
15 Protection and support services

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Attachment tables

Attachment tables are identified in references throughout this chapter by a '15A' suffix (for example, table 15A.3). A full list of attachment tables is provided at the end of this chapter, and the attachment tables are available on the CD-ROM enclosed with the Report or from the Review website at www.pc.gov.au/gsp.

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*: 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
- *juvenile justice services*: services to promote community safety and reduce youth offending by assisting young people to address their offending behaviour
- *supported accommodation and assistance services*: services to assist young people, adults and families who are homeless or at imminent risk of becoming homeless.

Improvements to the reporting of protection and support services this year include:

- five jurisdictions reporting performance data for the 'safety in out-of-home care' effectiveness indicator, compared with two previously
- seven jurisdictions reporting performance data for the two child protection 'response time' effectiveness indicators, compared with six previously
- all jurisdictions reporting for the efficiency indicator 'out-of-home care expenditure per placement night', compared with seven previously
- for the first time, performance data are included for six juvenile justice performance indicators and performance indicator boxes are included for a further seven performance indicators.

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 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 services 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 come into contact with the protection and support services system (Department of Human Services 2002; The Allen Consulting Group 2008).

Child protection concerns and Indigenous communities

Studies have highlighted the high incidence of child abuse and neglect within some Indigenous communities, compared with non-Indigenous communities. Indigenous families across Australia have been found to experience high levels of violence, compared with non-Indigenous families (AIHW 2006a). The final report of the Northern Territory Board of Inquiry into the Protection of Aboriginal Children from Sexual Abuse (2007), identified child sexual abuse as a significant issue for many of the remote NT Aboriginal communities consulted as part of the Inquiry. The final report of the WA Inquiry into Response by Government Agencies to Complaints of Family Violence and Child Abuse in Aboriginal Communities (Gordon Report 2002), also found high levels of violence and child abuse within Aboriginal communities in WA.

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. Placements may be voluntary or made in conjunction with care and protection orders.

Out-of-home care services comprise home-based care (for example, foster care, care with a 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 a 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.

(Continued on next page)

Box 15.1 (Continued)

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
- 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 on intensive family support services

Recurrent expenditure on intensive family support services across all jurisdictions was \$254.5 million in 2008-09. This expenditure has increased in real terms each year from \$71.7 million in 2004-05 (table 15A.26). This represents an average annual increase in expenditure of 37.2 per cent over this four year period. Tables 15A.26–29 provide additional information about families and children who were involved with intensive family support services, including the cost of providing these services per child commencing intensive family support services.

Child protection treatment and support services

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 services target 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 focus on either early intervention or reunification support.

Child protection treatment and support services provide educational services, clinical services including counselling, group work and other therapeutic interventions, and domestic violence services.

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW), with the support of State and Territory governments, is studying the feasibility of a national data collection for child protection treatment and support services.

Source: 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 (see box 15.2 for responsible State and Territory government departments during 2008-09). These services may be delivered by the government or the non-government sector. State and Territory departments responsible for child protection investigate and assess reports, provide, or refer families to, support services, and intervene where necessary (including making court applications when an order is required to protect a child, and placing children in out-of-home care).

Box 15.2 Child protection and out-of-home care services

<i>NSW</i>	Department of Community Services (DOCS) (now the Department of Human Services)
<i>VIC</i>	Department of Human Services (DHS)
<i>QLD</i>	QLD Department of Child Safety (DCS) (now the Department of Communities)
<i>WA</i>	Department for Child Protection (DCP)
<i>SA</i>	Department for Families and Communities (DFC)
<i>TAS</i>	Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)
<i>ACT</i>	Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services (DHCS)
<i>NT</i>	Department of Health and Families (DHF)

Other areas of government also have roles in child protection and provide services for children who have come into contact with relevant departments for protective reasons. These 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 departments responsible for child protection
- 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 child protection systems. Examples of these are listed in box 15.3.

Box 15.3 Initiatives 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 through a charter of rights for children in care. Part of the Commissioner's role is to monitor the quality of out-of-home care services.
- QLD* The Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian has a range of legislated functions designed to oversee children's wellbeing in the child protection system. One of these enables Community Visitors to regularly visit children in out-of-home care to independently assess their safety and wellbeing. The Department of Communities has a complaints management system so that clients, family members, advocates and members of the Queensland public can raise enquiries, concerns, or complaints about their contact and interactions with the department.
- WA* The Advocate for Children in Care provides advocacy and complaints management services for children and young people in care. The Department's Complaints Management Unit is available to all customers. Formal monitoring of protection and care service standards by a Standards Monitoring Unit began on 1 July 2007. Seventeen Districts are monitored on a two-year cycle and the monitoring regime will be extended across all placement service providers commencing 1 July 2010.
- SA* The Office of the Guardian monitors and assesses care, 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 wellbeing of children, examining the policies, practices and services provided for children and any laws affecting the health, welfare, care, protection and development of children.

(Continued on next page)

Box 15.3 (Continued)

ACT The Public Advocate of the ACT monitors the provision of services, and protects and advocates for the rights of children and young people. Systemic issues are referred by the Public Advocate to the Commissioner for Children and Young People. The Commissioner consults with and promotes the interests of children. The Official Visitor's role is to visit and inspect places of care, of detention or therapeutic protection, and receive and inquire about complaints made concerning the care provided to children and young people at these locations. In addition, an ACT Charter of Rights for children and young people in out-of-home care was launched in November 2009. The Charter is consistent with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, the ACT Human Rights Act 2004, and the Children and Young People Act 2008, all of which emphasise the basic human rights to which children and young people are entitled.

NT Provisions for the new Care and Protection of Children Act 2007 commenced in 2008 and included establishment of a Children's Commissioner to investigate complaints and oversight administration of the Act, enhanced regulations of children's services, establishment of a Child Deaths Review and Prevention Committee, and additional support for children leaving care.

Source: State and Territory governments (unpublished).

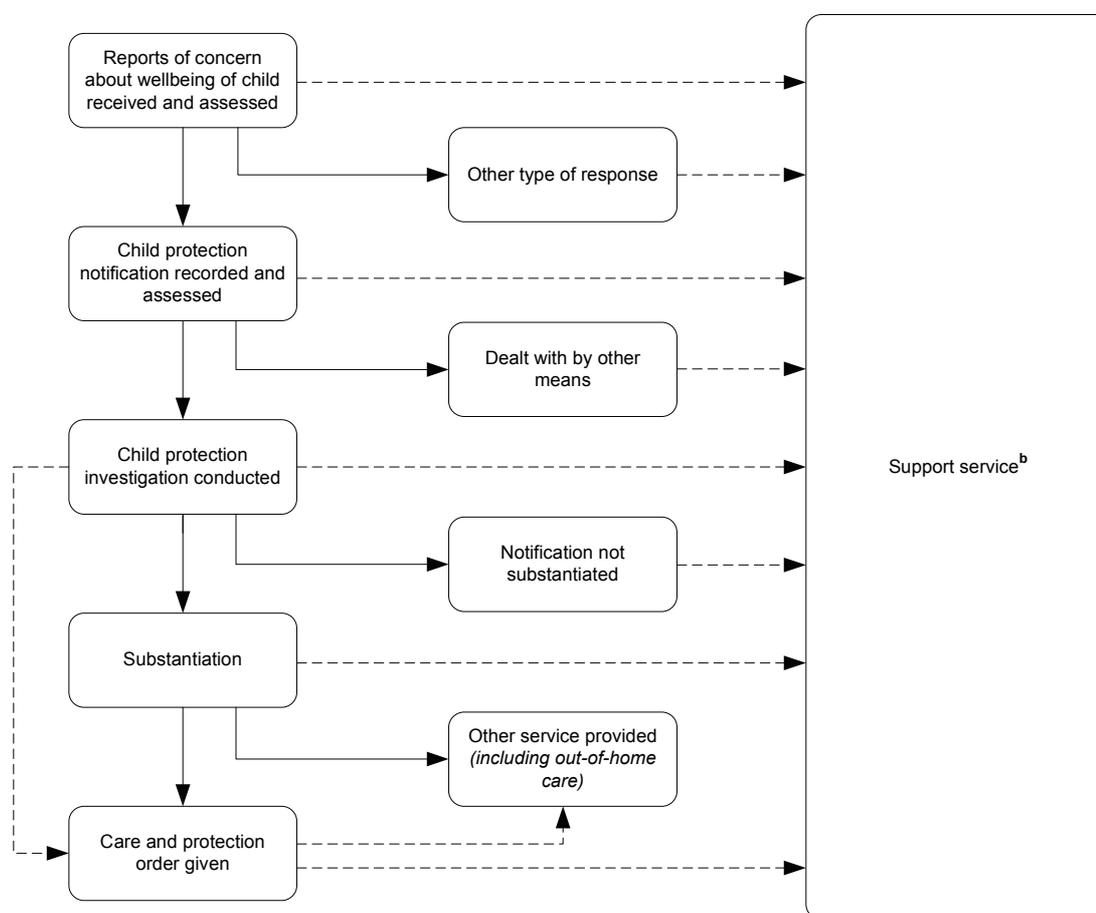
Size and scope

The child protection system

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

State and Territory departments with responsibility for child protection are advised of concerns about the wellbeing of children through reports to these departments. Reports may be made by people mandated to report or by other members of the community. Individuals and organisations mandated to report vary across states and territories, and may include medical practitioners, police services, school teachers and principals. These reports are assessed and classified as child protection notifications, child concern reports, or matters requiring some other kind of response. The most common source of notifications in 2008-09 in all jurisdictions were the police. The second most common source of notifications varied across jurisdictions and included social workers and school personnel (AIHW 2010).

Figure 15.1 The child protection system^a



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

Source: Australian State and Territory governments (unpublished).

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.

Most jurisdictions assesses incoming reports to determine whether they meet the threshold for recording a notification. Notifications are subsequently investigated based on the policies and practices in each jurisdiction. Once it has been decided that an investigation is required, the investigation process is similar across jurisdictions. The department responsible for child protection may obtain further information about the child and his or her family by checking information systems for any previous history, undertaking discussion 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. Where possible, an investigation determines whether a notification is substantiated or not substantiated (figure 15.1).

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

Nationally, 204 463 children aged 0–16 years were the subject of child protection notifications in 2008-09. The rate of notifications per 1000 children in the population aged 0–16 years was 43.1 in 2008-09 (table 15A.8). The total number of notifications for each jurisdiction for 2008-09 (including cases where a child is the subject of more than one child protection notification) by Indigenous status of the child is reported in table 15A.5.

Notifications data are collected early in the child protection process and often before an agency has full knowledge of a 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 need to be interpreted with care.

Substantiation

The legal definition of harm or risk of harm, abuse or risk of abuse are similar across jurisdictions. Traditionally, 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, the focus has now shifted 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 or risk to the child, and the child's needs. While the legal criteria for substantiating such matters are now similar across jurisdictions, there remain some differences in practice, including different thresholds for recording a substantiation related to risk of harm.

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

Nationally, 32 478 children aged 0–16 years were the subject of a substantiation in 2008-09. The rate of children who were the subject of a substantiation per 1000 children in the population aged 0–16 years was 6.9 (table 15A.8). The number and rate of children aged 0–16 years who were the subject of a substantiation has fluctuated since 2004-05. Nationally, 33 871 children were the subject of a substantiation in 2004-05. This represented a rate of 7.5 per 1000 children in the population aged 0–16 years (SCRGSP 2006).

Nationally, 8135 Indigenous and 24 343 non-Indigenous children were the subject of a substantiation in 2008-09. The rate of children who were the subject of a substantiation per 1000 children in the target population aged 0–16 years was 36.8 for Indigenous children and 5.4 for non-Indigenous children (table 15A.8).

Care and protection orders

Although child protection substantiations are often resolved without the need for a court order (which is usually a last resort) recourse to a court may take place at any point in the child protection investigation process. The types of orders available vary across jurisdictions and may include guardianship or custody orders, supervisory orders, and interim and temporary orders.

Nationally, 35 409 children aged 0–17 years were on care and protection orders at 30 June 2009. The rate of children on care and protection orders per 1000 children in the population aged 0–17 years was 7.0 (table 15A.8). The number and rate of children aged 0–17 years who were the subject of a care and protection order has increased since 2004-05. At 30 June 2005, 24 075 children were the subject of a care and protection order, which represented a rate of 4.8 per 1000 children in the population aged 0–17 years (AIHW 2010).

Nationally, 10 271 Indigenous and 25 138 non-Indigenous children were on care and protection orders at 30 June 2009. The rate of children on care and protection orders per 1000 children in the target population aged 0–17 years was 43.8 for Indigenous children and 5.2 for non-Indigenous children (table 15A.8).

Further information regarding children on care and protection orders is included in the attachment tables. Table 15A.6 identifies the number of children admitted to and discharged from care and protection orders by Indigenous status, 2008-09. Table 15A.7 identifies the number of children on care and protection orders by type of order and Indigenous status at 30 June 2009.

Out-of-home care

Out-of-home care is one of a range of services provided to children and families where there is a need to provide safe care for a child. Children are placed in out-of-home care as a last resort when it is not in their best interests to remain with their family (for example, because they are not safe or because no one is able or willing to provide care). Where children are placed in out-of-home care, placement with the extended family or community is sought where possible, particularly in the case of Indigenous children (AIHW 2006b). Continued emphasis is 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, 34 069 children were in out-of-home care at 30 June 2009. The rate of children in out-of-home care per 1000 children in the population aged 0–17 years was 6.7 (table 15A.16). The number and rate of children aged 0–17 years in out-of-home care has increased since 2004-05. At 30 June 2005, 23 695 children were in out-of-home care. This represented a rate of 4.9 per 1000 children in the population aged 0–17 years (SCRGSP 2006).

Nationally, 10 512 Indigenous children and 23 557 non-Indigenous children were in out-of-home care at 30 June 2009. The rate of children in out-of-home care per 1000 children in the target population aged 0–17 years was 44.8 for Indigenous children and 4.9 for non-Indigenous children (table 15A.16).

Further information on children in out-of-home care is included in the attachment tables. Table 15A.17 identifies the number of children in out-of-home care by Indigenous status and placement type at 30 June 2009. Table 15A.18 identifies the number of children in out-of-home care by Indigenous status and whether they were on a care and protection order at 30 June 2009. Table 15A.19 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 2009. Table 15A.20 identifies the number of children who exited care during 2008-09, by Indigenous status and length of time spent in care.

Funding

Recurrent expenditure on child protection and out-of-home care services was approximately \$2.2 billion across Australia in 2008-09 — a real increase of \$123.6 million (6.0 per cent) from 2007-08. Of this expenditure, out-of-home care services accounted for the majority (66.0 per cent, or \$1.4 billion). Nationally, annual real expenditure on child protection and out-of-home care services has

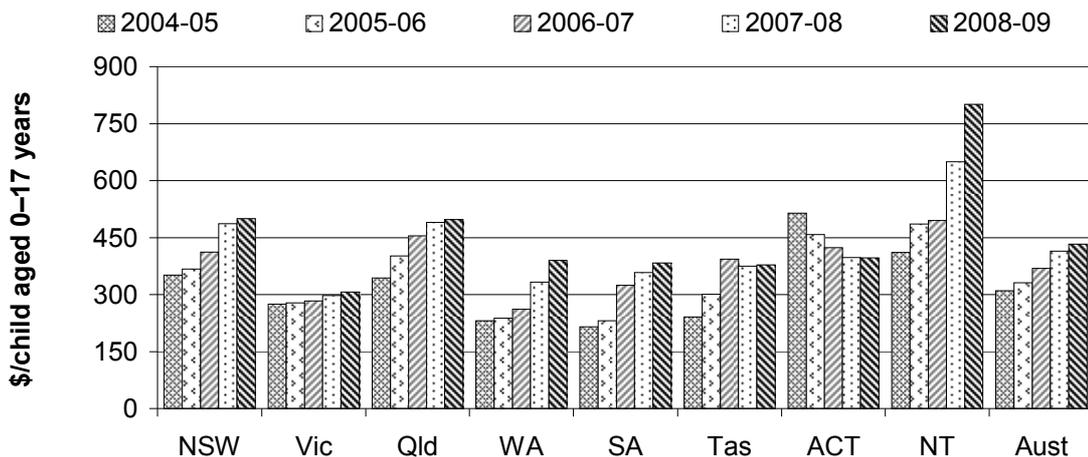
increased by \$696.6 million from \$1.5 billion since 2004-05, an average annual increase over the 4 year period of 10.1 per cent (table 15A.1).

In 2008-09, real recurrent expenditure per child aged 0–17 years in child protection and out-of-home care services was \$432 nationally (figure 15.2). Real recurrent expenditure per child aged 0–17 years increased in most jurisdictions between 2004-05 and 2008-09 and has increased nationally each year since 2004-05. In 2004-05 the real recurrent expenditure per child aged 0–17 years was \$310 (table 15A.1). This represents an average annual increase over the 4 year period of 9.9 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 calculated, costs should be estimated on a consistent basis across jurisdictions. However, in the area of child protection, 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 per child (2008-09 dollars)^a



^a Refer to table 15A.1 for detailed jurisdiction-specific footnotes on expenditure data and table 15A.4 for information on the comparability of expenditure data.

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

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 15.4).

Box 15.4 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.

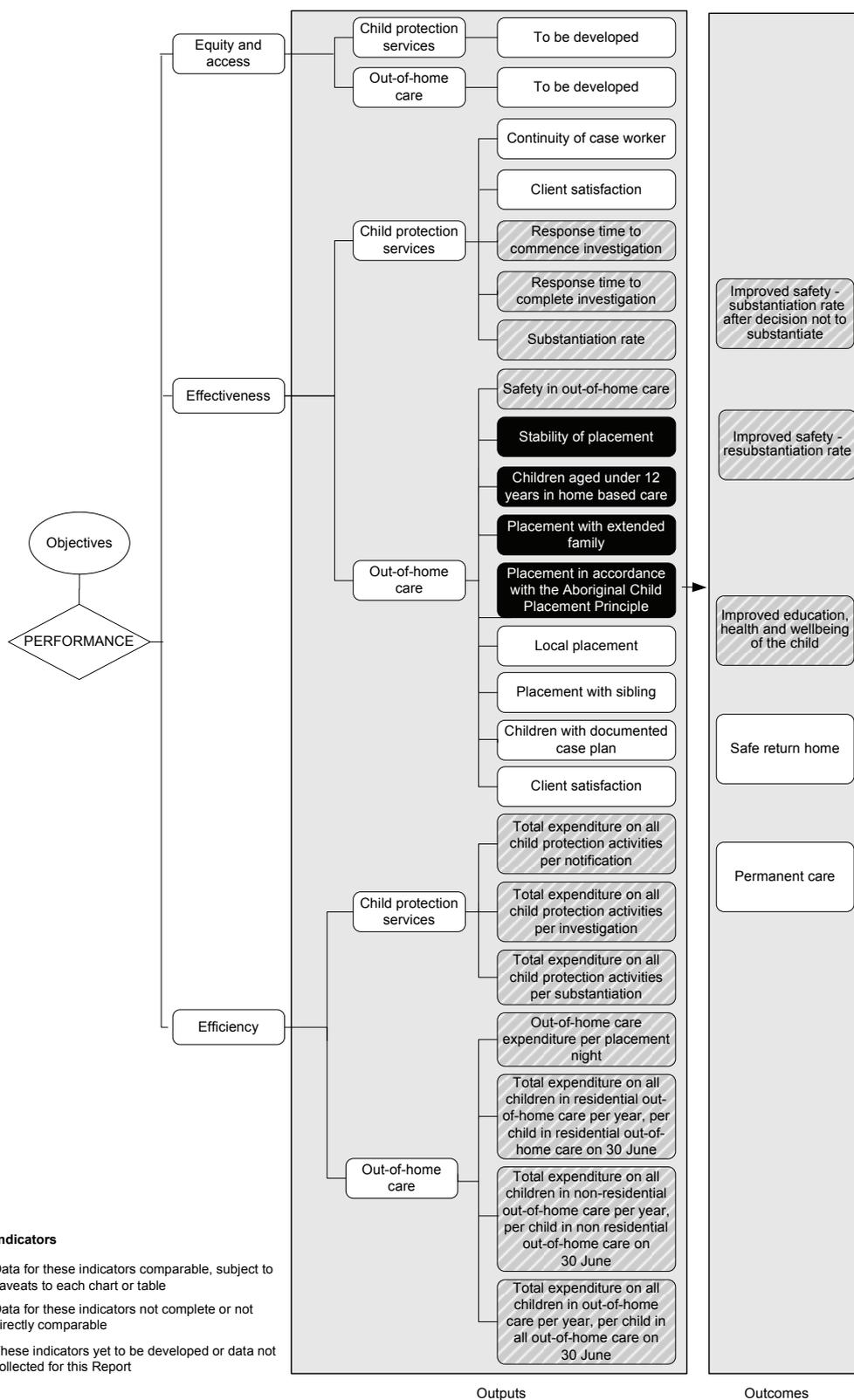
Child protection and out-of-home care services should be provided in an efficient and effective manner.

The performance indicator framework shows which data are comparable in the 2010 Report (figure 15.3). 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).

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. The Report's statistical appendix 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) (appendix A).

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



Key to indicators

- Text** Data for these indicators comparable, subject to caveats to each chart or table
- Text** Data for these indicators not complete or not directly comparable
- Text** These indicators yet to be developed or data not collected for this Report

Outputs

Outputs are the actual services delivered (while outcomes are the impact of these services on the status of an individual or group) (see chapter 1, section 1.5).

Equity and access

Equity and access indicators are 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 (box 15.5).

Box 15.5 Access to child protection and out-of-home care services by equity groups

'Access to child protection and out-of-home care services by equity groups' are yet to be defined.

These indicators have been identified for development in future reports.

Effectiveness

Child protection services — continuity of case worker

'Continuity of case worker' is an indicator of governments' objective to ensure child protection services are delivered in an effective manner (box 15.6).

Box 15.6 Continuity of case worker

'Continuity of case worker' is yet to be defined.

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.

Child protection services — client satisfaction

'Client satisfaction' is an indicator of governments' objective to provide high quality services that meet the needs of recipients (box 15.7).

Box 15.7 Client satisfaction

'Client satisfaction' is yet to be defined.

This indicator has been identified for development and reporting in future.

Box 15.8 provides examples of steps taken across jurisdictions to monitor, assess and promote client satisfaction in relation to child protection and out-of-home care.

Box 15.8 Developments in client satisfaction

NSW A large scale evaluation is being undertaken of the Brighter Futures early intervention program, which targets vulnerable families with children under 9 years of age. As part of the evaluation, a sample of 168 families participated in a survey assessing satisfaction with the services provided. In summary, 92 per cent stated that they were satisfied or completely satisfied with case management; 97 per cent stated that they were satisfied or completely satisfied with home visits; 59 per cent stated that they were satisfied with the child care service (with 35 per cent stating that it was not applicable); and 48 per cent stated that they were satisfied with parenting programs (with 46 per cent stating that it was not applicable).

VIC Survey findings of child protection clients and families in 2001 on their experience of child protection identified areas for practice improvement and a range of strengths in child protection practice, including that in the majority of cases, child protection intervention improved the safety and life circumstances of young people. A further survey of child protection, out-of-home care and intensive family support services clients is to take place in 2010 and again in 2012. Client feedback is also routinely sought by Community Services Organisations as part of meeting Victorian out-of-home care service registration standards.

Qld The views of children in care are regularly sought through surveys undertaken by the Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian. The surveys inform systems monitoring indicators and contribute to policy and practice development. The Department also supports 'Be Heard' programs delivered by the CREATE Foundation. These programs gather information from children and young people in care at a local level and provide feedback and training to the relevant child safety service centre. This includes recommendations to staff about how they can overcome barriers and address issues that have been raised by children and young people.

(Continued on next page)

Box 15.8 (Continued)

- WA** The Department for Child Protection undertook an on-line survey of foster carers in early 2008 and is responding to the feedback obtained from this stakeholder group. The Department introduced new complaints policy and procedures in March 2008. Formal monitoring of service standards has continued and all districts were assessed by June 2009. A pilot standards monitoring regime for residential and non-government placement services was completed in June 2009. WA's first Commissioner for Children and Young People was appointed in December 2007 and has legislative powers to consult, investigate, research, advise and report independently to the Parliament about issues that concern children and young people and those supporting them.
- SA** Based on recommendations arising from the Mullighan Inquiry (Mullighan 2008), the SA Government has commenced drafting legislation to strengthen prevention and early intervention. Families SA has also updated its customer complaints system. In addition, a survey of foster carers undertaken in 2007 revealed that in dealing with departmental staff the majority of carers reported being treated fairly, staff were competent and that foster carers received the information they sought. A further survey of carers will be undertaken in 2009. The SA Office of the Guardian has also conducted interviews with children and young people in care to identify what they want from their case workers. Overwhelmingly, children and young people value a positive relationship with their case worker (SA Government 2009).
- TAS** Tasmania engaged the CREATE Foundation in March 2009 to report the views of children in care as part of the 'Be Heard' project. The project's interim report indicates that children in care value being involved in decision making about their situation. They also value placements in which they feel part of a family and are respected. In June 2009 the Commissioner for Children commenced an audit of complaints in care with a focus on the level and quality of worker visitation and care planning. The Commissioner reported that children in care value equality of treatment by carers and benefit when a meaningful relationship is established with their child protection worker. Tasmania also launched a Charter of Rights for Children in Out-of-Home Care in June 2009. The Charter materials are distributed to children, young people, and others involved in the provision of Out-of-Home Care in Tasmania.
- ACT** The CREATE Foundation 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. This charter has been developed in consultation with children, young people, the out-of-home care sector, foster carers, kinships carers, and other government and non-government agencies. The Charter was launched in November 2009.

(Continued on next page)

Box 15.8 (Continued)

NT In June 2008 a Children's Commissioner was appointed. The Children's Commissioner can receive and investigate complaints about services, usually for children for whom care orders are in place. It may also include any child that Northern Territory Families and Children (Department of Health and Families) has accepted as requiring further assessment, case management, intervention or support services following a notification.

Source: State and Territory governments (unpublished).

Child protection services — response time to commence investigation

'Response time to commence investigation' is an indicator of governments' objective to minimise the risk of harm to children by responding to notifications of possible child protection incidents and commencing investigations in a timely manner (box 15.9).

Box 15.9 Response time to commence investigation

'Response time to commence investigation' is defined as the length of time (measured in days) between the date a child protection department records a notification and the date an investigation is subsequently commenced.

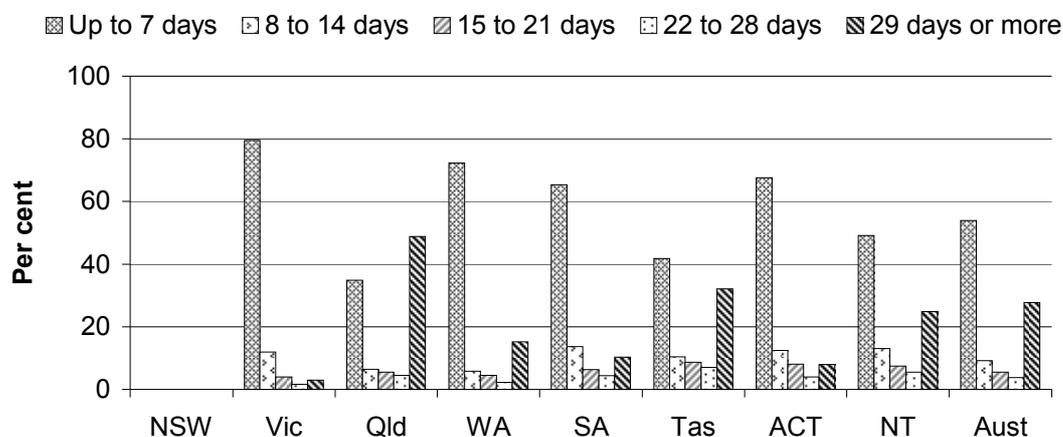
A short or decreasing length of time between recording a notification and commencing an investigation is desirable. The length of time between recording a notification and commencing an investigation indicates a department's promptness in effectively responding to child protection concerns.

This indicator needs to be interpreted with care as jurisdictions record notifications at different stages in response to a report, and jurisdictions have policy and legislation outlining the time recommended for commencing investigations, based on the seriousness of the child protection concern.

Data reported for this indicator are neither directly comparable nor complete.

For most jurisdictions, the majority of investigations were commenced within seven days of notification in 2008-09 (figure 15.4).

Figure 15.4 Proportion of investigations commenced, by time taken to commence investigation (2008-09)^a



^a Data for NSW were not available.

Source: AIHW data collection (unpublished); table 15A.14.

Child protection services — response time to complete investigation

‘Response time to complete investigation’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to minimise the risk of harm to the child by responding to notifications of possible child protection incidents and completing investigations in a timely manner (box 15.10).

Box 15.10 Response time to complete investigation

‘Response time to complete investigation’ is defined as the length of time (measured in days) between the date a child protection department records a notification and the date an investigation is completed (that is, the date an investigation outcome is determined by a department).

A short or decreasing length of time between recording a notification and completing an investigation is desirable. The length of time between recording a notification and completing an investigation indicates the effectiveness of the department in conducting investigations in a timely manner.

(Continued on next page)

Box 15.10 (Continued)

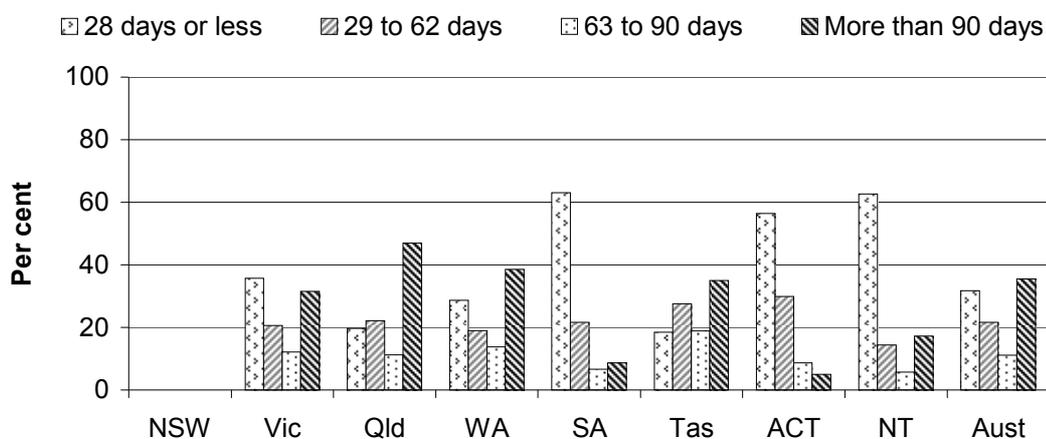
This indicator needs to be interpreted with care as jurisdictions record notifications at different stages in response to a report, and jurisdictions have policy and legislation outlining the time recommended for commencing investigations, based on the seriousness of the child protection concern. Furthermore, while investigations should be conducted in a timely manner, it is important that expediency does not undermine a thorough and accurate assessment of the case. In addition, a number of factors outside the control of a department can affect the timeliness of investigations, including involvement by external parties (for example, police, schools) and an inability to locate a child and/or family.

Data reported for this indicator are neither directly comparable nor complete.

Investigation is the process whereby the relevant department obtains more detailed information about a child who is the subject of a notification (for the 2010 Report this is between 1 July 2008 and 30 June 2009) and makes an assessment about the harm or degree of harm to the child, and his or her protective needs. An investigation includes sighting or interviewing the subject child where it is practical to do so.

The response time to complete investigation varied across jurisdictions in 2008-09, with the majority of investigations completed in either less than 28 days or more than 90 days (figure 15.5).

Figure 15.5 Proportion of investigations finalised, by time taken to complete investigation (2008-09)^a



^a Data for NSW were not available.

Source: AIHW data collection (unpublished); table 15A.15.

Child protection services — substantiation rate

‘Substantiation rate’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to target investigations to those notifications where a substantive child abuse/neglect incident has occurred or is at risk of occurring (box 15.11).

Box 15.11 Substantiation rate

‘Substantiation rate’ is defined as the proportion of finalised investigations where harm or risk of harm was substantiated.

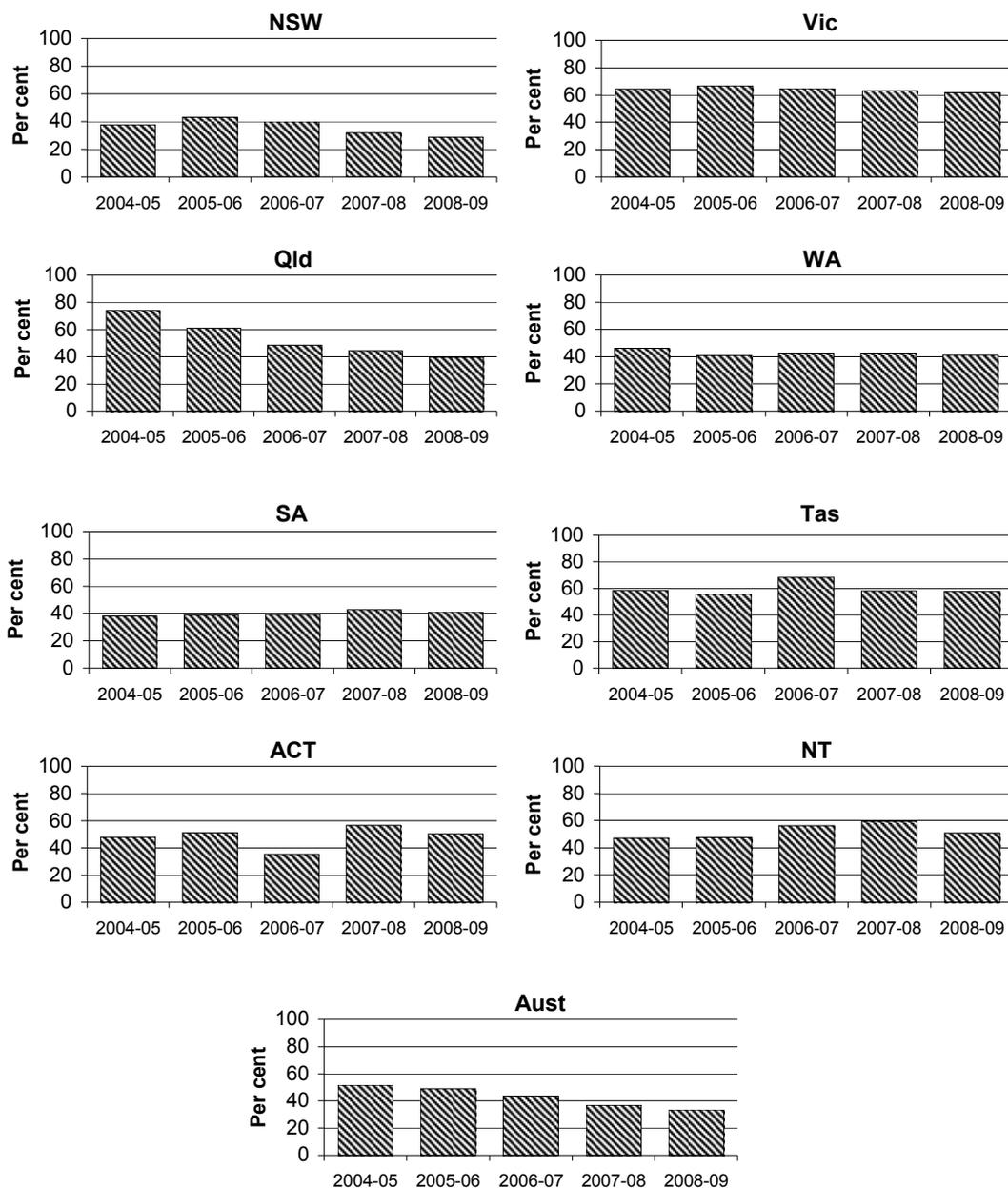
Neither a very high nor very low substantiation rate is desirable. The ‘substantiation rate’ provides an indication of the extent to which government avoided the human and financial costs of an investigation where no harm had occurred or was at risk of occurring. A very low substantiation rate might indicate that notifications and investigations are not accurately targeted at appropriate cases, with the undesirable consequence of distress to families and undermining the likelihood that families will voluntarily seek support. It might also reflect a greater propensity to substantiate abuse incidents rather than situations of risk. A very high substantiation rate might indicate that either some appropriate cases are being overlooked at notification and/or investigation, or that the criteria for substantiation are unnecessarily bringing ‘lower risk’ families into the statutory system.

The rate of finalised investigations that were substantiated is influenced by a range of factors and might fluctuate because of policy, funding and practice changes, 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 reported for this indicator are not directly comparable.

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 unless otherwise stated (figure 15.6).

Figure 15.6 Proportion of finalised child protection investigations that were substantiated^{a, b}



^a Data are not comparable across jurisdictions because definitions of substantiation vary significantly. Consequently, rates should not be compared across jurisdictions. ^b Refer to footnotes in the source tables for information about what each jurisdiction's data include.

Source: AIHW (unpublished), derived from *Child protection notifications, investigations and substantiations, Australia* data collection; tables 15A.39, 15A.56, 15A.73, 15A.90, 15A.107, 15A.124, 15A.141 and 15A.158.

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

‘Safety in out-of-home care’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to provide children who are under the care of the State with a safe home environment (box 15.12).

Box 15.12 Safety in out-of-home care

‘Safety in out-of-home care’ is defined as the proportion of children in out-of-home care who were the subject of a substantiation where the person responsible was living in the household providing out-of-home care.

A low or decreasing proportion of substantiations is desirable.

This indicator reflects the safety of children in care situations. Care should be taken when interpreting this indicator as the threshold for substantiating harm or risk involving children in care is generally lower than that for substantiating harm or risk involving a child in the care of his or her own parents. This is because governments assume a duty of care for children removed from the care of their parents for protective reasons. In addition, care should be taken when interpreting these data as the scope of information captured by jurisdictions differs. Some jurisdictions include substantiations concerning visitors to the home and substantiations where abuse was perpetrated by someone outside the care setting but a carer’s action or inaction contributed to the harm.

Data reported for this indicator are neither complete nor directly comparable.

Nationally, in 2008-09, 0.6 per cent of children in out-of-home care were the subject of a substantiation where the person responsible was living in the household (table 15.1). Proportions varied across jurisdictions.

Table 15.1 Rate and number of children in out-of-home care who were the subject of a substantiation and the person responsible was living in the household, 2008-09^{a, b}

	<i>Unit</i>	<i>NSW^c</i>	<i>Vic^c</i>	<i>Qld^d</i>	<i>WA</i>	<i>SA</i>	<i>Tas</i>	<i>ACT</i>	<i>NT^c</i>	<i>Aust</i>
Children in care who were the subject of a substantiation	no.	na	na	230	4	4	16	1	na	255
Children aged 0-17 in at least one care placement during the year	no.	17 998	7 826	9 527	3 456	2 519	1 011	892	747	43 976
Children in care who were the subject of a substantiation as a proportion of all children in care	%	na	na	2.4	0.1	0.2	1.6	0.1	na	0.6

^a Data reported for this indicator are not directly comparable across jurisdictions due to differences in policies, practices and reporting methods. ^b See table 15A.25 for detailed footnotes. ^c Data were not available for NSW, Victoria or the NT. ^d Queensland's data comprise matter of concern substantiations, which refer to children in the custody or guardianship of the Chief Executive only. Queensland's consideration of the 'person believed responsible' relates to the overall safety and risk experienced by a child in care. It includes not only allegations of actual harm inflicted by members of a household but also whether their action or inaction contributed to the risk or harm even if the person believed responsible did not reside in the household. Therefore, Queensland's data are broader than the scope of the national counting rule and should not be compared to other jurisdictions' data. **na** Not available.

Source: AIHW (unpublished), Children in Out-of-Home Care, Australia data collection (table 15A.25).

Out-of-home care — stability of placement

'Stability of placement' is an indicator of governments' objective to provide high quality services that meet the needs of recipients on the basis of relative need and available resources (box 15.13).

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 are collected on the number of different placements for children on a care and protection order who exited out-of-home care in 2008-09. Data are grouped according to the length of time in care (less than 12 months and 12 months or more).

Box 15.13 Stability of placement

‘Stability of placement’ is defined as the proportion of children who had 1 or 2 placements 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.

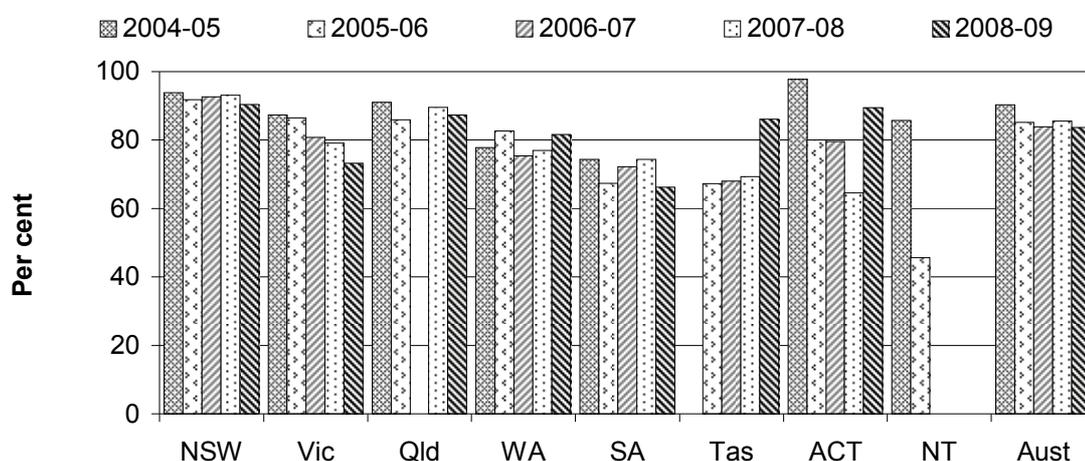
Children can have multiple short term placements for appropriate reasons (for example, an initial placement followed by a longer term placement) or it may be desirable to change placements to achieve better child–family compatibility. It is not desirable for a child to stay in an unsatisfactory or unsupportive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

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 population of children in an exit cohort is biased to children from recent entry cohorts with relatively short stays in care, and these children are likely to have experienced fewer placements.

Data reported for this indicator are comparable.

Nationally, 83.7 per cent of the children on a care and protection order who exited care after less than 12 months in 2008-09 experienced 1 or 2 placements. This proportion varied across jurisdictions (figure 15.7).

Figure 15.7 Proportion of children on a care and protection order exiting care after less than 12 months, who had 1 or 2 placements^{a, b, c, d, e, f, g}

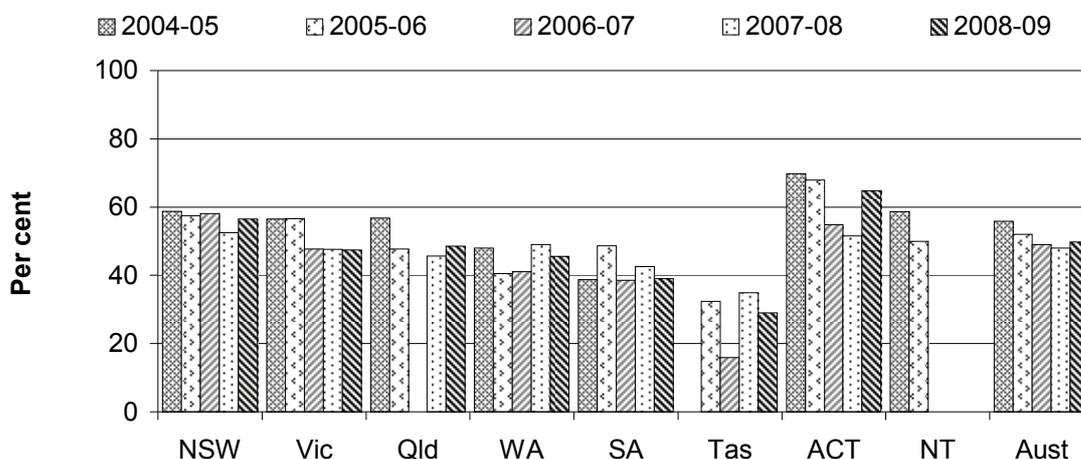


^a Data refer to children exiting care during the relevant financial year. ^b Refer to footnotes in the source tables for information about what each jurisdiction's data include. ^c During 2006-07 Victoria introduced new service and data reporting arrangements. Therefore data for 2006-07 onwards may not be fully comparable to previous years' data. ^d Queensland data for 2006-07 and NT data for 2006-07 to 2008-09 are not available. ^e Data for Tasmania were not available prior to 2005-06. ^f The apparent decline in the proportion for the ACT in 2007-08 was impacted by the small number of children involved and the placement of large sibling groups. ^g NT data for 2006-07 to 2008-09 were not available.

Source: AIHW (unpublished), derived from *Children in out-of-home care, Australia* collection; table 15A.24.

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 2008-09 after 12 months or more who had experienced 1 or 2 placements was 49.7 per cent nationally but varied across jurisdictions (figure 15.8).

Figure 15.8 Proportion of children on a care and protection order exiting care after 12 months or more, who had 1 or 2 placements^{a, b, c, d, e, f}



^a Data refer to children exiting care during the relevant financial year. ^b Refer to footnotes in the source table for information about what each jurisdiction's data include. ^c During 2006-07 Victoria introduced new service and data reporting arrangements. Therefore data for 2006-07 onwards may not be fully comparable to previous years' data. ^d Queensland data for 2006-07 were not available. ^e Data for Tasmania were not available prior to 2005-06. ^f NT data for 2006-07 to 2008-09 were not available.

Source: AIHW (unpublished), derived from *Children in out-of-home care, Australia* data collection; table 15A.24.

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

'Children aged under 12 years in home-based care' is an indicator of governments' objective to provide services which meet the needs of the recipients (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 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 desirable. This indicator should be interpreted in conjunction with other placement indicators.

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.

Data reported for this indicator are comparable.

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 2009 was 97.9 per cent nationally. In most 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 15.9).

Figure 15.9 Proportion of children aged under 12 years in out-of-home care and in a home-based placement, by Indigenous status, 30 June 2009^{a, b}



^a Family group homes are not classified as being home-based care. ^b Non-Indigenous status includes children whose Indigenous status is unknown or not stated.

Source: AIHW (unpublished), derived from *Children in out-of-home care, Australia* data collection; table 15A.23.

Out-of-home care — placement with extended family

‘Placement with extended family’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to provide services that meet the needs of recipients on the basis of relative need and available resources (box 15.15).

Box 15.15 Placement with extended family

'Placement with extended family' 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 high or increasing rate for this indicator is desirable. 'Placement with extended family' 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 placed in out-of-home care.

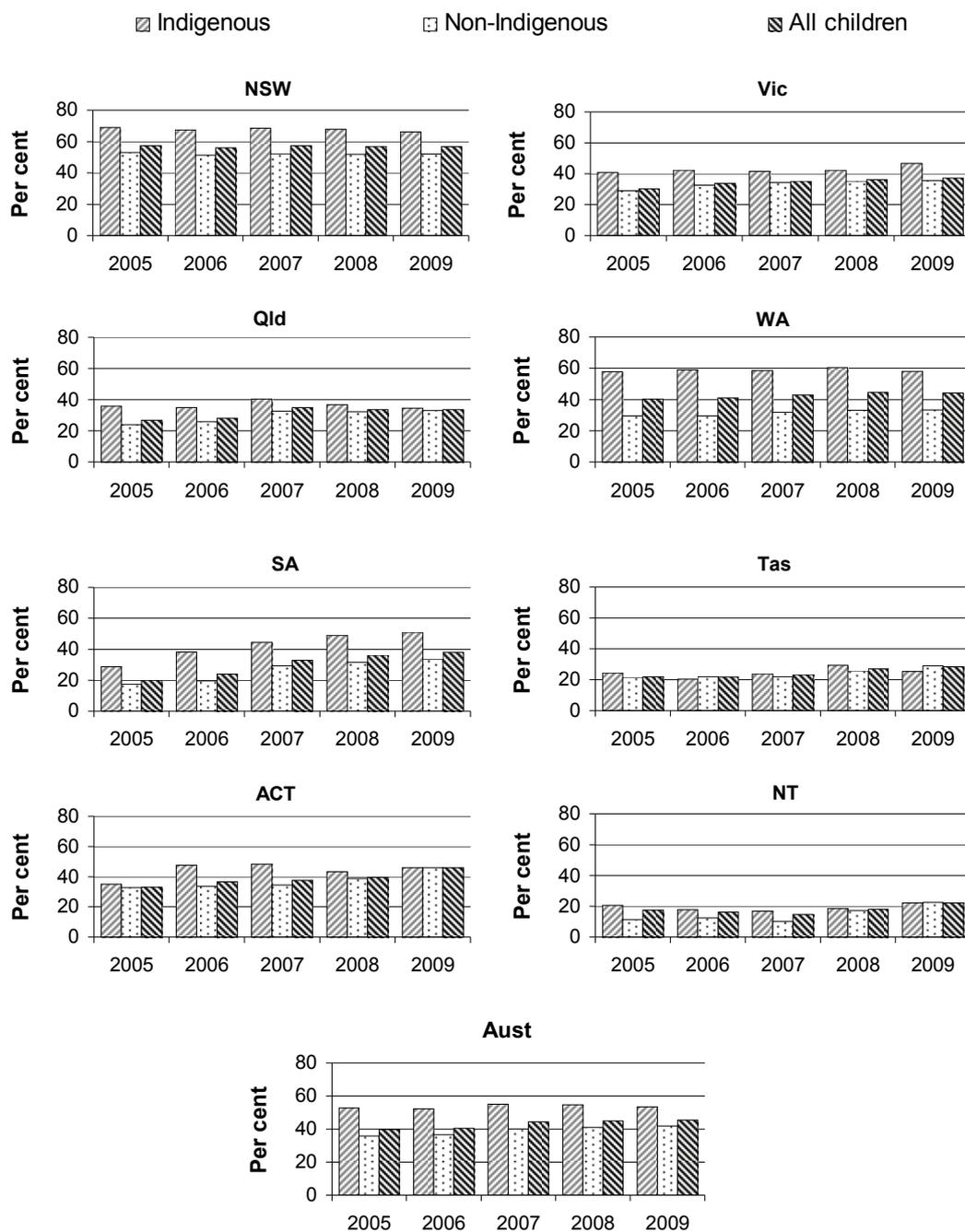
Placements with extended family may not always be the best option. Long standing family dynamics can undermine the pursuit of case goals such as reunification, and the possibility of intergenerational abuse needs to be considered. In addition, depending on the individual circumstances of the child, it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

Data reported for this indicator are comparable.

Figure 15.10 shows the proportion of children placed with relatives or kin by Indigenous status for the past 4 years. Although these data are comparable, each jurisdiction is shown separately for simpler presentation. The proportion of children placed with relatives or kin at 30 June 2009 was greater for Indigenous children than for non-Indigenous children in all jurisdictions and nationally (figure 15.10).

The Aboriginal Child Placement Principle places considerable emphasis on the placement of Indigenous children with extended family. This principle is discussed in box 15.16.

Figure 15.10 Proportion of children in out-of-home care placed with relatives/kin, by Indigenous status, 30 June^a



^a Non-Indigenous status includes children whose Indigenous status is unknown or not stated.

Source: AIHW (unpublished), derived from *Children in out-of-home care, Australia* data collection; table 15A.21.

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

‘Placement in accordance with the Aboriginal Child Placement Principle’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to protect the safety and welfare of Indigenous children while maintaining their cultural ties and identity (box 15.16).

Box 15.16 Placement in accordance with the Aboriginal Child Placement Principle

‘Placement in accordance with the Aboriginal Child Placement Principle’ 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 a non-relative Indigenous carer or in Indigenous residential care, and (iii) not placed with relative/kin, a non-relative Indigenous carer or in Indigenous residential care.

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

Placing Indigenous children in circumstances consistent with the Aboriginal Child Placement Principle is considered to be in their best interests. However, it is one factor among many considerations for the child’s safety and wellbeing that must be carefully considered in the placement decision. In the application of this principle, departments consult with and involve appropriate Indigenous individuals and/or organisations. If the preferred options are not available, the child may be placed (after appropriate consultation) with a non-Indigenous family or in a residential setting. The principle does not preclude the possibility that in some instances, placement in a non-Indigenous setting, where arrangements are in place for the child’s cultural identity to be preserved, might be the most appropriate placement for the child.

This indicator needs to be interpreted with care as it is a proxy for compliance with the principle. This indicator reports the placement outcomes of Indigenous children rather than compliance with the principle. The indicator does not report whether the hierarchy was followed in the consideration of the best placement for the child, nor whether consultation was had with appropriate Indigenous individuals or organisations.

Data reported for this indicator are comparable.

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

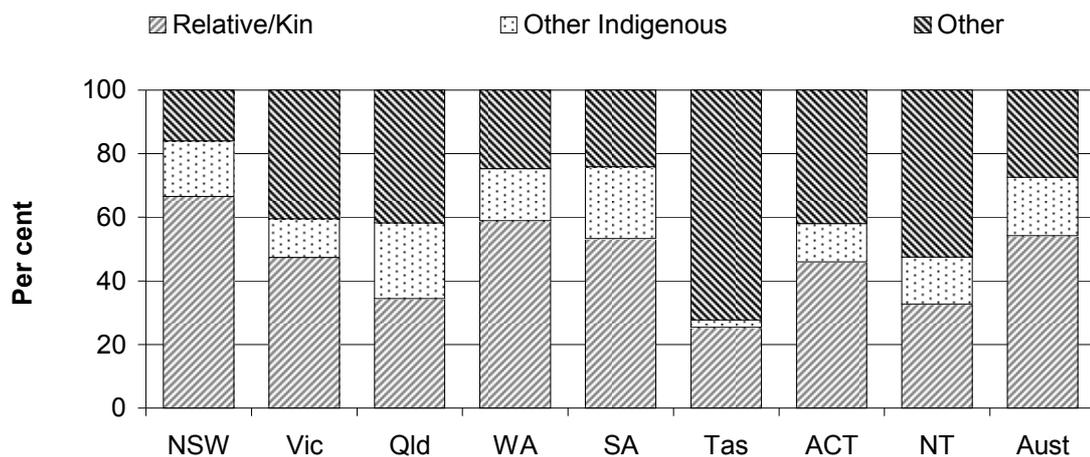
- placement with the child’s extended family (which includes Indigenous and non-Indigenous relatives/kin)
- placement within the child’s Indigenous community
- placement with other Indigenous people.

All jurisdictions have now adopted this principle in both legislation and policy.

Nationally, at 30 June 2009, 54.2 per cent of Indigenous children in out-of-home care were placed with a relative/kin, 18.4 per cent placed with a non-relative Indigenous carer or in Indigenous residential care, and 27.4 per cent were not placed with relative/kin, a non-relative Indigenous carer or in Indigenous residential care (figure 15.11).

The proportion of Indigenous children in out-of-home care at 30 June 2009 who were placed with Indigenous or non-Indigenous relatives or kin or with another Indigenous carer or in Indigenous residential care varied across jurisdictions (figure 15.11).

Figure 15.11 Placement of Indigenous children in out-of-home care, 30 June 2009^{a, b}



Relative/Kin = Placed with relative/kin. Other Indigenous = Placed with other Indigenous carer or Indigenous residential care. Other = Not placed with relative/kin, other Indigenous carer or Indigenous residential care. ^a Excludes Indigenous children living independently and those whose living arrangements were unknown. ^b Data for Tasmania and the ACT relate to a small number of Indigenous children (130 and 100 respectively) in care at 30 June 2009.

Source: AIHW (unpublished), derived from *Children in out-of-home care, Australia* data collection; table 15A.22.

Out-of-home care — local placement

‘Local placement’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to provide services which meet the needs of the recipients (box 15.17).

Box 15.17 Local placement

'Local placement' is defined as the proportion of children attending the same school that they were attending before entering out-of-home care as after entering out-of-home care.

A high or increasing rate of 'local placement' is desirable.

A placement close to where a child lived prior to entering out-of-home care is considered 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.

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 school to a secondary school or to a different local school at the same level.

Data will be provided for 3 and 12 months after entering care. Data collection for this indicator is under development. Data were not available for the 2010 Report.

Out-of-home care — placement with sibling

'Placement with sibling' is an indicator of governments' objective to provide services which meet the needs of the recipients (box 15.18).

Box 15.18 Placement with sibling

'Placement with sibling' 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 or increasing 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 may not be appropriate.

Data collection for this indicator is under development. Data were not available for the 2010 Report.

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

‘Children with documented case plan’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to provide services that meet the needs of the recipients (box 15.19).

Box 15.19 Children with documented case plan

‘Children with documented case plan’ is defined as the proportion of children on an order and in out-of-home care who have a documented case plan.

A high or increasing rate is desirable because all children should have a case plan. The quality of a case plan must also be considered as the existence of a case plan does not guarantee that appropriate case work to meet a child’s needs is occurring.

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 collection for this indicator are under development. Data were not available for the 2010 Report.

Out-of-home care — client satisfaction

‘Client satisfaction’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to provide high quality services that meet the needs of recipients (box 15.20).

Box 15.20 Client satisfaction

‘Client satisfaction’ is yet to be defined.

This indicator has been identified for development and reporting in future.

Some information on jurisdictions’ development of initiatives which may assist to measure client satisfaction in the future is included in box 15.8.

Efficiency

Understanding the efficiency of child protection systems broadly — and the different components of child protection systems, such as early intervention and out-of-home care services — enables State and Territory governments to identify key service cost drivers. Efficiency measures coupled with outcome measures

ultimately enable State and Territory governments to compare the relative cost effectiveness of broad system approaches and the cost effectiveness of different components of child protection systems.

Challenges in reporting efficiency for child protection systems

Current efficiency data for child protection services have 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. This has resulted in variations in the processes and emphases placed on different service delivery paradigms, such as different approaches to diversionary options
- *limitations of current information systems* — in most jurisdictions, it is difficult to identify resources directed specifically to 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 government agencies responsible for child protection services within larger community services departments. Table 15A.4 identifies the level of consistency in expenditure data across jurisdictions.

As a result of these limitations, 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.

In April 2002, the Review initiated a project to improve efficiency data for a national framework of protection and support pathways (the ‘Pathways’ project) (box 15.21). Until this can be fully implemented, reporting on efficiency has been limited to proxy indicators (box 15.22 and box 15.24).

Box 15.21 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. Eight national pathways have 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 the unit cost (including direct and indirect expenditure) 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 for children not on an order.
- Activity Group 6 Seeking an order.
- Activity Group 7 Provision of protective intervention, support and coordination services for children on an order.
- Activity Group 8 Provision of out-of-home care services.

Detailed definitions of activity groups are included in section 15.13.

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 (2003) and SCRGSP (unpublished).

Experimental results from the Pathways model, provided by five jurisdictions, are included in table 15.2. These data are preliminary and are subject to further analysis and refinement for future Reports. These data do not represent unit costs and should be interpreted with caution. Due to differing internal management systems across jurisdictions, there can be significant variation between jurisdictions in relation to specific activities or expenditures that are included in each activity group.

These 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). Indirect allocations have been approximated by jurisdictions across the eight activity groups.

Table 15.2 provides an approximation of the proportionate allocation of expenditure across 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 (box 15.22 and box 15.24).

The proportion of expenditure allocated to Activity group 8 (Out-of-home care) is the most significant and varies from 39 per cent to 51 per cent across reporting jurisdictions. The proportions allocated to Activity groups 1 (Receipt and assessment of initial information about a potential protection and support issue) and 6 (Seeking an order) both accounted for less than 10 per cent across all reporting jurisdictions.

Table 15.2 Proportion of expenditure by activity group — experimental estimates (per cent)^{a, b}

	AG1	AG2 ^c	AG3	AG4	AG5	AG6	AG7	AG8	Total ^d
NSW (2005-06)	7	17	18	6	2	3	2	46	100
Victoria (2005-06)	3	24	4	5	4	7	8	44	100
WA (2008-09) ^e	9	8	5	8	3	4	12	51	100
SA (2005-06)	4	8	4	13	10	8	7	45	100
Tasmania (2004-05)	5	9	3	11	15	8	9	39	100

AG = Activity Group (box 15.21). ^a Participating jurisdictions' experimental data relate to expenditure allocations across different years. Activity Group definitions have been refined over time, therefore, experimental estimates from earlier years are not strictly comparable with more recent data. ^b Experimental percentage allocations are derived from total expenditure allocations which vary from totals used to derive costs presented elsewhere in the chapter. ^c Expenditure items included in calculating proportional expenditure for Activity Group 2 can vary across jurisdictions, for example the inclusion/exclusion of expenditure on services outsourced to non-government organisations. ^d Totals may not add to 100 as a result of rounding. ^e In 2007-08, the WA Department for Child Protection was created in addition to the Department for Communities. A substantial amount of Activity Group 2 services are funded and provided by the Department for Communities and these data are not included in the above estimates. It is anticipated that these data will be included in future years.

Source: NSW, Victorian, WA, SA and Tasmanian governments (unpublished).

Total expenditure on all child protection activities per notification, investigation and substantiation

‘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’ are reported as proxy indicators of governments’ objective to maximise the benefit to the community through the efficient use of public resources (box 15.22).

Box 15.22 Total expenditure on all child protection activities per notification, investigation and substantiation

‘Total expenditure on all child protection activities per notification, investigation and substantiation’ is defined as:

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

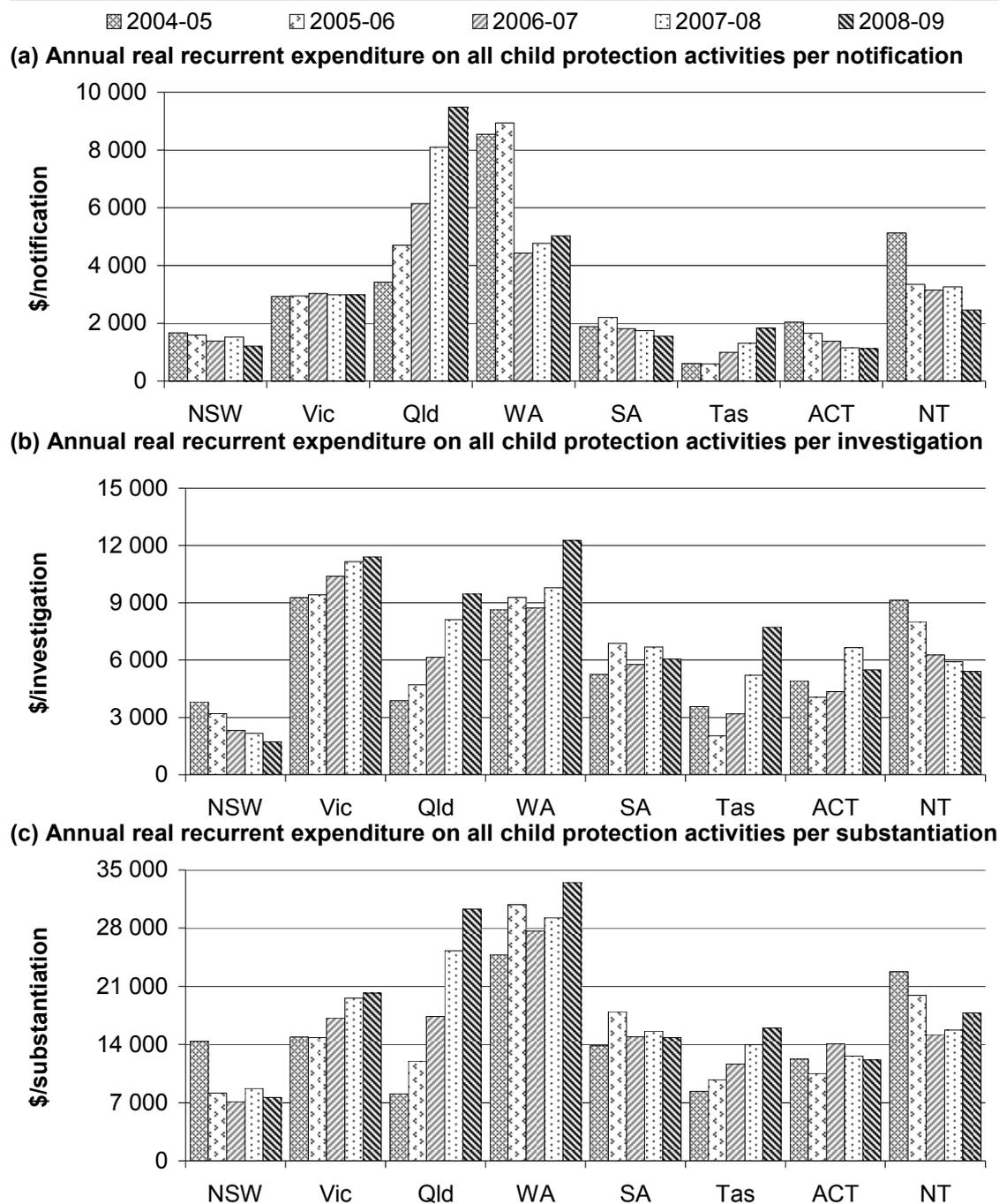
Low or decreasing expenditure per notification/investigation/substantiation can suggest more efficient services but may indicate lower quality or different service delivery models. These indicators are proxy indicators and need to be interpreted with care. Because each of these proxy indicators is based 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.

More comprehensive and accurate 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 (box 15.21).

Data reported for this indicator are not directly comparable.

Total expenditure on all child protection activities per notification, per investigation and per substantiation from 2004-05 to 2008-09 varied across jurisdictions (figure 15.12).

Figure 15.12 Child protection efficiency indicators (2008-09 dollars)^{a, b}



^a Real expenditure based on ABS gross domestic product price deflator (2008-09 = 100) (table AA.26). ^b See table 15A.2 for detailed jurisdiction-specific footnotes.

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

Out-of-home care expenditure per placement night

‘Out-of-home care expenditure per placement night’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to maximise the availability and quality of services through the efficient use of public resources (box 15.23).

Box 15.23 Out-of-home care expenditure per placement night

‘Out-of-home care expenditure per placement night’ is defined as total real recurrent expenditure on out-of-home care services divided by the total number of placement nights in out-of-home care.

Low or decreasing expenditure per placement night can suggest more efficient services but may indicate lower service quality or different service delivery models. Further, in some cases, efficiencies may not be able to be realised due to remote geographic locations that limit opportunities to reduce overheads through economies of scale.

Data reported for this indicator are not directly comparable.

Out-of-home care expenditure per placement night varied across jurisdictions (table 15.3).

Table 15.3 Out-of-home care expenditure per placement night, 2008-09^{a, b}

	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Vic</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>WA</i>	<i>SA</i>	<i>Tas^c</i>	<i>ACT</i>	<i>NT</i>
Real expenditure on out-of-home care services (\$m)	552.4	246.0	309.0	154.9	100.0	25.8	20.2	34.8
Placement nights in out-of-home care (no. '000)	5276.2	2129.9	2498.9	957.9	713.4	269.4	170.1	162.0
Out-of-home care program expenditure per placement night (\$)	104.7	115.5	123.6	161.7	140.1	95.6	118.9	214.9

^a These data should not be interpreted as unit costs for Activity Group 8 as they are derived using reported program expenditure and not activity group expenditure. ^b Caution should be used when interpreting results due to the variety of activities included in out-of-home care services. ^c Children in facility-based care placements contribute to a significant proportion of out-of-home care expenditure and can inflate the average unit cost.

Source: State and Territory Governments (unpublished); table 15A.32.

These indicative unit costs are derived using total real recurrent program expenditure on out-of-home care services (table 15A.1) and not expenditure allocated to an activity group. It is anticipated that unit costs for out-of-home care services derived from Activity group 8 expenditure will be available in future Reports, as development work continues on definitions, counting rules and a pilot data collection for the pathways project.

Expenditure on all out-of-home care services per child in out-of-home care, by residential and non-residential care

‘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’ are reported as proxy indicators of governments’ objective to maximise the benefit to the community through the efficient use of public resources (box 15.24).

Box 15.24 Expenditure on all out-of-home care services per child in out-of-home care, by residential and non-residential care

‘Expenditure on all out-of-home care services per child in out-of-home care, by residential and non-residential care is defined as:

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

Low or decreasing expenditure per child in care can suggest more efficient services but may indicate lower quality or different service delivery models. These indicators are proxy indicators and need to be interpreted with care as they do not represent a measure of unit costs. 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.

More comprehensive and accurate 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 (box 15.21).

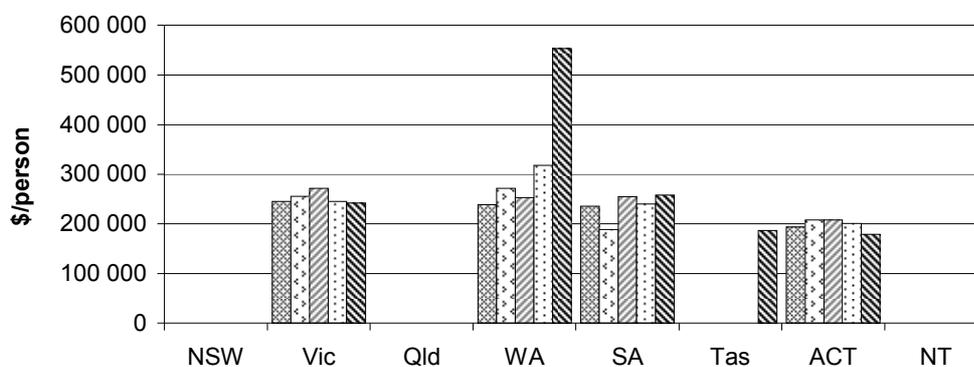
Data reported for this indicator are not directly comparable.

Total expenditure on residential care and non-residential care for the period 2004-05 to 2008-09, per child in residential care and non-residential care at 30 June, varied across jurisdictions (figures 15.13(a) and figure 15.13(b)). Total expenditure on all out-of-home care per child in care at 30 June for 2004-05 to 2008-09 also varied across jurisdictions (figure 15.13(c)).

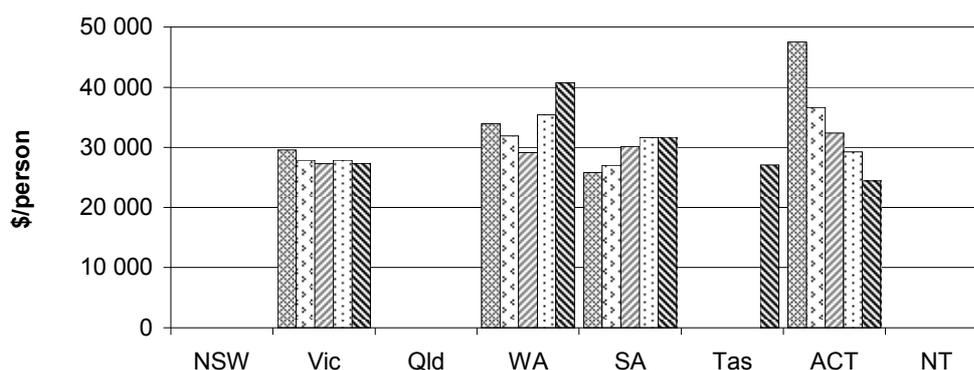
Figure 15.13 **Out-of-home care efficiency indicators (2008-09 dollars)^{a, b}**

■ 2004-05 ▨ 2005-06 ▩ 2006-07 □ 2007-08 ▤ 2008-09

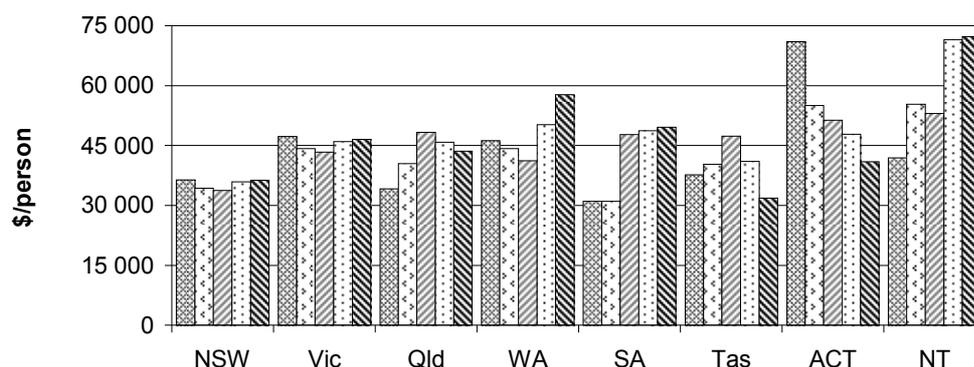
(a) Annual real expenditure on residential out-of-home care per child in residential out-of-home care at 30 June



(b) Annual real expenditure on non-residential out-of-home care per child in non-residential out-of-home care at 30 June



(c) Annual real expenditure on all out-of-home care per child in out-of-home care at 30 June



^a Real expenditure based on ABS gross domestic product price deflator (2008-09 = 100) (table AA.26).

^b NSW, Qld, and the NT could not disaggregate expenditure on out-of-home care into residential care and non-residential care. Tasmania could only disaggregate these data for 2008-09.

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

Outcomes

Outcomes are the impact of services on the status of an individual or group (while outputs are the actual services delivered) (see chapter 1, section 1.5).

Improved safety — substantiation rate after decision not to substantiate

‘Improved safety — substantiation rate after decision not to substantiate’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to reduce the risk of harm to children by appropriately assessing notifications of possible child protection incidents (box 15.25).

Box 15.25 Improved safety — substantiation rate after decision not to substantiate

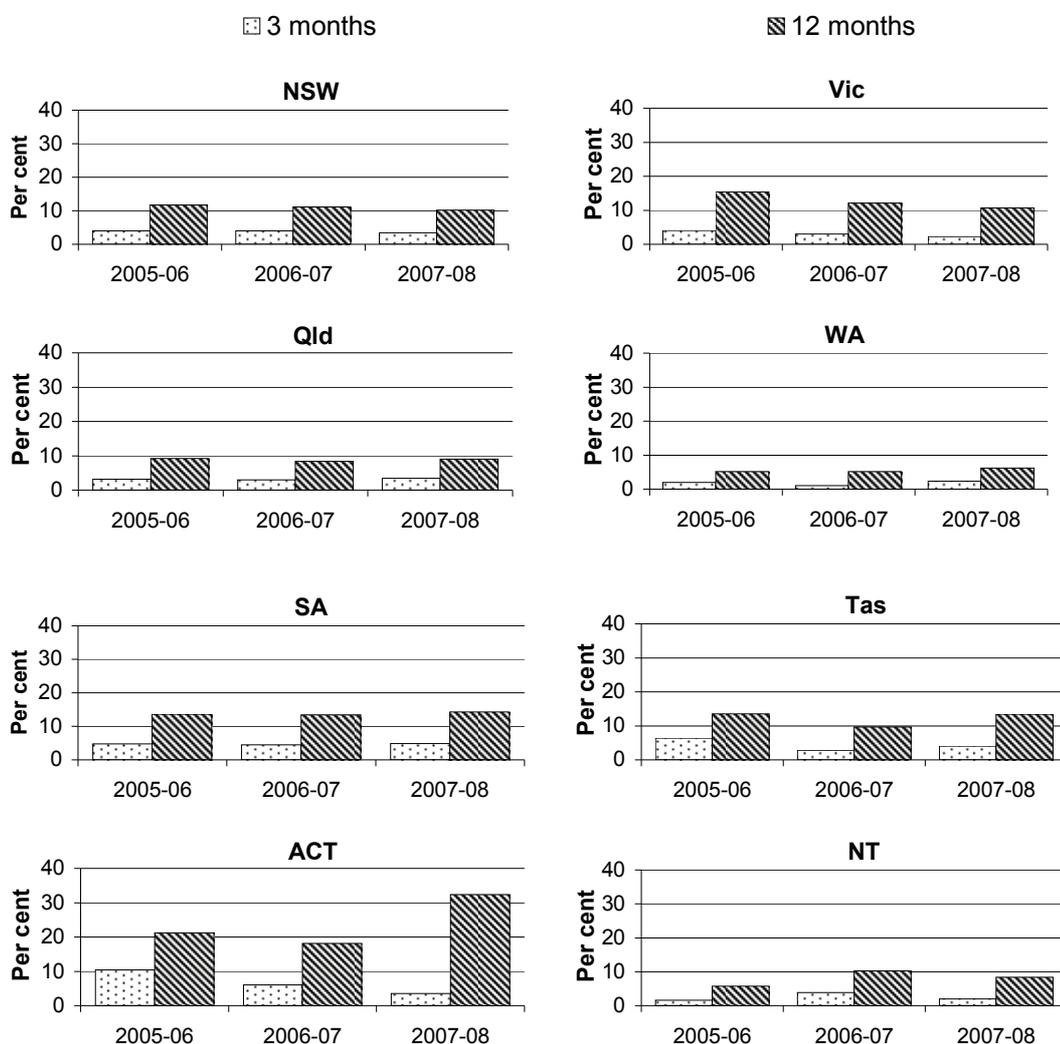
‘Improved safety — substantiation rate after decision not to substantiate’ is defined as the proportion of children who were the subject of an investigation in the previous financial year that led to a decision not to substantiate, and who were later the subject of a substantiation within 3 or 12 months of the initial decision not to substantiate. The year reported relates to the year of the initial decision not to substantiate.

A low or decreasing rate for this indicator is desirable. However, reported results can 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 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 interventions offered to children to protect them from further harm. This indicator should be considered with other outcome indicators.

Data reported for this indicator are not directly comparable.

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 unless otherwise stated (figure 15.14).

Figure 15.14 Improved safety — substantiation rate within 3 and/or 12 months after a decision not to substantiate^{a, b, c, d}



^a Data are not comparable across jurisdictions because definitions of substantiation vary significantly. Consequently, rates cannot be compared across jurisdictions. ^b Jurisdictions have provided the denominator for this indicator for this Report. In previous reports the denominator was derived by the AIHW. ^c During 2006-07 Victoria introduced new service and data reporting arrangements. Therefore data for 2006-07 may not be fully comparable to previous years' data. See source table 15A.54 for more details on these arrangements. ^d Data relating to substantiations after a decision not to substantiate in Tasmania for 2006-07 should be interpreted with care due to the high proportion of investigations in process at 31 August 2007.

Source: AIHW (unpublished), derived from *Child protection notifications, investigations and substantiations, Australia* data collection; tables 15A.9, 15A.37, 15A.54, 15A.71, 15A.88, 15A.105, 15A.122, 15A.139 and 15A.156.

Improved safety — resubstantiation rate

‘Improved safety — resubstantiation rate’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to reduce the risk of harm and to prevent the recurrence of abuse and neglect or harm to children (box 15.26).

Box 15.26 Improved safety — resubstantiation rate

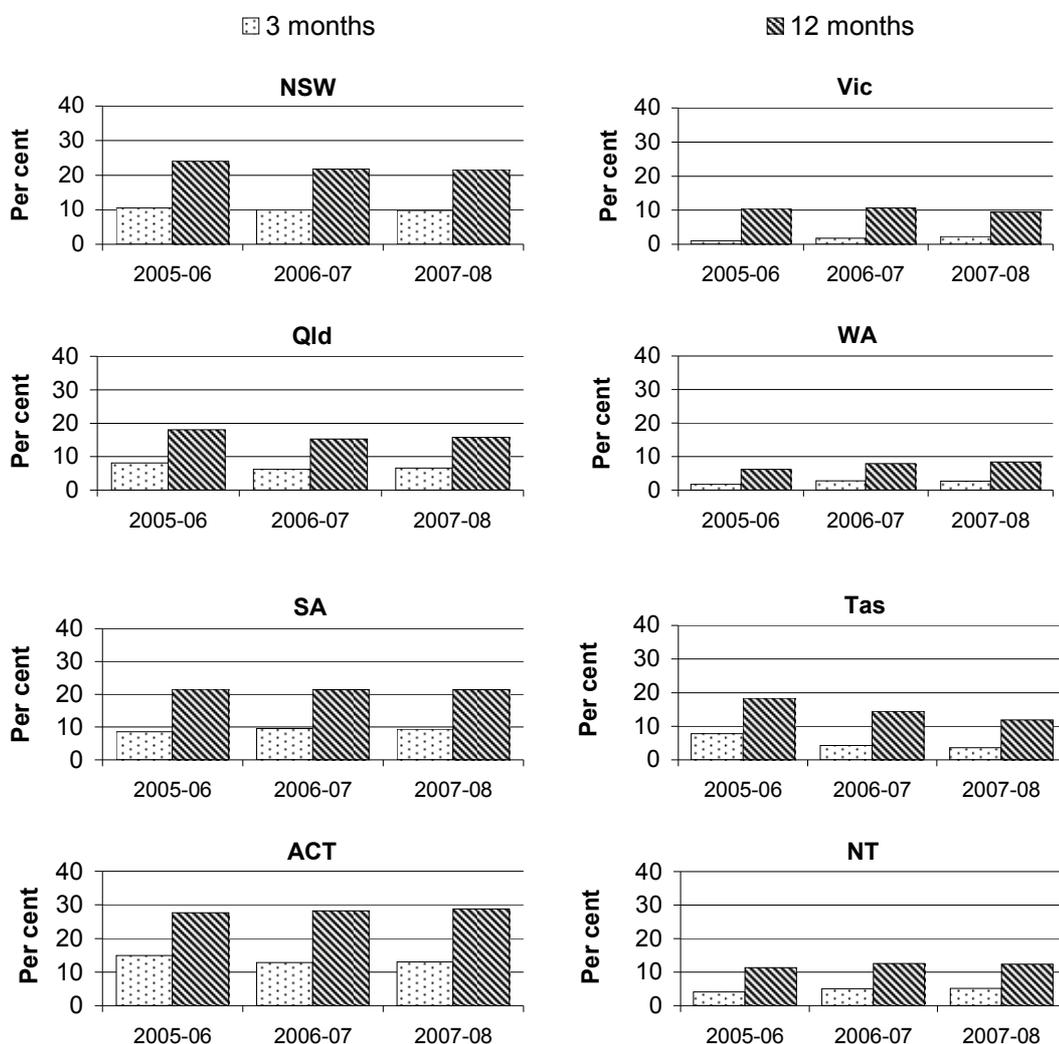
‘Improved safety — resubstantiation rate’ is defined as the proportion of children who were the subject of a substantiation in the previous financial year, who were subsequently the subject of a further substantiation within the following 3 or 12 months. The year reported relates to the year of the original substantiation.

A low or decreasing rate for this indicator is desirable. This indicator partly reveals the extent to which intervention by child protection services has succeeded in preventing further harm. However, reported results can be affected by the finalisation of investigations or 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 reported for this indicator are not directly comparable.

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 unless otherwise stated (figure 15.15).

Figure 15.15 Improved safety — resubstantiation rate within 3 and/or 12 months after a substantiation^{a, b, c, d}



^a Data are not comparable across jurisdictions because definitions of substantiation vary significantly. Consequently, rates cannot be compared across jurisdictions. ^b Jurisdictions provided the denominator for this indicator for the 2009 Report onwards. In reports prior to the 2009 Report, the denominator was derived by the AIHW. ^c During 2006-07 Victoria introduced new service and data reporting arrangements. Therefore data for 2006-07 may not be fully comparable to previous years' data. See source table 15A.55 for more details on these arrangements. ^d Data relating to resubstantiations in Tasmania for 2006-07 should be interpreted with care due to the high proportion of investigations in process at 31 August 2007.

Source: AIHW (unpublished), derived from *Child protection notifications, investigations and substantiations, Australia* data collection; tables 15A.10, 15A.38, 15A.55, 15A.72, 15A.89, 15A.106, 15A.123, 15A.140 and 15A.157.

Improved education, health and wellbeing of the child

‘Improved education, health and wellbeing of the child’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to maximise children’s life chances by ensuring children in care have their educational, health and wellbeing needs met (box 15.27).

Box 15.27 Improved education, health and wellbeing of the child

‘Improved education, health and wellbeing of the child’ is defined as the change over time in the learning outcomes for children on guardianship or custody orders.

An increase in learning outcomes over time for children on guardianship or custody orders indicates that their educational outcomes are improving.

However, factors outside the control of protection and support services can also influence the educational outcomes of children on guardianship or custody orders, and care needs to be exercised when interpreting results. Further, the change over time in the learning outcomes for children on guardianship or custody orders is a partial measure of this outcome indicator.

Data reported for this indicator are not complete.

For the 2010 Report, data were reported on the proportion of children in years 3, 5 and 7 on guardianship or custody orders (attending government schools) achieving the national reading and numeracy benchmarks in 2003, relative to all children (attending government and non-government schools) achieving these benchmarks over the same period. The proportion of children on guardianship or custody orders achieving national reading and numeracy benchmarks in 2003 varied significantly across jurisdictions for which data were available (see tables 15A.11–15A.13). Information on the learning outcomes for these children is not available at a later point in time, therefore changes over time are not able to be reported.

Additional data on educational outcomes will be collected for children on guardianship or custody orders in 2004, 2005 and 2006. The longitudinal component of this study will assess any change in academic performance over time for children who were continuously on guardianship or custody orders for a two-year period (between 2003–2005 and 2004–2006). These data are anticipated to be available for the 2011 Report.

Safe return home

‘Safe return home’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to remove the risk of harm to the child while maintaining family cohesion (box 15.28).

Box 15.28 Safe return home

‘Safe return home’ is yet to be defined.

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.

Permanent care

‘Permanent care’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to provide appropriate care for children who cannot be safely reunified with their families (box 15.29).

Box 15.29 Permanent care

‘Permanent care’ is yet to be defined.

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.

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

Improving national child protection data

The Performance and Data Working Group (previously the National Child Protection and Support Services working group) has initiated a number of national projects to improve the gaps in child protection reporting and to monitor the comparability of child protection data. Such projects, approved by the National Community Services Information Management Group (NCSIMG) and funded by the Community and Disability Services Ministerial Council (CDSMC), include: *Educational Outcomes for Children on Orders; Treatment and Support Services; National Foster Carers Data Collection; and, Comparability of Child Protection Data*. It is expected that these projects will enable improved child protection reporting.

COAG developments

National framework for protecting Australia's children 2009—2020

In May 2008, the Australian Government released a discussion paper for consultation, *Australia's children, safe and well: A national framework for protecting Australia's children*. The discussion paper was developed by the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) to canvass options for a national framework for protecting Australian children. Comments on the discussion paper were invited up until 30 June 2008. During this time, the Australian Government received almost 200 submissions. Consultations were also held across Australia. On 30 April 2009, COAG endorsed the final framework, *Protecting Children is Everyone's Business: National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009-2020* ("the National Framework").

The National Framework argues that Australia needs to move from seeing 'protecting children' as a response to abuse and neglect to one of promoting the safety and wellbeing of children. The National Framework is intended to deliver a more integrated response to protecting Australia's children and emphasises the role of government, the non-government sector, and the community in promoting the safety and wellbeing of children.

The National Framework does not change the responsibilities of governments. State and Territory governments retain responsibility for statutory child protection and the Australian Government retains responsibility for providing income support payments.

The National Framework's main goal is to ensure that Australia's children and young people are safe and well. To measure this high-level outcome, the National Framework sets the following target: a substantial and sustained reduction in child abuse and neglect in Australia over time.

To demonstrate progress towards achieving the target of a substantial and sustained reduction in child abuse and neglect over time, the National Framework sets out four key measures:

1. Trends in key national indicators of children's health, development and wellbeing.
2. Trends in hospital admissions and emergency department visits for neglect and injuries to children under three years.
3. Trends in substantiated child protection cases.

4. Trends in the number of children in out-of-home care.

The National Framework also identifies six supporting outcomes which are designed to focus efforts and actions under the National Framework in progress towards the high level outcome of ensuring Australia's children and young people are safe and well. The six supporting outcomes are:

1. Children live in safe and supportive families and communities.
2. Children and families access adequate support to promote safety and intervene early.
3. Risk factors for child abuse and neglect are addressed.
4. Children who have been abused or neglected receive the support and care they need for their safety and wellbeing.
5. Indigenous children are supported and safe in their families and communities.
6. Child sexual abuse and exploitation is prevented and survivors receive adequate support.

The National Framework acknowledges the inherent difficulties in measuring the specific impact of services and interventions on high-level social outcomes. As such, the National Framework contains a broad suite of indicators ("indicators of change"), which will be reported on annually in order to measure progress over the life of the National Framework (2009–2020).

The Report's child protection and out-of-home care performance indicator framework already includes and reports upon several National Framework performance indicators. In addition, the Steering Committee has previously identified developments for the Report's child protection and out-of-home care performance indicator framework which are complementary to many of the measures in the National Framework. In further developing the Report's child protection and out-of-home care performance indicator framework, the Steering Committee will reflect and report consistently with applicable National Framework developments.

Report on Government Services alignment with National Agreement reporting

It is anticipated that future editions of this chapter will align with applicable National Agreement indicators, including the National Indigenous Reform Agreement (NIRA). Further alignment between the Report and National Agreement indicators, and other reporting changes, might result from future developments in National Agreement and National Partnership reporting.

Outcomes from review of Report on Government Services

COAG agreed to Terms of Reference for a Heads of Treasuries/Senior Officials review of the Report in November 2008, to report to COAG by end-September 2009. The review examined the ongoing usefulness of the Report in the context of new national reporting under the Intergovernmental Agreement on Federal Financial Relations.

No significant changes from this review are reflected in the 2010 Report. Any COAG endorsed recommendations from the review are likely to be implemented for the 2011 Report.

15.5 Profile of juvenile justice services

Service overview

Juvenile justice systems are responsible for attending to young people (predominantly aged 10–17 years) who have committed or allegedly committed an offence while considered by law to be a juvenile. In so doing, juvenile justice systems aim to promote community safety and reduce youth offending by assisting young people to address their offending behaviour and take responsibility for the effect their behaviour has on victims and the wider community.

The juvenile justice system in each State and Territory comprises:

- police, who are usually a young person’s first point of contact with the system
- courts (usually a special children’s or youth court), where matters relating to the charges against young people are heard. The courts are largely responsible for decisions regarding bail, remand and sentencing
- statutory juvenile justice agencies, which are responsible for the supervision and case management of young people on a range of legal and administrative orders, and for the provision of a wide range of services aimed at crime prevention and reduction
- non-government and community service providers who may work with juvenile justice agencies to provide services and programs for young people under supervision.

The majority of young people who come into contact with the juvenile justice system do not become clients of statutory juvenile justice agencies. Instead, young people are diverted through a range of mechanisms including contact with police (who have the authority to issue warnings, formal cautions and infringement notices for minor offences) and the courts (which can issue non-supervised orders for minor offences).

The content in this chapter relates to the services provided by statutory juvenile justice agencies that are responsible for the supervision and case management of young people who have committed or allegedly committed an offence.

Most of the juvenile justice information contained in the ‘size and scope’ section of this chapter is sourced from the Juvenile Justice National Minimum Data Set (JJ NMDS), which is maintained by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW). However, in some cases, information is sourced directly from State and Territory governments.

The performance indicator data contained in section 15.6 are sourced directly from State and Territory governments (box 15.29).

Roles and responsibilities

Responsibility for the provision of juvenile justice services in Australia resides with State and Territory governments. The relevant department in each State and Territory responsible for funding and/or providing juvenile justice services in 2008-09 is listed in box 15.29. Each jurisdiction has its own legislation that determines the policies and practices of its juvenile justice system. While this legislation varies in detail, its intent is similar across jurisdictions. National coordination takes place through the Australasian Juvenile Justice Administrators (AJJA). AJJA is a Standing Committee of the Community and Disability Services Ministerial Advisory Council (CDSMAC).

Box 15.29 Government departments responsible for the delivery of juvenile justice services

<i>NSW</i>	Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ)
<i>VIC</i>	Department of Human Services (DHS)
<i>QLD</i>	Department of Communities (DOC)
<i>WA</i>	Department of Corrective Services (DCS)
<i>SA</i>	Department for Families and Communities (DFC)
<i>TAS</i>	Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)
<i>ACT</i>	Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services (DHCS)
<i>NT</i>	Department of Justice (DOJ)

Diversion of young offenders

Responsibility for administering the options available for diverting young people who have committed or allegedly committed relatively minor offences — warnings (informal cautions), formal cautions, and infringement notices — rests mainly with police in all jurisdictions. Responsibility for administering the diversionary processes available for more serious offences lies with juvenile justice authorities and courts. Comparable and extensive national data are not yet available to illustrate the nature or level of diversion undertaken by Australian jurisdictions. However, Police services (chapter 6) provides data on the number of juveniles who are diverted by police, as a proportion of all juvenile offenders formally dealt with by police (table 6A.42).

Funding

Comparable State and Territory governments' expenditure data on juvenile justice services are not currently available. Comparable juvenile justice funding information is being developed for future Reports.

Size and scope

Clients of juvenile justice agencies

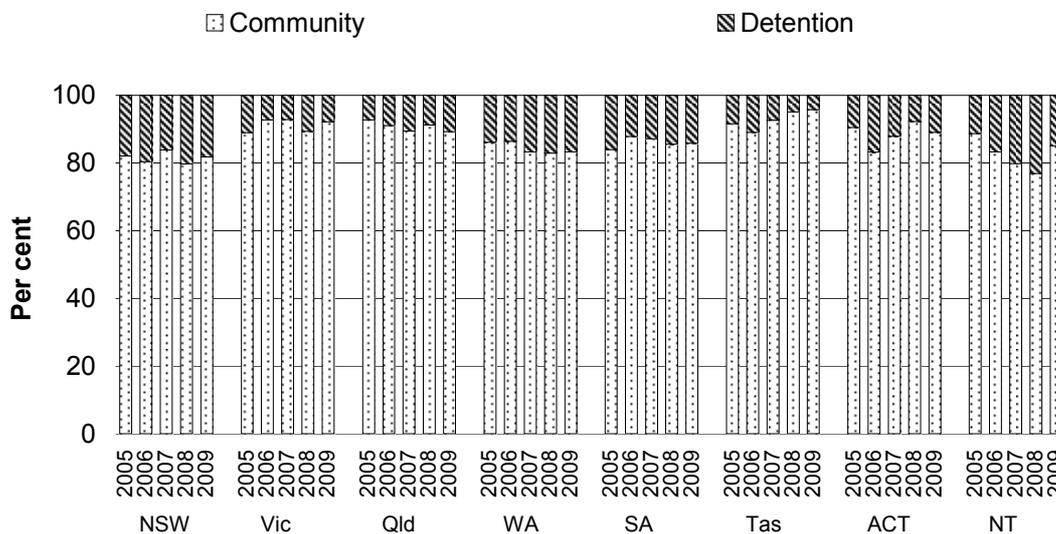
Most young people who are supervised by juvenile justice agencies are on community-based orders, which include supervised bail, probation and parole. During 2007-08, 12 102¹ young people experienced juvenile justice supervision in Australia. Of these young people, 10 948² experienced community-based supervision, 3945³ experienced detention-based supervision, with some young people experiencing both (AIHW 2009a; NSW Government, unpublished).

Nationally, the majority of young people aged 10–17 years supervised by juvenile justice services were in the community (between 81.8 per cent and 95.8 per cent), (figure 15.16). These figures do not include any juveniles aged 10–17 years who were supervised in the adult correctional system.

These data were collected at a point in time, so they need to be interpreted with care, particularly for jurisdictions with smaller populations where a small change to the number of young people in detention can make a significant difference to their relative proportion.

-
- ¹ The total number of young people who experienced juvenile justice supervision (12 102 young people) was reached by summing data sourced from the Juvenile Justice National Minimum Data Set (JJ NMDS) for all Australian States and Territories except NSW (9540 young people) and data sourced directly from the NSW Government (2562 young people).
 - ² The total number of young people who experienced community-based juvenile justice supervision (10 948 young people) was reached by summing data sourced from the JJ NMDS for all Australian States and Territories except NSW (8592 young people) and data sourced directly from the NSW Government (2356 young people).
 - ³ The total number of young people who experienced detention-based supervision (3945 young people) was reached by summing data sourced from the JJ NMDS for all Australian States and Territories except NSW (3378 young people) and data sourced directly from the NSW Government (567 young people).

Figure 15.16 Proportion of juvenile justice clients aged 10–17 years who were supervised in the community and in detention centres, at 30 June^{a, b, c, d}



^a Includes only those young people who were under the supervision or case management of juvenile justice agencies on a pre- or post-sentence legal arrangement or order (for example, supervised bail, remand, a community services order, parole and detention). ^b Juvenile justice agencies have additional clients in detention and community supervision who are over 17 years of age. This figure does not include juvenile justice clients over 17 years of age at 30 June. ^c Clients can be on multiple orders at any one time. The distribution in the figure, therefore, is based not on order type but on where the client was located at 30 June. ^d Refer to table 15A.169 for detailed footnotes.

Source: AIHW unpublished (data supplied by State and Territory governments); table 15A.169.

Juvenile detention

As outlined above, the majority of juvenile offenders are supervised in the community. The following data sourced from the JJ NMDS and the Australian Institute of Criminology (AIC) relate to juvenile detention only (young people both on remand and sentenced). As jurisdictions have different definitions of a juvenile, this may affect the number and rates reported.

Nationally, the daily average number of people aged 10–17 years in juvenile detention centres increased from 590 to 814 between 2003-04 and 2007-08 (table 15.4).

Table 15.4 Daily average population of people aged 10–17 years in juvenile detention (number)^{a, b, c}

	<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>
2003-04	209	62	91	122	50	26	18	13	590
2004-05	218	53	89	110	58	33	15	22	596
2005-06	244	53	127	115	39	27	13	17	634
2006-07	277	48	138	132	42	19	14	26	696
2007-08	338	63	143	154	55	24	13	24	814

^a Average based on population of juvenile detention centres on the last day of each quarter of the financial year. ^b Due to rounding, the Australian total may differ from the combined total of all jurisdictions. ^c Refer to table 15A.170 for detailed footnotes.

Source: AIHW Juvenile Justice National Minimum Data Set (JJ NMDS) (unpublished); AIC Juveniles in detention (unpublished); table 15A.170.

The average rate of detention of young people aged 10–17 years per 100 000 in the population aged 10–17 years increased from 26.8 per 100 000 in 2003-04 to 35.9 per 100 000 in 2007-08, with rates varying across jurisdictions (table 15A.171).

Nationally, females made up 8.5 per cent of the total population of juvenile detention centres at 30 June 2008. Males made up 91.5 per cent of the national population of juvenile detention centres at 30 June 2008 (table 15A.172).

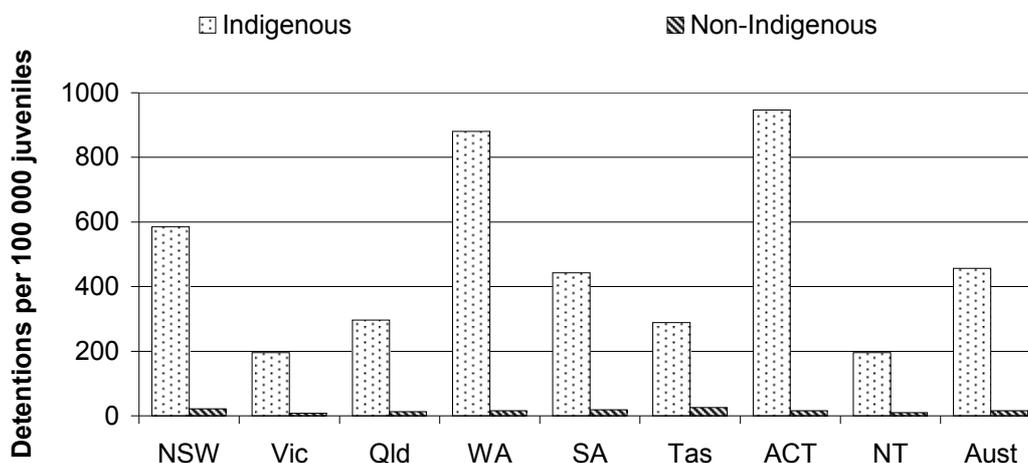
Numbers and rates of Indigenous young people placed in detention

The daily average number of Indigenous young people aged 10–17 years detained in juvenile detention centres was 469 in 2007-08 (table 15A.173). Nationally, the daily average detention rate for Indigenous people aged 10–17 years in 2007-08 was 456.1 per 100 000 Indigenous people aged 10–17 years. The rate for the non-Indigenous population aged 10–17 years in 2007-08 was 15.3 per 100 000 non-Indigenous people aged 10-17 years (table 15A.174).

Jurisdictional comparisons need to be treated with caution, especially for jurisdictions with low Indigenous populations, where small number effects can introduce statistical variations that do not accurately represent trends over time or consistent differences from other jurisdictions.

The over-representation of Indigenous young people in detention across jurisdictions in 2007-08 is shown in figure 15.17.

Figure 15.17 Average rate of detention of Indigenous and non-Indigenous people aged 10–17 years in juvenile detention, per 100 000 people, 2007-08^{a, b}



^a Rates of detention for Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in NSW in each quarter in 2007-08 include young people in the care of both the NSW Department of Juvenile Justice and the Department of Corrective Services. ^b The ACT rate for Indigenous young people should be treated with caution due to the small Indigenous population in the ACT. The rate ratio at table 15A.174 should also be taken into account.

Source: AIHW JJ NMDS (unpublished); AIC Juveniles in detention (unpublished); table 15A.174.

15.6 Framework of performance indicators for juvenile justice services

The performance indicator framework for juvenile justice services is based on a set of shared government objectives (box 15.30).

Box 15.30 Objectives for juvenile justice services

Juvenile justice services aim to contribute to a reduction in the frequency or severity of youth offending, recognise the rights of victims and promote community safety. Juvenile justice services seek to achieve these aims by:

- assisting young people to address their offending behaviour and take responsibility for the effect their behaviour has on victims and the wider community
- enabling the interests and views of victims to be heard
- contributing to the diversion of young offenders to alternative services
- recognising the importance of the families and communities of young offenders, particularly Indigenous communities, in the provision of services and programs
- providing services that are designed to rehabilitate young offenders and reintegrate them into their community.

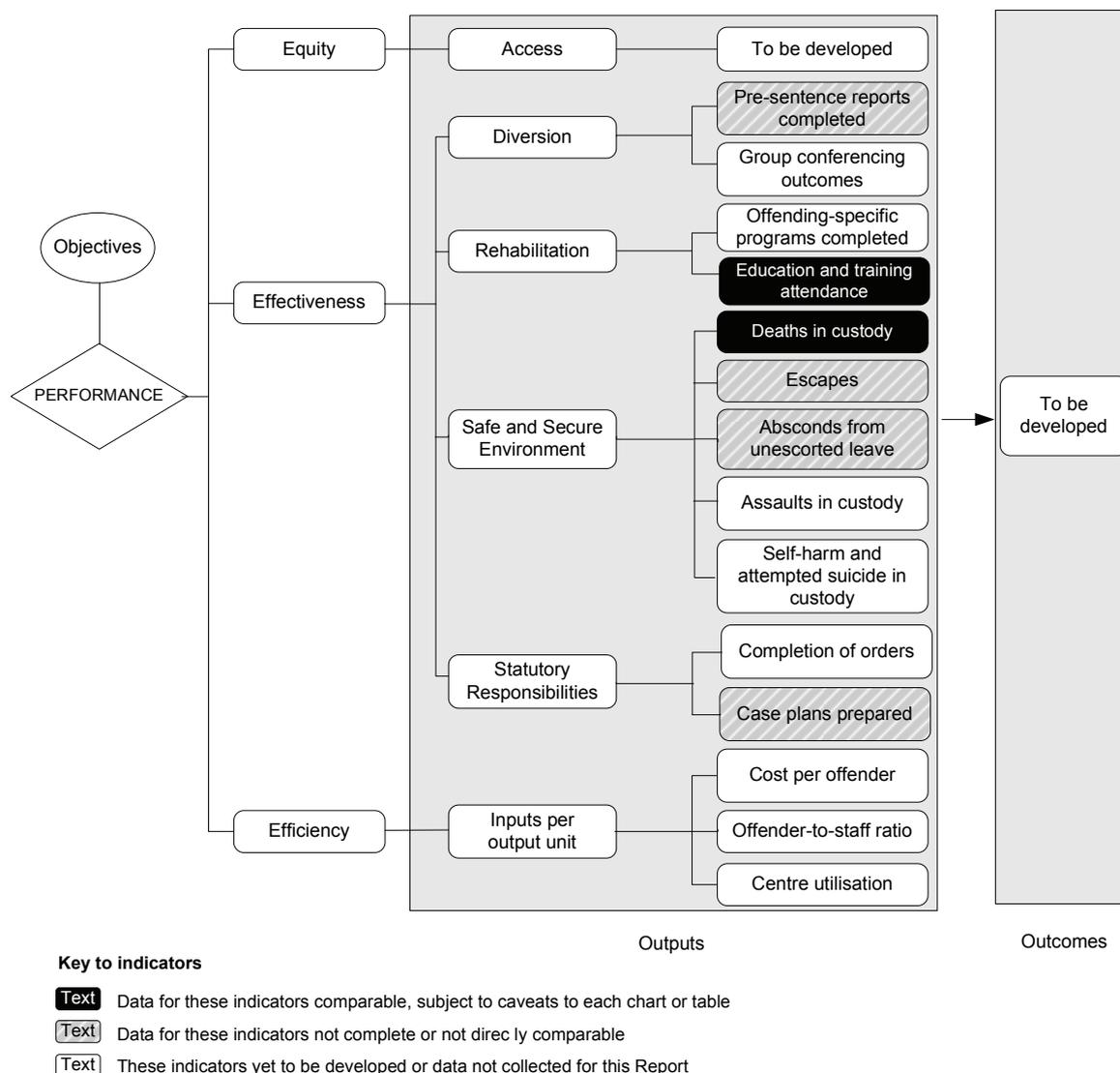
Juvenile justice services should be provided in an equitable, efficient and effective manner.

A performance indicator framework for juvenile justice services was included for the first time in the 2009 Report (figure 15.18). Further development of the framework and reporting for indicators included in the framework is being undertaken according to a staged process. Data for six performance indicators are included in this Report along with supporting text which includes relevant caveats and commentary. Chapter 1 discusses data comparability from a Report-wide perspective (see section 1.6).

This Report also includes new performance indicator boxes for seven other juvenile justice performance indicators. It is anticipated that data for these indicators will be available for the 2011 Report. The remaining performance indicators in the juvenile justice performance indicator framework, and additional efficiency and outcome indicators, will be developed for inclusion in future Reports.

The Report's statistical appendix 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) (appendix A).

Figure 15.18 Performance indicators for juvenile justice services



Outputs

Outputs are the actual services delivered (while outcomes are the impact of these services on the status of an individual or group) (see chapter 1, section 1.5).

Equity and access

Equity and access indicators are a key area for further development in future reports. 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

Diversion — pre-sentence reports completed

Pre-sentence reports are written reports that provide a court with pertinent information to assist in sentencing. ‘Pre-sentence reports completed’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to ensure that accurate and timely advice is provided to the court to inform decision-making (box 15.31).

Box 15.31 Pre-sentence reports completed

‘Pre-sentence reports completed’ is defined as the number of written reports provided by juvenile justice agencies to a court in response to a request for a pre-sentence report, as a proportion of all court requests to juvenile justice agencies for written pre-sentence reports.

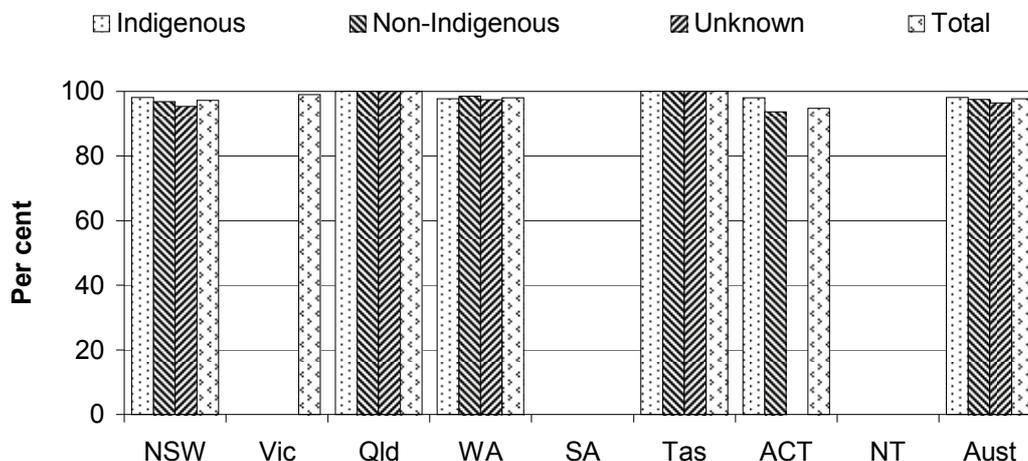
A pre-sentence report provides a court with relevant information about the assessed factors that contributed to a young person’s offence and explores programs and services that could be provided to address a young person’s offending behaviour. A pre-sentence report is prepared when ordered by a court after a young person has pleaded or has been found guilty of an offence.

A high or increasing percentage of pre-sentence reports completed is desirable.

Data reported for this indicator are not complete.

The percentage of pre-sentence reports completed varied across jurisdictions (figure 15.19). Nationally, 97.7 per cent of all court requests for pre-sentence reports were completed.

Figure 15.19 Proportion of pre-sentence reports completed by juvenile justice agencies, 2008-09^{a, b, c}



^a Data were not available for SA and the NT. ^b Victoria was unable to provide (1) the number of court requests for pre-sentence reports during 2008-09 and (2) the number of reports provided by the juvenile justice agency. These data will be available for future Reports. For 2008-09, a total percentage was collected by surveying staff. ^c Refer to table 15A.176 for detailed footnotes.

Source: State and Territory governments (unpublished); table 15A.176.

Diversion — group conferencing outcomes

Group conferences are decision-making forums that aim to minimise the progression of young people into the juvenile justice system, and provide restorative justice. ‘Group conferencing outcomes’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to divert young people from the juvenile justice system and address their offending needs (box 15.32).

Box 15.32 Group conferencing outcomes

‘Group conferencing’ is defined as the number of young people who receive group conferencing and who as a result reach an agreement, as a proportion of all young people who receive group conferencing.

A high rate for this indicator is desirable.

Data for this indicator should be interpreted with caution as the provision of group conferencing differs across jurisdictions in relation to: (a) its place in the court process (for example, whether young people are referred by police before court processes begin, or by the court as an alternative to sentencing), (b) the consequences for young people if they do not comply with the outcome plans of a conference, and (c) eligibility for group conferencing.

Data for this indicator were not available for the 2010 Report. Group conferencing data are expected to be available for inclusion in the 2011 Report.

Rehabilitation — offending-specific programs completed

Offending-specific programs aim to address young offenders’ criminogenic behaviours to reduce their risk of re-offending. ‘Offending-specific programs completed’ is an indicator of governments’ objective of providing program interventions that are designed to rehabilitate young offenders and reintegrate them into their community (for example, Changing Habits and Reaching Targets program, drug counselling programs, sex offender treatment programs) (box 15.33).

Box 15.33 Offending-specific programs completed

‘Offending-specific programs completed’ is defined as the percentage of young people who completed an offending-specific program while completing a supervised sentenced order (whether a community-based order or a detention order) as a proportion of all young people completing a supervised sentenced order who were assessed as requiring an offending-specific program to address their criminogenic behaviour.

A high or increasing rate for offending-specific programs is desirable.

Data for this indicator were not available for the 2010 Report. Offending-specific programs data are expected to be available for inclusion in the 2011 Report.

Rehabilitation — education and training attendance

‘Education and training attendance’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to provide program interventions in education and training to rehabilitate young

offenders and increase their chances of successfully re-integrating into the community (box 15.34).

Box 15.34 Education and training attendance

'Education and training attendance' is defined by two measures:

- the number of young people of compulsory school age in detention attending an education course, as a percentage of all young people of compulsory school age in detention
- the number of young people not of compulsory school age in detention attending an education or training course, as a percentage of all young people not of compulsory school age in detention.

Compulsory school age refers to individual State and Territory requirements for a young person to participate in school which are based primarily on age (see chapter 4 of the Report for further information).

Education or training course refers to school education or an accredited education or training course under the Australian Qualifications Framework.

Exclusions include young people not under juvenile justice supervision (for example, in police custody) and young people whose situation might exclude their participation in education programs (including young people who are: on temporary leave, work release, medically unable to participate, in isolation, and on remand or sentenced for less than 7 days).

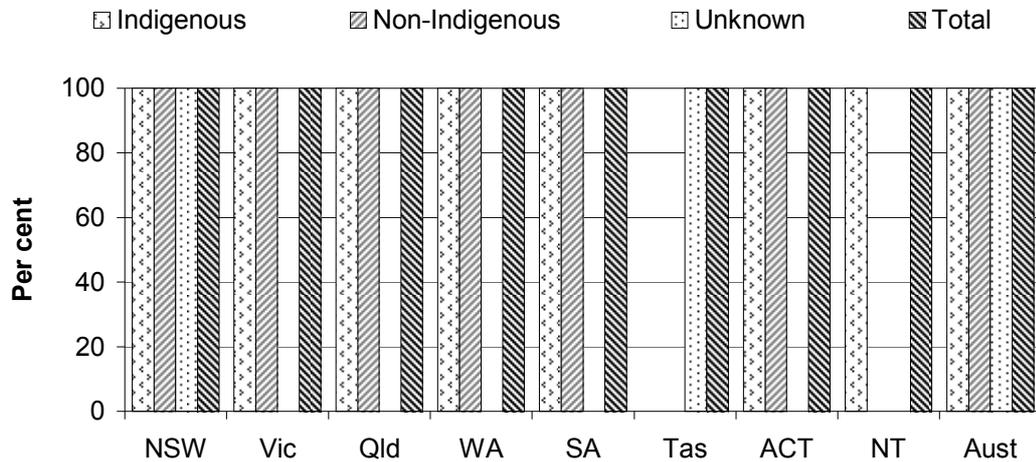
A high or increasing percentage of young people attending education and training is desirable.

Data reported for this indicator are not complete.

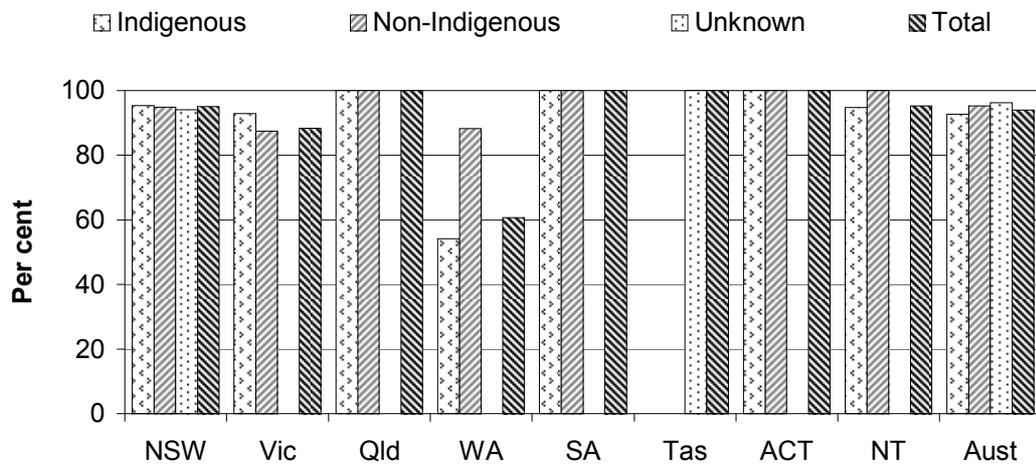
Nationally, all young people of compulsory school age in detention were attending education in 2008-09 (figure 15.20(a)). There was variation across jurisdictions in the proportion of young people *not* of compulsory school age attending an accredited education or training course. Nationally, 94.0 per cent of young people in detention not of compulsory school age were attending an accredited education or training course (figure 15.20(b)).

Figure 15.20 Proportion of young people in detention attending an accredited education or training course, 2008-09^a

(a) School-aged young people in detention attending an education course



(b) Young people not of compulsory school age attending education or training



^a Refer to table 15A.178 for detailed footnotes.

Source: State and Territory governments (unpublished); table 15A.178.

Safe and secure environment — deaths in custody

‘Deaths in custody’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to ensure that juvenile justice agencies provide a safe and secure environment for young people in custody (box 15.35).

Box 15.35 Deaths in custody

'Deaths in custody' is defined as the number of young people who died while in custody.

The scope of this indicator is restricted to those young people who died while in the legal and/or physical custody of a juvenile justice agency and those who died in, or en route to, an external medical facility as a result of becoming ill or being injured in custody (even if not escorted by juvenile justice agency workers).

A zero or decreasing deaths in custody rate is desirable.

Data reported for this indicator are comparable.

No young people died while in the legal or physical custody of an Australian juvenile justice agency in 2008-09 (table 15A.177).

Safe and secure environment — escapes

'Escapes' is an indicator of governments' objective to ensure that juvenile justice agencies provide a safe and secure environment for young people in custody, and the community (box 15.36).

Box 15.36 Escapes

'Escapes' is defined by two measures:

- the number of escapes from a juvenile justice detention centre, as a proportion of all young people in custody
- the number of escapes during periods of escorted movement, as a proportion of all periods of escorted movement.

An escape from a juvenile justice detention centre is defined as a breach of a secure perimeter or defined boundary of a juvenile justice detention centre by a young person under the supervision of the centre.

A period of escorted movement is defined as a period of time during which a young person is in the custody of the juvenile justice agency while outside a detention centre. The period of escorted movement ends when the young person is returned to the detention centre, or is no longer in the legal or physical custody of the juvenile justice agency. An escape from an escorted movement is defined as the failure of a young person to remain in the custody of a supervising juvenile justice worker or approved service provider during a period of escorted movement.

(Continued on next page)

Box 15.36 (Continued)

An escape is counted each time a young person escapes. For example, if a young person escapes three times in a counting period, three escapes are recorded. If three young people escape at the same time, three escapes are recorded.

A zero escape rate is desirable.

Data reported for this indicator are not complete.

Nationally, there was a total of 4 escapes from juvenile justice detention in 2008-09, which was equivalent to 0.1 escapes per 10 000 young people in juvenile justice detention in 2008-09 (table 15.5).

Table 15.5 Rate and number of escapes from juvenile justice detention centres, by Indigenous status, 2008-09^a

	<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>
Rate per 10 000 detainees									
Indigenous	0.4	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	0.2
Non-Indigenous	0.1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	0.1
Unknown	–	–	..	–	–	–
Total	0.3	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	0.1
Number of escapes									
Indigenous	3.0	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	3.0
Non-Indigenous	1.0	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1.0
Unknown	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Total	4.0	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	4.0

^a Refer to table 15A.179 for detailed footnotes. .. Not applicable. – Nil or rounded to zero.

Source: State and Territory governments (unpublished); table 15A.179.

Nationally, there was a total of 5 escapes from escorted movements in 2008-09, which was equivalent to 3.0 escapes per 10 000 periods of escorted movement in 2008-09 (table 15.6). The number of escapes from escorted movement in 2008-09 varied across jurisdictions.

Table 15.6 Rate and number of escapes from escorted movement, by Indigenous status, 2008-09^a

	<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>
Rate per 10 000 periods of escorted movement									
Indigenous	–	–	–	–	10.2	–	–	na	1.5
Non-Indigenous	5.3	–	–	–	–	na	–	na	4.6
Unknown	–	–	–	–	–
Total	3.0	–	–	–	3.6	28.1	–	–	3.1
Number of escapes									
Indigenous	–	–	–	–	1.0	–	–	na	1.0
Non-Indigenous	2.0	–	–	–	–	2.0	–	na	4.0
Unknown	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Total	2.0	–	–	–	1.0	2.0	–	–	5.0

^a Refer to table 15A.179 for detailed footnotes. **na** Not available. .. Not applicable. – Nil or rounded to zero.

Source: State and Territory governments (unpublished); table 15A.179.

Safe and secure environment — absconds from unescorted leave

‘Absconds from unescorted leave’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to appropriately manage young people while they are in the legal custody of a juvenile justice detention centre (box 15.37).

This includes the provision of appropriate assessment, planning and supervision to enable young people to undertake unescorted temporary leave from detention centres. Unescorted leave may be undertaken for the purposes of providing rehabilitation interventions and activities such as education, training and employment.

Box 15.37 Absconds from unescorted leave

‘Absconds from unescorted leave’ is defined as the number of young people who have unescorted temporary leave and fail to return to custody, as a proportion of all young people who have unescorted temporary leave.

A zero or low, or decreasing rate of absconds from unescorted leave is desirable.

Data reported for this indicator are not complete.

Nationally, there were no absconds from unescorted leave in 2008-09 (table 15A.180). There were no periods of unescorted leave in Queensland and Western Australia.

Safe and secure environment — assaults in custody

‘Assaults in custody’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to provide a custodial environment that is safe and secure in order to rehabilitate young offenders and reintegrate them into their community (box 15.38).

Box 15.38 Assaults in custody

‘Assaults in custody’ is defined as the rate of detainees and staff members who sustain an injury or who are sexually assaulted as a result of an assault perpetrated by one or more detainees, as a proportion of the number of detainees in custody.

A zero or low, or decreasing assaults in custody rate is desirable.

Data for this indicator were not available for the 2010 Report. Assaults in custody data are expected to be available for inclusion in the 2011 Report.

Safe and secure environment — self-harm and attempted suicide in custody

‘Self-harm and attempted suicide in custody’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to provide a custodial environment that is safe and secure in order to rehabilitate young offenders and reintegrate them into their community (box 15.39).

Box 15.39 Self-harm and attempted suicide in custody

‘Self-harm and attempted suicide in custody’ is defined as the number of incidents of self-harm and attempted suicide in custody as a proportion of the number of detainees in custody.

A zero or low, or decreasing self-harm and attempted suicide in custody rate is desirable.

Data for this indicator were not available for the 2010 Report. Self-harm and attempted suicide data are expected to be available for inclusion in the 2011 Report.

Statutory responsibilities — completion of orders

‘Completion of orders’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to effectively rehabilitate young offenders and reintegrate them into their community (box 15.40).

Box 15.40 Completion of orders

‘Completion of orders’ is defined as the proportion of sentenced community-based supervised orders successfully completed. An order is considered to be successfully completed where the earliest order expiry date or the order termination date is reached and breach is neither pending nor finalised.

A high or increasing proportion of orders successfully completed is desirable. However, where offenders are non-compliant and pose a risk, breach action (an unsuccessful completion) may be warranted. As a result, a completion rate less than 100 per cent may not necessarily indicate poor performance, and may reflect appropriate supervision of young people on community-based supervision orders.

Data for this indicator were not available for the 2010 Report. Completion of orders data are expected to be available for inclusion in the 2011 Report.

Statutory responsibilities — case plans prepared

‘Case plans prepared’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to ensure that juvenile justice agencies support young people to minimise the likelihood of re-offending by addressing their offending-related needs (box 15.41).

Box 15.41 Case plans prepared

‘Case plans prepared’ is defined as the number of eligible young people who had a documented case plan prepared or reviewed within six weeks of commencing:

- a sentenced detention order, as a proportion of all young people commencing a sentenced detention order
- a sentenced community-based order, as a proportion of all young people commencing a sentenced community-based order.

An eligible young person is one who is serving a sentenced order that requires case management.

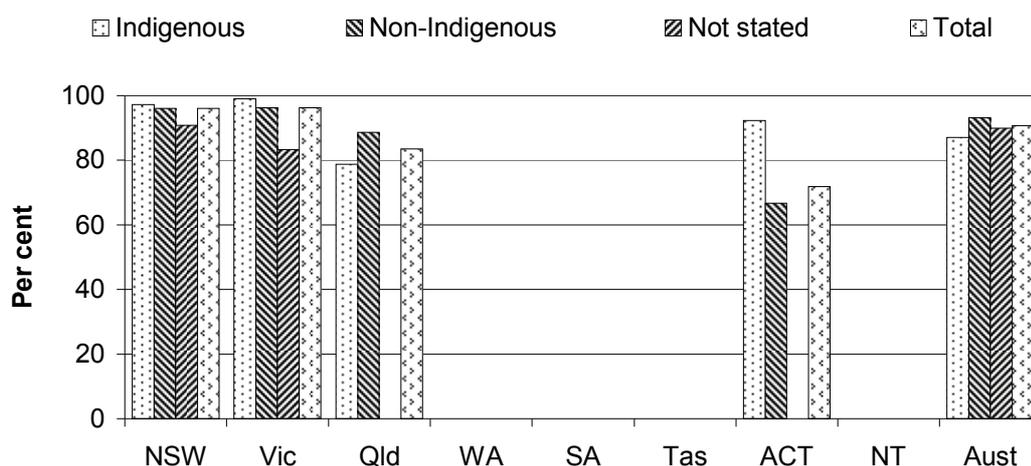
A high or increasing rate of case plans prepared is desirable.

Data reported for this indicator are not complete.

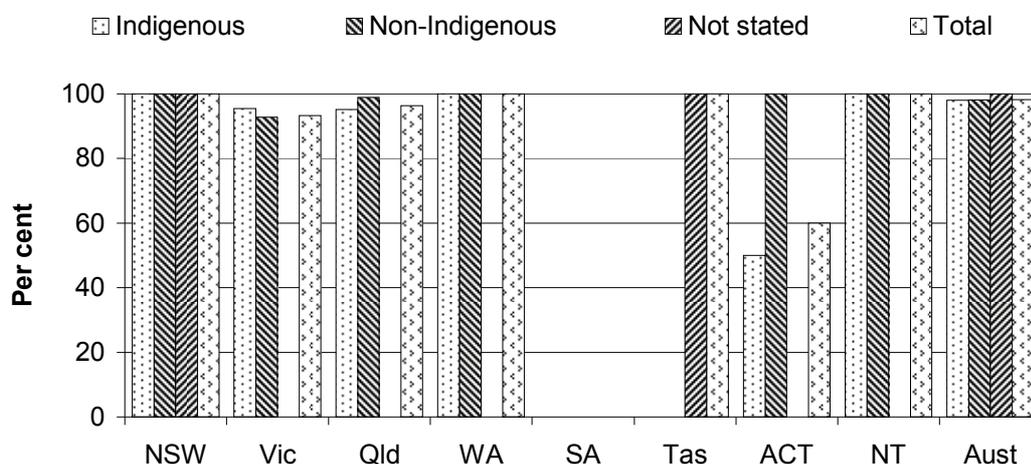
Nationally, 90.7 per cent of case plans were prepared within six weeks of commencing a sentenced community-based order in 2008-09 (figure 15.21(a)). Nationally, 98.2 per cent of case plans were prepared within six weeks of commencing a sentenced detention order in 2008-09 (figure 15.21(b)). Proportions varied across jurisdictions.

Figure 15.21 Proportion of case plans prepared within 6 weeks of commencing sentenced detention orders and sentenced community-based orders, by Indigenous status, 2008-09^a

(a) Proportion of case plans prepared within 6 weeks of commencing a sentenced community-based order^b



(b) Proportion of case plans prepared within 6-weeks of commencing a sentenced detention order^c



^a Refer to table 15A.181 for detailed footnotes. ^b Data for case plans prepared within 6 weeks of commencing a sentenced community-based order were not available for WA, SA, Tasmania and the NT. ^c Data for case plans prepared within 6 weeks of commencing a sentenced detention order were not available for SA.

Source: State and Territory governments (unpublished); table 15A.181.

Efficiency

Cost per offender

‘Cost per offender’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to provide juvenile justice services in an efficient manner (box 15.42).

Box 15.42 Cost per offender

‘Cost per offender’ is yet to be defined.

Data for this indicator were not available for the 2010 Report.

Offender-to-staff ratio

‘Offender-to-staff ratio’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to provide juvenile justice services in an efficient manner (box 15.43).

Box 15.43 Offender-to-staff ratio

‘Offender-to-staff ratio’ comprises two measures: (1) the number of young people requiring community-based supervision relative to the number of community-based staff, and (2) the number of young people in detention relative to the number of detention centre staff.

The number of staff relative to (1) the number of young people requiring community-based supervision; and (2) the number of young people in detention provides a measure of efficient resource management by juvenile justice agencies. A high ratio suggests better performance towards achieving efficient resource management. However, this indicator needs to be interpreted with caution as a lower ratio of staff to young people may result in more effective performance, particularly with high risk young offenders who possess significant offence-related needs. Further, in some cases, efficiencies may not be able to be realised due to remote geographic locations that limit opportunities to reduce overheads through economies of scale.

Data for this indicator were not available for the 2010 Report. Offender-to-staff ratio data are expected to be available for inclusion in the 2011 Report.

Centre utilisation

‘Centre utilisation’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to provide juvenile justice services in an efficient manner (box 15.44).

Box 15.44 Centre utilisation

Centre utilisation is defined as the number of detainees in detention centres as a proportion of the number of permanently funded beds. This indicator partially measures both effective and efficient performance.

Detention centres operating at higher capacities is desirable from an efficient resource management perspective. However, detention centres operating at or above capacity might be ineffective due to the consequences for rehabilitation when centres are over crowded. Centres also need to make provision for separately detaining various classes of young offenders (for example, boys and girls, offenders requiring different security levels, young people of different ages and young people on remand and sentenced). These factors require utilisation rates that are below full capacity.

This indicator also has application to the efficient use of publicly funded resources. Centres that are built at a point in time need to be able to justify significant under use, if that occurs in future years, where that under use cannot reasonably be explained by the factors listed above.

Data for this indicator were not available for the 2010 Report. Centre utilisation data are expected to be available for inclusion in the 2011 Report.

Outcomes

Outcomes are the impact of services on the status of an individual or group (while outputs are the actual services delivered) (see chapter 1, section 1.5).

Outcome indicators for juvenile justice services are yet to be developed. The Steering Committee has identified outcome indicators as an important element of the juvenile justice performance indicator framework to develop for future reports.

15.7 Future directions in juvenile justice reporting

The Juvenile Justice Research and Information Group (JJ RIG), a working group of the AJJA, is responsible for developing national performance indicators for juvenile justice.

The indicators are being developed in three stages:

- Stage 1 indicators — data for stage 1 indicators are included in section 15.6. Reporting for some of these indicators is incomplete and will be subject to further refinement in future Reports.
- Stage 2 indicators — descriptions of stage 2 indicators are included in performance indicator boxes in section 15.6. Data for these indicators are expected to be included in the 2011 Report.
- Stage 3 indicators — the development of remaining equity, efficiency, and outcome indicators will follow the completion of stages 1 and 2.

Outcomes from review of Report on Government Services

COAG agreed to Terms of Reference for a Heads of Treasuries/Senior Officials review of the Report in November 2008, to report to COAG by end-September 2009. The review examined the ongoing usefulness of the Report in the context of new national reporting under the Intergovernmental Agreement on Federal Financial Relations.

No significant changes from this review are reflected in the 2010 Report. Any COAG endorsed recommendations from the review are likely to be implemented for the 2011 Report.

15.8 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 Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) was established in 1985 to bring homelessness programs funded by individual State and Territory governments and the Australian Government under one nationally coordinated program. The most recent program (SAAP V 2005-2010, but replaced on 1 January 2009) was governed by the *Supported Accommodation Assistance Act 1994*. The Act specified that the overall aim of SAAP was to provide transitional supported accommodation and related support services to assist people who are homeless to achieve self-reliance and independence. Within this broad aim, the goals of the SAAP program were to resolve crises, to re-establish family links where appropriate, and to re-establish a capacity to live independently of SAAP services.

As part of the SAAP program, non-government, community and local government agencies delivered a variety of services to clients, including supported accommodation, counselling, advocacy, links to housing, health, education and employment services, outreach support, brokerage and meals services, and financial and employment assistance.

In January 2008, the Australian Government announced its intention to develop a long-term national plan to reduce homelessness. As part of this process, the Australian Government released a Green Paper in May 2008 entitled *Which way home? A new approach to homelessness*. The Green Paper sought community input on possible strategies and initiatives to address homelessness in Australia (Commonwealth of Australia 2008a).

After extensive consultation, the Australian Government released a White Paper in December 2008 entitled *The road home: A national approach to reducing homelessness* (Australian Government 2008b). The White Paper set out two main goals: (1) to halve overall homelessness by 2020; and (2) to offer supported accommodation to all 'rough sleepers' who need assistance by 2020. The White Paper is supported by a new funding package under the *National Affordable Housing Agreement* (NAHA) released by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) in November 2008 (COAG 2008). As a result of these reforms, the

SAAP V Multilateral Agreement (2005-2010) ended on 31 December 2008, with the NAHA and associated agreements and partnerships commencing 1 January 2009.

The NAHA provides a framework for the Australian Government and State and Territory governments to work together to improve housing affordability and homelessness outcomes for Australians. The objective of the NAHA is that all Australians have access to affordable, safe and sustainable housing that contributes to social and economic participation. Under the NAHA, Australian governments are committed to:

- providing direction for a range of measures including: social housing; assistance to people in the private rental market; support and accommodation for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness; and home purchase assistance
- working towards improving coordination across housing related programs to make better use of existing stock and under-utilised government assets and achieve better integration between housing and human services, including health and disability services
- reducing the rate of homelessness (COAG 2008).

SAAP data for 2007-08 are included in this Report. These data are not affected by the introduction of the NAHA in January 2009. Selected SAAP financial data are included for the period 1 July 2008 to 31 December 2008, when the SAAP V ended.

SAAP and the link with other services

Families and children in crisis 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 care and protection order. In 2007-08, 76 900 children accompanied a parent or guardian who received substantial SAAP support (AIHW 2009b).⁴ Research using 2004-05 data indicates that in 40.5 per cent of support periods involving adults with accompanying children, domestic violence was the main reason SAAP support was sought (AIHW 2006b).

Close links also exist with other forms of housing assistance reported in the Housing chapter of the Report (chapter 16). Chapter 16 focuses on the performance

⁴ The term ‘substantial’ in ‘substantial SAAP support’ is a term used in the SAAP data collection to denote SAAP support for a person defined as a SAAP client during a support period (see section 15.13 for definitions of SAAP ‘client’ and ‘support period’). It does not convey a measure of the number of distinct support services or duration of support.

of government in providing public housing, State owned and managed Indigenous housing (SOMIH), community housing, and financial assistance for crisis accommodation under the Commonwealth State Housing Agreement (CSHA). As the CSHA was subsumed by the NAHA on 1 January 2009, chapter 16 of this Report includes CSHA data from 1 July 2008 to 31 December 2008, and NAHA data from 1 January 2009 to 30 June 2009 (termed CSHA/NAHA data).

Some individuals and families utilised both SAAP services and services described in the Housing chapter, as people can move from homelessness to social housing, or might be in receipt of SAAP services and accommodated in social housing.⁵ For example, in 2007-08, approximately 17.1 per cent of former SAAP clients, who requested assistance with obtaining or maintaining independent housing, had moved to public housing (table 15A.202).

Size and scope

Homelessness has multiple causes and can affect anyone (Australian Government 2008b). On census night in 2006, there were approximately 105 000 homeless people (Chamberlain and MacKenzie 2008). SAAP provided accommodation to approximately 19 per cent of the homeless population on Census night in 2006 according to the ABS Counting the Homeless 2006 report (ABS, 2008).

SAAP agencies provided a range of support services to various client groups comprising people who were homeless or at risk of homelessness. SAAP clients included families, single men and women, and unaccompanied children and young people. Nationally, in 2007-08, SAAP agencies provided support to 202 500 people (125 600 clients and 76 900 accompanying children) (AIHW 2009b).

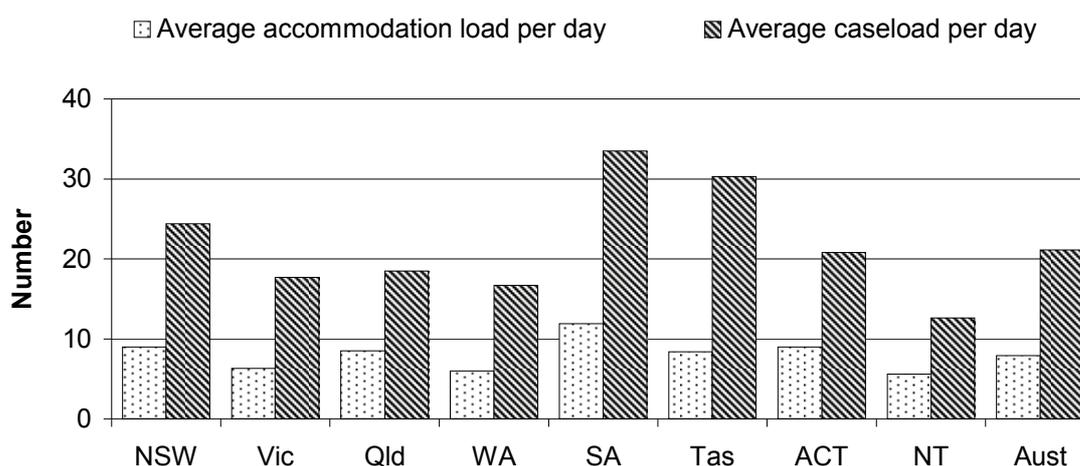
At least 1562 agencies were funded under the SAAP program in 2007-08, including non-government, community and local government agencies (AIHW 2009b) (table 15A.183). Services were delivered in 2007-08 by SAAP agencies targeting:

- young people (35.4 per cent of agencies)
- women escaping domestic violence (23.0 per cent)
- families (8.3 per cent)
- single men (6.5 per cent)
- single women (3.1 per cent)
- multiple client groups (23.6 per cent) (table 15A.183).

⁵ 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).

The daily average accommodation load and caseload per agency was 7.9 and 21.1 respectively, and this varied across jurisdictions in 2007-08 (figure 15.22).

Figure 15.22 Average accommodation load and caseload per day, 2007—08^a



^a See notes to table 15A.201 for descriptions of how accommodation load and caseload are estimated.

Source: SAAP NDCA *Administrative Data and Client Collections* (unpublished); table 15A.201.

SAAP agencies varied in their service delivery model. The most common models in 2007-08 were the provision of medium term to long term supported accommodation (41.2 per cent) and the provision of crisis or short term supported accommodation (30.9 per cent). SAAP agencies also provided services other than accommodation, such as outreach support, day support, and telephone information and referral. The proportions of agencies delivering particular service models remained relatively stable from 2003-04 to 2007-08 (table 15A.184).

Housing and accommodation services were provided in 53.9 per cent of support periods. General support and advocacy (77.6 per cent), counselling (54.5 per cent), financial and employment assistance (35.7 per cent), and specialist services (20.9 per cent) were also commonly provided. There has been some change in the proportions of types of services provided by SAAP agencies over time (figure 15.23). For example, in 2003-04, housing and accommodation constituted 62.0 per cent of support periods and counselling (formerly ‘personal support’) constituted 46.2 per cent.

Figure 15.23 Services received during a SAAP support period^a



^a 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.182.

Roles and responsibilities

SAAP was jointly funded by the Australian, State and Territory governments. The Coordination and Development Committee (CAD) of senior Australian, State and Territory government officials oversaw the development and implementation of the program at the national level, including coordination of research, strategy, and other planning and development activities. State and Territory governments were responsible for the day-to-day management of the program, including the distribution of funding to SAAP funded agencies (box 15.45 contains a list of relevant departments in 2008-09). Non-government agencies delivered most SAAP services with some local government participation.

Box 15.45 Departments responsible for managing the Supported Accommodation and Assistance Program (SAAP)

<i>NSW</i>	Department of Community Services (DOCS) (now the Department of Human Services)
<i>VIC</i>	Department of Human Services (DHS)
<i>QLD</i>	Department of Communities (DOC)
<i>WA</i>	Department for Child Protection (DCP)
<i>SA</i>	Department for Families and Communities (DFC)
<i>TAS</i>	Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)
<i>ACT</i>	Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services (DHCS)
<i>NT</i>	Department of Health and Families (DHF)
<i>Aust</i>	Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA)

Funding

Recurrent funding of SAAP services for the period 1 July 2008 to 31 December 2008 was approximately \$191.6 million (table 15A.186), of which the Australian Government contributed 50.1 per cent and State and Territory governments contributed 49.9 per cent (table 15A.185). From 2004-05 until 2007-08, the contribution from State and Territory governments increased as a proportion of the overall recurrent SAAP funding, remaining relatively stable between 2007-08 and 2008-09 (table 15A.185).

Nationally, real recurrent SAAP funding per head of population remained relatively stable from 2004-05 to 2008-09, noting that the funding per head of population provided for the period 1 July 2008 to 31 December 2008 is approximately half that recorded for previous financial years (table 15A.187). These figures varied across jurisdictions.

In 2008-09, in addition to the amounts determined in agreements between State and Territory governments and the Australian Government, some jurisdictions made recurrent allocations to SAAP services or SAAP-like activities (for example, to assist service viability). These additional funds are not included in the above figures.

15.9 Framework of performance indicators for supported accommodation and assistance services

The performance indicator framework for supported accommodation and assistance services is based on shared government objectives for SAAP services (box 15.46).

COAG has agreed six National Agreements to enhance accountability to the public for the outcomes achieved or outputs delivered by a range of government services (see chapter 1 for more detail on reforms to federal financial relations). The NAHA covers the area of housing and homelessness (previously SAAP) services, while the National Indigenous Reform Agreement (NIRA) establishes specific outcomes for reducing the level of disadvantage experienced by Indigenous Australians. The agreements include sets of performance indicators, for which the Steering Committee collates annual performance information for analysis by the COAG Reform Council (CRC).

The measurement details of relevant National Agreement reporting were under development at the time of preparing this Report. It is anticipated that the performance indicator results reported in this chapter will be revised to align with the performance indicators in the National Agreements for the 2011 Report.

Box 15.46 Objectives for SAAP services

The overall aim of SAAP was 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 were to:

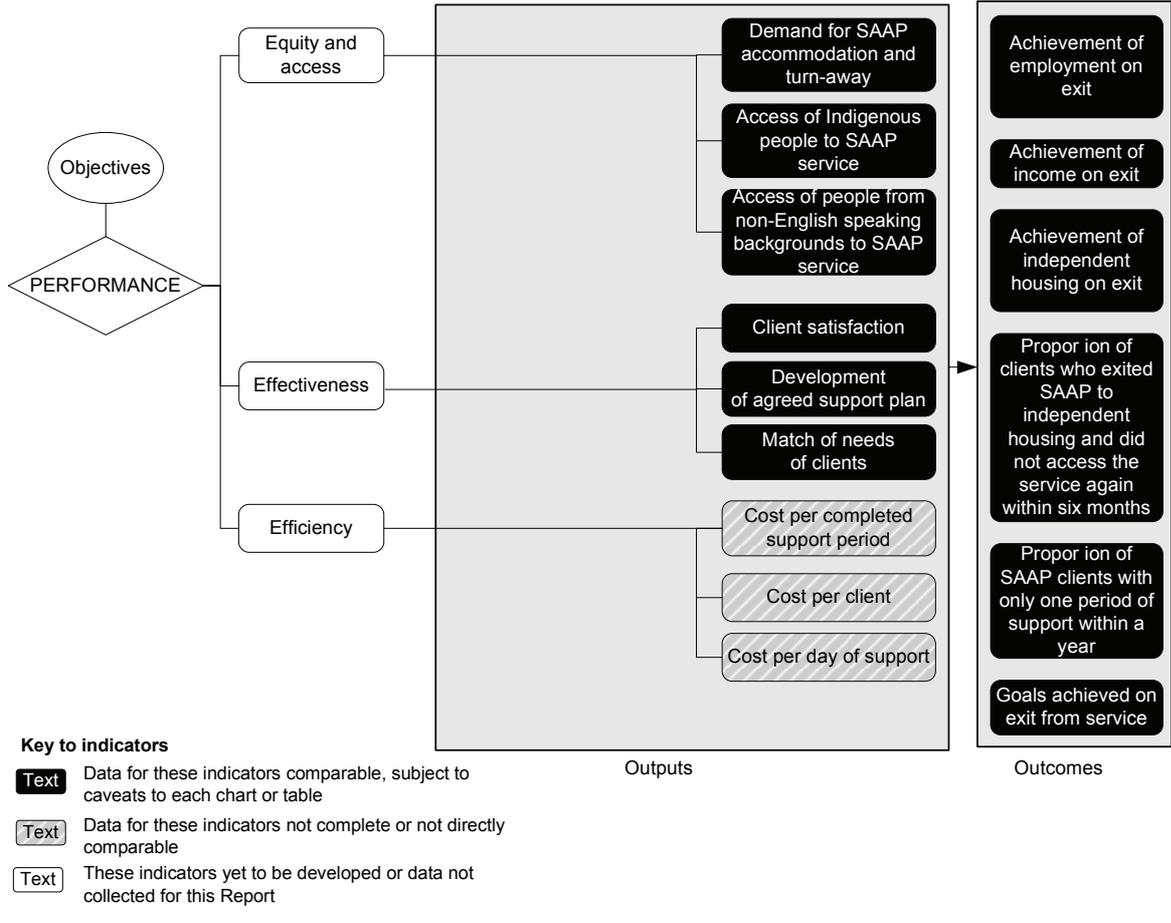
- resolve crises
- re-establish family links where appropriate
- re-establish the capacity of clients to live independently of SAAP.

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 15.24). The performance indicator framework shows which data are comparable in the 2010 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 Report’s statistical appendix 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) (appendix A).

Figure 15.24 Performance indicators for SAAP services



15.10 Key supported accommodation and assistance program performance indicator results

The SAAP data collection measures the number of clients and the number and types of services provided to clients, but is subject to limitations (box 15.47).

Box 15.47 Information 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 and they have the right to provide or not provide information while receiving SAAP services.
- Nationally, in 2007-08, clients consented to provide personal details for the SAAP client collection in 88.6 per cent of support periods, while 92.1 per cent of agencies participated in the client collection. A weighting system has been developed to adjust for client non-consent and agency non-participation (AIHW 2009b).

Outputs

Outputs are the actual services delivered (while outcomes are the impact of these services on the status of an individual or group) (see chapter 1, section 1.5).

Equity and access

Demand for SAAP accommodation and turn-away

‘Demand for SAAP accommodation and turn-away’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to ensure all Australians have equitable access to SAAP services on the basis of relative need (box 15.48).

Box 15.48 Demand for SAAP accommodation and turn-away

‘Demand for SAAP accommodation and turn-away’ is defined as the extent to which 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 might be provided). Two measures of the proportion of people whose valid request for immediate SAAP accommodation cannot be met are reported:

- turn-away as the proportion of people requiring new SAAP accommodation, defined as the average daily percentage of people who could not be accommodated relative to all people making valid requests for immediate SAAP accommodation. This provides an indication of a person’s likelihood of obtaining SAAP accommodation.
- turn-away as the proportion of total demand for SAAP accommodation, defined as the average daily percentage of people who could not be accommodated relative to all people who required new and immediate SAAP accommodation or who were continuing their accommodation from the previous day. This provides a measure of the overall ability of SAAP to meet the demand for accommodation on an average day during the Demand for Accommodation Collection period.

A higher or increasing proportion of valid requests receiving accommodation is desirable.

Data reported for this indicator are comparable across jurisdictions. However, these data are not necessarily comparable over time due to different collection periods in different years.

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.

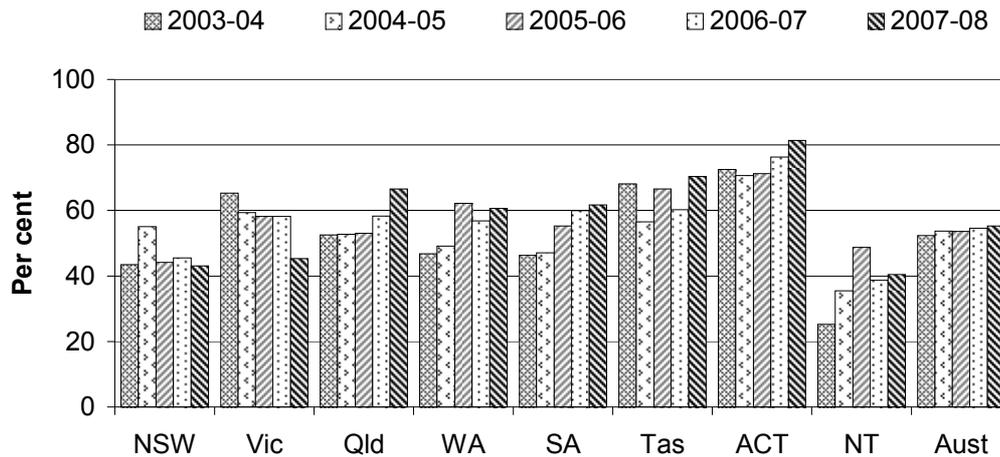
The Demand for Accommodation Collection collects data on ‘valid unmet requests’ for immediate accommodation. ‘Valid unmet requests’ excludes requests made at an agency where the person or group making the request does not fall within an agency’s target client group, where there is no fee-free accommodation available at that time⁶, or where assistance offered by an agency 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.

⁶ ‘No fee-free accommodation available’ refers to situations where the person/group is not given accommodation because they cannot meet the financial requirements (for example, fees) for that accommodation.

Demand data may understate the activities of SAAP agencies as only data from agencies that participated in both the Client Collection and the Demand for Accommodation Collection are used in the calculations. Additionally, the two one-week sample periods over which data are collected might not be representative of the eventual success of clients accessing SAAP services over the full year (see notes to tables 15A.188-189).

Data on the proportion of people with valid requests for SAAP accommodation who were turned away are reported for the years 2003-04 to 2007-08. Nationally, 55.3 per cent of adults and unaccompanied children requesting immediate new SAAP accommodation on a given day were turned away in 2007-08. This proportion varied across jurisdictions (figure 15.25).

Figure 15.25 Turn-away of adults and unaccompanied children as a proportion of people requiring new SAAP accommodation^{a, b, c, d}



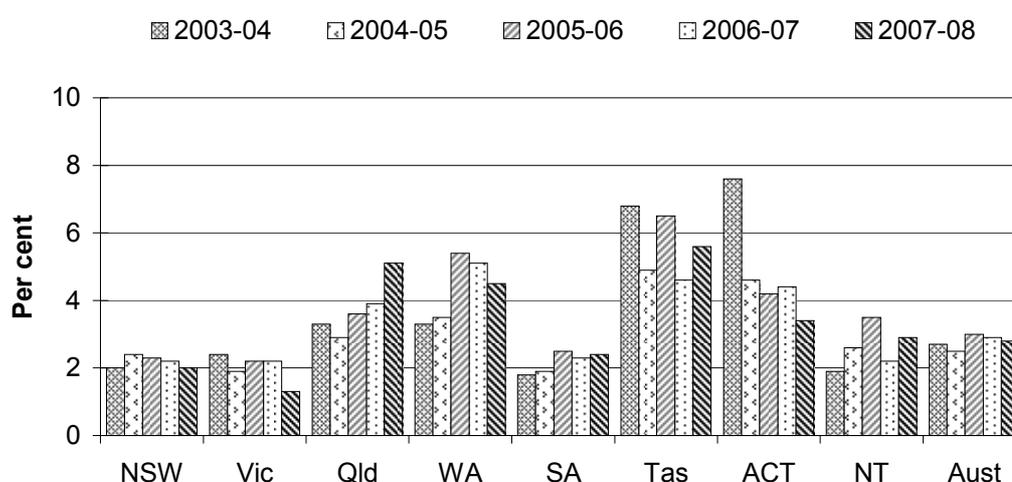
^a A two-week Demand for Accommodation Collection is conducted annually to gather information about homeless people whose requests for accommodation were unable to be met by SAAP agencies. The collections were held in December and May, or August and May, of each financial year. ^b Comparisons between 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. ^c The denominator for this indicator refers to adults and unaccompanied children. ^d See notes to table 15A.188 for more detailed data caveats.

Source: AIHW (2009) *Demand for SAAP accommodation by Homeless People 2007-08: A report from the SAAP national data collection*. SAAP NDCA report series 13. Cat. No. HOU 211; table 15A.188.

Nationally, the number of adults and unaccompanied children who made valid requests for SAAP accommodation but could not be accommodated accounted for 2.8 per cent of the total demand for SAAP accommodation in 2007-08 (total demand includes all accommodated adults and unaccompanied children) (figure 15.26). This proportion varied across jurisdictions.

The difference between (a) the percentage of people turned away on a given day as a proportion of total requests for new immediate SAAP accommodation on a given day (55.3 per cent) and (b) the percentage of people turned away on a given day as a proportion of total demand for SAAP accommodation suggests that SAAP agencies provide a significant number of clients with continuing accommodation.

Figure 15.26 Turn-away of adults and unaccompanied children as the proportion of total demand for SAAP accommodation^{a, b, c, d}



^a 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, or August and May, of each financial year. ^b 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. ^c The denominator for this indicator refers to adults and unaccompanied children. ^d See notes to table 15A.189 for more detailed data caveats.

Source: AIHW (2009) *Demand for SAAP accommodation by Homeless People 2007-08: A report from the SAAP national data collection*. SAAP NDCA report series 13. Cat. No. HOU 211; table 15A.189.

Nationally, requests for SAAP accommodation were not met for a number of reasons in 2007-08, including lack of available accommodation (59.0 per cent), no vacancies at the referral agency (24.0 per cent), type of accommodation requested is not provided (7.8 per cent) and insufficient staff (1.3 per cent) (table 15A.197).

Access of Indigenous people to SAAP service

‘Access of Indigenous people to SAAP service’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to ensure all Australians have equitable access to SAAP services on the basis of relative need (box 15.49).

Box 15.49 Access of Indigenous people to SAAP service

'Access of Indigenous people to SAAP service' 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.

A high proportion of valid requests receiving assistance is desirable.

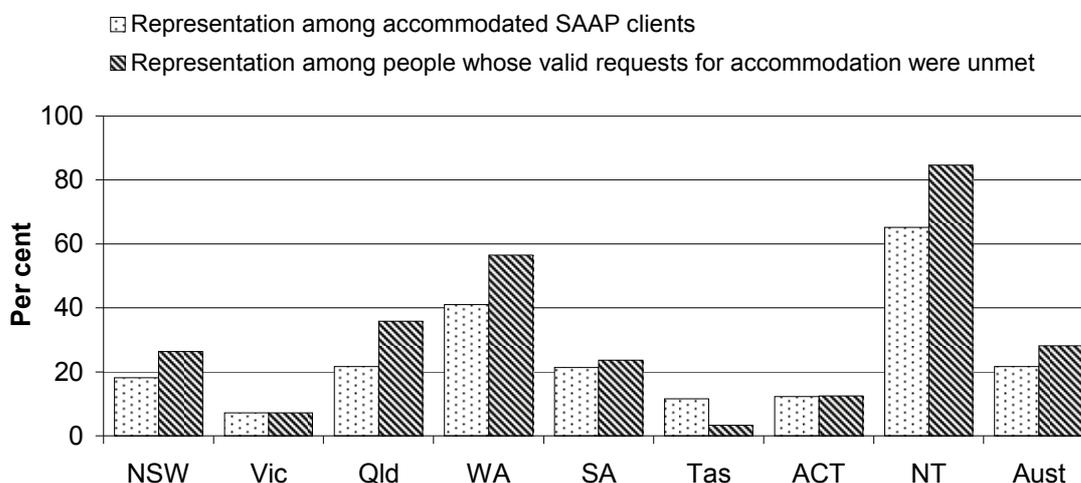
The indicator measures the extent to which the demand for assistance from Indigenous people is met or unmet. Unmet demand occurs when a homeless person expressly asking for supported accommodation, or support, cannot be provided with that assistance (although one-off assistance might be provided).

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

Data reported for this indicator are comparable.

Nationally, Indigenous people made up 28.2 per cent of all people whose valid requests for accommodation did not result in accommodation assistance in 2007-08 — a proportion greater than Indigenous clients among all accommodated SAAP clients (21.7 per cent). This result varied across jurisdictions (figure 15.27).

Figure 15.27 Proportion of Indigenous people among all accommodated SAAP clients and among people whose valid requests for accommodation were unmet, 2007-08^a



^a See notes to table 15A.190 for details of data definitions.

Source: SAAP NDCA *Client and Demand for Accommodation Collections* (unpublished); AIHW (2009) *Demand for SAAP accommodation by Homeless People 2007-08: A report from the SAAP national data collection*. SAAP NDCA report series 13. Cat. No. HOU 211; table 15A.190.

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

‘Access of people from non-English speaking backgrounds to SAAP service’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to ensure all Australians have equitable access to SAAP services on the basis of relative need (box 15.50).

Box 15.50 Access of people from non-English speaking backgrounds to SAAP service

‘Access of people from non-English speaking backgrounds to SAAP service’ 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.

A high proportion of valid requests receiving assistance is desirable.

(Continued on next page)

Box 15.50 (Continued)

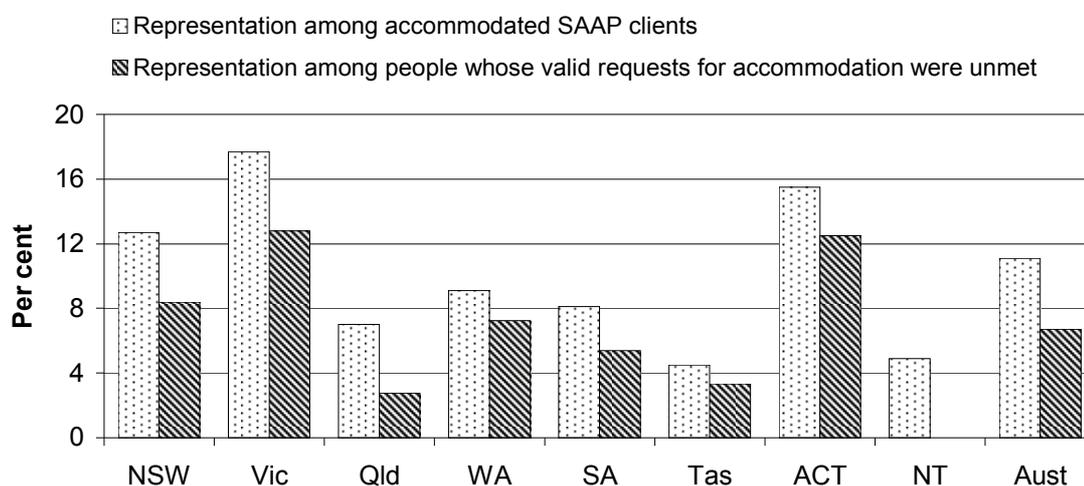
This indicator measures the extent to which the demand for assistance from people from non-English speaking backgrounds is met or unmet. Unmet demand occurs when a homeless person expressly asking for supported accommodation, or support, cannot be provided with that assistance (although one-off assistance might be provided).

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.

Data reported for this indicator are comparable.

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 6.7 per cent in 2007-08 — lower than that of people from non-English speaking backgrounds among all accommodated SAAP clients (11.1 per cent). This result varied across jurisdictions (figure 15.28).

Figure 15.28 Proportion of people from non-English speaking backgrounds among all accommodated SAAP clients and among people whose valid requests for accommodation were unmet, 2007-08^a



^a See notes to table 15A.191 for details of data definitions.

Source: SAAP NDCA *Client and Demand for Accommodation Collections* (unpublished); AIHW (2009) *Demand for SAAP accommodation by Homeless People 2007-08: A report from the SAAP national data collection*. SAAP NDCA report series 13. Cat. No. HOU 211; table 15A.191.

Effectiveness

Client satisfaction

‘Client satisfaction’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to provide high quality services that meet the needs of SAAP recipients (box 15.51).

Box 15.51 Client satisfaction

‘Client satisfaction’ is defined as the extent to which clients find SAAP services and programs to be helpful and of a high standard (CBSR 2004). Client satisfaction is measured as the proportion of clients who reported that their overall satisfaction with the assistance they received from SAAP services was either ‘good’ or ‘really good’.

A high proportion of clients reporting the assistance they received as ‘good’ or ‘really good’ suggests greater client satisfaction with the overall SAAP service.

Data reported for this indicator are comparable.

Data for the client satisfaction indicator are sourced from the national SAAP client satisfaction survey, which was conducted in 2003. New data for this indicator were 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; CBSR 2004).

Development of agreed support plan

‘Development of agreed support plan’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to provide high quality services that are appropriately targeted to meet the needs of SAAP clients (box 15.52).

Box 15.52 Development of agreed support plan

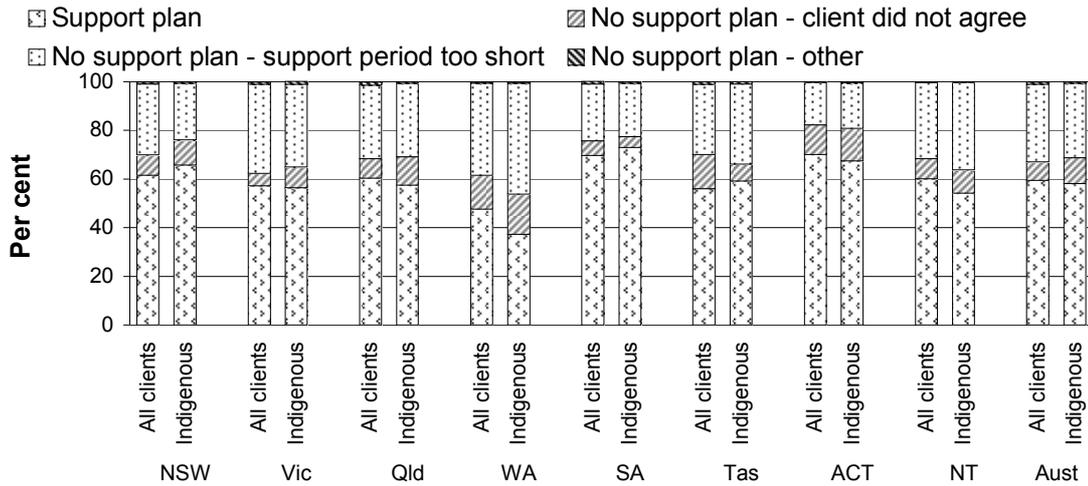
‘Development of agreed support plan’ is defined as the number of closed support periods with an agreed support plan divided by the total number of closed support periods. A closed support period is a support period that had finished on or before 30 June. Data are reported for all SAAP clients, and separately for Indigenous clients.

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

Data reported for this indicator are comparable.

Nationally, there was an agreed support plan for 59.5 per cent of closed support periods for all clients in 2007-08 (compared to 58.2 per cent for Indigenous clients). These proportions varied across jurisdictions (figure 15.29).

Figure 15.29 Closed support periods, by the existence of a support plan, 2007-08^a



^a See notes to tables 15A.185-186 for more details of data definitions.

Source: SAAP NDCA Client Collection (unpublished); tables 15A.192-193.

Match of needs of clients

‘Match of needs of clients’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to ensure that SAAP services meet client’s individual needs (box 15.53).

Box 15.53 Match of needs of clients

‘Match of needs of clients’ is defined as the number of distinct services required by clients that are provided, as well as those referred to another agency, divided by the total number of distinct services required by SAAP clients.

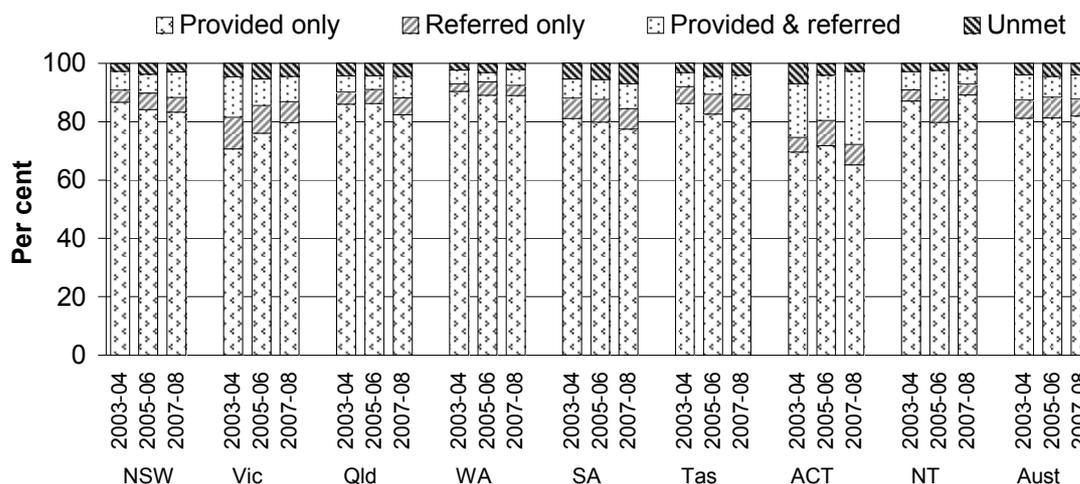
A high proportion of clients who received services they needed, or who were referred to another agency, is desirable.

The range of services needed by SAAP clients is broad (ranging from meals to laundry facilities to long term accommodation), so the effect of not providing these services varies. Data are reported for all SAAP clients, and separately for Indigenous people and people from non-English speaking backgrounds.

Data reported for this indicator are comparable.

Nationally, the proportion of clients who received services they needed (including services provided by the initially approached agencies and/or referrals to another agency) was 96.1 per cent in 2007-08 (figure 15.30).

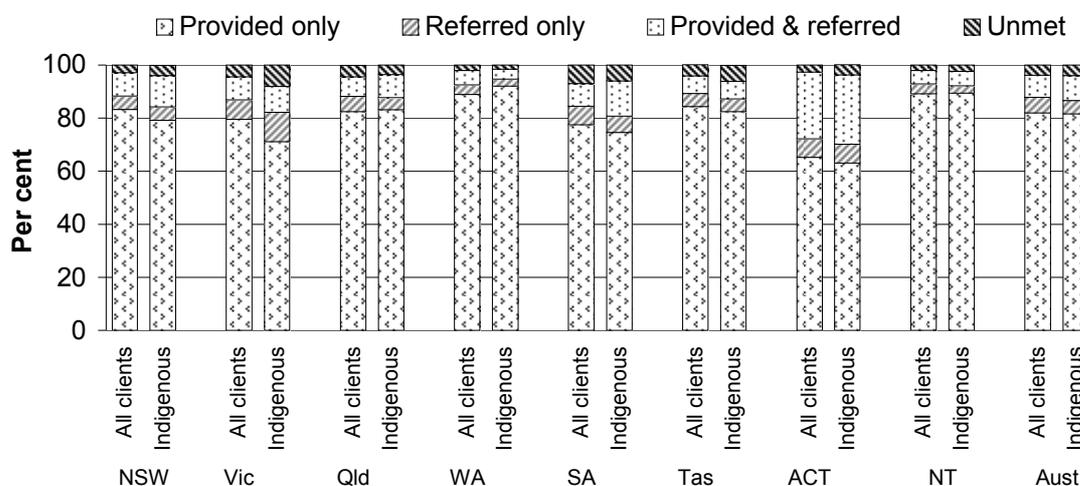
Figure 15.30 SAAP clients, by met and unmet support needs



Source: SAAP NDCA Client Collection (unpublished); table 15A.194.

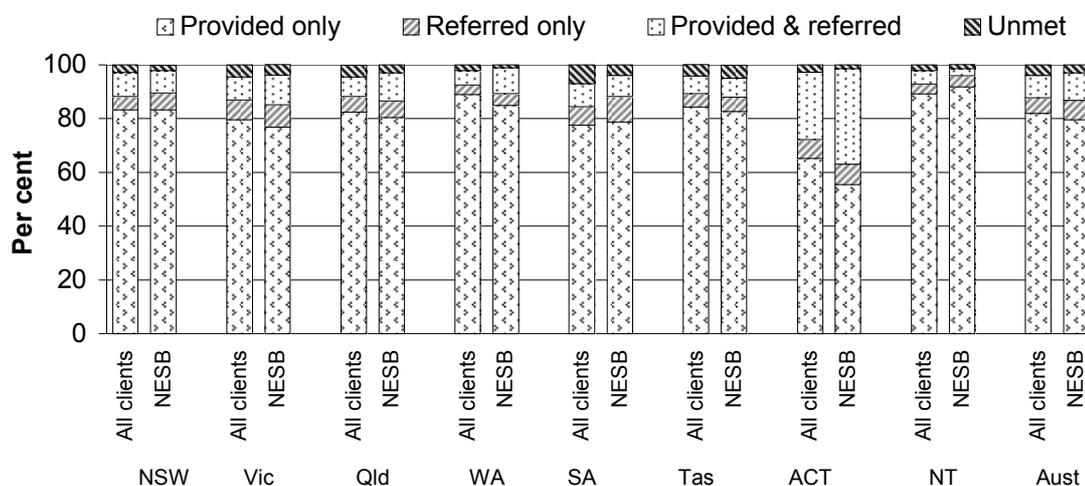
The proportions for Indigenous clients (96.0 per cent) and clients from a non-English speaking background (97.0 per cent) who received services in 2007-08 were similar to that for all clients (96.1 per cent). These proportions varied across jurisdictions (figures 15.31-32).

Figure 15.31 Indigenous clients, by met and unmet support needs, 2007-08



Source: SAAP NDCA Client Collection (unpublished); tables 15A.194-195.

Figure 15.32 Clients from non-English speaking backgrounds, by met and unmet support needs, 2007-08



NESB = Non-English speaking background.

Source: SAAP NDCA Client Collection (unpublished); tables 15A.194 and 15A.196.

Efficiency

Across jurisdictions, there are varying treatments of expenditure items (for example, superannuation) and different counting and reporting rules for generating financial data. Differences in expenditure data across jurisdictions might to some extent reflect differences in the way in which these data are compiled rather than true variations in expenditure.

The funding figures used to calculate the following efficiency indicators include recurrent allocations to agencies provided by some State and Territory governments 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 indicator of governments’ objective to maximise the availability and quality of services through the efficient use of public resources (box 15.54).

Box 15.54 Cost per completed support period

'Cost per completed support period' is defined as total expenditure on SAAP services divided by the number of completed support periods (excluding casual clients, and adults and accompanying children with a valid unmet request for accommodation).

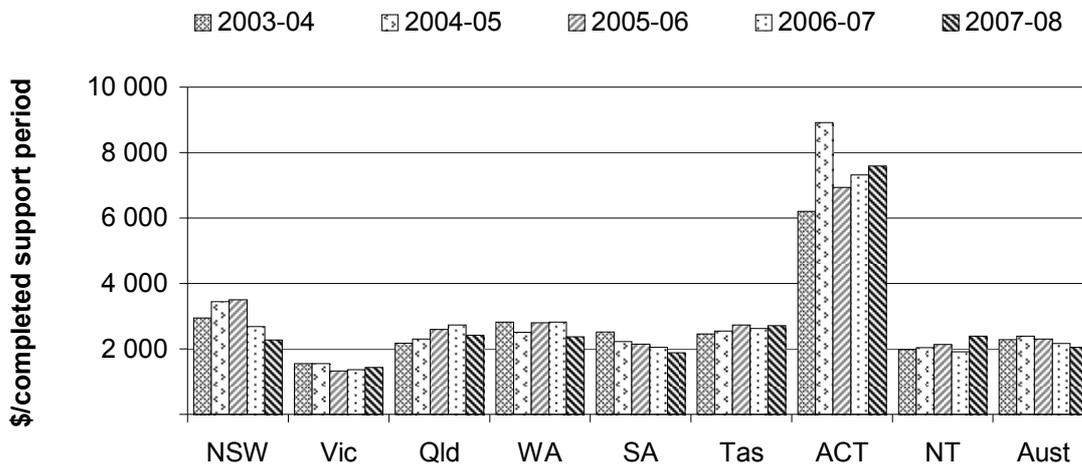
A low or decreasing cost per completed support period is desirable, but can also indicate lower service quality.

This is a proxy indicator of efficiency, measuring government inputs per unit of output (unit cost), including only expenditure by service delivery providers. Unit cost indicators ideally include administration costs borne by State and Territory governments in administering services, but this is not yet possible. In addition, capital costs are excluded because capital funding for SAAP is provided under the CSHA through a special purpose program (the CAP).

Data reported for this indicator are not directly comparable.

The recurrent cost per completed support period (excluding potential clients and accompanying children) averaged \$2050 nationally and varied across jurisdictions in 2007-08 (figure 15.33).

Figure 15.33 Real recurrent cost per completed support period (2007-08 dollars)^a



^a See notes to table 15A.198 for detailed data caveats.

Source: SAAP NDCA Administrative Data and Client Collections (unpublished); table 15A.198.

Cost per client

'Cost per client' is an indicator of governments' objective to maximise the availability and quality of services through the efficient use of public resources (box 15.55).

Box 15.55 Cost per client

'Cost per client' is defined as total expenditure on SAAP services divided by the number of clients accessing a bed or place over the year.

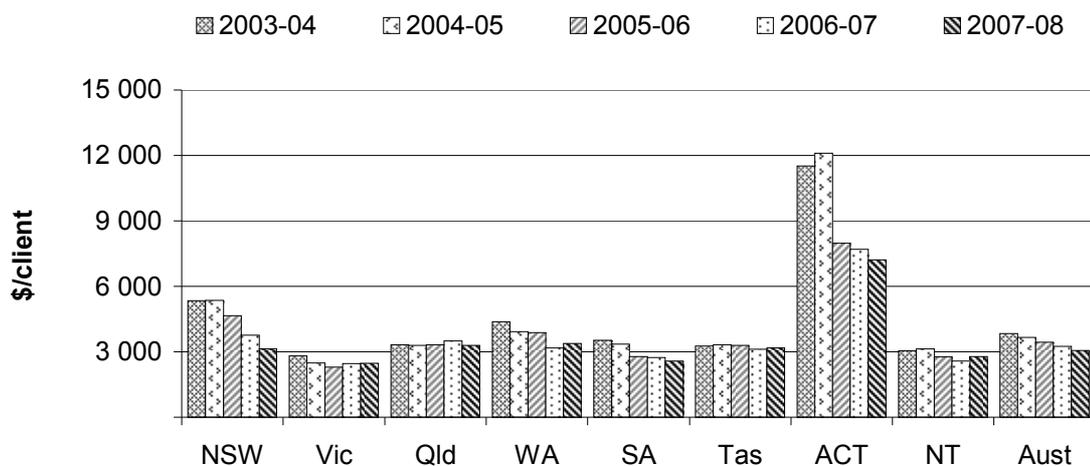
A low or decreasing cost per client is desirable, but can also indicate lower service quality.

This is a proxy indicator of efficiency, measuring government inputs per unit of output (unit cost), including only expenditure by service delivery providers. Unit cost indicators ideally include administration costs borne by State and Territory governments in administering services, but this is not yet possible. In addition, capital costs are excluded because capital funding for SAAP is provided under the CSHA through a special purpose program (the CAP).

Data reported for this indicator are not directly comparable.

Nationally, the recurrent cost per client accessing SAAP services was \$3060 and varied across jurisdictions in 2007-08 (figure 15.34).

Figure 15.34 Real recurrent cost per client accessing SAAP services (2007-08 dollars)^a



^a See notes to table 15A.199 for detailed data caveats.

Source: SAAP NDCA Administrative Data and Client Collections (unpublished); table 15A.199.

Cost per day of support

‘Cost per day of support’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to maximise the availability and quality of services through the efficient use of public resources (box 15.56).

Box 15.56 Cost per day of support

‘Cost per day of support’ 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 clients, and adults and accompanying children with a valid unmet request for accommodation).

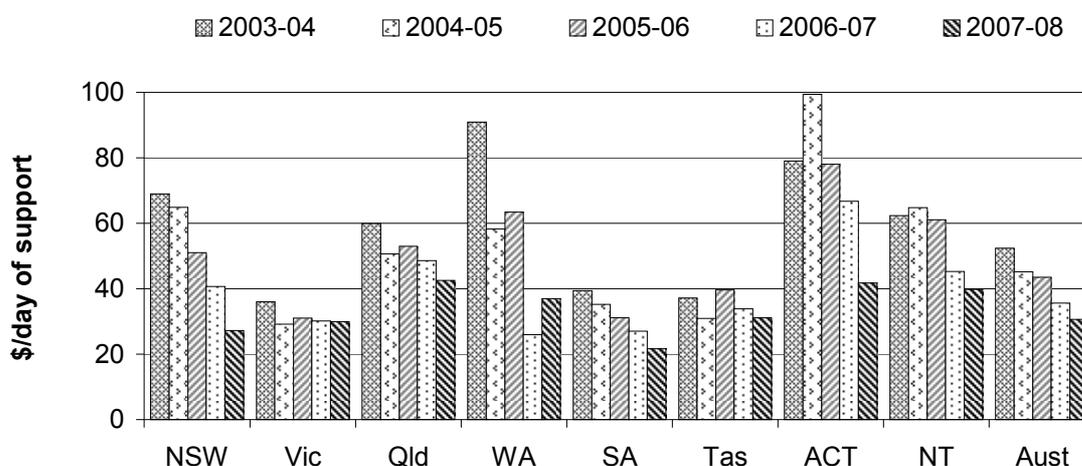
A low or decreasing cost per day of support is desirable, but can also indicate lower service quality.

This is a proxy indicator of efficiency, measuring government inputs per unit of output (unit cost), including only expenditure by service delivery providers. Unit cost indicators ideally include administration costs borne by State and Territory governments in administering services, but this is not yet possible. In addition, capital costs are excluded because capital funding for SAAP is provided under the CSHA through a special purpose program (the CAP).

Data reported for this indicator are not directly comparable.

The recurrent cost per day of support for SAAP clients averaged \$31 nationally and varied across jurisdictions in 2007-08 (figure 15.35).

Figure 15.35 Real recurrent cost per day of support for clients (2007-08 dollars)^a



^a See notes to table 15A.200 for detailed data caveats.

Source: SAAP NDCA Administrative Data and Client Collections (unpublished); table 15A.200.

Outcomes

Outcomes are the impact of services on the status of an individual or group (while outputs are the actual services delivered) (see chapter 1, section 1.5).

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.

In 2006, the SAAP CAD commissioned a research project to examine the impact of SAAP services on client self-reliance. The report based on this project, *Measuring the Impact of SAAP-funded Homelessness Services on Client Self-reliance* (FaHCSIA 2008a), found that many of the problems and barriers that led clients into homelessness were not easily fixed and could take considerable time, effort and resources to overcome.

Achievement of employment on exit

'Achievement of employment on exit' is an indicator of governments' objective to enable clients to participate as productive and self-reliant members of society at the end of their support period (box 15.57).

Box 15.57 Achievement of employment on exit

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

A high or increasing proportion of clients achieving employment after SAAP support is desirable.

This indicator compares these clients' employment status before and after they requested SAAP support. Data are reported for all SAAP clients, and separately for Indigenous clients.

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.

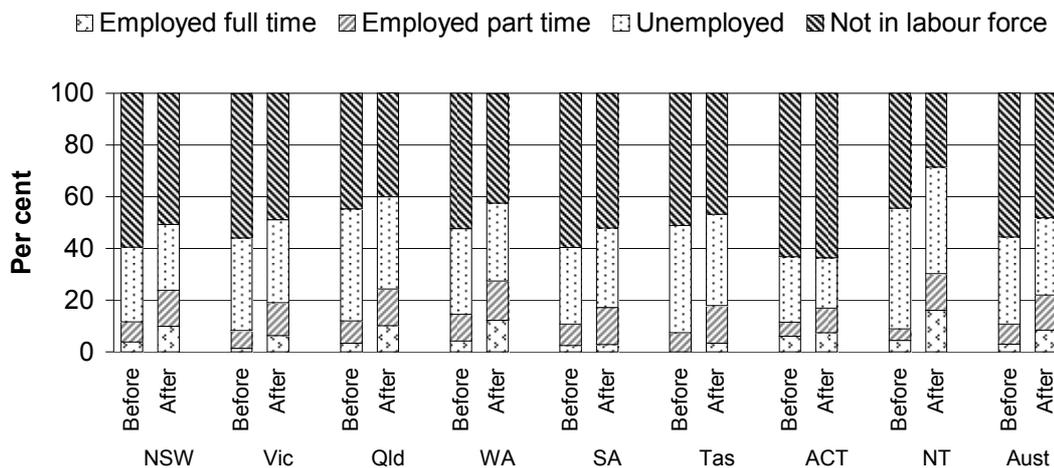
Data reported for this indicator are comparable.

Nationally, of those clients who sought assistance to obtain or maintain employment and training when entering SAAP in 2007-08, the proportion of clients who were employed either full time or part time increased from 10.8 per cent before support to 22.0 per cent after support (8.4 per cent full time and 13.6 per cent part time). The proportion of clients who were unemployed decreased from 33.7 per cent before support to 29.8 per cent after support. The proportion of clients who were not in the labour force decreased from 55.6 per cent before support to 48.2 per cent after support. Proportions varied across jurisdictions (figure 15.36(a), table 15A.204).

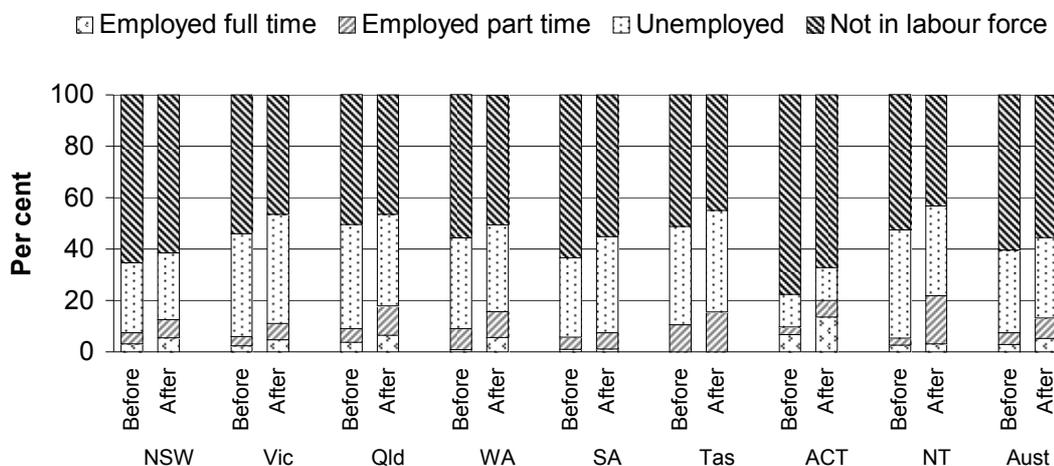
Nationally, of those Indigenous clients who sought assistance to obtain or maintain employment and training when entering SAAP in 2007-08, the proportion of clients who were employed either full time or part time increased from 7.5 per cent before support to 13.2 per cent after support (5.2 per cent full time and 8.0 per cent part time). The proportion of clients who were unemployed decreased from 32.1 per cent before support to 31.3 per cent after support. The proportion of clients who were not in the labour force decreased from 60.4 per cent before support to 55.4 per cent after support. These proportions varied across jurisdictions (figure 15.36(b) and table 15A.205).

Figure 15.36 Changes in labour force status of clients who needed assistance to obtain/maintain employment and training before/after SAAP support, 2007-08^a

(a) All SAAP clients



(b) Indigenous SAAP clients



^a Data are for people who requested assistance with obtaining or maintaining employment when entering SAAP services.

Source: SAAP NDCA Client Collection (unpublished); tables 15A.204-205.

Achievement of income on exit

‘Achievement of income on exit’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to enable clients to participate independently in society at the end of their support period (box 15.58).

Box 15.58 Achievement of income on exit

'Achievement of income on exit' is defined as the number of closed support periods for SAAP 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 closed support periods for clients who sought assistance to obtain or maintain a pension or benefit. Data are reported for all SAAP clients, and separately for Indigenous clients.

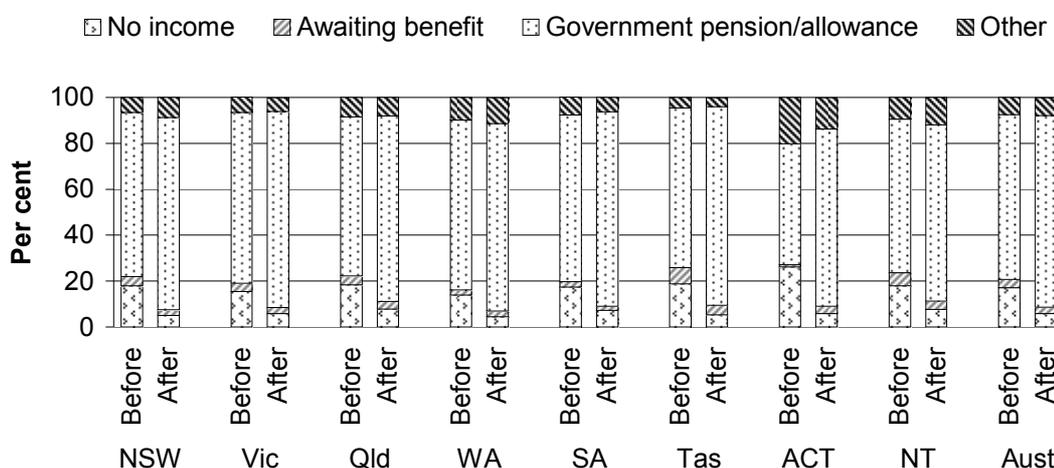
A high or increasing proportion of clients who requested income assistance and exited SAAP with an income source is desirable.

This indicator compares these clients' income status before and after they received SAAP support. 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.

Data reported for this indicator are comparable.

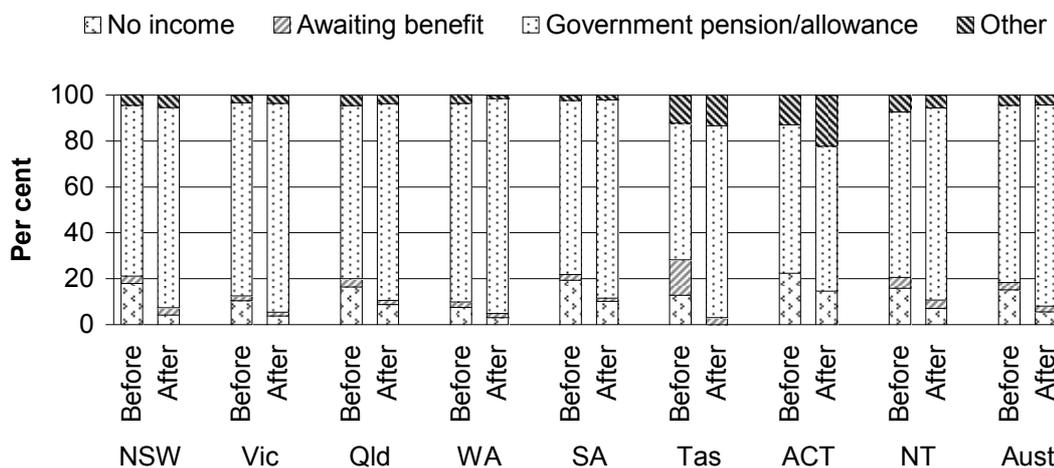
Nationally, in 2007-08 17.1 per cent of SAAP support periods in which clients who requested income assistance did not have income prior to SAAP assistance. After SAAP assistance, the proportion of SAAP support periods in which clients who had requested income assistance and had no income was 5.9 per cent (figure 15.37). The proportion of Indigenous clients who did not have income and requested income assistance also decreased after SAAP assistance (from 15.2 per cent to 5.6 per cent nationally) (figure 15.38). Both before and after SAAP assistance, the income source for the majority of SAAP clients was a government pension/benefit (figures 15.37 and 15.38).

Figure 15.37 Source of income immediately before/after SAAP support of clients who needed assistance to obtain/maintain a pension or benefit, 2007-08



Source: SAAP NDCA Client Collection (unpublished); table 15A.209.

Figure 15.38 Source of income immediately before/after SAAP support of Indigenous clients who needed assistance to obtain/maintain a pension or benefit, 2007-08



Source: SAAP NDCA Client Collection (unpublished); table 15A.210.

Achievement of independent housing on exit

‘Achievement of independent housing on exit’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to enable clients to participate as productive and self-reliant members of society at the end of their support period (box 15.59).

Box 15.59 Achievement of independent housing on exit

'Achievement of independent housing on exit' is defined as the number of closed support periods in which clients who requested assistance with obtaining or maintaining independent housing achieved independent housing, divided by the total number of closed support periods in which clients requested assistance obtaining or maintaining independent housing.

A high or increasing proportion of SAAP closed support periods in which clients achieve independent housing is desirable.

This indicator compares the proportion of clients who were in independent housing before and after they received SAAP support. It 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.

Data reported for this indicator are comparable.

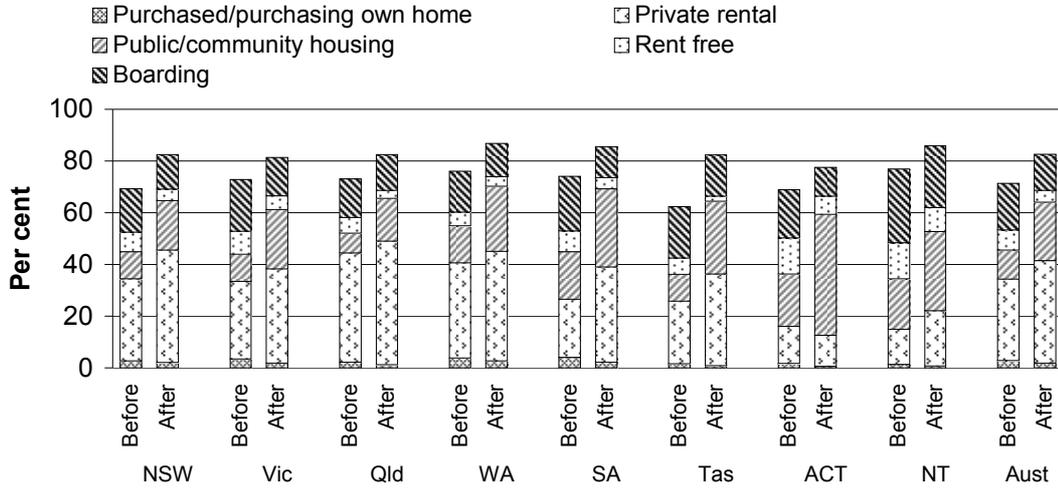
Nationally, 82.6 per cent of closed support periods in which clients requested assistance with obtaining or maintaining independent housing achieved independent housing in 2007-08. This included clients who moved or returned to private rental housing (39.7 per cent), to public or community rental housing (22.6 per cent), and those who were boarding (14.0 per cent) (figure 15.39a).

Among Indigenous clients, on a national basis, 84.4 per cent of clients who requested assistance with obtaining or maintaining independent housing achieved independent housing at the end of a support period in 2007-08, including those who moved or returned to private rental housing (29.9 per cent), to public or community rental housing (32.5 per cent), and who were boarding (17.4 per cent) (figure 15.40a).

Closed support periods in which clients did not achieve independent housing included those who moved to, or continued to live in, short to medium term SAAP accommodation and other forms of non-independent accommodation (figure 15.39b and 15.40b).

Figure 15.39 Accommodation type before and after SAAP support, for clients who requested assistance with obtaining or maintaining housing, all SAAP clients, 2007-08

(a) Independent housing



(b) Non-independent housing

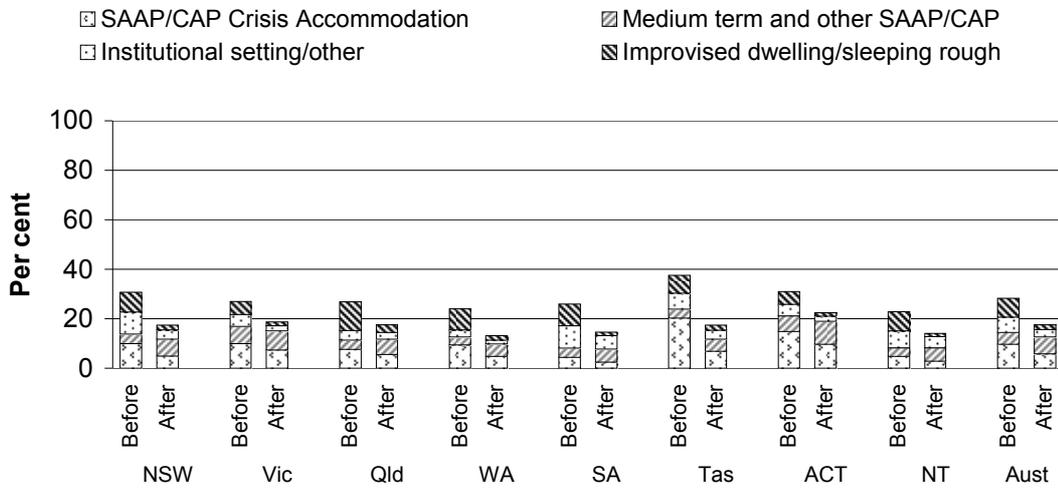
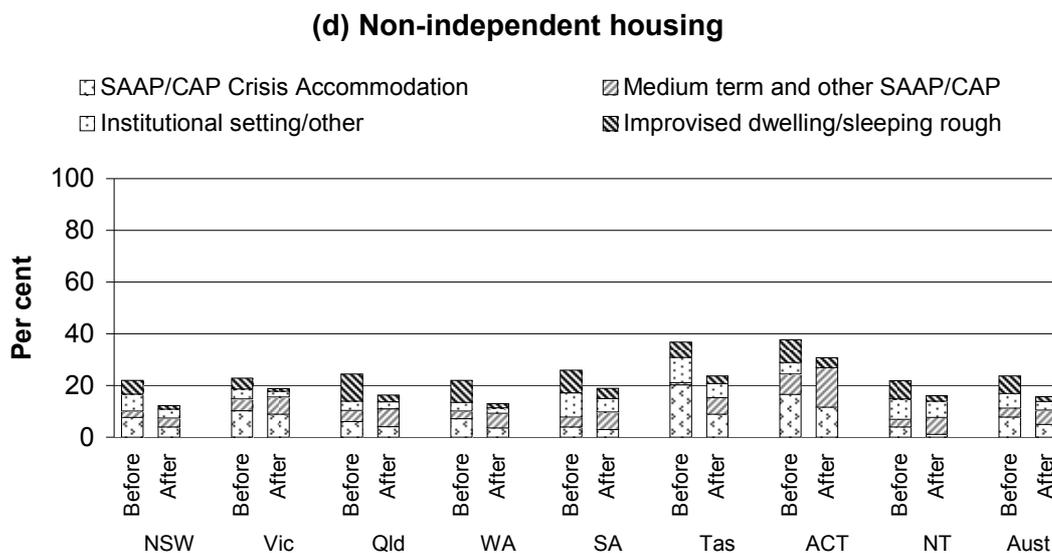
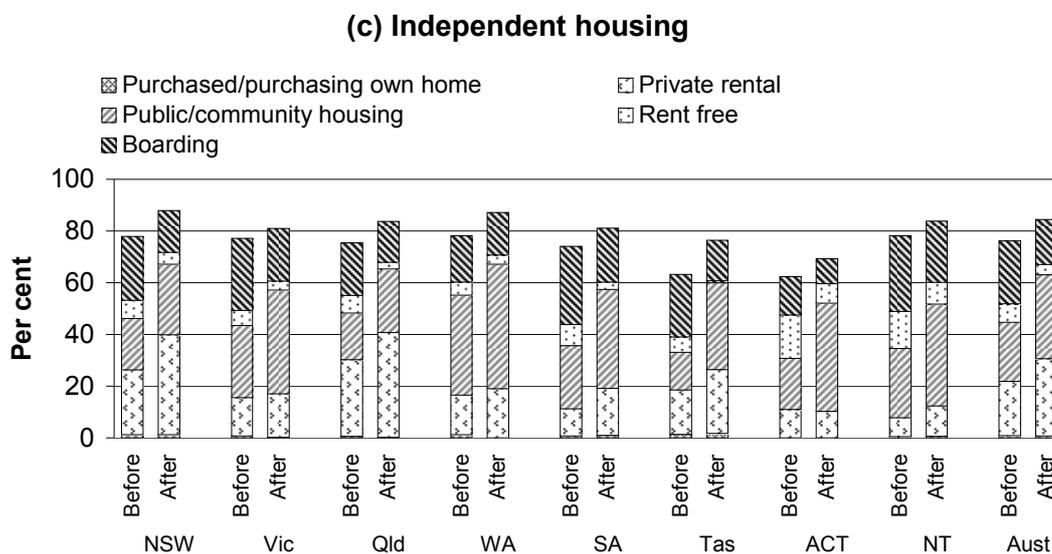


Figure 15.40 Accommodation type before and after SAAP support, for clients who requested assistance with obtaining or maintaining housing, Indigenous SAAP clients, 2007-08



Source: SAAP NDCA Administrative Data and Client Collections (unpublished); tables 15A.202-203.

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 indicator of governments’ objective to enable clients to participate independently in society at the end of their support period (box 15.60).

Box 15.60 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 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 high or increasing proportion of clients not returning to the program within six months is desirable.

Many of the problems and barriers that lead people into homelessness are not easily fixed (FaHCSIA 2008a). Therefore, a number of SAAP clients might access SAAP services several times before their needs are met on a permanent basis (for example, moving from crisis accommodation to medium term accommodation).

Data reported for this indicator are comparable.

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 15.46. The most recent data available are for the period 2004-05, during which 45.4 per cent of clients who exited a SAAP service to independent housing did not access the service again within six months. These data might not be representative of all clients (table 15A.208). Given the potential for data bias, these estimates should be interpreted with care.

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 indicator of governments’ objective to enable clients to participate independently in society at the end of their support period (box 15.61).

Box 15.61 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 defined as the number of clients with only one support period during the year, divided by the total number of SAAP clients. Data are reported for all SAAP clients, and separately for Indigenous clients.

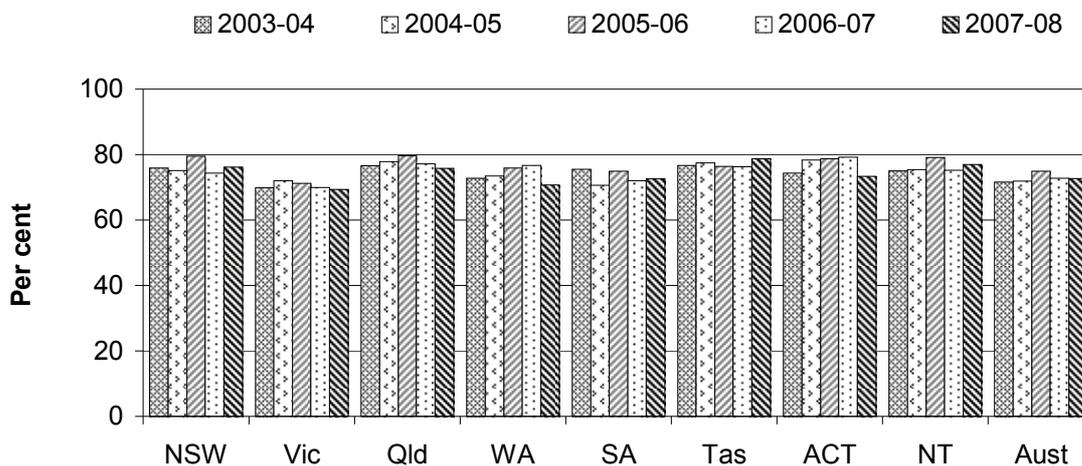
A high or increasing proportion of clients with only one support period during the year is desirable.

Many of the problems and barriers that lead people into homelessness are not easily fixed (FaHCSIA 2008a). Therefore, a number of SAAP clients might access SAAP services several times before their needs are met on a permanent basis (for example, moving from crisis accommodation to medium term accommodation).

Data reported for this indicator are comparable.

Nationally, 72.7 per cent of SAAP clients had only one support period in 2007-08 (figure 15.41). The proportion for Indigenous clients was similar (71.6 per cent) (table 15A.207).

Figure 15.41 Proportion of SAAP clients with only one period of support within a year



Source: SAAP NDCA Client Collection (unpublished); table 15A.206.

Goals achieved on exit from service

‘Goals achieved on exit from service’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to ensure SAAP services meet the needs and expectations of clients (box 15.62).

Box 15.62 Goals achieved on exit from service

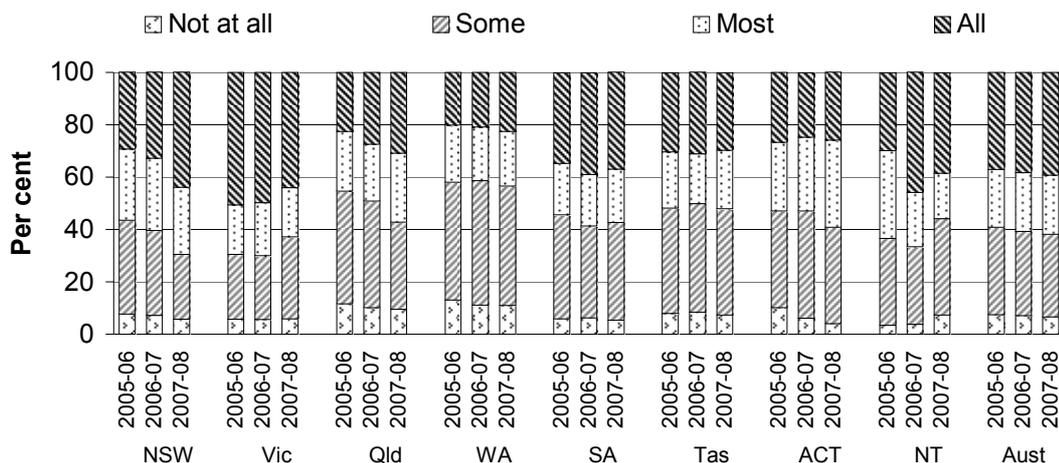
'Goals achieved on exit from service' is defined as the proportion of clients who reported that their case management goals were fully or mostly achieved by the end of their support period, divided by the total number of clients with case management goals in a given period.

A high or increasing proportion of achieved goals is desirable.

Data reported for this indicator are comparable.

Nationally, case management goals were fully or mostly achieved by the end of the support period for 61.8 per cent of clients in 2007-08 (figure 15.42).

Figure 15.42 Goals achieved on exit from SAAP service



Source: SAAP NDCA Client Collection (unpublished); table 15A.211.

15.11 Future directions in supported accommodation and assistance performance reporting

COAG developments

Report on Government Services alignment with National Agreement reporting

It is anticipated that future editions of this chapter will align with applicable National Agreement indicators, including the National Indigenous Reform Agreement. Further alignment between the Report and National Agreement

indicators, and other reporting changes, might result from future developments in National Agreement and National Partnership reporting.

While relevant ministerial groups, data agencies and the Steering Committee are progressing the development of performance indicators for the NAHA and associated partnerships, an interim SAAP collection will continue until end-June 2011.

Outcomes from review of Report on Government Services

COAG agreed to Terms of Reference for a Heads of Treasuries/Senior Officials review of the Report in November 2008, to report to COAG by end-September 2009. The review examined the ongoing usefulness of the Report in the context of new national reporting under the Intergovernmental Agreement on Federal Financial Relations.

No significant changes from this review are reflected in the 2010 Report. Any COAG endorsed recommendations from the review are likely to be implemented for the 2011 Report.

15.12 Jurisdictions' comments

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

Australian Government comments

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National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009–2020

In the 2008-09 Budget, the Australian Government announced they would invest a further \$63 million over four years to improve the safety and wellbeing of children and young people in Australia through the National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009–2020 (the National Framework).

The Council of Australian Governments (COAG) endorsed the National Framework on 30 April 2009. The National Framework is an ambitious, long term, national approach to ensuring the safety and well-being of Australian children. It will be delivered through a series of three-year action plans, with the first action plan containing over 70 actions. Commonwealth, State and Territory governments and the non-government sector worked in partnership to develop the National Framework and will continue to work together throughout its implementation.

COAG charged the Community and Disability Services Ministers' Conference (CDSMC) with the responsibility of implementing and monitoring the National Framework. On 11 September 2009, CDSMC endorsed the National Framework Implementation Plan 2009–2012, which sets out how actions under the National Framework's first action plan will be progressed, how progress will be measured and monitored, and the roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders. For the first three years of the National Framework's operation, CDSMC will present an annual report card to COAG on the progress of the first action plan. These report cards will be publicly released.

Supported Accommodation Assistance Program

The Australian Government provides homelessness assistance through the National Affordable Housing Agreement (NAHA) which subsumed funding under the previous homelessness assistance program, Supported Accommodation Assistance Program from 1 January 2009. The NAHA provides \$6.1 billion Australian government funding to State and Territory governments over five years from 2008-09. The NAHA also includes social housing, assistance to people in the private rental market and home purchase assistance.

The NAHA is supplemented by the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness which provides an additional \$1.1 billion specific homelessness funding by the Australian and State and Territory governments over four years from 2009-10. These agreements and specific Australian government homelessness programs including the Household Organisational Management Expenses (HOME) Advice Program, the National Homelessness Strategy, and the Reconnect Program recognise the service system needs to prevent homelessness where possible and stop people cycling in and out of homelessness. Services need to provide enough joined up support to help people get back on their feet, into secure housing and then to participate in the community, including getting a job.

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New South Wales Government comments

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Child protection and supported placements

The NSW Government published the five-year Action Plan, 'Keep Them Safe: A shared approach to child wellbeing' (2009–2014) on 3 March 2009, in response to the former Justice Wood's Report of the Special Commission of Inquiry into Child Protection Services in NSW (released in November 2008).

Keep Them Safe aims to re-shape the way family and community services are delivered in NSW so that children, young people and their families receive the services they need sooner, before problems escalate. Keep Them Safe includes actions to enhance the universal service system and early intervention services, better protect children at risk, support Aboriginal children and families and strengthen partnerships with non-government organisations in delivering community services.

Juvenile justice

The majority of young people supervised by the Department of Juvenile Justice are on community-based orders and this continues an upward trend. The Department administers youth justice conferences as an alternative to formal court processes and the number of referrals from the police and courts for group conferences is growing. In 2008 the juvenile justice system in NSW experienced a significant and unprecedented increase in young people entering remand. This development along with a rising number of young people sentenced to detention had a significant impact on custodial capacity. In response to this situation a new detention centre was developed and greater capacity was provided to four of the nine existing centres. In addition to increased custodial capacity, the Department has increased bail services to assist young people to attain bail and thus avoid entering custody on remand, or lessen the time spent in remand.

Supported Accommodation Assistance Program

The number of clients, including accompanying children assisted by Supported Accommodation Assistance Program services in NSW has increased by more than 88.7 per cent since 2004–05, rising from 30 050 to 56 700 in 2007–08. This increase is primarily due to changes in reporting practices and the move towards early intervention and post crisis support in SAAP in NSW. As part of its ongoing reform of SAAP, NSW Community Services has continued implementation of funding reforms, of which the key components were:

- results-based accountability
- performance-based contracting focusing on program priorities
- a performance monitoring framework
- evidence-based approaches.

These reforms contributed to the increased number of support periods and clients.

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Victorian Government comments

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Child protection and supported placements

- In 2008–09, the ‘every child every chance’ reform process supported by the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005, has continued. The reforms promote prevention and support services for at-risk children and families, strengthen child protection and out-of-home care services and assist the delivery of culturally appropriate services to Aboriginal children and families.
- As part of these reforms, Child FIRST has been implemented statewide to enhance the prevention and early intervention capacity of the service system. A Best Interests Case Practice Model has been developed and is being implemented across child protection, placement services and family services to further promote and support good practice. Additional funds have been provided to increase the capacity, diversity and quality of out-of-home care services, and to enhance the capacity and responsiveness of child protection and family services.

Juvenile Justice

- In 2008–09, a discussion paper was released for the Vulnerable Youth Framework (VYF). The VYF aims to deliver better outcomes for young Victorians by ensuring the Government’s major policy commitments in this field are implemented with a shared understanding and a consistent approach.
- The Youth Justice Community Support Service is a new initiative to support young people involved in the youth justice system. Many youth justice clients require intensive support and assistance to access employment, education or training, mental health, drug and alcohol, and housing services. Taking an integrated approach, community service organisations have formed partnerships to collectively provide a broad range of services to better meet these needs of youth justice clients and enhance their rehabilitation, economic contribution and social connectedness.

Supported Accommodation Assistance Program

- In 2008–09, Victoria made significant progress in assisting people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness to transition to more stable living arrangements and active participation in the community.
- Victoria commenced statewide implementation of Opening Doors, a framework for a coordinated entry point system designed to provide the basis for a more responsive and less stressful process for people seeking support and accommodation. Victoria also continued to implement the Integrated Response to Family Violence with significant reform and strengthening of the service system.
- The Supported Accommodation Assistance Program was terminated on 31 December 2008. Funding and programs were provided through the National Affordable Housing Agreement from 1 January 2009.

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Queensland Government comments

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Child protection and supported placements

The Queensland Government continued to enhance the child protection system in 2008–09, amalgamating the former Department of Child Safety with the new Department of Communities, creating opportunities to work more effectively with the prevention and early intervention tier of the child protection system. Through a statewide Foster and Kinship Carer recruitment campaign, 524 new carers were recruited. Therapeutic residential services were established in Cairns and Townsville to support young people in care to overcome trauma. Family intervention services supported approximately 1 200 families to help parents care for their children where statutory intervention is required. The Department procured land and obtained capital works and grants for six safe houses and a foster care house in Queensland’s remote Indigenous communities, enabling children requiring out-of-home placement to remain connected to their community, while assessment and consultation are undertaken.

Juvenile justice

Building on the work undertaken in 2007–08, the Queensland Government is targeting the causes of youth offending that will collectively result in strong and lasting positive impacts on offending rates in Queensland. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Youth Justice Strategy is one of these key activities. Major initiatives include the now operational young offender community response service and bail support service in far north Queensland and strengthening family engagement practices and training to improve the cultural competency of youth justice staff. ART (Aggression Replacement Training) and CHART (Changing Habits and Reaching Targets) have been implemented across all youth justice service centres and detention centres. Evaluation of these programs has commenced. The introduction of a risk/needs assessment tool and youth justice quality assurance framework has improved the case management of young people on supervised orders. Service delivery has been further improved with the introduction of an Integrated Case Management System, which is shared across youth justice and child protection services.

Supported Accommodation Assistance Program

In 2008–09, the Queensland Government continued to work in partnership with and fund non-government organisations under the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program. Initiatives under the Responding to Homelessness Strategy continued to operate and expand. A new client intake and assessment process for housing assistance was introduced, allowing clients who identify as homeless to be potentially streamed directly into the very high and high need segments of the housing register. The evaluation of the Responding to Homelessness Strategy has resulted in an increase in the quantum of services, accommodation and support available to homeless people. The demonstrated value and effectiveness of the strategy has provided a platform for development of Queensland’s implementation plan under the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness.

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Western Australian Government comments

Child protection and supported placements

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The Department continued to make progress towards implementing child protection reform projects arising from the Ford Review of the Department for Community Development, released in January 2007.

The Signs of Safety child protection practice framework is used in assessment in both the Department's statutory and child-centred family work and to engage the family, children and relevant agencies in the planning process. Income management was trialled selectively as a child protection measure and as part of the progressive rollout across areas of the State.

On 1 January 2009, the reporting of child sexual abuse became mandatory for teachers, doctors, nurses, midwives and police in Western Australia. This is managed through a centralised intake service.

Key initiatives to improve outcomes for children in the CEO's care include: the implementation of health and education plans; the reform and expansion of out-of-home care services; enhanced partnership with foster carers; and the development of policy on permanency planning which aims to ensure that timely decisions are made about children's long-term stability.

Juvenile justice

The Community and Juvenile Justice division commenced a major realignment of its services in the metropolitan area to improve its focus on youth justice, creating a balance with adult community corrections' issues. The realignment will result in distinct service delivery locations for youth justice services.

Extensive resources were placed into increasing the Department's focus on early intervention and diversionary programs and initiatives to divert young people away from the justice system. This included establishment of regional youth justice services centres in two regions to provide a full range of services, including outreach support, bail and emergency accommodation that focus on all aspects of a young person's life and also offer support to their families.

Supported Accommodation Assistance Program

The fifth Supported Accommodation Assistance Program Multilateral Agreement (SAAP V) ceased on 31 December 2008. Services previously funded under SAAP are now funded under the National Affordable Housing Agreement which commenced on 1 January 2009. In addition, the development of the Western Australian Implementation Plan for the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness (NPA) will provide new support services to prevent and reduce homelessness. The Western Australian Implementation Plan is not about doing more of the same but rather proposes to lever change in how homelessness is responded to in Western Australia by providing a more integrated response to homelessness. The initiatives focus on intervening early, preventing the cycle of homelessness, while addressing the needs of a range of target groups across metropolitan, regional and remote Western Australia.

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South Australian Government comments

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Child protection and supported placements

South Australia's child protection system is integrating child safety within a broader approach of strengthening child, family and community wellbeing. This includes a more focused partnership between Government agencies and the community sector to provide a range of protective, and support services, with increased funding to non-government agencies for targeted early intervention services, intensive placement prevention and reunification services. The demand on the alternative care system continues to grow. There has been a 52 per cent increase in the number of children in alternative care placements from 30 June 2005 to 30 June 2009. Keeping them Safe – In Our Care reforms place emphasis on improving assessment processes, strengthening relative and kinship care placements, implementing 'wrap around' care packages tailored to each child and expanding therapeutic foster care placements for children with complex needs.

Juvenile justice

The To Break the Cycle reform, led by the South Australian Attorney General's Department is taking an all of Government approach to tackling serious offending and preventing early entry of children and young people into the justice system. Emphasis has been placed on strengthening delivery of case management, including intensive case management services for serious repeat offenders and an expansion of home detention services. A Community Protection Panel has been established by the Attorney General as a non-statutory advisory committee to oversee the identification, assessment and intensive case management of serious repeat offenders. South Australia is expanding the range of treatment programs for offenders, particularly for those involved in high speed car crime, drug and alcohol related crime and violent offending.

Supported Accommodation Assistance Program

The 2007–08 data indicate that South Australian Supported Accommodation Assistance Program services continued to achieve very positive results for people who are homeless or at imminent risk of homelessness on most effectiveness and efficiency indicators. In 2007–08, South Australia achieved the second highest rate of a support plan in place for all clients (69.7 per cent compared to a national average of 59.5 per cent); the highest rate of a support plan in place for Indigenous clients (73 per cent compared to the national average of 58.2 per cent); the second lowest recurrent cost per client accessing services; the lowest real recurrent cost per day of support; the highest average accommodation load per day (11.9 compared to the national average of 7.9); and the highest average caseload per day (33.5 compared to the national average of 21.1). These outcomes clarify the positive direction that South Australia has achieved in improved planning and assessment responses.

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Tasmanian Government comments

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Child protection and supported placements

Substantial reforms are being implemented for Tasmania's child protection, family support and out-of-home care (OOHC) services by a dedicated Reform Implementation Unit within Human Services. The Gateway Services and Integrated Family Support Services are being established to support children and families in need via a single point of access within each of the four service delivery areas across the State. Other reforms include the establishment of advisory groups and community partnership teams to strengthen partnerships between government and the community sector. A common assessment framework has been implemented and a resource allocation and 'unit pricing' framework is also being developed to promote consistency and equity across service areas. Reform of OOHC is being scoped and planning is underway to outsource rostered care in July 2010. In addition, a residential practice consultant has been appointed to work with carers to improve standards of care as well as supervise the accreditation of foster carers.

Juvenile justice

Youth justice services within Disability, Child, Youth and Family Services (DCYFS) is focusing on case management practices. Community youth justice services will trial new electronic risk assessment and case management tools and implement a project to improve the case management interface between community and custodial services. A dedicated youth at risk focus within DCYFS, and the Youth at Risk strategy is now undertaking a range of initiatives that will enhance the strategic approach to planning, funding and delivering services for this group of young people. The Review of the Youth Justice Act 1997 has produced a number of papers that are available on the DHHS website at www.dhhs.tas.gov.au. The Project Steering Committee is currently considering the submissions received and the options for change.

Supported Accommodation Assistance Program

During 2008–09, Tasmania worked to provide a seamless transition into the new National Affordable Housing Agreement and related National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness. Alongside the extensive planning leading up to the launch of Tasmania's Homelessness Implementation Plan in June 2009 were the completion of the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program Quality Development Project and the successful negotiation of new funding agreements for the sector. The new Departmental funding agreements introduced by the Office for the Community Sector incorporate a new Quality and Safety Standards Framework, which maintains the emphasis on quality in service delivery, and also have a new Integrated Finance and Performance Framework. ”

Australian Capital Territory Government comments

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Child protection and supported placements

- The Care and Protection provisions of the new Children and Young People Act 2008 commenced on 27 October 2008. Provisions include enhanced powers to assess and respond to children and young people suspected to be at risk of abuse and neglect, a proactive framework for seeking the views and wishes of children and young people, stability proposals in care plans and long term orders, provisions to make prenatal reports and greater capacity to exchange information.
- 2008–09 has also seen a continued focus on improving collaborative service delivery, early intervention and the introduction of a permanency planning framework. Also introduced were Declared Care Teams, which promote coordinated and planned services for children, young people and their families and facilitate the sharing of information among its members if it is in their best interests.

Juvenile justice

- Bimberi Youth Justice Centre commenced operations in late 2008 and is the first human rights compliant juvenile detention centre in Australia. The centre engages young people through a rehabilitative approach, supporting them through programs including: Literacy and Numeracy; Drug and Alcohol Counselling; Indigenous Art; Music and Culture; and Living Skills.
- Legislative changes for ACT Youth Justice recently occurred through the implementation of the Children and Young People Act 2008. These have been reflected in the policies and procedures of ACT Youth Justice.
- ACT Youth Justice utilises a case management approach and continues to develop partnerships with government and non government agencies to increase the opportunities for young people and their access to support services within detention and the community.

Supported Accommodation Assistance Program

- The ACT provides high quality homelessness services, meeting the needs of many clients through reducing unemployment and improving access to sustainable housing including public and community housing.
- The establishment of a Joint Pathways Group has ensured that the sector has responses for people experiencing homelessness at all stages from crisis to independence. The reform of housing and homelessness services in the ACT, which commenced in 2006, has also resulted in significant moves away from a system where clients were required to change services or accommodation sites as their needs change. This work, undertaken in partnership with community agencies, consolidates the movement of Supported Accommodation Assistance Program to a client focussed, responsive approach, in which the availability of accommodation no longer determines the availability and nature of support provided.

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Northern Territory Government comments

Child Protection and supported placements

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The majority of provisions in the new Care and Protection of Children Act 2007 commenced operation on 8 December 2008, replacing the former Community Welfare Act 1983.

Features of the new Act include new principles and overriding objects for protecting children, new definitions of what constitutes abuse and neglect, new provisions to enable families to better care for their children (for example, family group conferencing), a screening system for child related employment, establishment of a Children's Commissioner to investigate complaints and oversight administration of the Act, enhanced regulation of children's services, establishment of a Child Deaths Review and Prevention Committee and additional support for young people leaving care. Day to day responsibility for administration of the Act passes to the Chief Executive of the Department of Health and Families although the Minister retains overall responsibility.

A quality auditing system was introduced in 2008 to measure compliance with key policy and legislative standards and a care and protection quality subcommittee was created in 2009 to guide quality practice and governance.

Juvenile justice services

In July 2008 the Northern Territory Government announced the introduction of the Youth Justice Strategy. The strategy is a framework for working with young people up to 18 years of age who are involved in anti-social, criminal or disruptive behaviour. As part of the strategy, amendments were made to Part 6A of the Youth Justice Act which relate to "responsible care and supervision within the family". This Act allows for certain Government agencies to enter into Family Responsibility Agreements and Family Responsibility Orders with families who are struggling with their child's behaviour, where it can be shown that the actions and/or behaviour of the family may have contributed to that behaviour.

Family support centres have been established in both Darwin and Alice Springs to implement the family responsibility amendments and provide support to families and young people.

Supported Accommodation Assistance Program

Transition arrangements for the National Affordable Housing Agreement and the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness were put in place with a particular focus on initiatives to support young people and rough sleepers. Significant housing stress continues to be a feature in the Northern Territory.

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15.13 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 non-government organisations (NGO) 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 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 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
- 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 for children

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

not on an order

- 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
- specialist child-focused therapeutic support.

Activity Group 6 (pathways)

Seeking an order

Activities that are typically associated with seeking orders (court orders or voluntary/administrative orders) including:

- preparing applications for the order
- preparing reports for the court
- obtaining assessment reports to submit to the court
- informing parties to the court proceedings, including parents, the child, and lawyers
- informing and briefing legal counsel or internal court groups
- going through internal pre-court review processes
- attending court
- conducting family group conferences.

Activity Group 7 (pathways)

Provision of protective intervention, support and coordination services for children on an order

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

- 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
- meeting any specific requirements of any court order
- 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
- reporting back to court
- long term cases involving out-of-home care.

Activity Group 8 (pathways)

Provision of out-of-home care services

Activities that are typically associated with provision of out-of-home care services including:

- finding suitable placement(s) for the child
- assisting the child or young person to maintain contact with his/her family
- in some cases, staff payments for recruiting and training carers
- assessing suitability of potential kinship carers
- assisting the child or young person to maintain contact with their family
- working to return the child home
- assisting the child or young person as they prepare to leave care as the end of the order approaches.

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.

	<p>Care and protection orders are categorised as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • finalised guardianship and finalised custody orders sought through a court • third party parental responsibility orders • 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. <p>Children are counted only once, even if they are on more than one care and protection order.</p>
Child	A person aged 0–17 years.
Child at risk	A child for whom no abuse or neglect can be substantiated but 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 departments responsible for child protection 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 were 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.
Dealt with by other means	A notification that is responded to by means other than an investigation, such as the provision of advice or referral to services.
Exited out-of-home care	Where a child does not return to care within two months.
Family based care	Home-based care (see 'placement types').
Family group homes	Residential child care single dwelling establishments that have as their main purpose the provision of substitute care to children. They are typically run like family homes, with a limited number of children who eat together as a family group and are cared for around the clock by resident substitute parents.
Foster care	Care of a child who is living apart from his or her natural or adoptive parents in a private household, by one or more adults who act as 'foster parents' and are paid a regular allowance by a government authority or non-government organisation for the child's support. The authorised department or non-government organisation provides continuing supervision or support while the child remains in the care of foster parents.
Foster parent	Any person (or such a person's spouse) who is being paid a foster allowance by a government or non-government organisation for the care of a child (excluding children in family group homes).
Guardian	Any person who has the legal and ongoing care and responsibility for the protection of a child.
Indigenous person	Person of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent who identifies as being an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and is accepted as such by the community with which he or she is associated. If Indigenous status is unknown, then a person is considered to be

	non-Indigenous.
Investigation	An investigation of child abuse and neglect that involves identifying harm or risk of harm to the child, determining an outcome and assessing protective needs. It includes the interviewing or sighting of the subject child where practicable.
Investigation finalised	Where an investigation is completed and an outcome of 'substantiated' or 'not substantiated' is recorded by 31 August.
Investigation in process	Where an investigation is commenced but an outcome is not recorded by 31 August.
Investigation closed – no outcome possible	Where an investigation is commenced but is not able to be finalised in order to reach the outcome of 'substantiated' or 'not substantiated'. These files would be closed for administrative purposes. This may happen in instances where the family have relocated.
Length of time in continuous out-of-home care	The length of time for which a child is in out-of-home care on a continuous basis. A return home of less than seven days is not considered to break the continuity of placement.
Non-respite care	Out-of-home care for children for child protection reasons.
Notification	Contact with an authorised department by persons or other bodies making allegations of child abuse or neglect, or harm to a child. Notifications can be counted 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.
Other relative	A grandparent, aunt, uncle or cousin, whether the relationship is half, full, step or through adoption, and can be traced through or to a person whose parents were not married to each other at the time of the child's birth. This category includes members of Aboriginal communities who are accepted by that community as being related to the child.
Out-of-home care	Overnight care, including placement with relatives (other than parents) where the government makes a financial payment. Includes care of children in legal and voluntary placements (that is, children on and not on a legal order) but excludes placements made in disability services, psychiatric services, juvenile justice facilities and overnight child care services.
Placement types	Four main categories: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • residential 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) • non-residential care (placement in the home of a carer who is reimbursed for expenses for the care of the child). The three subcategories of non-residential care are foster care/community care, relative/kinship care and other • independent living (including private board) • other (including unknown).
Relatives/kin	Family members other than parents, or a person well known to the child and/or family (based on an existing relationship).
Respite care	Out-of-home care on a temporary basis for reasons other than child protection — for example, when parents are ill. Excludes emergency care provided to children who are removed from their homes for protective reasons.

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

The proportion of children in out-of-home care who are the subject of a child protection substantiation, where the person believed responsible for the child abuse, neglect or harm is living in the household (or was a worker in a residential care facility).

**Stability
of placement**

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:

- a change in the placement type — for example, from a home-based to a facility-based placement
- within placement type, a change in venue or a change from one home-based placement to a different home-based placement.

A particular placement is counted only once, so a return to a previous placement is another placement.

Substantiation

Notification for which an investigation concludes there is reasonable cause to believe that the child has been, is being or is likely to be abused, neglected or otherwise harmed. It does not necessarily require sufficient evidence for a successful prosecution and does not imply that treatment or case management is, or is to be, provided.

Juvenile justice services

**Juvenile justice
centre**

A place administered and operated by a juvenile justice department, where young people are detained whilst under the supervision of the relevant juvenile justice department on a remand or sentenced detention episode.

**Juvenile justice
department**

Refers to those departments in each State and Territory that are responsible for juvenile justice matters.

Supervision period

A period of time during which a young person is continuously under juvenile justice supervision of one type or another. A supervision period is made up of one or more contiguous episodes.

Police caution

Refers to when a police officer administers a caution to the child instead of bringing the child before a court for the offence.

**Pre-sentence
community**

Pre-sentence arrangements where the juvenile justice department is responsible for the case management or supervision of a young person (such as supervised or conditional bail where the juvenile justice department is involved with monitoring or supervising a young person).

**Pre-sentence
detention**

Remanded or held in a juvenile justice centre or police watch house prior to appearing in court or to being sentenced.

**Sentenced
community-based
supervision**

Includes probation, recognisance and community service orders which are supervised or case managed by the juvenile justice department. May be supervision with or without additional mandated requirements, requiring some form of obligation or additional element that a young person is required to meet. This obligation could be community work such as in a community service order, a developmental activity or program attendance. The juvenile justice department may or may not directly supervise any additional

Youth justice conference / group conference

mandated requirements, but remains responsible for the overall case management of a young person.

A youth justice conference is a facilitated meeting resulting in a formal agreement to repair the harm caused by the offence. Participants can include the victim, offender, convenor, police and other key stakeholders. Referrals may be initiated by the police or the courts.

Supported accommodation and assistance services

Accommodation

Crisis or short term accommodation, medium term to long term accommodation, and other SAAP funded accommodation (which comprises accommodation at hostels, motels and hotels, accommodation in caravans, community placements and other SAAP funded arrangements).

Accommodation load (of agencies)

The number of accommodation days divided by the number of days for which the agency is operational during the reporting period, where the number of accommodation days equals the sum of accommodation days for all clients of an agency who are supported during the reporting period. The average accommodation load is the mean value of all agencies' accommodation loads. Support periods without valid accommodation dates are assigned the interquartile modal duration of accommodation for agencies of the same service delivery model in the same jurisdiction.

Agency

The body or establishment with which the State or Territory government or its representative agrees to provide a SAAP service. The legal entity has to be incorporated. Funding from the State or Territory government could be allocated directly (that is, from the government department) or indirectly (that is, from the auspice of the agency). The SAAP service could be provided at the agency's location or through an outlet at a different location.

Caseload (of agencies)

The number of support days (the sum of support days for all clients of the agency who are supported during the reporting period) divided by the number of days for which the agency is operational during the reporting period. The average caseload is the mean value of all agencies' caseloads. Support periods without valid support dates are assigned the interquartile modal duration of support for agencies of the same service delivery model in the same jurisdiction.

Client (SAAP)

A person who is accommodated by a SAAP agency, or enters into an ongoing support relationship with a SAAP agency, or receives support or assistance from a SAAP agency which entails generally 1 hour or more of a worker's time.

Crisis or short term supported accommodation

Supported accommodation for periods of generally not more than three months (short term), and for persons needing immediate short term accommodation (crisis).

Cross target/multiple/general services

SAAP services targeted at more than one primary client group category — for example, SAAP services for single persons regardless of their gender.

Day support

Support provided only on a walk-in basis — for example, an agency that provides a drop-in centre, showering facilities and a meals service at the location of the SAAP agency.

Homeless person	<p>A person who does not have access to safe, secure and adequate housing. A person is considered to not have such access if the only housing to which he or she has access:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is damaged, or is likely to damage, the person's health • threatens the person's safety • marginalises the person by failing to provide access to adequate personal amenities or the economic and social supports that a home normally affords • places the person in circumstances that threaten or adversely affect the adequacy, safety, security and affordability of that housing • is of unsecured tenure. <p>A person is also considered homeless if living in accommodation provided by a SAAP agency or some other form of emergency accommodation.</p>
Indigenous person	<p>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.</p>
Medium term to long term supported accommodation	<p>Supported accommodation for periods over three months. Medium term is around three to six months and long term is longer than six months.</p>
Multiple service delivery model	<p>SAAP agencies that use more than one service delivery model to provide SAAP services — for example, crisis or short term accommodation and support, as well as day support (that is, the provision of meals).</p>
Non-English speaking background services	<p>Services that are targeted at persons whose first language is not English.</p>
One-off assistance	<p>Assistance provided to a person who is not a client, such as the provision of a meal, a shower, transport, money, clothing, telephone advice, information or a referral.</p>
Ongoing support period	<p>A support period for which, at the end of the reporting period, no support end date and no after-support information are provided.</p>
Outlet	<p>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).</p>
Outreach support services	<p>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'.</p>
Providers	<p>Agencies that supply support and accommodation services.</p>
Real expenditure	<p>Actual expenditure adjusted for changes in prices. Adjustments are made using the GDP(E) price deflator and expressed in terms of final year prices.</p>
Recurrent funding	<p>Funding provided by the Australian, State and Territory governments to cover operating costs, salaries and rent.</p>

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

Unmet demand

client group level) for training, equipment and other administration costs.

Women escaping domestic violence services

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.

Youth/young people services

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

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

15.14 Attachment tables

Attachment tables are identified in references throughout this chapter by an ‘15A’ suffix (for example, table 15A.3 is table 3). Attachment tables are provided on the CD-ROM enclosed with the Report and on the Review website (www.pc.gov.au/gsp). Users without access to the CD-ROM or the website can contact the Secretariat to obtain the attachment tables (see contact details on the inside front cover of the Report).

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