# 18 Housing

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This chapter reports on the performance of governments in providing social housing services.

Further information on the Report on Government Services including other reported service areas, the glossary and list of abbreviations is available at www.pc.gov.au/rogs/2018.

## 18.1 Profile of social housing assistance

### Service overview

Social housing is subsidised rental housing provided by not-for-profit, non‑government or government organisations to assist people who are unable to access suitable accommodation in the private rental market. Four forms of social housing are reported in this chapter (box 18.1).

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| Box 18.1 Forms of social housing |
| * *Public housing*: dwellings owned (or leased) and managed by State and Territory housing authorities. It is generally accessed by people on low incomes and/or those with special needs, and aims to provide a choice of housing location, physical type and management arrangements. * *State owned and managed Indigenous housing (SOMIH)*: dwellings owned and managed by State and Territory housing authorities that are allocated only to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tenants, including dwellings managed by government Indigenous housing agencies. * *Community housing*: rental housing provided to low–to–moderate income and/or special needs households, managed by community‑based organisations that lease properties from government or have received a capital or recurrent subsidy from government. Community housing organisations typically receive some form of government assistance, such as direct funding or the provision of land and property, but a number of community housing organisations are entirely self‑funded. Section 18.4 provides further information on different models of community housing*.* * *Indigenous community housing (ICH):* dwellings owned or leased and managed by ICH organisations and community councils. ICH models vary across jurisdictions and can also include dwellings funded, managed or registered by government. ICH organisations include community organisations such as resource agencies and land councils.   *Crisis and transitional housing* is another form of social housing, but is not able to be separately identified in this Report. Some crisis and transitional housing may be indirectly reported through the forms of social housing that are reported. |
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### Roles and responsibilities

Social housing is funded and delivered under the National Affordable Housing Agreement (NAHA)[[1]](#footnote-1) and related Partnership Agreements between the Australian Government and State and Territory governments[[2]](#footnote-2).

State and Territory governments have primary responsibility for delivering social housing services either directly through public housing and SOMIH or through funding community housing providers. ICH is generally managed by ICH organisations (although some ICH dwellings are managed by State and Territory housing authorities). State and Territory governments assumed responsibility for administering ICH in urban and regional areas, however arrangements varied across jurisdictions.

### Funding

State and Territory government net recurrent expenditure on social housing was $3.9 billion in 2016‑17, an increase in real terms from $3.8 billion in 2015‑16 (table 18.1). In 2016‑17, this expenditure included $3.0 billion for public housing and $114.2 million for SOMIH (table 18A.1).

Australian Government funding for services under the NAHA was $1.7 billion in 2016‑17 (see table GA.1 in the Housing and Homelessness Sector Overview) and is included in total State and Territory government net recurrent expenditure for housing and homelessness services.

State and Territory government capital (non-recurrent) expenditure for social housing was $1.3 billion in 2016‑17 (table 18A.1).

| Table 18.1 State and Territory government net recurrent expenditure on social housing (2016-17 dollars) ($million)**a** |
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| a See table 18A.1 for detailed footnotes and caveats. |
| *Source*: State and Territory governments (unpublished); tables 18A.1 and 2A.49. |
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### Size and scope

As at 30 June 2017, nationally there were a total of 395 691 households and 417 736 social housing dwellings (excluding ICH) (tables 18A.3–4)[[3]](#footnote-3), comprising:

* 310 483 households and 319 913 public housing dwellings
* 9574 households and 14 921 SOMIH dwellings3 — in 2017, SOMIH operated in NSW, Queensland, SA, Tasmania and the NT
* 75 634 households and 82 902 community housing tenancy rental units.

In addition, as at 30 June 2016 (latest available data), there were 13 177 households and 15 461 permanent ICH dwellings managed by government funded ICH organisations (tables 18A.3 and 18A.8).

While the number of public housing households has decreased over the last decade (331 136 in 2008 to 310 483 in 2017), there has been an increase in the number of households in community housing, from 35 043 to 75 634 (table 18A.4). This in part reflects transfer of some public housing stock (management and/or title) to the community housing sector (table 18A.2), in line with government policy to expand the role of community housing in the provision of affordable housing. Community housing organisations are working in partnership with the Australian, State and Territory governments, and the private sector, to increase the supply of affordable housing — many new social housing dwellings are or will be owned or managed by community housing organisations.

Some forms of community housing also allow tenants to participate in the management of their housing. Notwithstanding their common objectives, community housing programs vary within and across jurisdictions in their administration and the types of accommodation they provide. See section 18.4 for details on the models of community housing.

### Diversity of State and Territory government social housing

While State and Territory governments have similar broad objectives for providing social housing, the emphasis each places on an individual objective differs depending on historical precedents and processes for interaction with community sector providers. Private housing markets also vary across jurisdictions. Accordingly, policy responses and associated forms of assistance vary across jurisdictions. It is important to consider the differing levels and types of assistance provided in each State and Territory, their differing urban, regional and remote area concentrations (tables 18A.5–7), differences in eligibility criteria for the different assistance types and factors affecting waiting lists, when analysing performance information. Some information on the context for public housing, SOMIH and community housing is provided in tables 18A.48–50.

#### Eligibility criteria for access to social housing

Eligibility criteria for social housing vary between social housing types and between jurisdictions.

* Public housing — in most cases, jurisdictions require that applicants are Australian citizens or permanent residents and do not own or partially own residential property. All jurisdictions, except Victoria, require eligible applicants to reside in the respective State or Territory. Most jurisdictions provide security of tenure after an initial probationary period and most jurisdictions have periodic reviews of eligibility (table 18A.48).
* SOMIH — criteria are generally consistent with those for public housing once an applicant has been confirmed as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. Terms of tenure for SOMIH are the same as those for public housing in most jurisdictions (table 18A.49).
* Community housing — criteria are generally consistent with those for public housing in each jurisdiction (table 18A.50).

#### Factors affecting waiting lists

State and Territory governments prioritise access to social housing in ways that generally reflect the urgent need to address homelessness and applicants’ inability to access appropriate private market accommodation. States and territories other than Victoria have adopted social housing waiting lists that are integrated across public housing, SOMIH (where applicable) and community housing.

Waiting times for social housing are impacted by the availability of suitable dwellings. Nationally at 30 June 2017, the proportion of rental stock occupied was 97.1 per cent for public housing, 96.8 per cent for SOMIH, and 95.0 per cent for community housing (tables 18A.9–11) — in 2016, 94.6 per cent of total ICH rental stock was occupied (table 18A.12). Occupancy rates are influenced by tenancy turnover as well as by housing supply and demand — dwellings that have, for example, reached the end of their useful life may require major redevelopment or replacement before being allocated to a new household.

‘Turnaround time’ is the number of days taken to allocate a newly vacated dwelling (that is fit for occupation) to a new household. The average turnaround time for vacant public housing and SOMIH stock varied within and across jurisdictions and over time (tables 18A.13–14) — noting that data are not comparable or complete across jurisdictions.

## 18.2 Framework of performance indicators

The framework of performance indicators reflects governments’ objectives for social housing delivered under the NAHA (box 18.2).

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| Box 18.2 Objectives for social housing |
| The social housing services system aims to provide low income people who do not have alternative suitable housing options with access to social housing assistance that supports their wellbeing and contributes to their social and economic participation. Some forms of social housing aim specifically to contribute to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community wellbeing through improved housing outcomes, particularly in remote areas and discrete communities. The social housing services system seeks to achieve these aims through the provision of services that are:   * timely and affordable * safe * appropriate, meeting the needs of individual households * high quality * sustainable.   Governments aim for social housing services to meet these objectives in an equitable and efficient manner. |
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The performance indicator framework provides information on equity, efficiency and effectiveness, and distinguishes the outputs and outcomes of social housing services (figure 18.1).

The performance indicator framework shows which data are comparable and complete   
in the 2018 Report. For data that are not considered directly comparable, text includes relevant caveats and supporting commentary. Chapter 1 discusses data comparability, data completeness and information on data quality from a Report‑wide perspective. In addition to section 18.1, the Report’s statistical context chapter (chapter 2) contains data that may assist in interpreting the performance indicators presented in this chapter. Chapters 1 and 2 are available from the website at www.pc.gov.au/rogs/2018.

Improvements to performance reporting for social housing services are ongoing and include identifying data sources to fill gaps in reporting for performance indicators and measures, and improving the comparability and completeness of data.

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| Figure 18.1 Social housing performance indicator framework |
| More details can be found within the text surrounding this image. |
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## 18.3 Key performance indicator results

Different delivery contexts, locations and types of clients can affect the equity, effectiveness and efficiency of social housing services.

### Outputs

Outputs are the services delivered (while outcomes are the impact of these services on the status of an individual or group) (see chapter 1). Output information is also critical for equitable, efficient and effective management of government services.

### Equity

#### Access — Priority access to those in greatest need

‘Priority access to those in greatest need’ is a proxy indicator of governments’ objective to provide services in an equitable manner (box 18.3).

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| Box 18.3 Priority access to those in greatest need |
| ‘Priority access to those in greatest need’ is defined as the proportion of new housing allocations that were to households in greatest need.  Greatest need households are defined as households that at the time of allocation are homeless, in housing inappropriate to their needs, in housing that is adversely affecting their health or placing their life and safety at risk, or, have very high rental housing costs.  This is a partial proxy indicator as information is not provided about the proportion of households on the waiting list that are ‘greatest need’ households. A high or increasing proportion, particularly for short timeframes, may indicate a high degree of access for those households in greatest need.  Data for this measure are reported for public housing, SOMIH and community housing and are:   * comparable (subject to caveats) within some jurisdictions over time but are not comparable across jurisdictions or over time for other jurisdictions (see caveats in attachment tables for specific jurisdictions) * not comparable across public housing, SOMIH and community housing * complete for public housing for the current reporting period (subject to caveats). All required 2016‑17 data are available for all jurisdictions * incomplete for SOMIH and community housing for the current reporting period. All required 2016‑17 data are not available for the NT. |
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Nationally in 2016‑17, 74.3 per cent of new public housing allocations, 58.8 per cent of new SOMIH allocations and 86.4 per cent of new community housing allocations were to those households in greatest need (figure 18.2).

Of all households allocated public housing within three months, 89.4 per cent were households in greatest need (table 18A.15). For households allocated SOMIH within three months, this proportion was 78.5 per cent (table 18A.16). Data for other timeframes are in tables 18A.15–16.

Households that are in greatest need are more likely to have members with special needs, and there may be overlap between special needs and greatest need groups (AIHW 2017).

| Figure 18.2 Proportion of new allocations to households in greatest need**a** |
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| | **Public housing**  **SOMIH**b  **Community housing**c  Legend to Figure 18.2  Green = 2012-13 to 2015-16 Blue = 2016-17  More details can be found within the text surrounding this image. | | --- | |
| a See box 18.3 and tables 18A.15–17 for detailed definitions, footnotes and caveats. b Data are not available for Tasmania. The SOMIH program in the NT commenced reporting in 2016‑17, but these data are not yet available. c Data are not available for the NT. |
| *Source*: AIHW (unpublished) National Housing Assistance Data Repository; tables 18A.15–17. |
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#### Access — Special needs

Access of ‘special needs’ groups to social housing is an indicator of governments’ objective to provide services in an equitable manner (box 18.4).

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| Box 18.4 Special needs |
| ‘Special needs’ is defined as the proportion of new tenancies allocated to households with special needs.  Special needs households are defined as households that at the time of allocation have:   * for public housing and community housing — a household member with disability, a main tenant aged 24 years or under, a main tenant aged 75 years or over, and/or satisfy the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander household definition * for SOMIH — a household member with disability, a principal tenant aged 24 years or under and/or a principal tenant aged 50 years or over.   The proportion of new tenancies with special needs is reported as a proxy for measuring all households with special needs. A high or increasing proportion indicates high or increasing access by special needs households.  Data for this measure are reported for public housing, SOMIH and community housing and are:   * comparable (subject to caveats) within some jurisdictions over time but are not comparable across jurisdictions or over time for other jurisdictions (see caveats in attachment tables for specific jurisdictions) * not comparable across public housing, SOMIH and community housing * complete for public housing for the current reporting period (subject to caveats). All required 2016‑17 data are available for all jurisdictions providing the service * incomplete for SOMIH and community housing for the current reporting period. All required 2016‑17 data are not available for the NT. |
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The proportion of new housing tenancies allocated to households with special needs varies across the forms of social housing, across jurisdictions and over time.

Nationally in 2016‑17, the proportion of new tenancies allocated to households with special needs was 61.5 per cent for public housing, 45.9 per cent for SOMIH and 56.2 per cent for community housing (figure 18.3).

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| Figure 18.3 New tenancies allocated to households with special needs**a, b** |
| |  | | --- | | **Public housing SOMIH  Community housing**  Legend to figure 18.3   Green = 2012-13 to 2015-16 Blue = 2016-17  More details can be found within the text surrounding this image. | |
| a See box 18.4 and tables 18A.18–20 for detailed definitions, footnotes and caveats. b The SOMIH program in the NT commenced reporting in 2016‑17, but these data are not yet available. Community housing data are not available for the NT. |
| *Source*: AIHW (unpublished) National Housing Assistance Data Repository;tables18A.18–20. |
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### Effectiveness

#### Access — Affordability

‘Affordability’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to provide services that are affordable (box 18.5).

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| Box 18.5 Affordability |
| ‘Affordability’ is defined as the financial capacity of low income households in social housing to meet rental costs. It is measured as the proportion of low income social housing households in rental stress, where:   * ‘rental stress’ is defined as spending more than 30 per cent of gross household income (excluding CRA) on rent * low income households are defined as those in the bottom 40 per cent of equivalised gross household income (see section 18.4 for further detail). Low income households are more likely to be adversely affected by relatively high housing costs than households with higher disposable incomes (Yates and Gabriel 2006; Yates and Milligan 2007).   A low or decreasing proportion of social housing households spending more than 30 per cent of their income on rent implies that social housing is more affordable.  Data for this measure are reported for public housing, SOMIH and community housing and are:   * comparable (subject to caveats) across jurisdictions * not comparable across public housing, SOMIH and community housing * complete for public housing for the current reporting period (subject to caveats). All required 30 June 2017 data are available for all jurisdictions * incomplete for the current reporting period for SOMIH and community housing. All required 30 June 2017 data are not available for the NT. |
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At 30 June 2017, the majority of all households in social housing were low income households. Of those in:

* public housing — 97.5 per cent were low income households, of which 0.5 per cent were in rental stress
* SOMIH — 94.4 per cent were low income households, of which 2.4 per cent were in rental stress
* community housing — 94.2 per cent were low income households, of which 7.2 per cent were in rental stress (table 18.2 and tables 18A.21–24).

Further information on the proportion of income paid in rent by low income households is provided in tables 18A.22–24.

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| Table 18.2 Proportion of low income households in social housing spending more than 30 per cent of their gross income on rent, at 30 June (per cent)**a** |
| |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | |  | NSW | Vic | Qld | WA | SA | Tas | ACT | NT | Aust/ Total | | Public housing | | | | | | | | | | | 2017 | 1.0 | 0.5 | – | 0.4 | – | 0.2 | 0.2 | 3.0 | 0.5 | | 2016 | 0.7 | 0.4 | – | 2.9 | – | 0.1 | 0.3 | 3.5 | 0.7 | | 2015 | 0.7 | 0.4 | – | 1.5 | – | 0.1 | 0.1 | 6.6 | 0.6 | | 2014 | 0.4 | 0.3 | 0.1 | 1.4 | – | 0.1 | 0.1 | 6.9 | 0.5 | | 2013 | 0.2 | 0.4 | 0.2 | 1.5 | – | 0.1 | 0.4 | 6.9 | 0.5 | | *SOMIH* | | | | | | | | | | | 2017 | 5.8 | .. | 0.1 | .. | – | 0.6 | .. | na | 2.4 | | 2016 | 0.3 | .. | 0.1 | .. | – | – | .. | .. | 0.2 | | 2015 | 0.6 | .. | – | .. | – | – | .. | .. | 0.3 | | 2014 | 0.5 | .. | 0.5 | .. | – | – | .. | .. | 0.4 | | 2013 | 0.5 | .. | 0.8 | .. | – | – | .. | .. | 0.5 | | *Community housing* | | | | | | | | | | | 2017 | 5.8 | 0.5 | 29.2 | 4.8 | 6.0 | 14.2 | 10.4 | na | 7.2 | | 2016 | 3.1 | – | 9.0 | 3.0 | 5.5 | 20.7 | 5.1 | na | 4.3 | | 2015 | 7.6 | 0.1 | na | 17.1 | 8.9 | 27.6 | 0.4 | na | 8.6 | | 2014 | 10.4 | 4.9 | na | 10.4 | 3.7 | 23.0 | – | na | 9.0 | | 2013 | 8.4 | 9.5 | na | 30.4 | 6.5 | 27.1 | 0.6 | na | 9.8 | |
| a See box 18.5 and tables 18A.22–24 for detailed definitions, footnotes and caveats. **na** Not available.  .. Not applicable. – Nil or rounded to zero. |
| *Source*:AIHW (unpublished) National Housing Assistance Data Repository*;* tables 18A.22–24. |
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Rental stress is mitigated through rental subsidies provided to eligible low income social housing households by State and Territory governments. For public housing and SOMIH, rents are generally set at estimated market rates and subsidised for eligible households so that rental costs do not exceed a set proportion of assessable household income (25 per cent in most states and territories) (tables 18A.48–50).

#### Wait times

‘Wait times’ is an indicator of government’s objective to provide services that are timely (box 18.6).

| Box 18.6 Wait times |
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| ‘Wait times’ is defined as the proportion of households on social housing wait lists who received a housing allocation in the previous 12 months, by their time spent on the wait list.  A high or increasing percentage who spent less time on the wait list is desirable.  Data are not yet available for reporting against this indicator. |
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#### Appropriateness — Match of dwelling to household size

‘Match of dwelling to household size’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to provide services that are appropriate, meeting the needs of individual households (box 18.7).

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| Box 18.7 Match of dwelling to household size |
| ‘Match of dwelling to household size’ is defined as the proportion of households that are overcrowded.  Overcrowding is defined and measured using the Canadian National Occupancy Standard (CNOS) with households deemed to be overcrowded if one or more additional bedrooms are required to meet the standard (see section 18.4 for CNOS definition). State and Territory housing authorities’ bedroom entitlement policies may differ from the CNOS.  The CNOS requires knowledge of the age, sex and relationship status of all tenants within a household, as well as the number of bedrooms. Households for which complete information is not available are excluded from data for this measure.  Low or decreasing proportions of households in social housing living in overcrowded conditions is desirable.  Data for this measure are reported for public housing, SOMIH, community housing and ICH and are:   * not comparable across jurisdictions * not comparable across public housing, SOMIH, community housing and ICH * complete for public housing and for SOMIH for the current reporting period (subject to caveats). All required 30 June 2017 data are available for all jurisdictions providing the service * incomplete for community housing (all required 30 June 2017 data were not available for the NT) or ICH (all required 30 June 2016 data were not available for NSW, Tasmania and the NT). |
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The proportion of overcrowded households varied across social housing programs and across jurisdictions. At 30 June 2017:

* 4.0 per cent of households in public housing were overcrowded
* 24.4 per cent of SOMIH households were overcrowded
* 4.3 per cent of households in community housing were overcrowded (figure 18.4).

Data for overcrowding in ICH are presented in table 18A.28.

Overcrowding data for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households are presented in table 18A.29 and, disaggregated by remoteness for public housing and SOMIH, in tables 18A.30–31. Data for underutilisation in public housing, SOMIH and community housing dwellings are reported in table 18A.32.

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| Figure 18.4 Overcrowded households, at 30 June**a** |
| **Public housing**  **SOMIH**b  **Community housing**c    Legend to figure 18.4   Green = 2013 to 2016 Blue = 2017  More details can be found within the text surrounding this image. |
| a See box 18.7 and tables 18A.25–27 for detailed definitions, footnotes and caveats. b National data for SOMIH include all available data for each year. The SOMIH program in the NT commenced reporting in 2016-17. c Community housing data are not available for the NT and are not available for Queensland for 2015 and previous years. |
| *Source*: AIHW (unpublished) National Housing Assistance Data Repository*;* tables 18A.25–27. |
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#### Appropriateness — Amenity/location

‘Amenity/location’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to provide services that are appropriate, meeting the needs of individual households (box 18.8).

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| Box 18.8 Amenity/location |
| ‘Amenity/location’ is defined as the proportion of those households that rate particular aspects of amenity and location as important to their needs, who are in dwellings that meet those needs.  ‘Amenity’ aspects include size of dwelling, modifications for special needs, ease of access and entry, car parking, yard space and fencing, privacy of home, safety/security of home and safety/security of neighbourhood. ‘Location’ aspects include proximity to facilities and services such as: shops and banking, public transport, parks and recreational facilities, emergency services, medical services and hospitals, child care facilities, education/training facilities, employment/place of work, community and support services, family and friends.  A high or increasing proportion of households with amenity and location needs met is desirable.  Data for this measure are reported for public housing, SOMIH and community housing (ICH data are not available) and are:   * comparable (subject to caveats) across jurisdictions and over time from the 2014 reporting period * not comparable across public housing, SOMIH and community housing due to the different demographic profiles of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tenants and the method of data collection * complete for the current reporting period (subject to caveats) except for community housing, for which all required 2016 data were not available for the NT. |
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In 2016, the majority of National Social Housing Survey (NSHS) respondents who indicated that the selected amenity and location aspects of their dwelling were important also indicated that those aspects met their household’s needs. Averaged across the amenity and the location items, the proportion responding that their household’s needs were met were:

* public housing — amenity (82.6 per cent) and location (89.0 per cent)
* SOMIH — amenity (82.9 per cent) and location (90.9 per cent)
* community housing — amenity (85.8 per cent) and location (90.2 per cent) (figure 18.5).

Averaged amenity and location data for households with a member with disability are available in tables 18A.33–35.

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| Figure 18.5 Proportion of tenants rating amenity and location aspects as important and meeting their needs, 2016**a, b** |
| **Public housing**  **SOMIH**  **Community housing**  Legend to figure 18.5   Green = Amenity Blue = Location  More details can be found within the text surrounding this image. |
| a See box 18.8 and tables 18A.33–35 for detailed definitions, footnotes and caveats. b The SOMIH program in the NT did not participate in this survey. Community housing data are not available for the NT. |
| *Source*:AIHW (unpublished)National Social Housing Survey 2016; tables 18A.33–35. |
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#### Quality — Dwelling condition

‘Dwelling condition’ is a proxy indicator of governments’ objective to provide services that are high quality (box 18.9).

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| Box 18.9 Dwelling condition |
| ‘Dwelling condition’ is defined as the proportion of households living in dwellings that meet agreed minimum acceptable standards. A dwelling is assessed as meeting minimum acceptable standards if it has at least four working facilities (for washing people, for washing clothes/bedding, for storing/preparing food, and for removing sewerage) and not more than two major structural problems.  This is a proxy indicator of quality as it measures the extent to which dwellings conform to agreed minimum standards. The survey collections ask respondents (AIHW 2015):   * which of a list of facilities is present in their dwelling and whether each is in working order * which of a list of structural problems is present in their dwelling.   A high or increasing proportion of households living in dwellings that meet minimum acceptable standards suggests that services are high or increasing in quality.  Data for this indicator are reported for public housing, SOMIH, community housing and ICH and are:   * comparable (subject to caveats) across jurisdictions and over time from the 2014 reporting period * not comparable across public housing, SOMIH, community housing and ICH due to the different demographic profiles of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tenants and the method of data collection * complete for public housing, SOMIH and ICH for the most current reporting period (subject to caveats). All required 2016 data (public housing and SOMIH) and 2014‑15 data (ICH) are available for all jurisdictions providing the services * incomplete for community housing for the current reporting period. All required 2016 data are not available for the NT. |
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Nationally in 2016, the majority of social housing respondents lived in dwellings of an acceptable standard, though proportions were lower for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households (figure 18.6; tables 18A.36–38):

* for public housing, 80.7 per cent for all households and 69.6 per cent for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households
* for SOMIH, 75.1 per cent for all households
* for community housing, 88.8 per cent for all households and 77.2 per cent for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households.

Households with a member with disability were also less likely to report living in dwellings of an acceptable standard (73.9 per cent in public housing, 70.2 per cent in SOMIH, and 86.1 per cent in community housing) (tables 18A.36–38).

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| Figure 18.6 Dwellings meeting agreed minimum acceptable standards**a, b, c** |
| **Public housing**  **SOMIH**  **Community housing**  Legend to figure 18.6  Green = 2014 Blue = 2016  More details can be found within the text surrounding this image. |
| a See box 18.9 and tables 18A.36–38 for detailed definitions, footnotes and caveats. b Error bars represent the 95 per cent confidence interval associated with each point estimate. c The SOMIH program in the NT did not participate in this survey. Community housing data are not available for the NT. |
| *Source*: AIHW (unpublished) National Social Housing Survey 2014, 2016; tables 18A.36–38. |
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Nationally in 2014‑15, 71.4 per cent of households in Indigenous community housing were reported to be living in dwellings of an acceptable standard (table 18A.39). These data are unable to be disaggregated for households with a member with disability.

#### Quality — Customer satisfaction

‘Customer satisfaction’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to provide services that are high quality (box 18.10).

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| Box 18.10 Customer satisfaction |
| ‘Customer satisfaction’ is defined as the proportion of social housing survey respondents who indicated they were satisfied or very satisfied with the overall service provided by their housing provider.  A high or increasing level of customer satisfaction is desirable.  Data are reported for public housing, SOMIH and community housing (ICH data are not available) and are:   * comparable (subject to caveats) across jurisdictions for the current reporting period and comparable (subject to caveats) over time from the 2014 reporting period * comparable (subject to caveats) across public housing, SOMIH and community housing * complete for the current reporting period (subject to caveats) with the exception of community housing, for which all required 2016 data were not available for the NT. |
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Nationally in 2016, the majority of social housing tenants were satisfied or very satisfied with the overall service provided by their housing provider (73.1 per cent for public housing, 67.6 per cent for SOMIH, and 80.3 per cent for community housing) (figure 18.7). Customer satisfaction data for households with a member with disability are available in tables 18A.40–42.

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| Figure 18.7 Proportion of tenants satisfied or very satisfied with the service provided by their housing provider, 2016**a, b, c** |
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| a See box 18.10 and tables 18A.40–42 for detailed definitions, footnotes and caveats. b Error bars represent the 95 per cent confidence interval associated with each point estimate. c The SOMIH program does not operate in Victoria, WA or the ACT and, in the NT, did not participate in this survey. Community housing data are not available for the NT. |
| *Source*:AIHW (unpublished)National Social Housing Survey 2016; tables 18A.40–42. |
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#### Perceptions of safety

‘Perceptions of safety’ is an indicator of government’s objective to provide services that are safe (box 18.11).

| Box 18.11 Perceptions of safety |
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| ‘Perceptions of safety’ is defined as the proportion of households rating their safety requirements as being met, measured separately for safety of home and safety outside of the home within the neighbourhood.  A high or increasing proportion is desirable.  Data are not yet available for reporting against this indicator. |
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#### Sustainability

‘Sustainability’ is an indicator of government’s objective to provide services that are sustainable (box18.12).

| Box 18.12 Sustainability |
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| ‘Sustainability’ is broadly defined as the extent to which current social housing needs are met with reference to the need for future generations to meet their own social housing needs. In its broadest sense, this could consider financial, social and environmental sustainability.  Further development of this indicator concept and potential measure(s) will be considered with reference to any changes in the policy environment. |
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### Efficiency

#### Net recurrent cost per dwelling

‘Net recurrent cost per dwelling’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to provide services in an efficient manner (box 18.13).

| Box 18.13 Net recurrent cost per dwelling |
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| ‘Net recurrent cost per dwelling’ is defined as the cost of providing assistance per dwelling and is measured as total recurrent expenditure divided by the total number of dwellings.  Data are reported for public housing, SOMIH, community housing and ICH. Net recurrent cost per dwelling for public housing is reported with user cost of capital both included and excluded. User cost of capital data are not available for SOMIH, community housing or ICH. For ICH, total number of dwellings is the number of permanent dwellings.  An inconsistency between numerator and denominator with a deflationary effect on community housing cost per dwelling may result from transfer of management responsibility for some public housing and/or SOMIH stock to the community sector, which is underway in some jurisdictions and planned to occur progressively over time in most others. The denominator (number of community housing dwellings at 30 June) may include dwellings for which expenditure for only part of the reporting year is counted in the numerator. This inconsistency is not expected to apply for public housing and SOMIH as the denominator (the average of the number of dwellings for each month of the reporting year) largely accounts for transfer of dwellings to the community sector.  Holding other factors — such as dwelling condition and tenant support services — equal, a low or decreasing cost per dwelling is desirable.  Data reported for this indicator are:   * comparable (subject to caveats) within some jurisdictions over time but are not comparable across jurisdictions or over time for other jurisdictions * not comparable across public housing, SOMIH, community housing and ICH * complete for public housing for the current reporting period (subject to caveats). All required 2016‑17 data are available for all jurisdictions providing the service |
| (continued next page) |
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| Box 18.13 (continued) |
| * incomplete for SOMIH for the current reporting period. All required 2016‑17 data are not available for the NT * incomplete for community housing and ICH for the current reporting period. All required 2015‑16 data are not available for SA (for ICH) and the NT (for community housing and ICH). |
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Care needs to be taken in interpreting the cost of delivering social housing. Data are not comparable across jurisdictions as jurisdictions vary in how completely costs are captured and how consistently data are collected, as well as the degree to which costs can be separated between different models of social housing and homelessness services. There is also potential for double counting — for example, some of the user cost of capital may also be included in operating costs.

The user cost of capital is the cost of the funds tied up in the capital used to provide social housing. User cost of capital is the main driver of cost per dwelling due to the level of capital expenditure on housing. Data should be interpreted with caution due to variation across jurisdictions in the treatment of assets (table 18A.52) and service delivery models.

Payroll tax is excluded from total recurrent cost for public housing to improve comparability across jurisdictions (see chapter 1 for an explanation of the rationale).

Nationally in 2016‑17, net recurrent cost per dwelling for public housing was:

* $9369 (excluding user cost of capital) — up 13.3 per cent (in real terms) from 2012‑13
* $38 314 (including user cost of capital) — up 20.0 per cent (in real terms) since 2012‑13 (figure 18.8).

Table 18A.43 reports data from 2007‑08.

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| Figure 18.8 Net recurrent cost per dwelling – public housing (2016‑17 dollars)**a** |
| **Excluding the cost of capital**  **Including the cost of capital**   |  | | --- | |  | |
| a See box 18.13 and table 18A.43 for detailed definitions, footnotes and caveats. |
| *Source*: State and Territory governments (unpublished); tables 18A.43 and 2A.49. |
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Nationally, the net recurrent cost of providing assistance (not including user cost of capital) per dwelling for SOMIH was $11 550 in 2016‑17, similar to 2012‑13 (figure 18.9). Table 18A.44 reports data from 2007‑08.

Nationally, the net recurrent cost per community housing tenancy for 2015‑16 was $11 802, up 34.4 per cent since 2011‑12 (figure 18.10). Table 18A.45 reports data from 2007‑08.

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| Figure 18.9 Net recurrent cost per dwelling — SOMIH (2016-17 dollars)**a, b** |
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| a See box 18.13 and table 18A.44 for detailed definitions, footnotes and caveats. b The SOMIH program in the NT commenced reporting in 2016‑17, but these data are not yet available. |
| *Source*: State and Territory governments (unpublished); tables 18A.44 and 2A.49. |
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| Figure 18.10 Net recurrent cost per tenancy — community housing (2015‑16 dollars)**a, b, c** |
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| a See box 18.13 and table 18A.45 for detailed definitions, footnotes and caveats. b Data for the NT are not available. c Data for 2013‑14 for Tasmania are not available. |
| *Source*: AIHW (unpublished) National Housing Assistance Data Repository; tables 18A.45 and 2A.49. |
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In 2015‑16, the average net current cost per permanent ICH dwelling for jurisdictions where the program operates and data are available was $9587 — up 12.6 per cent in real terms since 2011‑12 (table 18A.46).

### Outcomes

Outcomes are the impact of services on the status of an individual or group (see chapter 1).

#### Social and economic participation

‘Social and economic participation’ is an indicator of government’s objective to provide social housing assistance that supports wellbeing and contributes to social and economic participation (box 18.14).

| Box 18.14 Social and economic participation |
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| ‘Social and economic participation’ is defined as the proportion of social housing tenants engaged in social and/or work-related activities.  Living in stable, safe and secure housing is associated with greater capacity to participate in social and economic activity and improved household wellbeing.  A high or increasing proportion of social housing tenants engaged in social and/or work related activities is desirable.  Data are not yet available for reporting against this indicator. |
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## 18.4 Definitions of key terms

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| **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander household** | A household with one or more members (including children) who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. |
| **Administration costs** | Those costs associated with the administration offices of the property manager and tenancy manager. They include the general accounting and personnel function costs relating to:   * employee expenses (for example, superannuation, compensation, accrued leave and training) * supplies and services expenses (including stationery, postage, telephone, office equipment, information systems and vehicle expenses) * rent * grants and subsidies (excluding rental subsidies) * expenditure incurred by other government agencies on behalf of the public housing agency * contracted public housing management services. |
| **Assessable income** | The income used to assess eligibility for housing assistance and to calculate the rental housing rebate that allows a household to pay a rent lower than the market rent. The components of income that are counted as assessable may vary across jurisdictions. |
| **Canadian National Occupancy Standard (CNOS)** | A standardised measure of housing utilisation and overcrowding. This measure assesses a household’s bedroom requirements by specifying that:   * there should be no more than two people per bedroom * a household of one unattached individual may reasonably occupy a bed–sit (i.e. have no bedroom) * couples and parents should have a separate bedroom * children less than five years of age, of different sexes, may reasonably share a bedroom * children five years of age or over, of the opposite sex, should not share a bedroom * children less than 18 years of age and of the same sex may reasonably share a bedroom; and * single household members aged 18 years or over should have a separate bedroom. |
| **Comparability** | Data are considered comparable if (subject to caveats) they can be used to inform an assessment of comparative performance. Typically, data are considered comparable when they are collected in the same way and in accordance with the same definitions. For comparable indicators or measures, significant differences in reported results allow an assessment of differences in performance, rather than being the result of anomalies in the data. |
| **Completeness** | Data are considered complete if all required data are available for all jurisdictions that provide the service. |
| **Confidence intervals** | Survey data, for example data from the NSHS, are subject to sampling error because they are based on samples of the total population. Where survey data are shown in charts in this report, error bars are included, showing 95 per cent confidence intervals. There is a 95 per cent chance that the true value of the data item lies within the interval shown by the error bars. |
| **Depreciation costs** | Depreciation calculated on a straight–line basis at a rate that realistically represents the useful life of the asset (as per the Australian Accounting Standards 13–17). |
| **Disability** | Households with a member with disability are defined as households in which at least one member always or sometimes needs assistance with self‑care activities, body movement activities or communication, and the reason for needing assistance is either ‘long‑term health condition lasting six months or more’ or ‘disability’. |
| **Dwelling** | A structure or a discrete space within a structure intended for people to live in or where a person or group of people live. Thus, a structure that people actually live in is a dwelling regardless of its intended purpose, but a vacant structure is a dwelling only if intended for human residence. A dwelling may include one or more rooms that is/are used as an office or workshop, provided the dwelling is in residential use. Dwelling types include:   * a separate house * a semi–detached, row or terrace house, townhouse, etc. * a flat, unit or apartment; caravan, tent, cabin etc. either in or not in a caravan park; houseboat in marina, etc. * an improvised home, tent, camper * a house or flat attached to a shop, office, etc. * a boarding/rooming house unit. |
| **Equivalisation** | See low income households entry. |
| **Greatest need** | Applies to low‑income households if, at the time of allocation, household members were subject to one or more of the following circumstances:   * they were homeless * their life or safety was at risk in their accommodation * their health condition was aggravated by their housing * their housing was inappropriate to their needs * they had very high rental housing costs.   A low–income household for the greatest need definition is a household that satisfies an eligibility test to receive housing assistance. |
| **Household** | The grouping of people living in a dwelling. Household composition is based on couple and parent–child relationships. A *single‑family* household contains a main tenant only, or a main tenant residing with a partner and/or the main tenant’s children. *Group households* consist of 2 or more tenants aged 16 or over who are not in a couple or parent–child relationship. *Mixed households* are households not described by the other two types — for example, multiple single‑family households.  For the purpose of the public housing, SOMIH and community and Indigenous community housing collections, the number of tenancy agreements is the proxy for counting the number of households. A tenancy agreement is defined as a formal written agreement between a household (a person or group of people) and a housing provider, specifying details of a tenancy for a particular dwelling. |
| **Low income households** | For the purpose of social housing affordability analyses, ‘low income households’ are defined as those in the bottom 40 per cent of equivalised gross household income. (Different definitions of low income households are used for different purposes by the ABS and others.)  Equivalisation  Increased household size is associated with increased consumption needs, but also with economies of scale. An equivalence scale is used to adjust household incomes to take account of the economies that flow from sharing resources, enabling more meaningful comparisons across different types of households.  The ABS provides low income household equivalised gross income cutoffs derived from the biennial Survey of Income and Housing data to the AIHW. The AIHW determines the equivalised gross household income for social housing households for affordability analyses.  Note that equivalised gross household income is not used to determine eligibility for social housing or rental subsidies (see ‘assessable income’). |
| **Maintenance costs** | Costs incurred to maintain the value of the asset or to restore an asset to its original condition. The definition includes day–to–day maintenance reflecting general wear and tear, cyclical maintenance, performed as part of a planned maintenance program and other maintenance, such as repairs as a result of vandalism. |
| **Market rent** | Aggregate market rent that would be collected if the public rental housing properties were available in the private market. |
| **Models of community housing** | Community housing models vary across jurisdictions in scale, organisational structure and financing arrangements, and the extent to which community organisations or government have management responsibility and ownership of the housing stock. Table 18A.51 lists the in‑scope community housing programs in each jurisdiction. |
|  | Some models of community housing are:   * *housing cooperatives*, providing tenancy management and maintenance of housing that is owned by government, a central finance company or an individual cooperative * *local government housing associations*, providing low cost housing within a particular municipality, are closely involved in policy, planning, funding and/or monitoring roles, and can directly manage the housing stock * *regional or local housing associations*, providing property and tenancy management services, and support services to tenants * *specialist providers* are organisations with a specific purpose or function, such as tenancy management, housing development, or for specific target groups (including people with disability) * *broad service delivery* are organisations that provide housing and other welfare services, such as aged care and disability services |
|  | * *vertically integrated providers of affordable housing* are involved in all stages of providing affordable housing, from construction to property and tenancy management * *community ownership and/or management*, where housing is owned and/or managed by not–for–profit or community housing associations * *joint ventures and housing partnerships*, where church and welfare entities, local government, private sector and other organisations provide resources in cooperation with State and Territory governments; or where groups of community housing providers form partnerships to maximise growth opportunities, share resources and/or manage risk * *equity share rental housing*, where housing cooperatives wholly own the housing stock and lease it to tenants (who are shareholders in the cooperative and, therefore, have the rights and responsibilities of cooperative management) (Australian, State and Territory governments). |
| **New household** | Households that commence receiving assistance during the relevant reporting period (financial year). A new household is recorded if the composition of the household changes i.e. if someone enters or leaves the household. |
| **Occupancy rate** | The number of dwellings occupied as a proportion of total dwellings. |
| **Occupied dwelling** | Dwellings occupied by tenants who have a tenancy agreement with the relevant housing authority. |
| **Overcrowding** | A situation in a dwelling when one or more additional bedrooms are required to meet the Canadian National Occupancy Standard. |
| **Priority access to those in greatest need** | Allocation processes to ensure those in greatest need have first access to housing. This is measured as the proportion of new allocations to those in greatest need. |
| **Principal tenant** | The person whose name appears on the tenancy agreement. Where this is not clear, it should be the person who is responsible for rental payments. |
| **Rebated household** | A household that receives housing assistance and pays less than the market rent value for the dwelling. |
| **Remoteness areas** | An aggregation of non‑continuous geographical areas that share common characteristics of remoteness. The delimitation criteria for remoteness areas (RAs) are based on the Accessibility/Remoteness Index for Australia (ARIA+), which measures the remoteness of a point based on the road distance to the nearest urban centre. Within the Australian Statistical Geography Standard, each RA is created from a grouping of Statistical Areas Level 1 having a particular degree of remoteness.  Remoteness areas comprise the following six categories:   * major cities of Australia * inner regional Australia * outer regional Australia * remote Australia * very remote Australia * migratory — offshore — shipping. |
| **Rent charged** | The amount in dollars that households are charged based on the rents they are expected to pay. The rents charged to tenants may or may not have been received. |
| **Tenancy (rental) unit** | A tenancy (rental) unit is the unit of accommodation for which a rental agreement can be made. With the exception of community housing, dwellings in the majority of cases have only one tenancy (rental) unit; for community housing and a small number of other cases (for example, boarding houses, special group homes, semi–institutional dwellings), there are commonly more than one tenancy (rental) unit. |
| **Tenantable dwelling** | A dwelling where maintenance has been completed, whether occupied or unoccupied at 30 June. All occupied dwellings are tenantable. |
| **Total gross household income** | The value of gross weekly income from all sources (before deductions for income tax, superannuation etc.) for all household members, expressed as dollars per week. The main components of gross income are current usual wages and salary; income derived from self–employment, government pensions, benefits and allowances; and other income comprising investments and other regular income. CRA payments are not included as income. |
| **Transfer household** | A household, either rebated or market renting, that relocates (transfers) from one dwelling to another within the same social housing program. In the community housing data collection, a transfer household is a household that transfers within a single community housing organisation’s portfolio (not across the sector). This leads to under‑reporting of transfers. |
| **Turnaround time** | The average time taken in days for vacant dwellings, which are available for letting, to be occupied. |
| **Underutilisation** | A situation where a dwelling contains two or more bedrooms surplus to the needs of the household occupying it, according to the Canadian National Occupancy Standard. |
| **Untenantable dwelling** | A dwelling not currently occupied by a tenant, where maintenance has been either deferred or not completed at 30 June. |

## 18.5 References

AIHW (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare) 2017, *Housing assistance in Australia*, www.aihw.gov.au/housing-assistance/haa/2017/priority-groups (accessed 20 November 2017).

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1. This chapter does not consider housing programs not provided under the NAHA (for example, those provided by the Department of Veterans’ Affairs or rental or home purchase assistance — the latter is discussed in sector overview G). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. The NAHA and National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness are due to expire 1 July 2018. A new National Housing and Homelessness Agreement is currently under negotiation. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. The NT commenced data reporting for its SOMIH program in 2016-17. Limited aggregate data are available and include the number of dwellings (5032), but not the number of households. These dwellings were not included in administrative data collections used in this Report for 2015-16 and previous years following their transfer from ICH management in the period 2008–2010. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)