
G Housing and homelessness sector overview

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Attachment tables

Attachment tables are identified in references throughout this Indigenous Compendium by an 'A' prefix (for example, in this sector overview, table GA.1). As the data are directly sourced from the 2014 Report, the Compendium also notes where the original table, figure or text in the 2014 Report can be found. For example, where the Compendium refers to '2014 Report, p. G.1', this is page 1 of the Housing and homelessness services sector overview of the 2014 Report, and '2014 Report, table GA.1' is table 1 of attachment GA of the 2014 Report. A list of attachment tables referred to in the Compendium is provided at the end of this chapter, and the full attachment tables are available from the Review website at www.pc.gov.au/gsp.

The Housing and homelessness services sector overview in the *Report on Government Services 2014* (2014 Report) reports on the Housing and homelessness services in each Australian state and territory. Data are reported for Indigenous Australians for a subset of the performance indicators reported in that chapter — those data are compiled and presented here.

This sector overview provides an introduction to the 'Housing' (chapter 17) and 'Homelessness services' (chapter 18) chapters of this Report. It provides an overview of the housing and homelessness sector, presenting both contextual information and high level performance information.

This sector overview also includes descriptive information on Commonwealth Rent Assistance (CRA).

Major improvements in reporting on housing and homelessness this year are identified in each of the service-specific housing and homelessness chapters.

Indigenous data in the Housing and homelessness sector overview

The Housing and homelessness sector overview in the 2014 Report contains the following information on Indigenous Australians:

- Australian Government nominal expenditure relating to the National Affordable Housing Agreement (NAHA)
- social housing descriptive statistics, 2011-12
- households living in overcrowded conditions, 2013
- households living in houses of an acceptable standard, 2012
- income units receiving CRA, by payment type, special needs and geographic location, 2013

- proportion of Indigenous income units receiving CRA, paying more than 30 per cent of income on rent, with and without CRA, by geographic location, 2009 to 2013
- proportion of Indigenous income units receiving CRA, paying more than 30 per cent of income on rent, with and without CRA, 2009 to 2013
- number and proportion of income units receiving CRA with more than 50 per cent of income spent on rent, with and without CRA, by special needs and geographic location, 2013.

Sector scope

This Report includes detailed information on two specific services: social housing and homelessness services. Social housing broadly encompasses public housing, State owned and managed Indigenous housing (SOMIH), community housing and Indigenous community housing, and is reported in chapter 17 (box G.1).

Box G.1 Scope of social housing

Social housing is rental housing provided by government or non-government organisations (including not-for-profit) to assist people who are unable to access suitable accommodation in the private rental market (AIHW 2010). The forms of social housing included in this Report are:

- *Public housing*: dwellings owned (or leased) and managed by State and Territory housing authorities to provide affordable rental accommodation.
- *State owned and managed Indigenous housing*: dwellings owned and managed by State housing authorities that are allocated only to Indigenous households.
- *Community housing*: rental housing provided low to moderate income 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 models vary across jurisdictions, and the housing stock may be owned by a variety of groups, including local government.
- *Indigenous community housing (ICH)*: dwellings owned or leased and managed by ICH organisations and community councils in major cities, regional areas and remote areas. Indigenous community housing models vary across jurisdictions and can also include dwellings funded or registered by government.

Crisis and transitional housing is an additional form of social housing, but it is not separately identified in this Report. Crisis and transitional housing might be indirectly reported through the other forms of social housing described above.

Source: 2014 Report, Chapter 17.

Homelessness services in this Report encompass government funded specialist homelessness services, and are reported in chapter 18 (box G.2).

This report focuses on social housing and homelessness services funded under the National Affordable Housing Specific Purpose Payment (NAH SPP) and related National Partnership Agreements (NPAs), and provided through the framework of the NAHA and the related NPAs which support it.

Governments provide other forms of support for housing and homelessness, including home purchase assistance and private rental assistance, but these are not considered in detail in this Report.

Housing and homelessness outcomes are influenced by many factors apart from government assistance. Appendix — Private housing market contextual information presents contextual information on some of these factors, including housing affordability, private rental markets and home ownership.

Box G.2 Scope of homelessness services

Under the NAHA, governments have committed to undertake reforms in the housing sector to improve integration between homelessness services and mainstream services, and reduce the rate of homelessness.

Government funded specialist homelessness services provide assistance to individuals and families who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.

Data reported in Chapter 18 of this Report are for government funded specialist homelessness services delivered under the NAHA and the National Partnership on Homelessness. Data are sourced from the Specialist Homelessness Services Collection (SHSC), which measures the number of clients and the number and types of services provided to clients.

Definition of homelessness

Definitions of homelessness range from objective measures in which homelessness means having 'no roof', to broader, more subjective definitions founded on culturally and historically determined ideas of 'home'.

Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) definition

The ABS definition of homelessness is informed by a broader understanding of homelessness as 'home'lessness, not 'roof'lessness. Data on homelessness from the 2011, 2006 and 2001 censuses are based on the ABS methodology (ABS 2012a) and a statistical definition of homelessness (ABS 2012b), which were both developed following consultation with the homelessness sector.

(Continued next page)

Box G.2 (continued)

Data on homeless people are categorised by the ABS (2012b) according to their living situation. When a person does not have suitable accommodation alternatives they are considered homeless if their current living arrangement:

- is in a dwelling that is inadequate, or
- has no tenure, or if their initial tenure is short and not extendable, or
- does not allow them to have control of, and access to space for social relations.

The definition has been constructed from a conceptual framework centred around the following elements:

- adequacy of the dwelling; and
- security of tenure in the dwelling; and
- control of, and access to space for social relations.

SHSC definition

All clients of specialist homelessness services are either homeless or at risk of homelessness. 'Homeless' status is derived for a client based on the client's housing circumstances at the beginning of their first support period in 2012–13 (or at the beginning of 2012–13 for clients who were existing clients on 1 July 2012). All other clients not meeting these criteria are considered to be at risk of homelessness (excluding clients who did not provide sufficient information to make this assessment).

Source: ABS (2012b); 2014 Report, Chapter 18.

Profile of the housing and homelessness sector

Detailed profiles for the services within the housing and homelessness services sector are reported in chapters 17 and 18, and cover:

- size and scope of the individual service types
- roles and responsibilities of each level of government and non-government organisations
- funding and expenditure.

Government funding and expenditure

Most Australian Government funding for housing and homelessness services is provided through the NAH SPP. This funding is based on outcomes rather than tied to programs, so it is not possible to identify NAH SPP funding used for specific programs.

In 2012–13, the Australian Government provided \$1.7 billion to State and Territory governments for housing and homelessness services through national partnership agreements in support of the NAHA (table GA.1). In addition, the Australian Government provided a further \$3.6 billion for CRA in 2012–13 (2014 Report, table GA.12).

Australian, State and Territory governments' total expenditure on social housing and homelessness services was \$3.9 billion in 2011–12 (table G.1). Other descriptive data for social housing and homelessness services for 2011–12 are presented in table G.1, and data for each jurisdiction are reported in table GA.3 and 2014 Report, table GA.4.

Further information, including 2011–12 and 2012–13 financial data for public housing, SOMIH and homelessness services, is presented in chapters 17 and 18.

Table G.1 Housing and homelessness services sector, selected descriptive statistics, Australia, 2011–12^a

	<i>Net recurrent expenditure</i>	<i>Dwellings^b</i>	<i>Households</i>
	<i>\$m</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>No.</i>
<i>Social housing</i>			
Public housing	2 538.0	330 906	323 423
SOMIH	107.3	10 047	9 692
Community housing	560.1	61 563	61 033
Indigenous community housing ^c	90.4	16 773	..
Total	3 295.8	419 289	394 148
		<i>Clients ('000)</i>	
<i>Homelessness services</i>	575.9	236.4	..
Total	3 871.7

^a Data may not be comparable across jurisdictions or service areas and comparisons could be misleading. Chapters 17 and 18 provide further information. ^b The total number of dwellings at 30 June. ^c Data for ICH are likely to be underestimated because complete data were not available for all jurisdictions. The number of ICH dwellings are 'funded, permanent dwellings'. .. Not applicable.

Source: Chapters 17 and 18; table GA.2; 2014 Report, table G.1, p. G.6.

Commonwealth Rent Assistance

CRA is an Australian Government payment to people on low and moderate incomes who are renting in the private housing market, to assist with the cost of housing. It is a non-taxable income supplement, paid to income support recipients or people who receive more than the base rate of the Family Tax Benefit Part A, and who rent in the private market. CRA may be payable to people living in SOMIH (in NSW

only), community housing or Indigenous community housing but it is not payable to people renting housing from State or Territory housing authorities (that is, people living in public housing, or SOMIH [other than NSW]), as housing authorities separately subsidise rent for eligible tenants.

Tables GA.12–34 in the 2014 Report, present a range of detailed data on CRA, including Australian Government expenditure; CRA recipients, including Indigenous recipients and those with special needs; and the amount of rent paid and the proportion of income spent on rent by CRA recipients.

Social and economic factors affecting demand for services

Research shows the pathways to homelessness are varied and complex. Longitudinal factors (for example, influences from early childhood) can compound with situational factors, leading to homelessness. For young people, factors such as family conflict or abuse, drug use, unstable employment, participating in education and training, combining work and study, and financial pressure (for example, tension between paying rent, food and utility costs) can potentially lead to unstable housing and increase the risk of homelessness (Memmott and Chambers 2010; CHP 2005).

Service-sector objectives

The overarching service sector objectives in box G.3 draw together the objectives from each of the specific services (described in chapters 17 and 18), as well as reflecting the objectives set out in the NAHA.

Box G.3 Objectives for housing and homelessness services

The overarching objective of housing and homelessness services is that all Australians have access to affordable, safe and sustainable housing that contributes to social and economic participation. Further, government services are to be provided in a collaborative, equitable and efficient manner.

The specific objectives of the services that comprise the housing and homelessness services sector are summarised below:

- *Social housing* aims to assist people unable to access alternative suitable housing options, through the delivery of affordable, appropriate, flexible and diverse social housing. Some forms of social housing specifically aim to contribute to Indigenous community wellbeing, by improving housing outcomes for Indigenous people, especially those living in remote communities (chapter 17).
- *Government funded specialist homelessness services* aim 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 stable and long term independent housing (chapter 18).

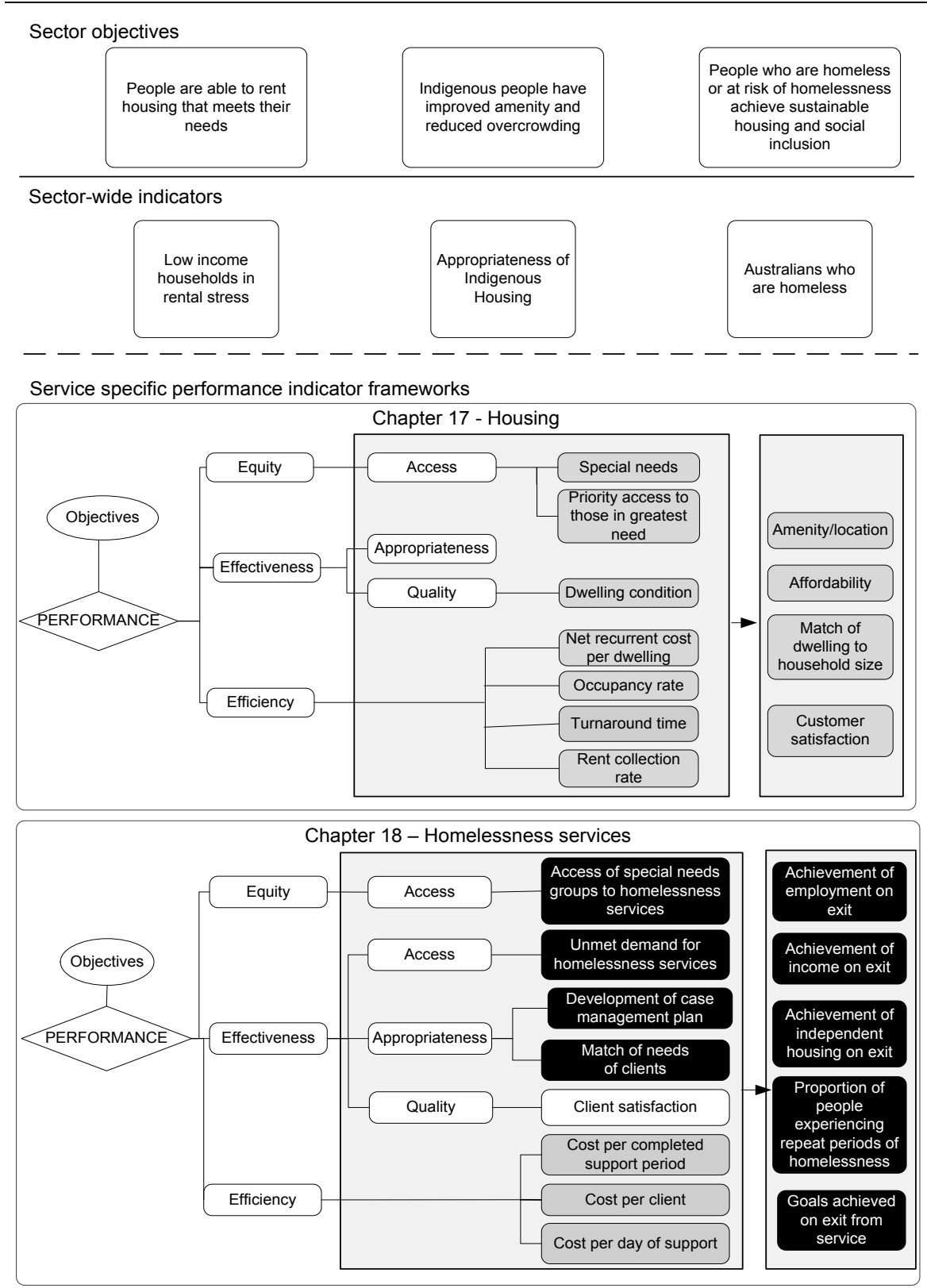
Source: COAG (2008), Chapters 17 and 18.

Sector performance indicator framework

This sector overview is based on a sector performance indicator framework (figure G.1). This framework is made up of the following elements:

- Sector objectives — three sector objectives are a précis of the key objectives of housing and homelessness services and reflect the outcomes in the NAHA (box G.3).
- Sector-wide indicators — three sector-wide indicators relate to the overarching service sector objectives.

Figure G.1 Housing and homelessness services sector performance indicator framework



Source: 2014 Report, figure G.1, p. G.11.

Sector-wide indicators

This section includes high level indicators of housing and homelessness outcomes. Many factors are likely to influence these outcomes — not solely the performance of government services. However, these outcomes inform the development of appropriate policies and the delivery of government services.

Appropriateness of Indigenous housing

‘Appropriateness of Indigenous housing’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to ensure all Australians have access to affordable, safe, appropriate and sustainable housing (box G.4). Governments have a specific interest in improving amenity and reducing overcrowding for Indigenous people, particularly those living in remote and discrete communities (COAG 2008).

Box G.4 Appropriateness of Indigenous housing

'Appropriateness of Indigenous housing' is an indicator of the effectiveness and quality of Indigenous housing. Two measures are reported:

- proportion of Indigenous households living in overcrowded conditions
- proportion of Indigenous households living in dwellings of an acceptable standard.

Overcrowding is defined and measured using the Canadian National Occupancy Standard (CNOS) under which overcrowding is deemed to have occurred if one or more additional bedrooms are required to meet the standard.

For all housing tenures, acceptable standard is defined as a dwelling with four working facilities (for washing people, for washing clothes/bedding, for storing/preparing food, and sewerage) and not more than two major structural problems.

A low proportion of households living in overcrowded conditions is desirable. A high proportion of Indigenous households living in dwellings of an acceptable standard is desirable.

Data comparability and completeness vary for this indicator. Data reported are:

Overcrowding

- for public housing and SOMIH, comparable (subject to caveats) across jurisdictions but a break in series means that data for 2009–10 onward are not comparable to data for earlier years
- not comparable across public housing, SOMIH, community housing and Indigenous community housing
- complete for public housing and SOMIH for the current reporting period (subject to caveats). All required 2012–13 data are available for all jurisdictions providing the service
- incomplete for community housing. All required data were not available for the Northern Territory
- incomplete for Indigenous community housing. All required data were not available for NSW, Tasmania, the ACT, NT and Australia.

Dwellings of an acceptable standard

- comparable (subject to caveats) across jurisdictions for the current reporting period
- incomplete for community housing. All required data were not available for the Northern Territory.

Related information on the appropriateness of social housing is presented for the outcome indicators 'match of dwelling to household size' and 'amenity/location' in chapter 17.

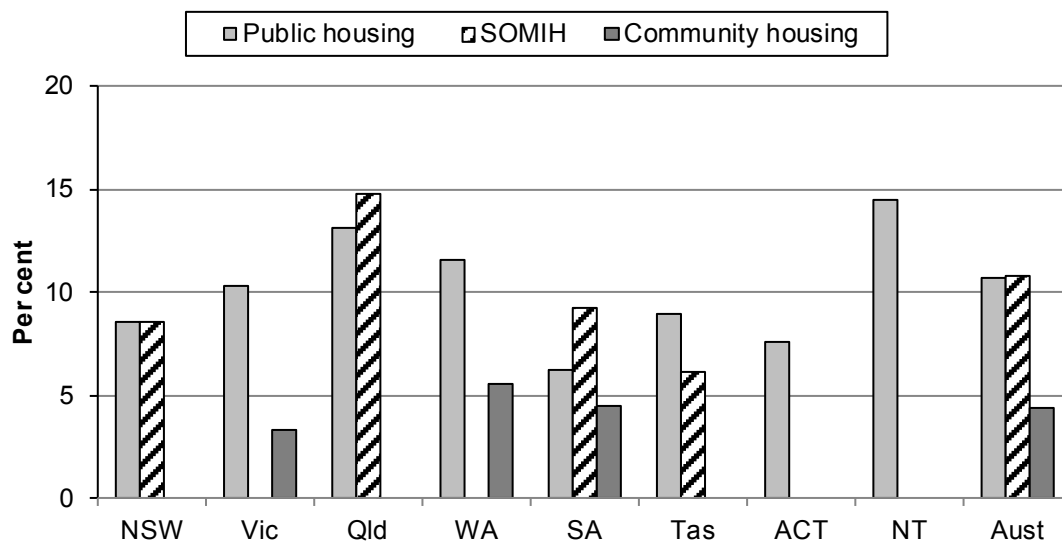
Data quality information for this indicator is at www.pc.gov.au/gsp/reports/rogs/2014.

Indigenous households living in overcrowded conditions

Overcrowding is deemed to occur if one or more bedrooms are required to meet the Canadian National Occupancy Standard (see 2014 Report, chapter 17 for more detail). Overcrowding is a significant issue for many Indigenous people.

The proportion of Indigenous households living in overcrowded conditions varied across jurisdictions in 2013 (figure G.2).

Figure G.2 Proportion of Indigenous households living in overcrowded conditions, at 30 June 2013^{a, b, c}



^a There are no SOMIH data reported for Victoria, WA, the ACT or the NT as the SOMIH program does not exist in these jurisdictions. ^b Community housing data are not available for NSW, Qld and the NT. ^c Community housing data for Tasmania and the ACT is nil or rounded to zero.

Source: AIHW (unpublished) Public Rental Housing data; AIHW (unpublished) The National Housing Assistance Data Repository; *Housing Assistance in Australia* 2011, Cat. No. HOU 271, AIHW, Canberra; table GA.6; 2014 Report, figure G.3, p. G.15.

Data for Indigenous community housing are presented in table GA.6.

Indigenous households living in houses of an acceptable standard

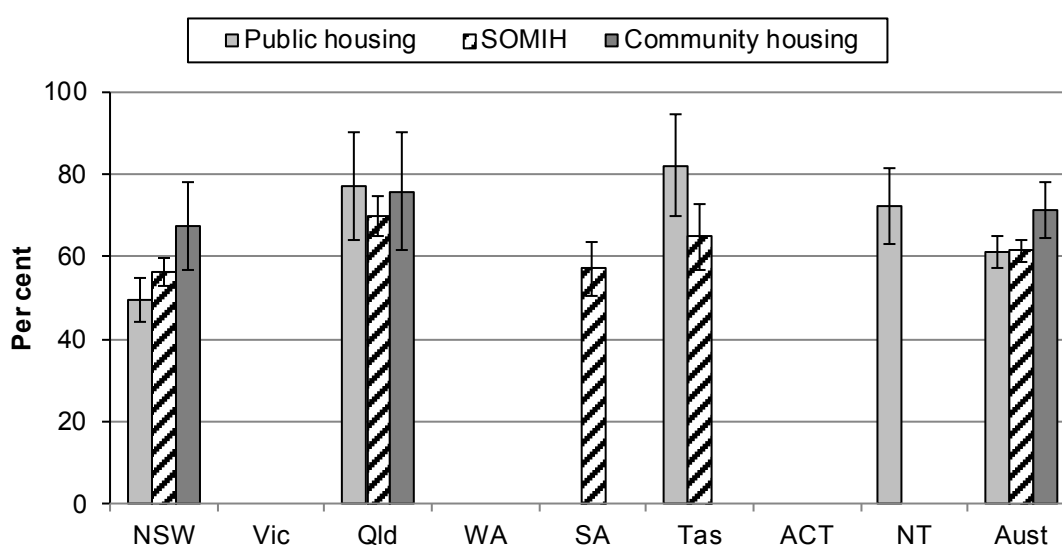
Data for this measure are sourced from the National Social Housing Survey (NSHS) for public housing, SOMIH and community housing. To date, Indigenous community housing tenants have not been surveyed in the NSHS.

Nationally in 2012, the NSHS found that:

- for public housing, 61.3 per cent of Indigenous households were living in dwellings of an acceptable standard

- for SOMIH, 61.4 per cent of Indigenous households were living in dwellings of an acceptable standard
- for community housing, 71.5 per cent of Indigenous households were living in dwellings of an acceptable standard (figure G.3).

Figure G.3 **Proportion of Indigenous households living in dwellings of an acceptable standard, 2012^{a, b, c, d, e}**



^a Error bars represent the 95 per cent confidence intervals associated with each point estimate. ^b There are no SOMIH data reported for Victoria, WA, the ACT or the NT as the SOMIH program does not exist in these jurisdictions. ^c Public housing and community housing data are not published for Victoria, WA, SA and the ACT. ^d Community housing data are not published for Tasmania. ^e Community housing data are not available for the NT.

Source: AIHW (unpublished) *National Social Housing Survey 2012*; table GA.7; 2014 Report, figure G.4, p. G.16.

Service-specific performance indicator frameworks

This section summarises information from the performance indicator frameworks for housing (chapter 17) and government funded specialist homelessness services (chapter 18). Additional information is available to assist the interpretation of these results, such as, additional measures and further disaggregation of reported measures (for example, by Indigenous status, remoteness, disability and age data (chapter 17 and attachment 17A; chapter 18 and attachment 18A).

An overview of the performance indicator results for the most recent reporting period is presented in 2014 Report, table G.2. Results are reported separately for public housing, SOMIH, community housing and Indigenous community housing. Data for Indigenous community housing are not reported for a number of

performance indicators due to issues with data quality and availability. Information to assist the interpretation of these data can be found in the indicator interpretation boxes in chapter 17 and in the footnotes in attachment 17A.

List of attachment tables

Attachment tables for data within this sector overview are contained in the attachment to the Compendium. These tables are identified in references throughout this chapter by a 'GA' prefix (for example, table GA.1 is table 1 in the Housing and homelessness overview attachment). Attachment tables are on the Review website (www.pc.gov.au/gsp).

- Table GA.1** Australian Government nominal expenditure relating to the National Affordable Housing Agreement (NAHA) (\$million)
- Table GA.2** Housing and homelessness services sector, descriptive statistics, Australia, 2011-12
- Table GA.3** Social housing descriptive statistics, 2011-12
- Table GA.6** Proportion of Indigenous households living in overcrowded conditions
- Table GA.7** Proportion of Indigenous households living in dwellings of an acceptable standard, 2012

CRA

- Table GA.17** Indigenous income units receiving CRA, 2013
- Table GA.19** Indigenous CRA recipients, by payment type, 2013
- Table GA.21** Income units receiving CRA, by special needs and geographic location, 2013
- Table GA.26** Proportion of Indigenous income units receiving CRA, paying more than 30 per cent of income on rent, with and without CRA, by geographic location, 2009 to 2013 (per cent)
- Table GA.27** Proportion of Indigenous income units receiving CRA, paying more than 30 per cent of income on rent, with and without CRA, 2009 to 2013 (per cent)
- Table GA.34** Number and proportion of income units receiving CRA with more than 50 per cent of income spent on rent, with and without CRA, by special needs and geographic location, 2013 (per cent)

Definitions of key terms

Commonwealth Rent Assistance

Affordability

Affordability (without CRA) is calculated for all income units receiving CRA by dividing Rent by Total Income from all sources. The CRA entitlement for the reference fortnight in June is included in Total Income from all sources for the calculation of affordability with CRA.

Commonwealth Rent Assistance (CRA)

A fortnightly supplement paid to two types of renter in private and community housing: income support recipients (for example, people receiving the Disability Support Pension), and low- and moderate-income families with children. Payment of CRA continues as long as recipients meet income tests for their primary payment and continue to pay a predetermined amount of rent.

Dependent child for CRA

Dependent child has a wider meaning under Social Security and Family Assistance law than is used in this chapter in relation to CRA. In this chapter, a dependent child is one in respect of whom an adult member of the income unit receives Family Tax Benefit (FTB) Part A at more than the base rate. Prior to 1 January 2012, children aged 16 or older attracted the base rate of FTB Part A so are not included in the count of dependent children. From January 2012 children aged 16 to 19 years attending secondary school may now receive more than the base rate of FTB Part A. Figures from June 2013 include 16 to 19 years olds who receive more than the base rate of FTB Part A. Some children under 20 years of age attract the base rate of FTB Part A only and may not be eligible to be counted for CRA entitlement.

Income support recipient

Recipients in receipt of a payment made under social security law. Under the Machinery of Government changes announced on the 18 September 2013 Income Support Payments administered under social security law are now the responsibility of the Department of Social Services. Family Tax Benefit is paid under family assistance law and is not an income support payment.

Income unit

An income unit may consist of:

- a single person with no dependent children
- a sole parent with one or more dependent children
- a couple (married, registered or defacto) with no dependent children
- a couple (married, registered or defacto) with one or more dependent children.

A non-dependent child living at home, including one who is receiving an income support payment in their own right, is regarded as a separate income unit. Similarly, a group of non-related adults sharing accommodation are counted as separate income units.

Low and moderate incomes

Individuals and families receive CRA with either an income support payment or FTB Part A. While income support recipients are generally thought of as low income, those receiving FTB Part A can have higher incomes and still be eligible for a part rate of Rent Assistance. For this reason, CRA recipients are not defined as those on low incomes.

Machinery of Government Changes

Prior to the Machinery of Government changes announced on 18 September 2013, the main income support payments administered by the former Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous affairs (FaHCSIA) were Age Pension, Disability Support Pension and Carer Payment, while the main income support payments administered by former Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations were Newstart Allowance, Youth Allowance (other), Parenting Payment (Single) and Parenting Payment (Partnered). Youth Allowance (student) and Austudy were administered by the former Department of Industry, Innovation, Climate Change, Science, Research and Tertiary Education.

Rent

Amount payable as a condition of occupancy of a person's home. Rent includes site fees for a caravan, mooring fees and payment for services provided in a retirement village. Rent encompasses not only a formal tenancy agreement, but also informal agreements between family members, including the payment of board or board and lodgings. Where a person pays board and lodgings and cannot separately identify the amount paid for lodgings, two thirds of the payment is deemed to be for rent.

Special needs

Individuals and families with at least one member who either self-identifies as Indigenous; receives a Disability Support Pension; is aged 24 years or under; or is aged 75 years or over.

Total income from all sources

Income received by the recipients or partner, excluding income received by a dependent. It includes regular social security payments and any maintenance and other private income taken into account for income testing purposes. It does not include:

- one-time payments
- arrears payments
- advances
- Employment or Education Entry Payments
- Mobility Allowance
- Baby Bonus
- Child Care Tax Rebate.

In most cases, private income reflects the person's current circumstances. Taxable income for a past financial year or an estimate of taxable income for the current financial year is used where the income unit receives more than the minimum rate of the Family Tax Benefit part A but no income support payment.

Appendix – Private housing market contextual information

Housing market demand, supply and affordability

The private housing market encompasses rented accommodation, home ownership and housing investment. A range of factors influence demand and supply in the private housing market:

- Factors affecting the demand for housing include population growth, household formation, household income and employment, investor demand, household preferences for size, quality and location of housing, the price and availability of housing, government taxes, concessions and transfers, and the cost and availability of finance (NHSC 2010).
- Factors affecting the supply of housing include land tenure arrangements, land release and development processes, construction and infrastructure costs, government taxes, concessions and transfers, and the availability and price of land (NHSC 2010). The availability of credit to finance the development of new housing can also affect the supply of housing (RBA 2009).

An efficient housing market refers to achieving a balance between housing supply and demand (CRC 2010).

Nationally at June 2011, there was an estimated cumulative gap between underlying demand for housing and housing supply, as a proportion of growth in underlying demand, of 2.6 per cent. An estimated 228 000 dwellings were required in Australia to meet growth in demand (NHSC 2012: tables 4.1 and 4.4).

Housing affordability

A shortage of affordable housing is likely to affect demand for housing and homelessness services. Governments provide support to ensure people can access affordable rental housing, either in the private market or in social housing, and many governments provide support to those purchasing houses, particularly first home buyers (box G.5).

Box G.5 **Government assistance for affordable housing**

A range of government initiatives and programs are designed to help households to pay for housing, and to increase the supply of affordable housing. These initiatives include:

- direct assistance to first home buyers through schemes such as the First Home Owners Grant and the First Home Owners Boost (FHOB). Until 2012-13, the FHOB was funded by the Australian government and administered by the states and territories. Funding for FHOB ceased on 31 December 2009
- funding for Indigenous home ownership programs (the Home Ownership Program [HOP] funded and administered by Indigenous Business Australia [IBA] and the Home Ownership on Indigenous Land Program [HOIL] jointly funded by FaHCSIA and IBA). On 1 July 2012, IBA's HOP, and HOIL Program were integrated into a single Indigenous Home Ownership program
- stamp duty concessions or exemptions for first home buyers
- incentives to save for first home ownership through First Home Saver Accounts
- State and Territory Government funding to assist low income households with home purchases or mortgage repayments
- Commonwealth Rent Assistance paid on an ongoing basis to income support and family tax benefit recipients in the private rental market and community housing
- funding for provision and management of social (public and community) housing and related reforms through the National Affordable Housing Specific Purpose Payment
- incentives for institutional investors and community housing providers to build new affordable rental properties
- Commonwealth, State and Territory land and planning measures to increase the supply of affordable housing
- Housing Affordability Fund grants to improve planning and infrastructure provision.

Source: Australian, State and Territory Governments (unpublished).

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