c</sup> NSW 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.

<sup>d</sup> NT was unable to provide data for 2001-02. <sup>e</sup> 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. Every call regarding a child is now 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.

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### *Out-of-home care proxy efficiency indicators*

There are several 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 proxy efficiency indicators**

Three proxy out-of-home care efficiency measures are output indicators of governments' objective to maximise the benefit to the community through the efficient use of taxpayer resources: 'total expenditure on all children in residential out-of-home care per year, per child in residential out-of-home care on 30 June', 'total expenditure on all children in non-residential out-of-home care per year, per child in non-residential out-of-home care on 30 June', and 'total expenditure on all children in out-of-home care per year, per child in all out-of-home care on 30 June'.

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

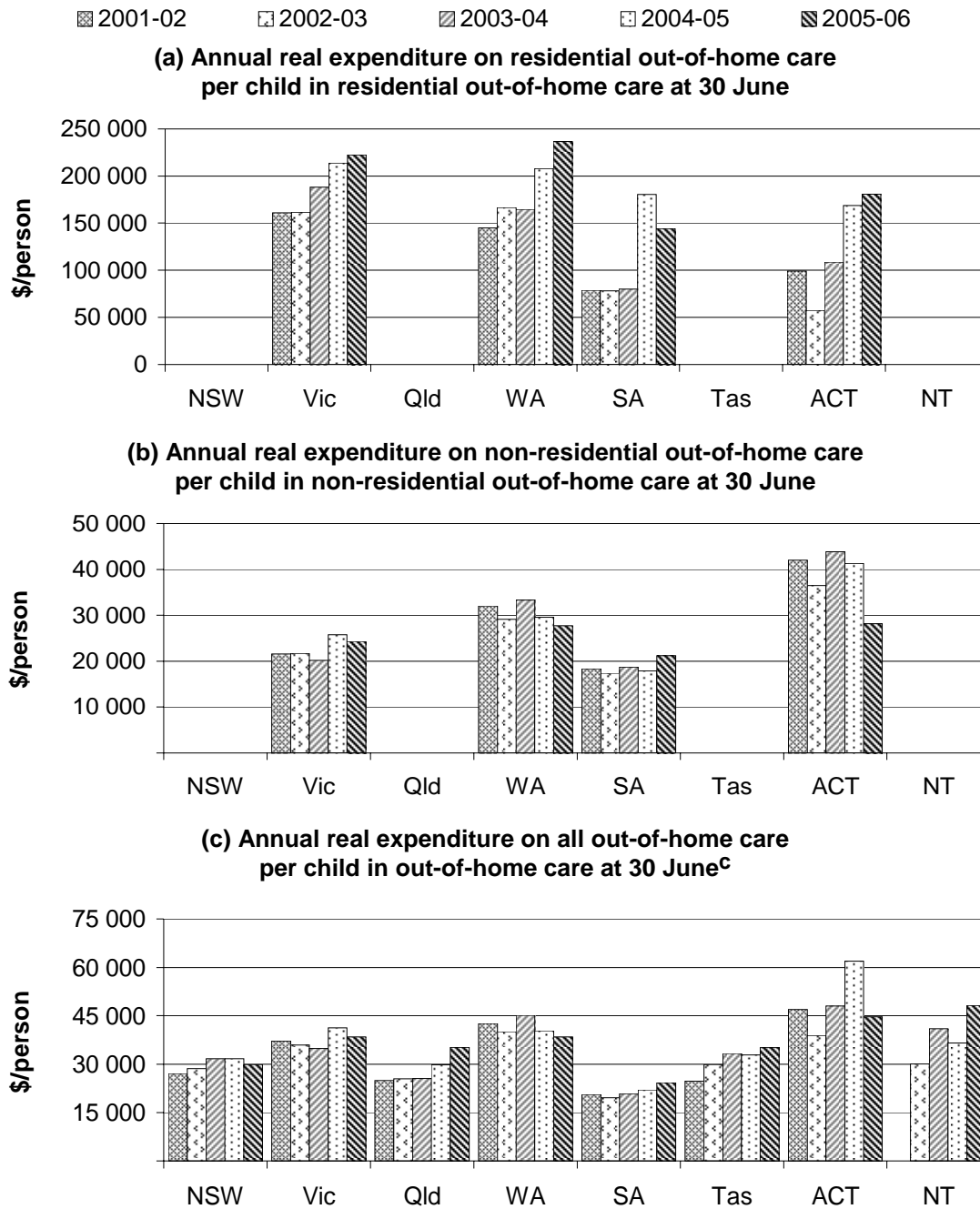
These indicators are imperfect proxy indicators and need to be interpreted with care. Low expenditure per child in care may suggest more efficient services but may also indicate lower service quality.

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.

These measures are included as interim measures only, and will be replaced by a more robust method under development (box 15.20). 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. This annual expenditure to 30 June for 2001-02 to 2005-06 varied across these 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 2001-02 to 2005-06, which varied across jurisdictions (figure 15.11c).

Figure 15.11 Out-of-home care efficiency indicators (2005-06 dollars)<sup>a, b</sup>



<sup>a</sup> Real expenditure based on ABS gross domestic product price deflator (2005-06 = 100) (table AA.26).

<sup>b</sup> These data do not represent unit costs of providing out-of-home care services. <sup>c</sup> NT were unable to provide data for 2001-02.

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

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## 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).

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

‘Improved safety — substantiation rate 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.

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. The year reported relates to the year of the initial decision not to substantiate.

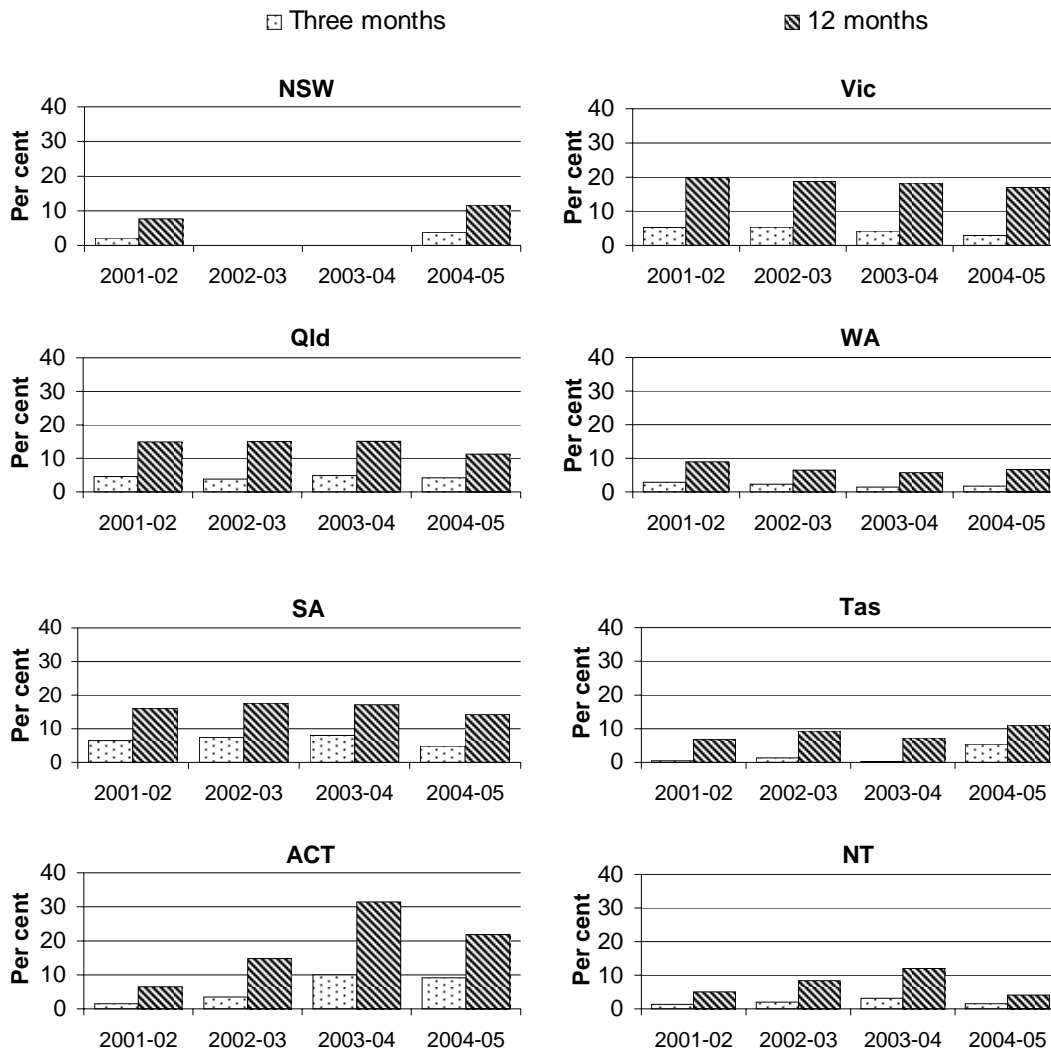
This indicator partly reveals the extent to which an investigation has not succeeded in identifying the risk of harm to a child who is subsequently the subject of substantiated harm. It also provides a measure of the adequacy of intervention offered to children in terms of protecting them from further harm.

A low rate for this indicator is generally desirable. However, 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).

This indicator should be considered with other outcome indicators.

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 from 2003-04 onwards are based on a different counting rule to previous years (figure 15.12).

**Figure 15.12 Improved safety — substantiation rate within 3 and/or 12 months after a decision not to substantiate<sup>a, b, c</sup>**



<sup>a</sup> Data are not comparable across jurisdictions because definitions of substantiation vary significantly. Consequently, rates cannot be compared across jurisdictions. <sup>b</sup> NSW was unable to provide 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. <sup>c</sup> The counting rule for this indicator has been changed for 2003-04 onwards, which may have resulted in a lowering of the rate for some jurisdictions in 2003-04 and 2004-05. Therefore care should be taken when comparing 2003-04 and 2004-05 with other years. SA applied the earlier counting rule, from 2001-02 to 2004-05.

Source: AIHW *Child protection notifications, investigations and substantiations, Australia* data collection (unpublished); tables 15A.9, 15A.31, 15A.48, 15A.65, 15A.82, 15A.99, 15A.116, 15A.133 and 15A.150.

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### *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 outcome 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.

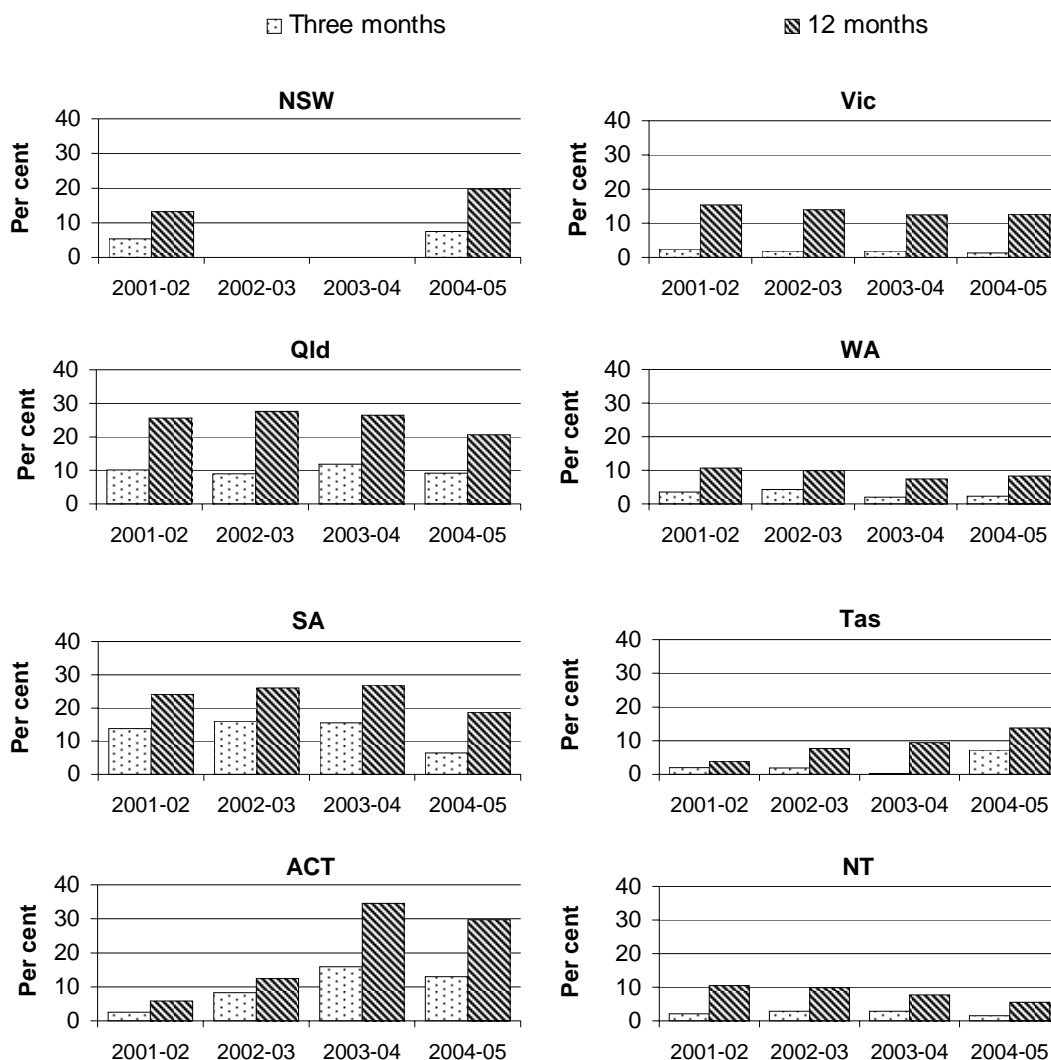
This indicator is defined as the proportion of children who were the subject of a substantiation in the previous financial year, who were subsequently the subject of a further substantiation within the following three or 12 months. The year reported relates to the year of the original substantiation.

A low rate for this indicator is generally desirable. However, 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).

This indicator should be considered with other outcome indicators.

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 from 2003-04 onwards 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<sup>a, b, c</sup>**



<sup>a</sup> Data are not comparable across jurisdictions because definitions of substantiation vary significantly. Consequently, rates cannot be compared across jurisdictions. <sup>b</sup> NSW was unable to provide 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. <sup>c</sup> The counting rule for this indicator has been changed for 2003-04 onwards, which may have resulted in a lowering of the rate for some jurisdictions in 2003-04 and 2004-05. Therefore care should be taken when comparing 2003-04 and 2004-05 with other years. SA applied the earlier counting rule, from 2001-02 to 2004-05.

Source: AIHW *Child protection notifications, investigations and substantiations, Australia data collection* (unpublished); tables 15A.10, 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’ is an outcome indicator of child protection and out-of-home care services (box 15.25).



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**Box 15.25 Improved education, health and wellbeing of the child**

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

This indicator has been identified for development and reporting in future. Data, however, were not available for the 2007 Report, although progress is underway to collect information on educational outcomes for future Reports.

*Safe return home*

'Safe return home' is an outcome indicator of child protection and out-of-home care services (box 15.26).

**Box 15.26 Safe return home**

'Safe return home' is an outcome 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.

This indicator has been identified for development and reporting in future. Data, however, were not available for the 2007 Report.

*Permanent care*

'Permanent care' is an outcome indicator of child protection and out-of-home care services (box 15.27).

**Box 15.27 Permanent care**

'Permanent care' is an outcome 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.

This indicator has been identified for development and reporting in future. Data, however, were not available for the 2007 Report.

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## **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 NCPASS will be developing comparative data in relation to response times to commence and complete investigations for inclusion in the 2008 Report, in addition to some material relating to educational outcomes for children on orders.

Further development of the pathways activity-based costing project will reduce the reliance on proxy efficiency indicators for child protection and out-of-home care and enable more detailed and comparative analysis of efficiency indicators.

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## 15.5 Profile of supported accommodation and assistance services

### Service overview

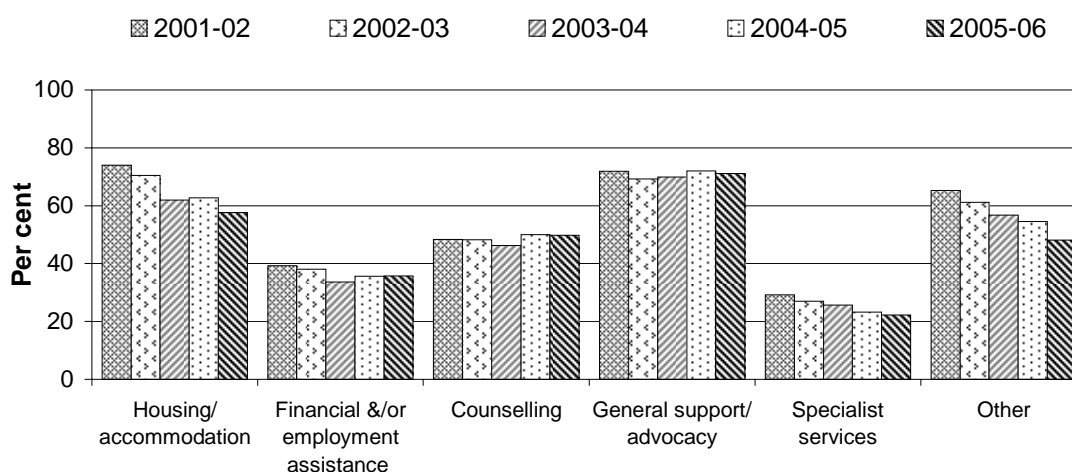
Supported accommodation and assistance services aim to assist people who are homeless or at imminent risk of becoming homeless as a result of a crisis, including women and children escaping domestic violence.

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.

Most of the SAAP information in this Report is sourced from the SAAP National Data Collection (NDC). In 2005-06, the Client Collection of the SAAP NDC underwent some significant changes resulting from the introduction of the new core dataset and the new linkage key. Some of the data items in the Client Collection have changed. The new linkage key used in estimating the number of clients now contains a different combination of letters in clients' names and surnames and requires clients' date of birth instead of year of birth. Therefore, some SAAP data for this year are not directly comparable to those in previous years. Since 2004-05, there has also been a change in the definition of a SAAP support period. This may have an effect on the reported number of support periods.

Nationally, in 2005-06, housing and accommodation services were provided in 57.6 per cent of support periods. Financial and employment assistance (35.7 per cent), counselling (49.8 per cent), general support and advocacy (71.1 per cent), and specialist services (22.2 per cent) were also commonly provided. There has been some change in the proportions of types of service provided by SAAP agencies over time. In 2001-02, housing and accommodation constituted 74.0 per cent of support periods and specialist services constituted 29.2 per cent. 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<sup>a</sup>



<sup>a</sup> Totals do 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 1294 agencies are funded under the SAAP program, and most target principally one of these client groups. Services were delivered in 2005-06 by agencies targeting:

- young people (36.0 per cent of agencies)
- women escaping domestic violence (22.9 per cent)
- families (9.1 per cent)
- single men (6.9 per cent)
- single women (3.6 per cent)
- multiple client groups (21.5 per cent) (table 15A.164).

The proportions of agencies targeting the client groups listed above have remained relatively stable since 2001-02.

Agencies also vary in their service delivery model. The most common models in 2005-06 were the provision of medium term to long term supported accommodation (35.9 per cent) and the provision of crisis or short term supported accommodation (35.2 per cent). Agencies also provided services other than accommodation, such as

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outreach support (4.6 per cent of agencies), day support (2.1 per cent), and telephone information and referral (1.4 per cent). A further 13.4 per cent of agencies provided multiple services and 1.8 per cent provided agency support (table 15A.165). The proportions of agencies delivering particular service models listed above have remained relatively stable since 2001-02.

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 may have also had contact with child protection and out-of-home care services or may 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 infrastructure funding for SAAP accommodation. 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.<sup>2</sup> In 2005-06, for example, approximately 13.3 per cent of former SAAP clients, who requested assistance with obtaining or maintaining independent housing, had moved to public housing (figure 15.32).

## **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

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<sup>2</sup> 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.

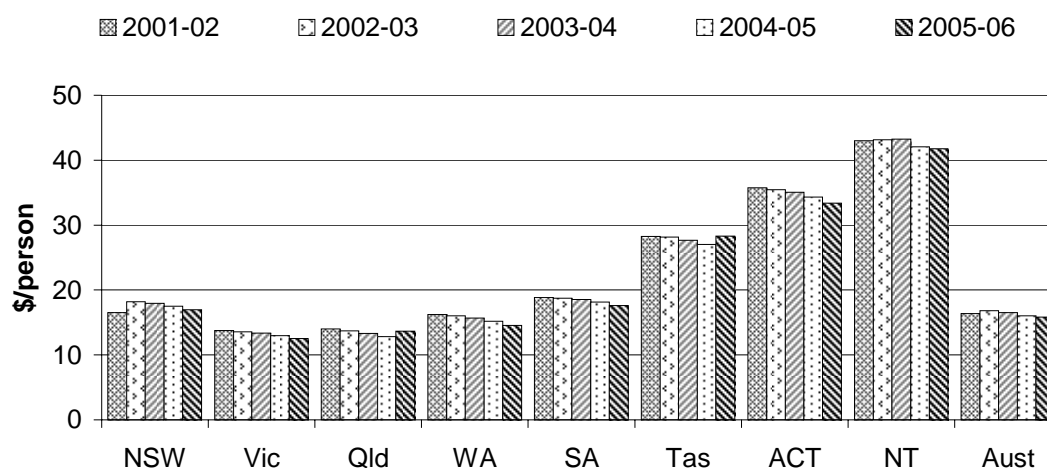
Development Committee (which includes representatives of the Australian Government and each State and Territory government).

## Funding

Recurrent funding of SAAP services was \$323.9 million in 2005-06 (table 15A.167), of which the Australian Government contributed 55.1 per cent and the States and Territory governments contributed 44.9 per cent (table 15A.166). These proportions have remained relatively stable since 2001-02. Recurrent SAAP funding per person in the total population in 2005-06 was \$15.80 nationally. This figure varied across jurisdictions but has relatively stable nationally since 2001-02 (figure 15.15).

In 2005-06, some jurisdictions made recurrent allocations in addition to the amounts determined in agreements between those jurisdictions and the Australian Government. These additional funds are not included in the above figures.

**Figure 15.15 Real recurrent SAAP funding per person in the residential population (2005-06 dollars)<sup>a, b, c</sup>**



<sup>a</sup> Includes total recurrent allocations (including State and Territory level allocations for program administration). <sup>b</sup> The total population figure is not indicative of the demand for these services. <sup>c</sup> Real recurrent funding is calculated using ABS gross domestic product expenditure implicit price deflator 2005-06 = 100 (table AA.26).

Source: Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaCSIA) (unpublished); table 15A.168.

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## 15.6 Framework of performance indicators for supported accommodation and assistance services

The framework of performance indicators for supported accommodation and assistance services 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:

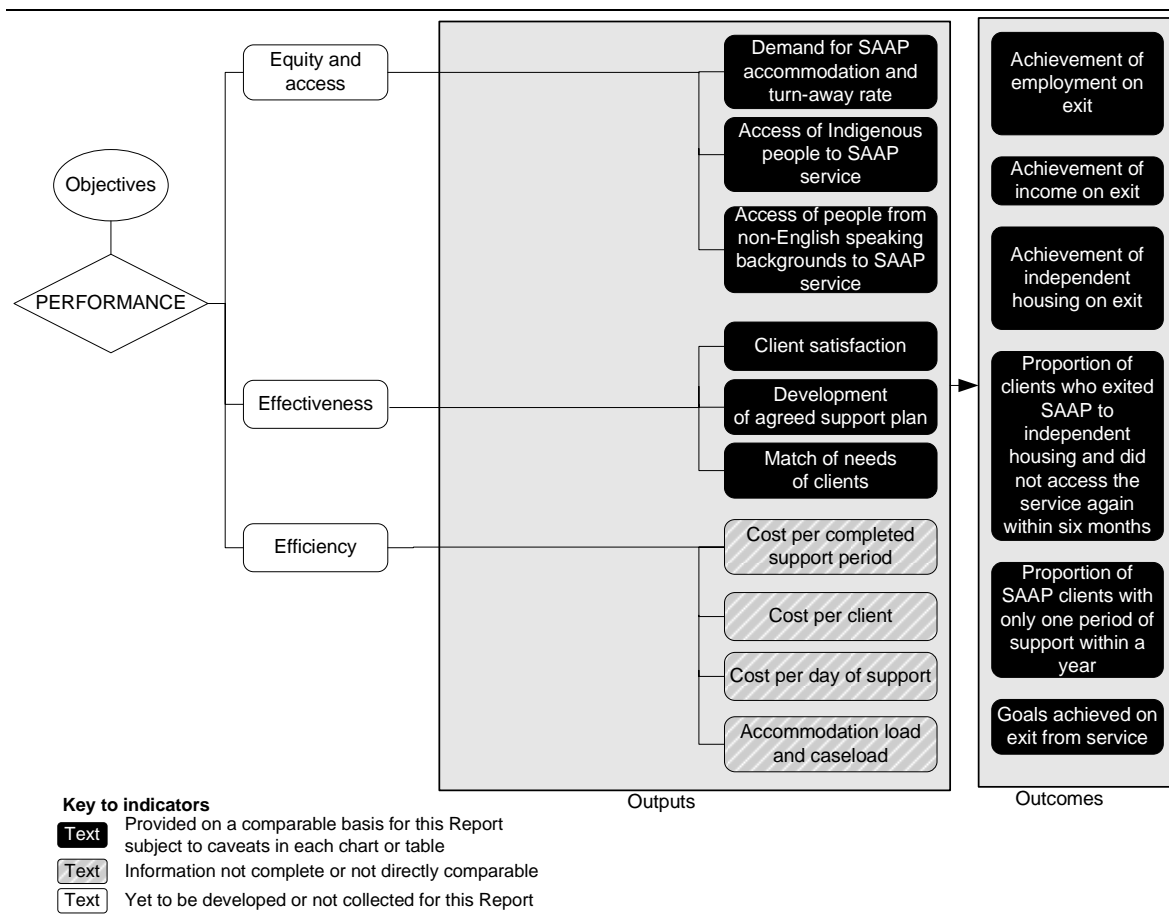
- resolve crises
- re-establish family links where appropriate
- re-establish the capacity of clients to live independently of SAAP.

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).

The performance indicator framework shows which data are comparable in the 2007 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 2007 Report, there are a number of improvements in reporting performance of SAAP services. The equity and access indicator in previous Reports ‘proportion of people who receive a service’ is now presented as three separate indicators ‘demand for SAAP accommodation and turn away rate’, ‘access of Indigenous people to SAAP service’ and ‘access of people from non-English speaking backgrounds to SAAP service’. The outcome indicator in previous Reports ‘achievement of independent living’ is now presented as two separate indicators ‘achievement of independent housing on exit’ and ‘achievement of employment on exit’. The outcome indicator in previous Reports ‘not returning to SAAP services within the year or six months’ is now presented as two separate indicators ‘proportion of SAAP clients with only one period of support within a year’ and ‘proportion of SAAP clients who exited SAAP to independent housing and did not access the service again within six months’.



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## 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 86.6 per cent of support periods in 2005-06. A weighting system has been developed to adjust for agency non-participation (92.9 per cent of agencies participated in the client collection) and non-consent (SAAP NDCA *Administrative Data and Client Collection*, unpublished).

## Outputs

*Equity and access*

*Demand for SAAP accommodation and turn away rate*

‘Demand for SAAP accommodation and turn away rate’ is an output (equity and access) indicator of SAAP services (box 15.30).

### Box 15.30 Demand for SAAP accommodation and turn away rate

‘Demand for SAAP accommodation and turn away rate’ is an output 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 accommodation is met or unmet. Unmet demand occurs when a homeless person expressly asking for supported accommodation cannot be provided with that assistance (although one-off assistance may be provided).

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**Box 15.30 (Continued)**

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

Daily request turn-away rate 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.

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

A higher proportion of valid requests receiving assistance is desirable.

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.

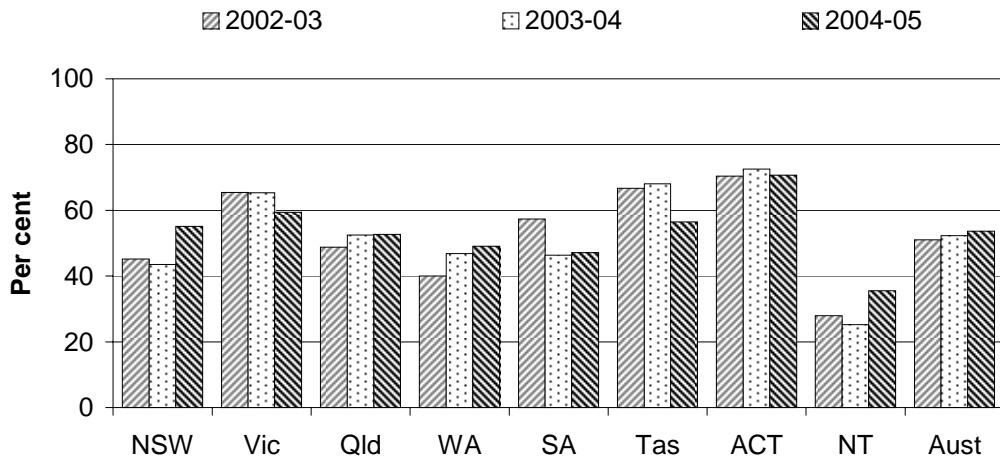
The Demand for Accommodation Collection collects data on 'valid unmet requests' for immediate accommodation. 'Valid unmet requests' excludes requests made at an agency, where the person or group is determined to be inappropriate for the agency, where there is no fee-free accommodation available at that time, 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 on the proportion of people with valid requests for SAAP accommodation who were turned away are included for the years 2002-03 to 2004-05. Nationally, 53.7 per cent of adults and unaccompanied children requesting immediate SAAP

accommodation on a given day were turned away in 2004-05. 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 and May<sup>a, b, c</sup>**

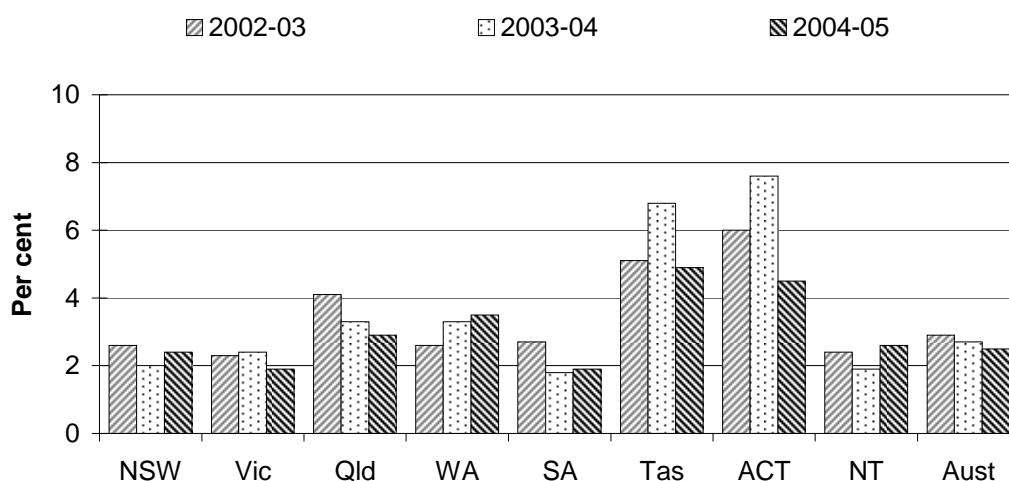


<sup>a</sup> A two-week Demand for Accommodation Collection is conducted annually to gather information about homeless people whose requests for accommodation were unable to be met by SAAP agencies. The collections were held in December and May of each financial year. <sup>b</sup> Comparisons between years should be treated with caution, due to variation in participation rates, differing imputation methods and because the collections were held on different dates each year. <sup>c</sup> See notes to table 15A.169 for more detailed data caveats.

Source: AIHW (2004, 2006c); SAAP NDCA *Client and Demand for Accommodation Collections* (unpublished); 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 2.5 per cent of the total demand for SAAP accommodation in 2004-05. 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 Ratio of unmet demand to total demand for SAAP accommodation by adults and unaccompanied children, December and May<sup>a, b, c</sup>**



<sup>a</sup> A two-week Demand for Accommodation Collection is conducted annually to gather information about homeless people whose requests for accommodation were unable to be met by SAAP agencies. The collections were held in December and May of each financial year. <sup>b</sup> Comparisons between years should be treated with caution, due to variation in participation rates, differing imputation methods and because the collections were held on different dates each year. <sup>c</sup> See notes to table 15A.170 for more detailed data caveats.

Source: AIHW (2004, 2006c); SAAP NDCA *Client and Demand for Accommodation Collections* (unpublished); table 15A.170.

Some requests for SAAP accommodation were not met for a number of reasons in 2005-06, including a lack of available accommodation (63.0 per cent of those requests that were unmet were for this reason), no vacancies at the referral agency (23.8 per cent), and insufficient staff (1.3 per cent) (table 15A.178).

### *Access of Indigenous people to SAAP service*

‘Access of Indigenous people to SAAP service’ is an output (equity and access) indicator of SAAP services (box 15.31).

#### **Box 15.31 Access of Indigenous people to SAAP service**

‘Access of Indigenous people to SAAP service’ is an output 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 from Indigenous people is met or unmet. Unmet demand occurs when a homeless person expressly asking for supported accommodation, or support, cannot be provided with that assistance (although one-off assistance may be provided).

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**Box 15.31 (Continued)**

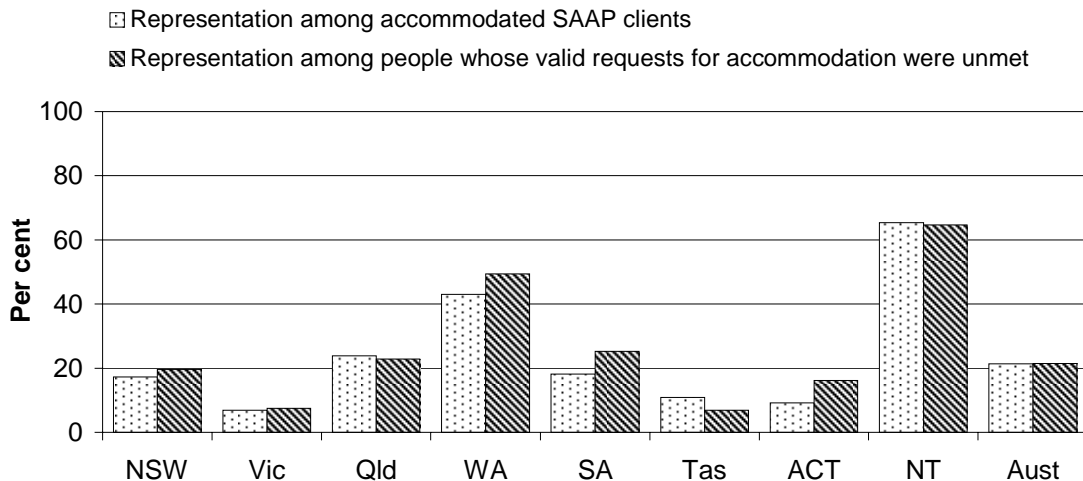
This indicator is defined as the comparison between the representation of Indigenous people among all people whose valid requests for SAAP accommodation were unmet and their representation among SAAP clients who were accommodated during the year.

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

A high and equivalent proportion of valid requests receiving assistance is desirable.

Nationally, Indigenous people made up 21.4 per cent of all people whose valid requests for accommodation did not result in accommodation assistance in 2005-06 — a proportion no different to that of Indigenous clients among all accommodated SAAP clients (21.4 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, 2005-06<sup>a</sup>**



<sup>a</sup> See notes to table 15A.171 for details of data definitions.

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

*Access of people from non-English speaking backgrounds to SAAP service*

‘Access of people from non-English speaking backgrounds to SAAP service’ is an output (equity and access) indicator of SAAP services (box 15.32).

**Box 15.32 Access of people from non-English speaking backgrounds to SAAP service**

‘Access of people from non-English speaking backgrounds to SAAP service’ is an output 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 from people from non-English speaking backgrounds is met or unmet. Unmet demand occurs when a homeless person expressly asking for supported accommodation, or support, cannot be provided with that assistance (although one-off assistance may be provided).

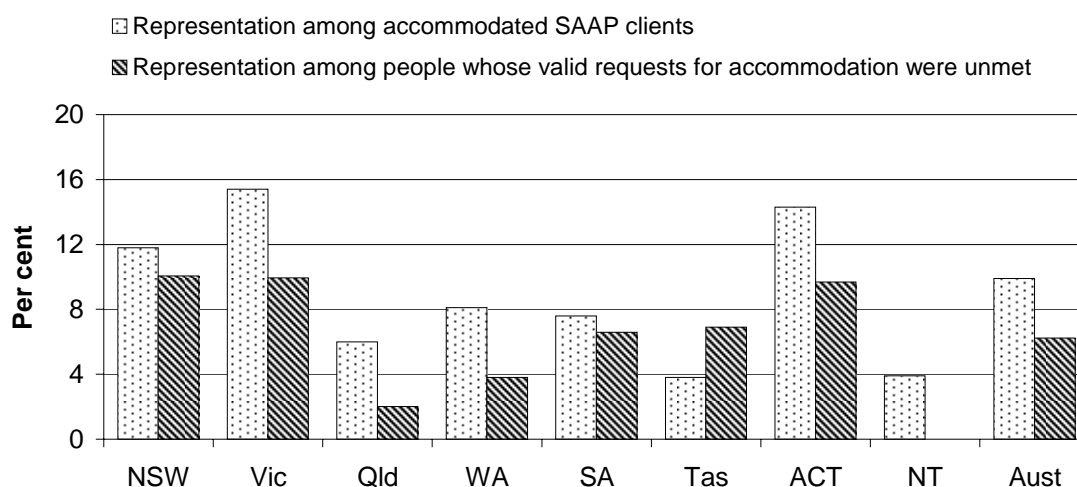
This indicator is defined as the comparison between the representation of people from non-English speaking backgrounds, among all people whose valid requests for SAAP accommodation were unmet, and their representation among SAAP clients who were accommodated during the year.

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

A high and equivalent proportion of valid requests receiving assistance is desirable.

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 6.2 per cent in 2005-06 — lower than that of people from non-English speaking backgrounds among all accommodated SAAP clients (9.9 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, 2005-06<sup>a</sup>**



<sup>a</sup> See notes to table 15A.172 for details of data definitions.

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

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## *Effectiveness*

### *Client satisfaction*

‘Client satisfaction’ is an output indicator of the effectiveness of SAAP services (box 15.33).

#### **Box 15.33 Client satisfaction**

‘Client satisfaction’ is an output 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 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 (SCRGSP 2005, pp. 15.47-48; Colmar Brunton Social Research 2004).

### *Development of agreed support plan*

‘Development of agreed support plan’ is an output indicator of the effectiveness of SAAP services (box 15.34).

#### **Box 15.34 Development of agreed support plan**

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

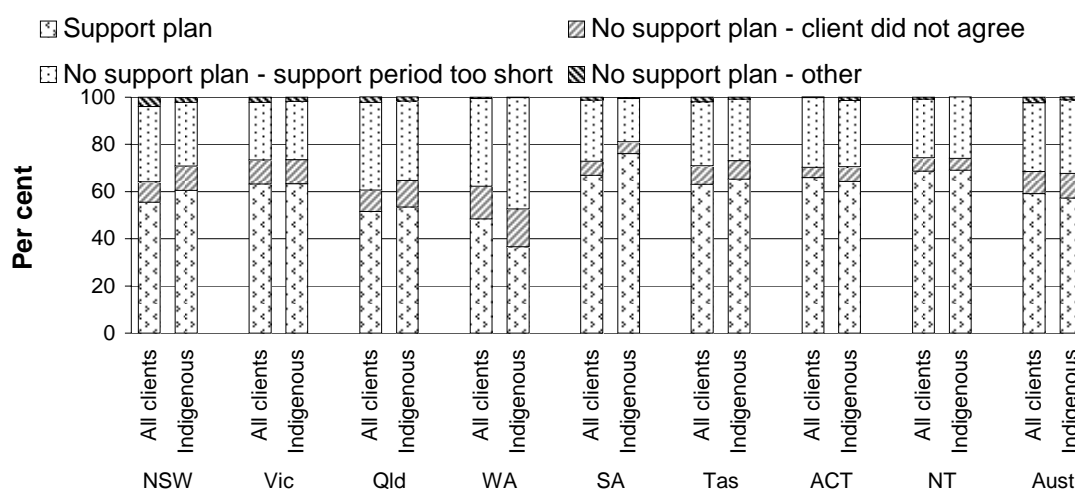
This indicator is defined as the number of closed support periods with an agreed support plan divided by the total number of support periods. Data are reported for all SAAP clients, and separately for Indigenous people.

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).

Counting rules for this indicator were changed for this Report. Only ‘closed’ support periods are now included for 2005-06 data. This excludes previously counted ‘ongoing’ support periods where outcomes of the support cannot be determined and is consistent with other support period data in the Report.

Nationally, there was an agreed support plan for 59.2 per cent of support periods for all clients in 2005-06 (compared with 57.2 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, 2005-06<sup>a</sup>**



<sup>a</sup> 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 indicator of the effectiveness of SAAP services (box 15.35).



**Box 15.35 Match of needs of clients**

'Match of needs of clients' is an output 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.

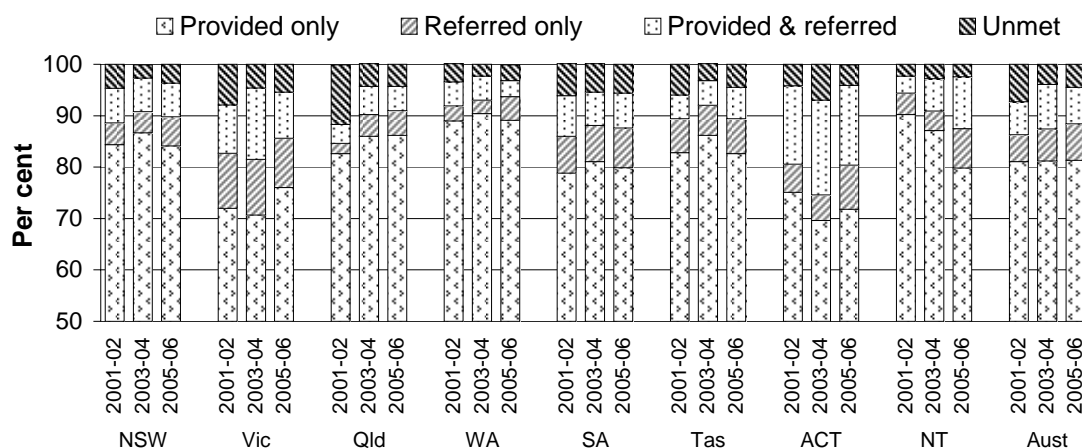
Data are reported for all SAAP clients, and separately for Indigenous people and people from non-English speaking backgrounds.

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

Counting rules for this indicator were changed for this Report. Only 'closed' support periods are now included for 2005-06 data. This excludes previously counted 'ongoing' support periods where outcomes of the support cannot be determined and is consistent with other support period data in the Report.

Nationally, the proportion of clients who received needed services (including services provided by the initially approached agencies and/or referrals to another agency) was 95.5 per cent in 2005-06 (figure 15.22).

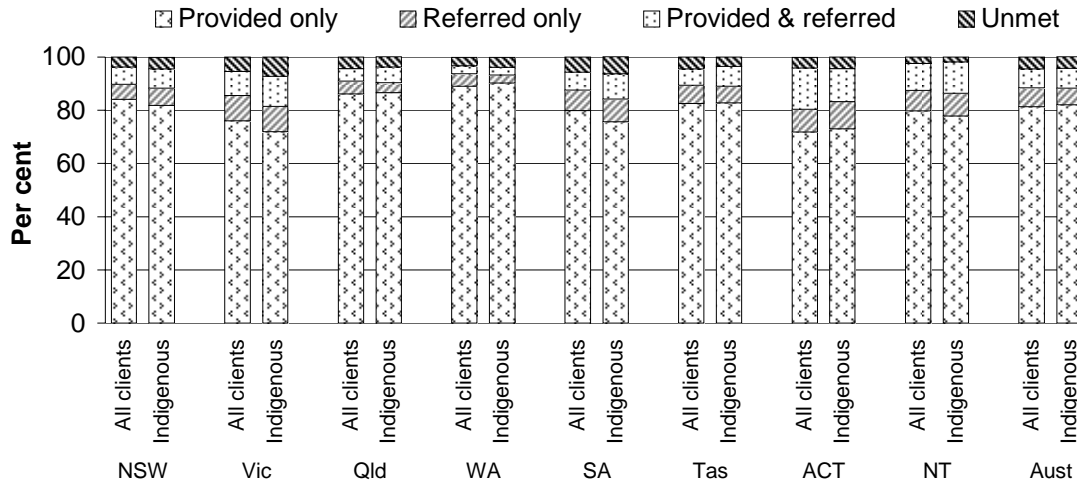
**Figure 15.22 SAAP clients, by met and unmet support needs**



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

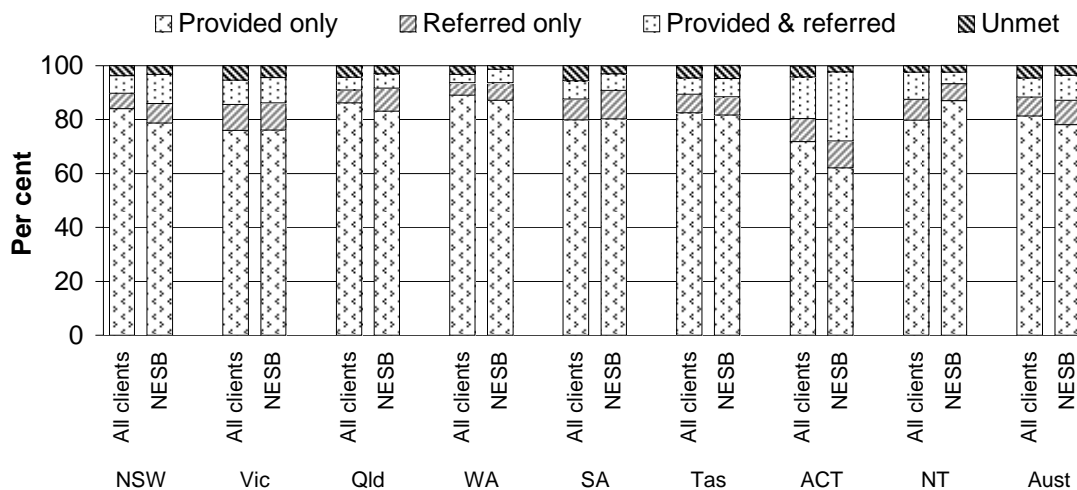
The proportions for Indigenous clients (95.7 per cent) and clients from a non-English speaking background (96.4 per cent) who received needed services in 2005-06 were similar to that for all clients. These proportions varied across jurisdictions (figures 15.23 and 15.24).

**Figure 15.23 Indigenous clients, by met and unmet support needs, 2005-06**



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, 2005-06**



NESB = Non-English speaking background.

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

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## *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.

The funding figures used in calculating the following efficiency indicators include recurrent allocations to agencies provided by some jurisdictions in addition to the amounts determined in the agreements between these jurisdictions and the Australian Government.

### *Cost per completed support period*

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

#### **Box 15.36 Cost per completed support period**

‘Cost per completed support period’ is an output 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).

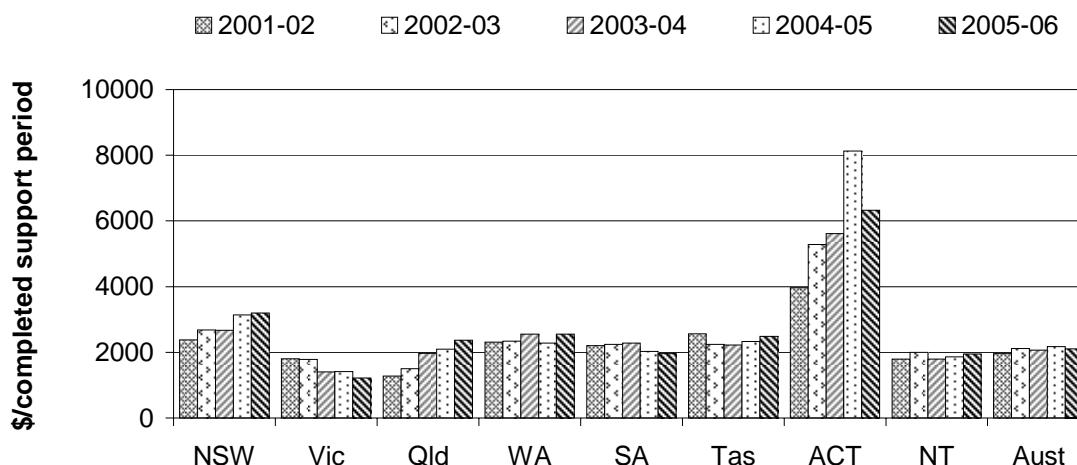
This indicator is defined as total expenditure on SAAP services divided by the number of completed support periods (excluding casual and potential clients, and accompanying children).

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 \$2100 nationally and varied across jurisdictions in 2005-06 (figure 15.25).

Figure 15.25 **Real recurrent cost per completed support period (2005-06 dollars)<sup>a</sup>**



<sup>a</sup> 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 indicator of the efficiency of SAAP services (box 15.37).

#### Box 15.37 Cost per client

‘Cost per client’ is an output 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).

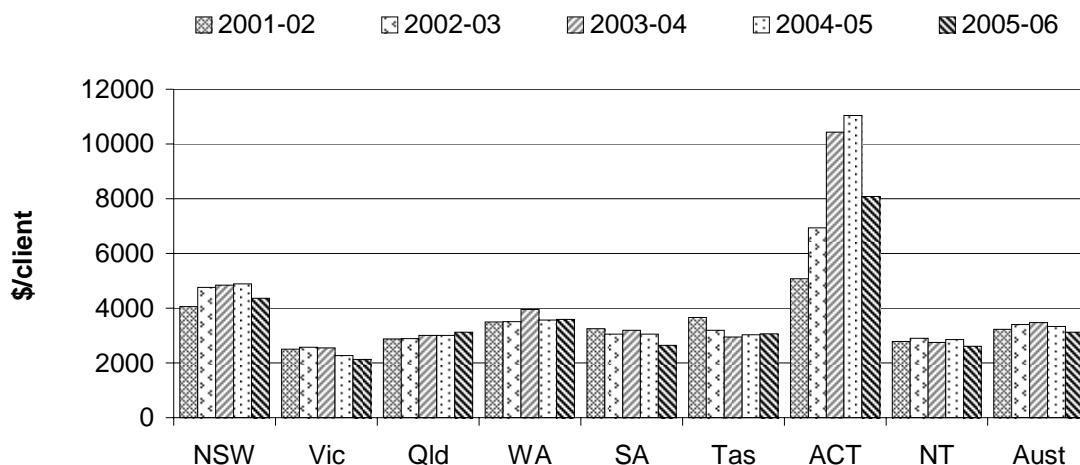
This indicator is defined as total expenditure on SAAP services divided by the number of clients accessing a bed or place over the year.

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 \$3130 and varied across jurisdictions in 2005-06 (figure 15.26).

Figure 15.26 **Real recurrent cost per client accessing SAAP services (2005-06 dollars)<sup>a</sup>**



<sup>a</sup> 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 indicator of the efficiency of SAAP services (box 15.38).

#### **Box 15.38 Cost per day of support**

‘Cost per day of support’ is an output 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).

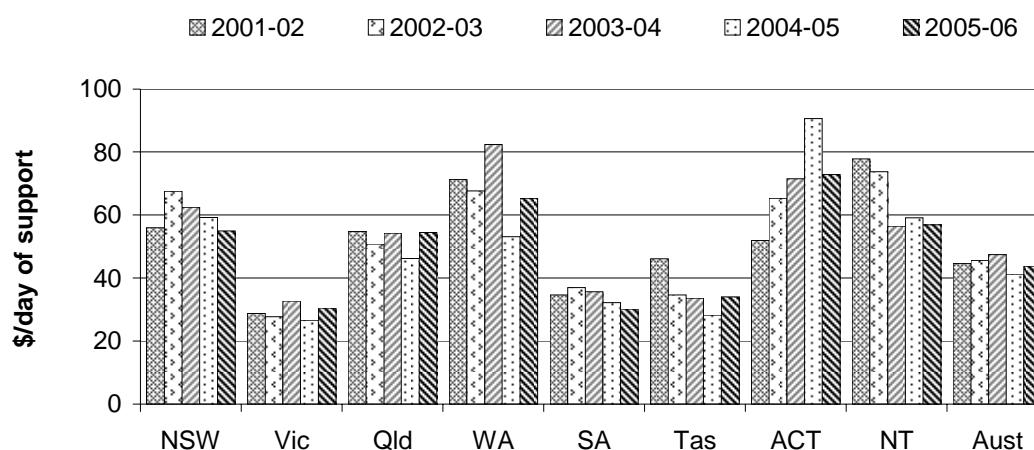
This indicator is defined as total expenditure on SAAP services divided by the number of days of support for SAAP clients receiving support and/or supported accommodation (excluding casual and potential clients, and accompanying children).

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 \$44 nationally and varied across jurisdictions in 2005-06 (figure 15.27).

**Figure 15.27 Real recurrent cost per day of support for homeless clients (2005-06 dollars)<sup>a</sup>**



<sup>a</sup> 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 indicators of the efficiency of SAAP services (box 15.39).

#### **Box 15.39 Accommodation load and caseload**

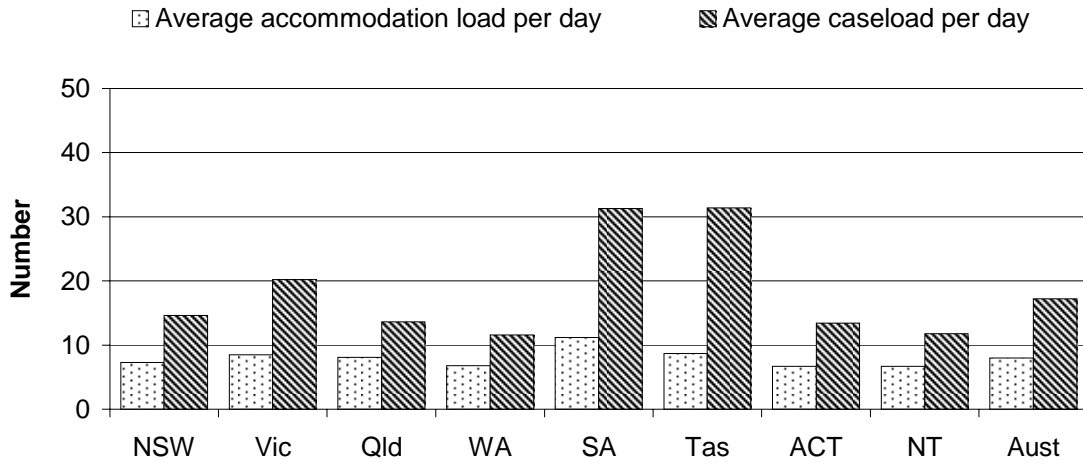
‘Accommodation load’ and ‘caseload’ are indicators of governments’ objective to maximise the availability and quality of services through the efficient use of taxpayer resources. Average accommodation load and caseload are output indicators of efficiency, and they indicate levels of output by agencies.

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.

The national average daily accommodation load and caseload per agency were 8.0 and 17.2 respectively, and this varied across jurisdictions in 2005-06 (figure 15.28).

Figure 15.28 Average accommodation load and caseload per day, 2005-06<sup>a</sup>



<sup>a</sup> 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 employment on exit*

'Achievement of employment on exit' is an outcome indicator of SAAP services (box 15.40).

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**Box 15.40 Achievement of employment on exit**

'Achievement of employment on exit' is an outcome indicator of governments' objective to enable clients to participate as productive and self-reliant members of society at the end of their support period.

Achievement of employment is defined as the number of SAAP clients who sought assistance to obtain or maintain employment and training, and achieved employment after SAAP support, divided by the total number of clients who sought assistance to obtain or maintain employment. Support periods reported relate to these clients only.

This indicator compares these clients' employment status before and after they requested SAAP support.

This indicator relates 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.

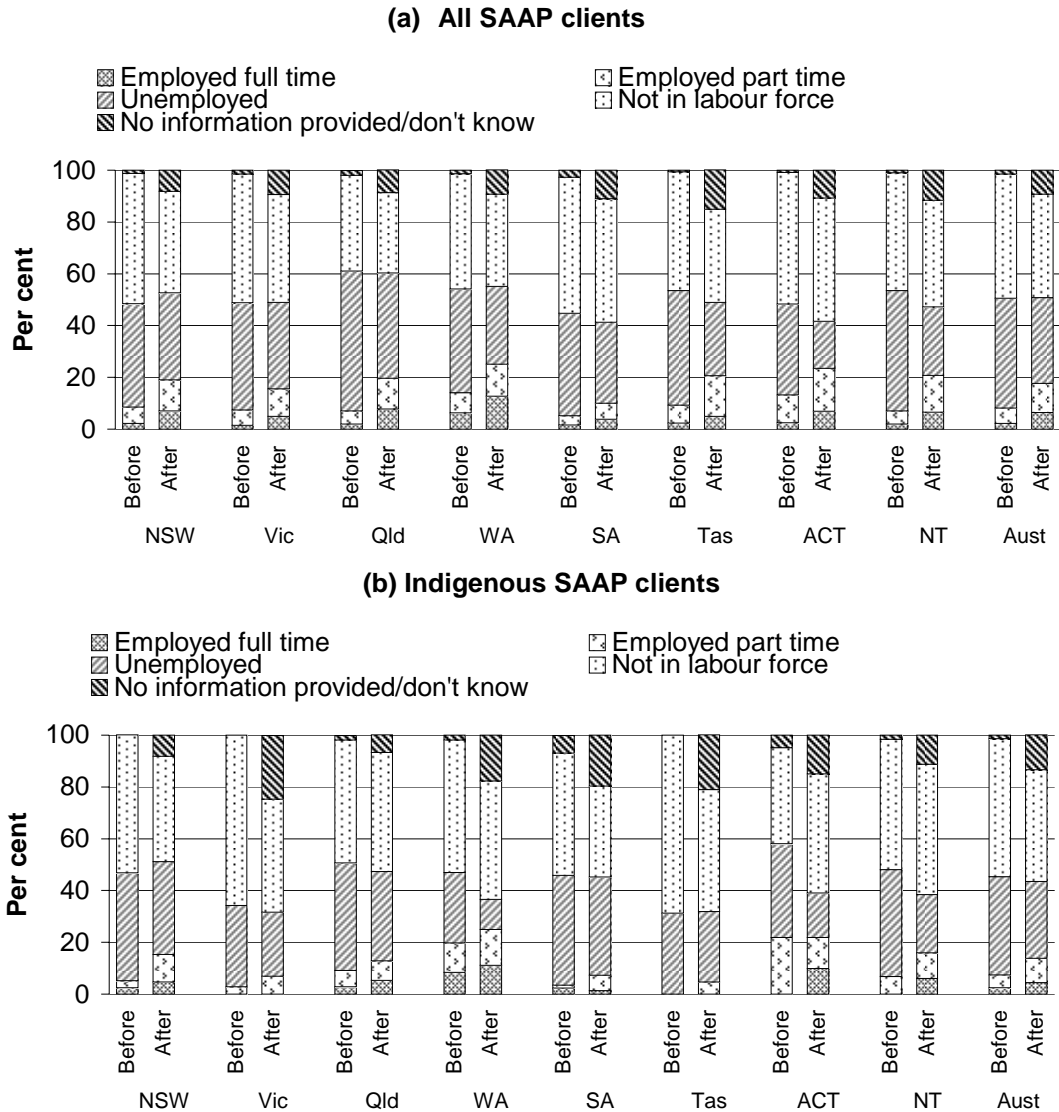
Higher proportions of achievement of employment are desirable.

Nationally, of those clients who sought assistance to obtain or maintain employment and training when entering SAAP in 2005-06, the proportion of clients who were employed either full-time or part-time increased from 8.2 per cent before support to 17.7 per cent after support (6.4 per cent full time and 11.3 per cent part time). The proportions of clients who were unemployed decreased from 42.3 per cent before support to 33.1 per cent after support. The proportions of clients who were not in the labour force decreased from 48.0 per cent before support to 39.9 per cent after support. These proportions varied across jurisdictions (figure 15.29, table 15A.185 and table 15A.186).

Nationally, of those Indigenous clients who sought assistance to obtain or maintain employment and training when entering SAAP in 2005-06, the proportion of clients who were employed either full-time or part-time increased from 7.4 per cent before support to 13.8 per cent after support (4.5 per cent full time and 9.3 per cent part time). The proportion of clients who were unemployed decreased from 38.0 per cent before support to 29.7 per cent after support. The proportion of clients who were not in the labour force decreased from 53.3 per cent before support to 43.1 per cent after support. These proportions varied across jurisdictions (figure 15.29 and table 15A.187).



**Figure 15.29 Changes in labour force status of clients who needed assistance to obtain/maintain employment and training before/after SAAP support, 2005-06<sup>a</sup>**



<sup>a</sup> Data are for people who requested assistance with obtaining or maintaining employment when entering SAAP services.

Source: SAAP NDCA Administrative Data and Client Collections (unpublished); tables 15A.185-187.

*Achievement of income on exit*

‘Achievement of income on exit’ is an outcome indicator of SAAP services (box 15.41).

### Box 15.41 Achievement of income on exit

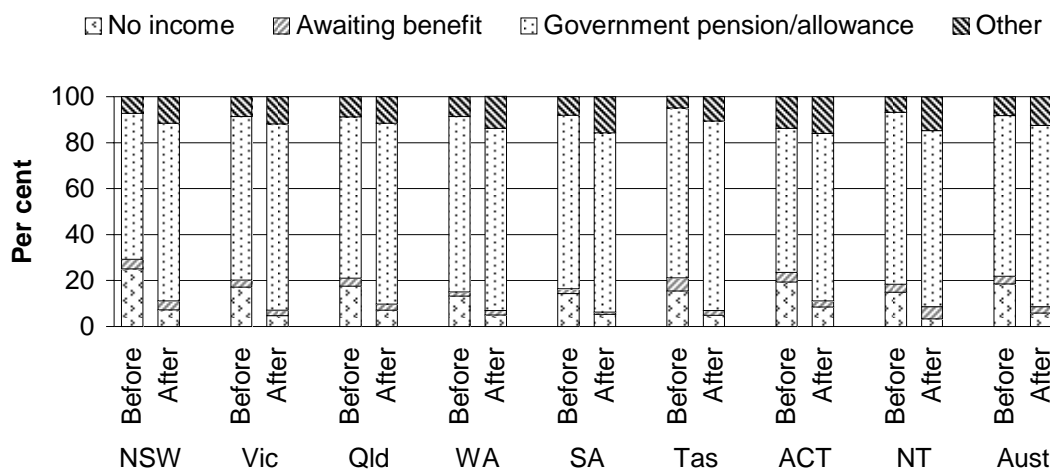
'Achievement of income on exit' is an outcome indicator of governments' objective to enable clients to participate independently in society at the end of their support period. A client's independence and self-reliance is enhanced when the client experiences a positive change in income source (for example, 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 assistance to obtain or maintain a pension or benefit and exited SAAP with an income source, divided by the total number of clients who requested assistance to obtain or maintain a pension or benefit.

A high 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 5.9 per cent after SAAP assistance in 2005-06 — a 12.6 per cent decrease from 18.5 per cent before SAAP assistance (figure 15.30). The proportion of Indigenous clients who did not have income and requested income assistance also decreased after SAAP assistance nationally (5.0 per cent compared with 16.1 per cent before SAAP assistance) (figure 15.31). Both before and after the SAAP assistance, the income source for the majority of SAAP clients is a government pension/allowance (figures 15.30 and 15.31).

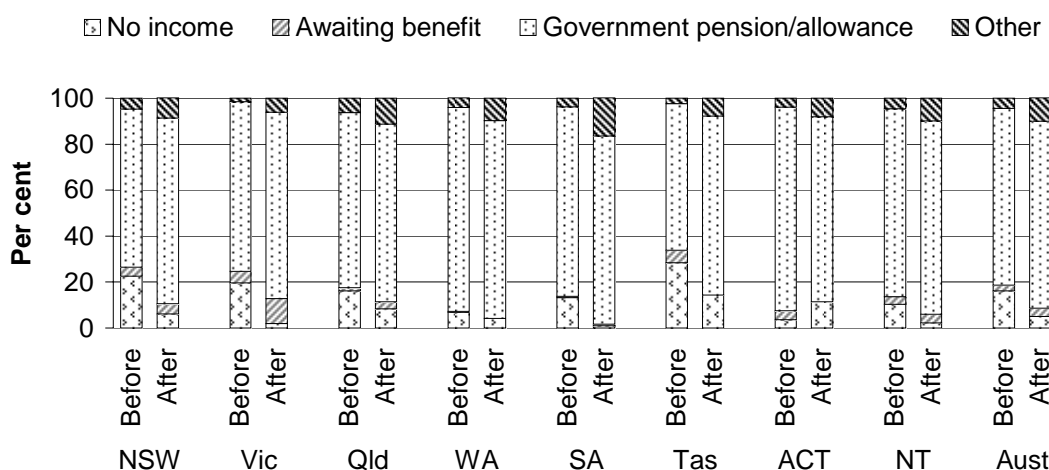
Figure 15.30 **Source of income immediately before/after SAAP support of clients who needed assistance to obtain/maintain a pension or benefit, 2005-06<sup>a</sup>**



<sup>a</sup> 'Other' includes other, don't know and no information provided.

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

Figure 15.31 **Source of income immediately before/after SAAP support of Indigenous clients who needed assistance to obtain/maintain a pension or benefit, 2005-06<sup>a</sup>**



<sup>a</sup> 'Other' includes other, don't know and no information provided.

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

### *Achievement of independent housing on exit*

'Achievement of independent housing on exit' is an outcome indicator of SAAP services (box 15.42).

#### **Box 15.42 Achievement of independent housing on exit**

'Achievement of independent housing on exit' is an outcome indicator of governments' objective to enable clients to participate as productive and self-reliant members of society at the end of their support period.

Achievement of independent housing is defined as the number of support periods of clients who requested assistance with obtaining or maintaining independent housing achieving independent housing at the end of a support period, divided by the total number support periods of clients who requested assistance with obtaining or maintaining independent housing.

This indicator relates 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 independent housing are desirable.

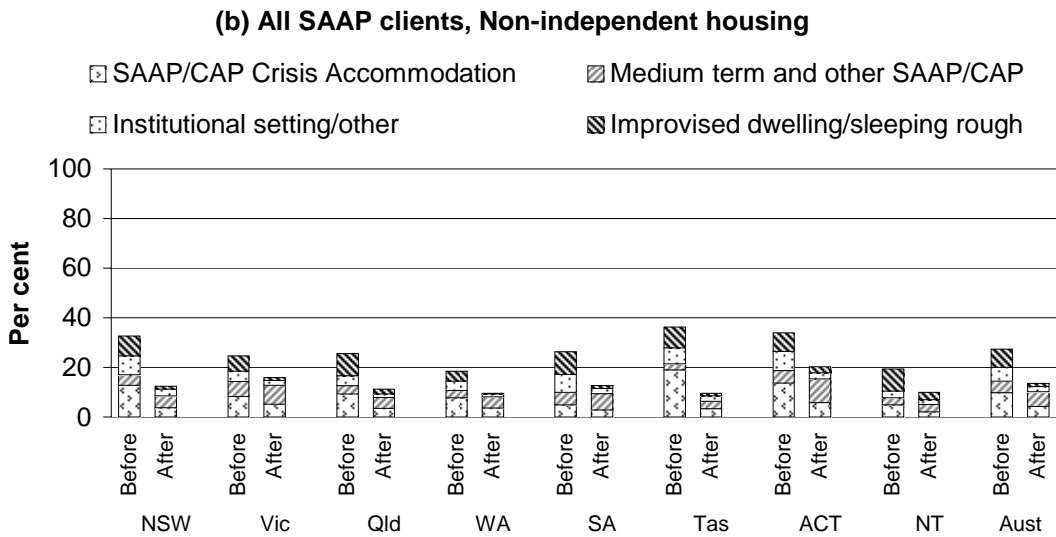
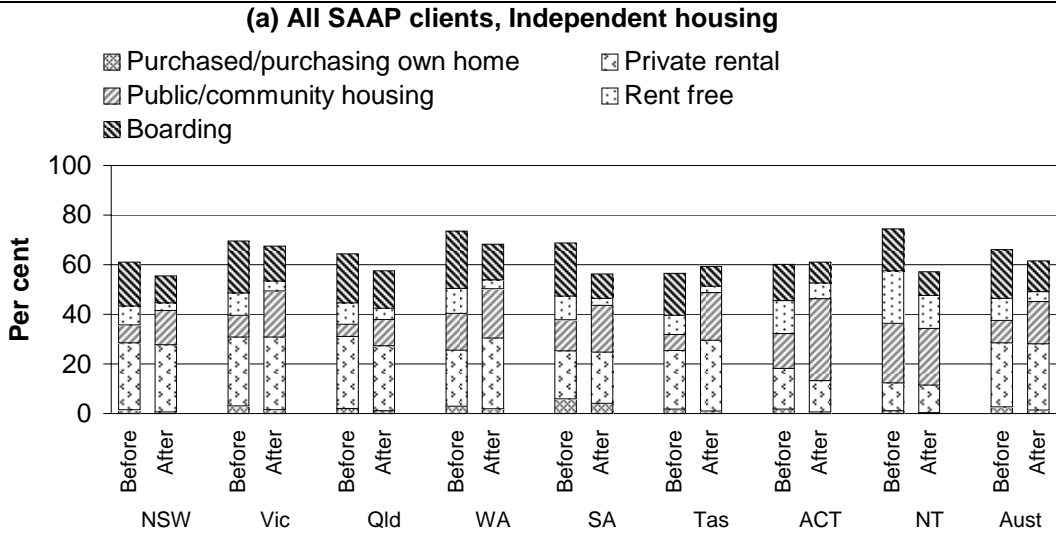
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Nationally, 61.5 per cent of clients who requested assistance with obtaining or maintaining independent housing achieved independent housing at the end of a support period in 2005-06. This included clients who moved or returned to private rental housing (26.7 per cent), to public rental housing (13.3 per cent), and those who were boarding (12.4 per cent) (figure 15.32).

Among Indigenous clients, on a national basis, 58.3 per cent of clients who requested assistance with obtaining or maintaining independent housing achieved independent housing at the end of a support period in 2005-06, including those who moved or returned to private rental housing (17.5 per cent), to public rental housing (17.8 per cent), and who were boarding (13.0 per cent) (figure 15.32).

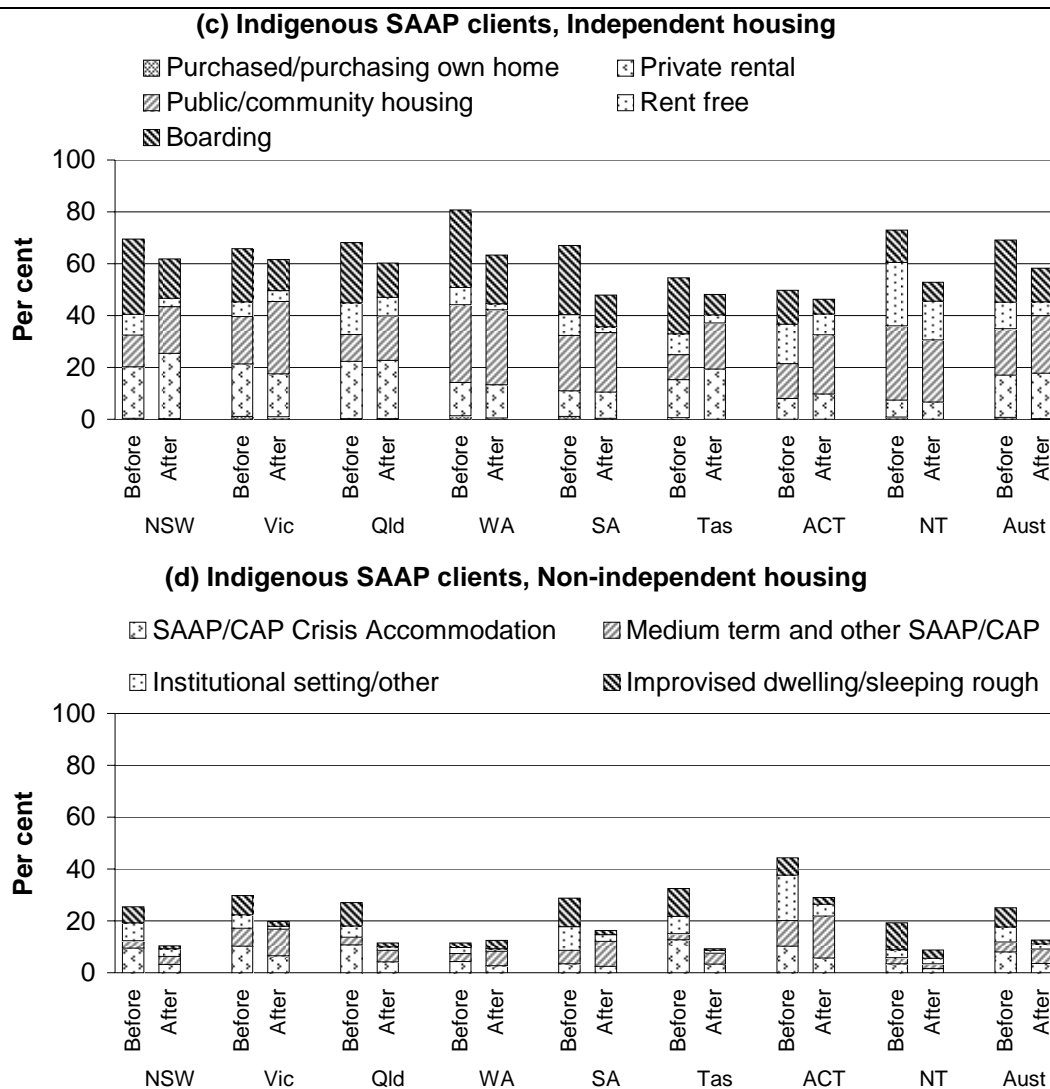
Clients who did not achieve independent housing at the end of a support period in 2005-06 included those who moved to, or continued to live in, short to medium term SAAP accommodation and other forms of non-independent accommodation (figure 15.32).

**Figure 15.32 Accommodation type before and after SAAP support, for clients who requested assistance with obtaining or maintaining housing, 2005-06<sup>a</sup>**



(Continued on next page)

Figure 15.32 (Continued)



<sup>a</sup> High levels of ‘don’t know’ and ‘no information provided’ categories in the “after SAAP Support” data may mean that some clients who achieved independent or non-Independent housing are not represented here (see attachment tables for more information).

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

*Proportion of SAAP clients who exited SAAP to independent housing and did not access the service again within six months*

‘Proportion of SAAP clients who exited SAAP to independent housing and did not access the service again within six months’ is an outcome indicator of SAAP services (box 15.43).

**Box 15.43 Proportion of SAAP clients who exited SAAP to independent housing and did not access the service again within six months**

'Proportion of SAAP clients who exited SAAP to independent housing and did not access the service again within six months' is an outcome indicator of governments' objective to enable clients to participate independently in society at the end of their support period.

This indicator 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 six months is desirable.

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. Ongoing contact with SAAP agencies may also lead to an improvement in living skills and self-reliance.

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. The most recent data available are from 2004-05 and 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 (table 15.2). Given the potential for data bias, these estimates should be interpreted with care.

**Table 15.2 Indicative estimates of clients who exited SAAP to independent housing and did not return within six months, 2004-05<sup>a</sup>**

<i>Unit</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Vic</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>WA</i>	<i>SA</i>	<i>Tas</i>	<i>ACT</i>	<i>NT</i>	<i>Aust</i>
Clients who provided information on accommodation after exit from support									
no.	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

<sup>a</sup> 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 over time data will become sufficiently robust to allow comparative performance assessment.

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*Proportion of SAAP clients with only one period of support within a year*

'Proportion of SAAP clients with only one period of support within a year' is an outcome indicator of SAAP services (box 15.44).

**Box 15.44 Proportion of SAAP clients with only one period of support within a year**

'Proportion of SAAP clients with only one period of support within a year' is an outcome indicator of governments' objective to enable clients to participate independently in society at the end of their support period.

This indicator is defined as the number of clients with only one support period during the year, divided by the total number of SAAP clients.

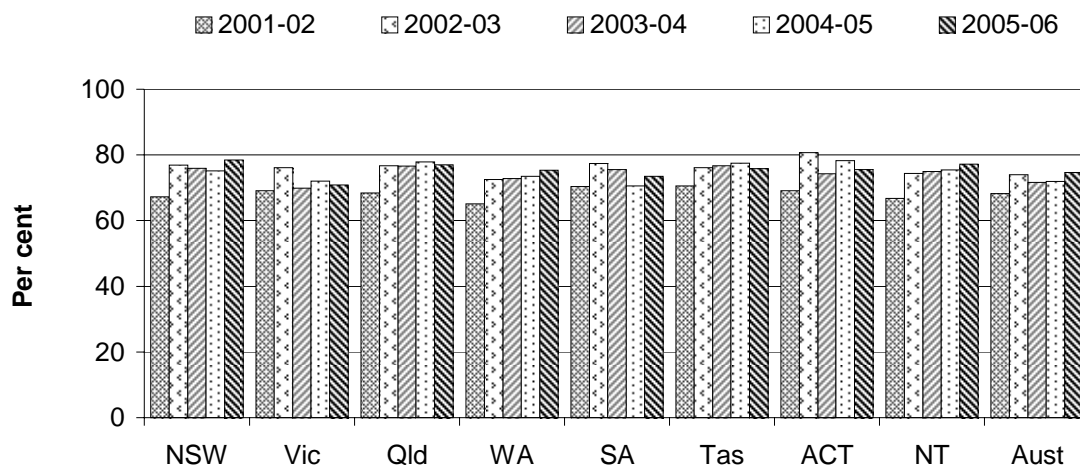
A higher proportion of clients with only one support period during the year is desirable.

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. Ongoing contact with SAAP agencies may also lead to an improvement in living skills and self-reliance.

Nationally, 74.7 per cent of SAAP clients had only one support period in 2005-06 (figure 15.33). The proportion for Indigenous clients was similar (75.1 per cent) (table 15A.189).



Figure 15.33 **Proportion of SAAP clients with only one period of support within a year<sup>a</sup>**



<sup>a</sup> Data from 2001-02 are based on estimated support periods per client, rather than on observed support periods per client as included in previous Reports.

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

### *Goals achieved on exit from service*

‘Goals achieved on exit from service’ is an outcome indicator of SAAP services (box 15.45).

#### **Box 15.45 Goals achieved on exit from service**

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

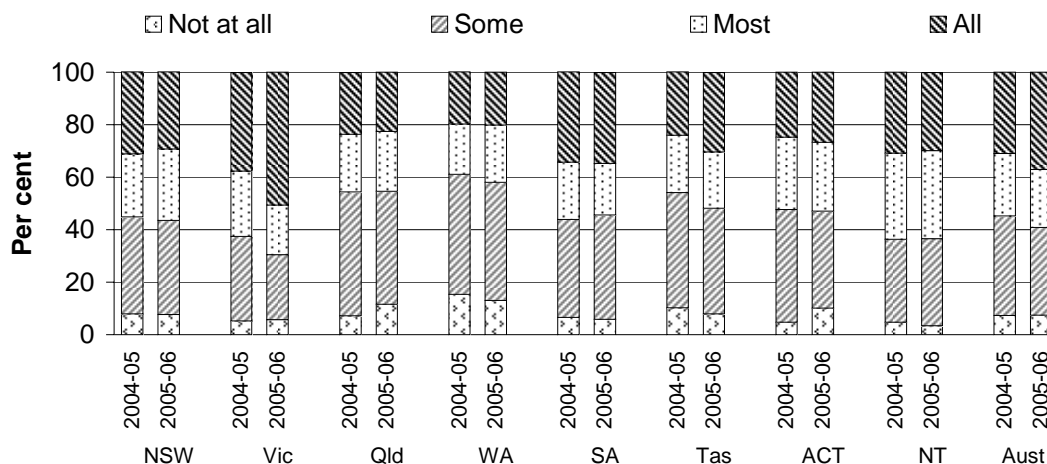
This indicator is defined as the number of clients whose case management goals are fully or mostly achieved by the end of the support period, divided by the total number of clients with case management goals in a given period.

The data is identified from a questionnaire completed by clients.

A high proportion of achieved goals is desirable.

Nationally, case management goals were fully or mostly achieved by the end of the support period for 59.2 per cent of clients in 2005-06 (figure 15.34).

Figure 15.34 Goals achieved on exit from SAAP services



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

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

Under SAAP V (2005–2010), a new performance framework was developed and incorporated into the Multilateral Agreement. The new performance framework contains some of the same performance indicators as SAAP IV but new emphases have been placed on client outcome information. Four levels of client outcomes are identified in the SAAP V Program Logic developed by a working group of the Coordination and Development Committee (CAD). Information on some client outcome indicators can be obtained from the SAAP National Data Collection and reported on a regular basis, but information on some higher level client outcome indicators can only be obtained from targeted research. Three specific research projects will be carried out under SAAP V to obtain this information. These projects are: SAAP Impact on client self-reliance, measuring the number of clients with high and complex needs and Client Satisfaction and Exit survey.

An Evaluation Working Group (EWG) consisting of representatives from the Australian and State/Territory governments has been established to develop an evaluation framework for SAAP V. The EWG has been conducting a rolling evaluation process for SAAP V and is currently examining the data and research implications with a view to putting in place any new data and research activities required for evaluation over the life of SAAP V. These data and research activities include research on longer term housing outcomes for SAAP clients entering public housing and private rental housing, a survey of SAAP agencies to determine views

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on the achievement of SAAP V strategic directions, an analysis of the evaluations undertaken on each of the Innovation and Investment Fund projects, the three client outcome projects mentioned above, and other data and research projects. These developments are likely to provide improved outcome focussed data for future Reports.

### **Improving data from Indigenous clients**

An Indigenous data training package is being developed by the NDCA at the AIHW in collaboration with the Information Sub-committee of the CAD. Members of the Indigenous Reference Group consist of SAAP Indigenous representatives from NSW, Victoria, Queensland, WA and NT, together with staff from the NDCA, Queensland Department of Communities, and FaCSIA. The Reference Group provided input to develop the package based on current SAAP data training content but with an Indigenous specific focus. It is anticipated that the package will encourage more Indigenous agencies to participate in the SAAP data collection and demonstrate to Indigenous agencies the value of collecting SAAP data for Indigenous clients. This development will improve the quality and coverage of Indigenous data in future Reports.

### **SMART 6**

A new version of the SAAP Management and Reporting Tool (SMART) is being planned for release in 2007. Currently 55 per cent of SAAP agencies are using SMART to collect SAAP data. It is envisaged that the deployment of SMART 6 will see the phasing out of paper questionnaires. The rollout of SMART 6 will first take place at agencies that are currently using SMART, with eventual implementation in all agencies. These developments are anticipated to provide greater coverage and improved quality of data for future Reports.

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## **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).

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## Australian Government comments

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

The Multilateral Agreement for SAAP V was signed by all partners in September 2005 and all Bilateral Agreements were signed by the end of January 2006. Under the Agreement total resources available to the program will increase by almost \$350 million to an estimated \$1.82 billion over the life of SAAP V (2005–2010). The Australian Government's contribution to SAAP V totals \$932 million over five years.

One of the significant differences between the SAAP IV and SAAP V Agreements is the jointly-funded Innovation and Investment Fund worth around \$125 million. The Australian Government initiated the establishment of the Fund to drive strategic reform in the SAAP sector. The focus of the Fund is on identifying ways of reducing the high rates of return to SAAP services by improving pre-crisis intervention, post-crisis transition and linkages with other services, including mental health and employment support services. The Australian Government's contribution to the Innovation and Investment Fund is \$40 million with \$39 million provided directly to State/Territory governments.

Total spending for SAAP in 2005-06 was \$324 million. Of that amount, \$179 million was contributed by the Australian Government, and State and Territory governments contributed \$145 million.

The Australian government provided funding of \$10.4 million over four years in the 2004-05 Budget for the Household Organisational Management Expenses Advice Program. This programme builds on the success of the Family Homelessness Prevention Pilots which was introduced in 2001.

An extension of the National Homelessness Strategy (NHS) was announced in the 2005-06 budget with funding of \$10 million over four years. The NHS includes demonstration projects which trial innovative models to prevent or respond to homelessness and communication activities to disseminate the knowledge base on homelessness.

The Reconnect programme provides early intervention assistance to young people aged 12–18, who are homeless or at risk of homelessness to improve the level of engagement with their family, education, training or work and with the community. The 2006-07 budget allocated \$22.72 million for the Reconnect programme. This includes funding to provide combined Reconnect and Job Placement Employment and Training services to assist newly arrived young people and their families from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. There are 98 Reconnect services across Australia. Since its inception in 1999 Reconnect services have provided support to over 50 000 young people and their families.

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## **New South Wales Government comments**

### *Child protection and supported placements*

“ The NSW Guidelines for Child Protection Intervention have been a central part of the NSW child and family service system for almost two decades. While not intended to replace individual agencies policies and procedures, the Guidelines are the key source document to advise and guide professionals and agencies in key child protection interagency issues. Following a comprehensive review of the Guidelines which commenced in 2004 and led by the Child Protection Senior Officers' Group, who consulted extensively across the sector, a new edition of the guidelines was made electronically available to practitioners in September 2006.

The Department of Community Services (DoCS) Early Intervention Program is a voluntary, targeted program that supports vulnerable children and families to prevent them from entering or escalating in the child protection system. This Program is progressively rolling out across NSW, and will deliver \$150 million for early intervention services and the employment of 350 new dedicated early intervention caseworkers by 2008.

An important feature of the Early Intervention Program is that families can access the full range of services and supports they require through a single entry point, either through the DoCS early intervention team, or an identified non-government agency called a Lead Agency. This is intended to promote accessible, efficient and consistent service provision and a more collaborative approach to service delivery. Families in the Early Intervention Program can access core funded services which are home visiting, parenting programs and quality childcare, coordinated by their case manager. The case manager works closely with families over an extended period, fostering and promoting family strengths, facilitating access to support services that meet identified family needs, all with a focus on strengthening positive parent-child relationships and optimising long term benefits for children including school readiness.

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

Implementing SAAP V in year one Agreement has been truncated due to the delay in finalising the Multilateral and Bilateral Agreements. In NSW the focus was on finalising the critical operational policy frameworks that SAAP will operate under. These include, SAAP V Regional Planning, Performance Monitoring Framework and Good Practice Guidelines.

Priority was given to communicating the strategic directions of SAAP V, in particular the expectations and requirements of service providers to implement SAAP V, the regional planning processes and expectations and the process for implementing a Performance Monitoring Framework and Good Practice Guidelines.

SAAP V Regional Planning is due for completion by July 2007 and this will describe the reforms required over the remaining three years of SAAP V. ”

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## Victorian Government comments

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### *Child protection and supported placements*

The Minister for Children launched the ‘every child every chance’ reforms for vulnerable children in April 2006. These reforms form part of a broader reform of child and family services aimed at helping all children to grow, thrive and reach their full potential. A critical milestone in these reforms was the passage of two new Acts, the *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act*, which is the framework legislation for services for all children, and the *Children, Youth and Families Act*, which is detailed legislation targeted at vulnerable children and families. These Acts were given royal assent in December 2005.

The *Children, Youth and Families Act* will commence operation in March 2007. The Act provides the necessary legal foundations to create a more integrated system of child, youth and family services — a system that focuses on vulnerable children’s safety, health, learning, well-being and development. It provides the necessary legal authorities for new ways of working that will connect families to the services they need earlier and to make these services more accessible and more adaptable to the changing needs of today’s families. Strong focus is given to keeping Aboriginal children connected to their culture and community.

As part of these changes, the Department of Human Services is working closely with community service organisations and Aboriginal services to strengthen support services for vulnerable families.

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

Victoria continued to implement development of the integrated homelessness assistance responses outlined in the Victorian Homelessness Strategy, particularly in relation to the integrated response to family violence.

An additional \$13.4 million is being invested over four years from 2005-06 to improve housing and support services for women and children experiencing family violence, as part of the Victorian Government’s \$35.1 million package to reduce family violence. This approach aims to reduce family violence through a response that involves support services, police and courts working together to improve integrated responses to family violence.

The *Consumer Charter* was implemented which sets out the rights and responsibilities of people who use homelessness services. Funding was provided to enhance the homelessness advocacy program delivered through the Council to Homeless Persons and to implement the peer educator support program. Six peer educators — people who are or have been homeless — provide expert advice to government, organisations and consumers as well as providing peer support to consumers about consumer rights.

A protocol for responding to people who are homeless in public places was developed for the use of police and other services during the Commonwealth Games and has been implemented for ongoing guidance.

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## Queensland Government comments

### *Child protection and supported placements*

“ The Queensland Government remains committed to the ongoing reform of the child protection system and a record operating budget has been allocated for 2005-06, a 45 per cent unprecedented increase on 2004-05, to support children and young people who have been harmed or who are at risk of harm.

Significant collaboration between government and non-government agencies to improve outcomes for children and young people in the child protection system include:

- the appointment of Child Safety Directors in 11 government agencies to facilitate integrated government service provision
- the development of Education Support Plans and piloting the Health Passport initiative to provide a health assessment and plan for all children and young people in care, which will be fully implemented in January 2007
- the implementation of ‘Evolve’ (the therapeutic and behaviour support services) for children and young people in care with significant psychological, behavioural issues and/or disability behaviour support needs
- the establishment of ten early intervention services ‘Referral for Active Intervention’ to provide support to families and children aged 0 to 8 years at high risk of renotification.

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

In 2005-06, the Queensland Government continued to address homelessness as a whole-of-government issue requiring an integrated response. Work continued on the implementation of the ‘Responding to Homelessness’ initiative, which will provide a continuum of integrated responses to the needs of homeless people. The continuum of services ranges from Homelessness Early Intervention services right through to Integrated Service Hubs and Crisis Accommodation and Support services for rough sleepers.

Over the year Queensland continued to experience the fastest population growth of any state or territory, with an increase of 2.0 per cent over the past year, compared with national population growth of 1.3 per cent. This level of growth continues to put pressure on demand for services in Queensland and this is particularly evident in South East Queensland.

There continued to be a very low supply of affordable rental accommodation in Queensland, with a rental accommodation vacancy rate of 1.9 per cent across the state. The resources boom has also created homelessness crises in specific regions, where demand for limited supplies of accommodation has caused dramatic rental increases and led to displacement of people on low incomes.

Cyclone Larry also left many people homeless in Far North Queensland and had a dramatic impact on demand for SAAP services.”



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## Western Australian Government comments

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### *Child protection and supported placements*

The Department for Community Development implemented the *Children and Community Services Act 2004* on 1 March 2006. The Act provides for a continuum of responses to safeguard or promote a child's wellbeing, strengthens legal protection for people who report concerns to the Department, provides an expanded range of options when intervention is required for the protection of children and greater emphasis on transparency and accountability when working with families in need and children in the CEO's care.

A Charter of Rights for Children in Care, a requirement under the new Act, has been drafted in consultation with children and young people. The Department has implemented the requirements that an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander agency is consulted regarding the prospective placement of an Indigenous child, and that an Indigenous department officer is involved when making a placement arrangement for an Indigenous child.

The 2005-06 Budget allocated new funding of more than \$10 million over four years for a range of new and expanded services for children in care, including an advocate for children in care, intensive individual placements, expanded counselling services and an intensive support and treatment placement team.

The Department engaged Ms Gwenn Murray to examine cases of substantiated harm to children in care between April and September 2005. An Implementation Committee chaired by the Director General and including stakeholder representatives has developed an implementation strategy, action plan and performance indicator framework for all 43 recommendations.

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

The SAAP V Multilateral Agreement was signed on 30 September 2005 and the Western Australian Bilateral Agreement was signed on 25 January 2006.

Development and approval of 10 Innovation and Investment Fund pilot projects proposals are to be implemented in 17 SAAP services throughout WA commencing in 2006-07.

Sector campaigning and Department research indicate an increase in base funding is required for SAAP services to maintain existing service provision.

The Western Australian Government applied the higher state indexation to the State component of SAAP funding and additional funding of \$1.5 million has been allocated over and above the SAAP V Multilateral Agreement to continue this arrangement for the duration of SAAP V.

Training and Technology Grants were provided to SAAP services to assist service providers to better meet SAAP National Data Collection requirements.

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## South Australian Government comments

### *Child protection and supported placements*

In 2005, the Children's Protection (Miscellaneous) Amendment Act was passed, continuing the government's child protection reform program: Keeping them Safe. The Act strengthens the legislative base for the care and protection system in SA, provides a stronger commitment to ensure that children and their families have access to support service, builds community capacity to protect children through the establishment of child-safe environments, establishes common standards across all sectors for criminal history checking, and extends mandatory reporting of suspected child abuse.

Significant progress has been made in the development of across government agreements and programs for prevention and early intervention programs to support families to safely care for their children (for example, the Family Home Visiting Program).

South Australia has experienced significantly increased demand for out-of-home care placements for children and young people (a 12.6 per cent increase between 2004-05 and 2005-06). Increased emphasis on finding relative care placement has improved the proportion of children in out-of-home care living with their relatives or kin. Work commenced during the year to develop a Blueprint for the future of Alternative Care services in SA to improve the capacity to meet children's needs.

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

In addition to the national strategic directions of the SAAP V Agreement, SA has negotiated the following priorities:

- addressing the needs of Indigenous people who are homeless
- State wide programs that assist adults and accompanying children
- homeless people with complex needs.

Initiatives to address the additional priorities in 2005-06 included:

- the restructure of the Anglican Community Care SAAP service in Mount Gambier to refocus the service and provide early intervention and prevention services for people, who are homeless, in crisis and have been placed on a waiting list for a vacancy in a SAAP service
- \$1 million SAAP Restructure Funding for 14 innovative projects. The selected projects represent program initiatives in line with the SAAP V reforms and demonstrated good practice models, particularly those which address the service requirements for clients with complex needs needing a range of responses.

The data for SA in 2005-06 indicate that the number of Indigenous people who are homeless, the number of accompanying children, and the number of people who are in receipt of a disability pension are in significant numbers in SA SAAP agencies.

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## Tasmanian Government comments

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### *Child protection and supported placements*

The Tasmanian Government has commenced reforming the child protection system within the broader health and human services change agenda. A wide-ranging review of Tasmania's child protection system was released in November 2006. The review was jointly undertaken by the Department of Health and Human Services and the Commissioner for Children. The review provided recommendations on a number of service reforms as well as providing the framework for a new strategic plan.

In 2005-06, the Tasmanian Government increased staffing and program funding for the child protection service and implemented a new statewide induction program for child protection practitioners. The Formal Kinship Care Program has also been fully implemented.

Improvements to the child protection service include the trial of an Early Support Program initiative aimed at diverting notified children at risk and families of concern into targeted non-government support services. A range of new therapeutic services is also currently under development.

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

A significant initiative for the SAAP in Tasmania was the commencement in 2005-06 of the Quality Development Project. The three-year project will map the updated service standards to the Quality Improvement Council's (QIC) standards for community organisations, conduct both internal and external assessments of all services, and work with each organisation to enhance its performance and develop a culture of continual improvement. By the end of June 2006 most of the preliminary work had been completed and the mapping of the SAAP standards to the QIC standards was well underway.

During the reporting period four emergency accommodation services were redeveloped. Two purpose-built facilities were constructed for young men's services. Reports indicate a marked improvement in clients' self-esteem and security, and better management practices by staff by being able to separate high and low needs clients. Two other services, a service for women and children and a multi-target service, redeveloped their service delivery models and moved from a *shelter-based* model to a *decentralised* model with a single intake centre. Staff report that this has provided increased privacy and anonymity for clients and increased role delineation for workers.

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## Australian Capital Territory Government comments

### *Child protection and supported placements*

The ACT has continued to implement reforms outlined in The Territory as Parent and the Territory's Children reports. Some reforms include:

- during 2005-06, Care and Protection Services have continued to receive an increased number of child protection reports and additional demand for out-of-home care placements. Additional residential programs (almost doubling available residential placements) and specialist foster care places for children and young people have been provided
- a renewed focus on stabilising long-term care arrangements for children and young people through the use of Enduring Parental Responsibility orders
- the establishment of a Placement Manager position to co-ordinate, approve and select appropriate placements that meet the needs for children and young people requiring out of home care
- the expansion and promotion of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Services, enabling the provision of family and youth support, and an Indigenous Foster Carer program.

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

The ACT Homelessness Strategy — Breaking the Cycle entered its second year of implementation, with a range of reforms being implemented in the SAAP sector. The "Pathways Projects" and the Housing ACT reforms are the first stage for the provision of services to people who are experiencing or are at risk of homelessness. There were also changes to service models such as shifts away from congregate care, supported by the addition of stand alone properties to the service system. Reforms at the ACT's largest SAAP provider have progressed, and it is now managed as a Community Housing site which better reflects the site's provision of longer term accommodation. Public housing has introduced a range of reforms designed to reinforce its role as the post-crisis housing provider, and SAAP's complementary role to enable housing applicants in SAAP services to more easily access public housing.

In 2004-05 there were eight SAAP or SAAP-like services that did not participate in the SAAP National Data Collection. These agencies receive 15 per cent of the total ACT funding (\$2 131 670). Plans are in place over the next two years to ensure all non-participating agencies will be included in future data collections.

Factors influencing ACT results in previous reports continue in 2006. The small size of ACT service providers leads to proportionally larger overhead and indirect costs compared to larger jurisdictions. The ACT has the highest median rents for private rental in Australia placing extreme pressure on the public housing system and impacting on clients' length of stay in, and transition from SAAP.

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## 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 (FACS) program in 2006. Increased funding commenced in December 2003 with the intent of improving child protection services and systems over a period of 5 years. The increased funding has been used to build on the child protection workforce, to raise foster care payment rates, and to ensure quality of care for children in out-of-home care. Other initiatives resulted in the employment of additional Indigenous apprentices and cadets, and the tailoring of services to some of the highest needs children in out-of-home care by means of a specialist carer model.

An enhanced training program has been established to increase the opportunities for new and existing staff. This is achieved via mandatory induction training, specialist training, and opportunistic training in line with the FACS Training Framework.

A combined Police/FACS Child Abuse Task Force has recently been established to respond to systemic maltreatment and severe physical and sexual abuse notifications across the NT. A second phase of the initiative is a cross Government Community Action Planning strategy to develop community based activities that address abuse issues. This, coupled with the local 'Peace at Home' Police/FACS initiative in Katherine, broadens the response mechanisms to statutory investigations in the region.

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

During 2005-06 the NT undertook a mapping and capacity audit of SAAP services that included an agency self-assessment against the NT SAAP Service Standards, scrutiny of agency performance reports including financial statements and a agency consultation in the form of a site visit. Individual agency reports were provided to each agency and an overall report was produced.

Findings were that SAAP services are generally at or near capacity and that they generally comply with SAAP Service Standards. One area that needs more work is around corporate governance. In response to these findings, a one year project has commenced with a focus on assisting individual agencies to improve their human and financial resource management.

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## 15.10 Definitions of key terms and indicators

### Child protection and out-of-home care services

#### Activity Group 1 (pathways)

Receipt and assessment of initial information about a potential protection or support issue

Activities that are typically associated with receipt and assessment of initial information including receipt and recording of information, review of department databases, initial assessment of information and decisions about the appropriate response. This activity can also include consultation, with possible provision of advice. Activities by NGOs may be included if appropriate.

#### Activity Group 2 (pathways)

Provision of generic/non-intensive family support services

Activities that are typically associated with provision of lower level family support services at various stages including identification of family needs, provision of support services and diversionary services, some counselling and active linking of the family to support networks. Services are funded by government but can be delivered by either the relevant agency or a Non-government organisation (NGO). This bundle of services does not involve planned follow-up by the relevant agency after initial service delivery. The services will be delivered under voluntary arrangements between the relevant agency and family. Clients may receive these services more than once.

#### Activity Group 3 (pathways)

Provision of intensive family support services

Activities that are typically associated with provision of complex or intensive family support services including provision of therapeutic and in-home supports such as counselling and mediation, modelling of positive parenting strategies, referrals to intensive support services that may be provided by NGOs, advocacy on behalf of clients and intensive support for a family in a residential setting. This includes protection and treatment support services. These activities services may be provided if diversionary services are inappropriate to the case and may lead to statutory services being provided to the client.

#### Activity Group 4 (pathways)

Secondary information gathering and assessment

Activities that are typically associated with secondary information gathering and assessment are currently counted as 'investigations' in the Report on Government Services. As part of this activity group a decision may be made to substantiate or not substantiate. Information gathering activities include:

- sighting the child;
- contacting people with relevant information about the child or family (for example, teachers, police, support services);
- interviewing the child, sibling(s) and parents;
- observing family interactions;
- obtaining assessments of the child and/or family;
- conducting family group conferences;
- liaising with agencies providing services to the child and family;
- recording a substantiation or non-substantiation decision; and
- case conferences with partners and contributors in the investigation and assessment process.

#### Activity Group 5 (pathways)

Provision of short-term protective intervention and coordination services

Activities that are typically associated with provision of short-term protective intervention and coordination services including:

- working with the family to address protective issues;
- developing networks of support for the child;
- monitoring and reviewing the safety of the child;
- monitoring and reviewing family progress against case planning goals;
- case conferences with agencies providing services to the child and/or family, internal discussions and reviews; and

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• specialist child-focused therapeutic support</li> </ul>
<p><b>Activity Group 6 (pathways)</b> Seeking a court order</p>	<p>Activities that are typically associated with seeking court orders including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• preparing applications for the order;</li> <li>• preparing reports for the court;</li> <li>• obtaining assessment reports to submit to the court;</li> <li>• informing parties to the court proceedings, including parents, the child, and lawyers;</li> <li>• informing and briefing legal counsel or internal court groups;</li> <li>• going through internal pre-court review processes;</li> <li>• attending court; and</li> <li>• conducting family group conferences.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Activity Group 7 (pathways)</b> Provision of longer-term protective intervention and coordination services</p>	<p>Activities that are typically associated with provision of longer-term protective intervention and coordination services including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• monitoring the child or young person's progress and development (for example, social development and education progress) and undertaking activities that facilitate progress and development;</li> <li>• meeting any specific requirements of any court order;</li> <li>• reviewing appropriateness of the order for the circumstances of the child or young person. This usually occurs at intervals established by the court or in legislation;</li> <li>• reporting back to court;</li> </ul> <p>long term cases involving out-of-home care</p>
<p><b>Activity Group 8 (pathways)</b> Provision of out-of-home care services</p>	<p>Activities that are typically associated with provision of out-of-home care services including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• finding suitable placement(s) for the child;</li> <li>• assisting the child or young person to maintain contact with his/her family;</li> <li>• in some cases, staff payments for recruiting and training carers;</li> <li>• assessing suitability of potential kinship carers.</li> <li>• assisting the child or young person to maintain contact with their family;</li> <li>• working to return the child home; and</li> <li>• assisting the child or young person as they prepare to leave care as the end of the order approaches.</li> </ul>

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**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').



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<b>Family group homes</b>	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.
<b>Foster care</b>	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.
<b>Foster parent</b>	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).
<b>Guardian</b>	Any person who has the legal and ongoing care and responsibility for the protection of a child.
<b>Indigenous person</b>	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.
<b>Investigation</b>	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.
<b>Investigation finalised</b>	Where an investigation is completed and an outcome is recorded by 31 August.
<b>Investigation not finalised</b>	Where an investigation is commenced but an outcome is not recorded by 31 August.
<b>Length of time in continuous out-of-home care</b>	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.
<b>Non-respite care</b>	Out-of-home care for children for child protection reasons.
<b>Notification</b>	Contact with an authorised department by persons or other bodies making allegations of child abuse or neglect, or harm to a child.
<b>Other relative</b>	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.
<b>Out-of-home care</b>	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.

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<b>Placement types</b>	<p>Four main categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• facility-based care (placement in a residential building where the purpose is to provide placement for children and where there are paid staff, including placements in family group homes)</li> <li>• home-based care (placement in the home of a carer who is reimbursed for expenses for the care of the child). The three subcategories of home-based care are foster care/community care, relative/kinship care and other</li> <li>• independent living (including private board)</li> <li>• other (including unknown).</li> </ul>
<b>Relatives/kin</b>	Family members other than parents, or a person well known to the child and/or family (based on an existing relationship).
<b>Respite care</b>	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.
<b>Safety in out-of-home care</b>	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).
<b>Stability of placement</b>	<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"> <li>• a change in the placement type — for example, from a home-based to a facility-based placement</li> <li>• within placement type, a change in venue or a change from one home-based placement to a different home-based placement.</li> </ul> <p>A particular placement is counted only once, so a return to a previous placement is another placement.</p>
<b>Substantiation</b>	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

<b>Accommodation</b>	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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<b>Accommodation load (of agencies)</b>	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.
<b>Agency</b>	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.
<b>Caseload (of agencies)</b>	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.
<b>Casual client</b>	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.
<b>Client</b>	A person who receives supported accommodation or support.
<b>Crisis or short term supported accommodation</b>	Supported accommodation for periods of generally not more than three months (short term), and for persons needing immediate short term accommodation (crisis).
<b>Cross-target/multiple/general services</b>	SAAP services targeted at more than one primary client group category — for example, SAAP services for single persons regardless of their gender.
<b>Day support</b>	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.
<b>Homeless person</b>	<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"> <li>• is damaged, or is likely to damage, the person's health</li> <li>• threatens the person's safety</li> <li>• marginalises the person by failing to provide access to adequate personal amenities or the economic and social supports that a home normally affords</li> <li>• places the person in circumstances that threaten or adversely affect the adequacy, safety, security and affordability of that housing</li> <li>• is of unsecured tenure.</li> </ul> <p>A person is also considered homeless if living in accommodation provided by a SAAP agency or some other form of emergency accommodation.</p>

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<b>Indigenous person</b>	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.
<b>Medium term to long term supported accommodation</b>	Supported accommodation for periods over three months. Medium term is around three to six months and long term is longer than six months.
<b>Multiple service delivery model</b>	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).
<b>Non-English speaking background services</b>	Services that are targeted at persons whose first language is not English.
<b>One-off assistance</b>	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.
<b>Ongoing support period</b>	A support period for which, at the end of the reporting period, no support end date and no after-support information are provided.
<b>Outlet</b>	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).
<b>Outreach support services</b>	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'.
<b>Providers</b>	Agencies that supply support and accommodation services.
<b>Real expenditure</b>	Actual expenditure adjusted for changes in prices. Adjustments are made using the GDP(E) price deflator and expressed in terms of final year prices.
<b>Recurrent funding</b>	Funding provided by the Australian, State and Territory governments to cover operating costs, salaries and rent.
<b>Referral</b>	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.
<b>SAAP service</b>	Supported accommodation, support or one-off assistance that is provided by a SAAP agency and intended to be used by homeless persons.
<b>Service delivery model</b>	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.

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<b>Service provider</b>	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.
<b>Single men services</b>	Services provided for males who present to the SAAP agency without a partner or children.
<b>Single women services</b>	Services provided for females who present to the SAAP agency without a partner or children.
<b>Support</b>	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.
<b>Support period</b>	<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"> <li>• support ceases because the SAAP client terminates the relationship with the SAAP agency</li> <li>• support ceases because the SAAP agency terminates the relationship with the SAAP client</li> <li>• no support is provided to the SAAP client for a period of three months.</li> </ul> <p>A support period is relevant to the provision of supported accommodation or support, not the provision of one-off assistance.</p>
<b>Supported accommodation</b>	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.
<b>Telephone information and referral</b>	Support delivered via telephone without face-to-face contact. Support provided may include information and/or referral.
<b>Total funding</b>	Funding for allocation to agencies (not available at the individual client group level) for training, equipment and other administration costs.
<b>Unmet demand</b>	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.
<b>Women escaping domestic violence services</b>	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.
<b>Youth/young people services</b>	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.

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## 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\2007\Attach15A.xls and in Adobe PDF format as \Publications\Reports\2007\Attach15A.pdf. The files containing the supporting tables can also be found on the Review web page ([www.pc.gov.au/gsp](http://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).

### All jurisdiction data

<b>Table 15A.1</b>	State and Territory Government real recurrent expenditure on child protection and out-of-home care services (2005-06 dollars)
<b>Table 15A.2</b>	State and Territory Government real recurrent expenditure on child protection services, per notification, per investigation and per substantiation (2005-06 dollars)
<b>Table 15A.3</b>	State and Territory Government real recurrent expenditure on out-of-home care services (2005-06 dollars)
<b>Table 15A.4</b>	Comparability of government recurrent expenditure — items included, 2005-06
<b>Table 15A.5</b>	Child protection notifications, investigations and substantiations by Indigenous status 2005-06
<b>Table 15A.6</b>	Children admitted to and discharged from care and protection orders by Indigenous status, 2005-06 (number)
<b>Table 15A.7</b>	Children on care and protection orders at by type of order and Indigenous status, at 30 June 2006 (number)
<b>Table 15A.8</b>	Children in notifications, investigations and substantiations and children on care and protection orders: number and rate per 1000 children in the target populations by Indigenous status, 2005-06
<b>Table 15A.9</b>	Children who were the subject of a decision not to substantiate during the year and who were also the subject of a subsequent substantiation within 3 and/or 12 months, 2004-05
<b>Table 15A.10</b>	Children who were the subject of a substantiation during the year and who were also the subject of a subsequent substantiation within 3 and/or 12 months, 2004-05
<b>Table 15A.11</b>	Children in out-of-home care: number and rate per 1000 children aged 0–17 years by Indigenous status, 2005-06
<b>Table 15A.12</b>	Children in out-of-home care by Indigenous status and placement type, 30 June 2006 (number)

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<b>Table 15A.13</b>	Children in out-of-home care by Indigenous status and whether on a care and protection order, 30 June 2006 (number)
<b>Table 15A.14</b>	Children in out-of-home care by Indigenous status and length of time in continuous out-of-home care, 30 June 2006 (number)
<b>Table 15A.15</b>	Children who exited care during the year 2005-06 by Indigenous status and length of time spent in care (number)
<b>Table 15A.16</b>	Children in out-of-home care placed with relatives/kin by Indigenous status, 30 June
<b>Table 15A.17</b>	Indigenous children in out-of-home care by relationship of caregiver, 30 June 2006
<b>Table 15A.18</b>	Children aged under 12 years in out-of-home care and in a home based placement by Indigenous status, 30 June 2006
<b>Table 15A.19</b>	Children on a care and protection order and exiting out-of-home care during the year by number of placements, by the length of time in out-of-home care (number)
<b>Table 15A.20</b>	Children in out-of-home care by whether they were the subject of a child protection substantiation and the person believed responsible was in the household, 2005-06
<b>Table 15A.21</b>	Intensive family support services: number of services, total real recurrent expenditure and real recurrent expenditure per child
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## 15.12 References

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