
12 PROTECTION AND SUPPORT SERVICES

12.1 Introduction

Protection and support services are provided to individuals and families in crisis or experiencing difficulties which impede personal and family functioning. These services aim to alleviate difficulties and reduce the potential for recurrence. The services reported on in this chapter comprise:

- *child protection*: those functions of government which receive and assess allegations of harm to children, provide and refer clients to family support services, and take statutory action to protect children (including applying for and supervising care and protection orders). Child protection services aim to protect children where harm or an existing risk of harm has been identified, by strengthening the capacity of families to care for children;
- *supported placement*: care for children placed away from their parents for protective or other family welfare reasons, provided by or financially supported by government. Care can be overnight to long-term (up to several years) and can be provided to children who are subject to care and protection orders or placed voluntarily; and
- *supported accommodation and assistance*: services which aim to assist people who are homeless or are at imminent risk of becoming homeless, including women escaping domestic violence.

The major improvement from the 1997 Report is the inclusion of performance data for supported accommodation and assistance. Efficiency indicators for these services have also been developed.

Protection and support services covered in this chapter were mainly provided through State and Territory Government community services departments, although administrative and legislative arrangements differed significantly across states and territories. The Commonwealth Government was involved in researching aspects of child protection, funding preventative strategies, and funding and planning supported accommodation and assistance.

Recurrent expenditure on protection and support services across Australia was \$409 million in 1995–96. This comprised 50 per cent for child protection and supported placements and 50 per cent for supported accommodation (ABS 1997, AIHW 1997a).

12.2 Child protection services

Child protection services are services provided to children, young people and their families to protect children and young people at risk of harm from within their family, or in circumstances where the family does not have the capacity to protect the child or young person.

Statutory child protection services, such as the investigation of allegations of harm, are provided by State and Territory Governments. Other services, such as supported placements, are provided by both the government and the non-government sectors. Those provided by the non-government sector are usually financially supported by the State and Territory Governments.

Services grouped under the broad umbrella of child protection include family support services focused on child protection, statutory and non-statutory child protection assessment and response services, supported placements, and therapeutic and counselling services to address the effects of abuse and neglect. Reporting does not cover family support services and therapeutic services. However, the use of family support services (both general services and those with a specific child protection objective) is integral to working with families who have experienced abuse and neglect, and to the prevention of abuse and neglect. Similarly, therapeutic and counselling services are necessary for many children and families if significant abuse or neglect has occurred.

12.2.1 Profile of protection and support services

Child protection activities include:

- receiving and responding to allegations of child abuse and neglect, including investigation and assessment where appropriate;
- providing support services (directly or through referral) where harm or a risk of harm is identified, to strengthen the capacity of families to safely care for children;
- initiating formal statutory intervention, including applying to the court for protective orders, to secure the safety of children or young people;
- ensuring the ongoing safety of children by working with families to resolve protective concerns;
- working with families to reunite children — removed for safety reasons — with their parents, as soon as possible; and
- securing permanent alternative care when it is determined that a child is unable to be returned to the care of his or her parents.

Responses to allegations of child abuse and neglect may vary, but all aim to ensure that children, young people and their families receive the services required to meet their needs. The appropriate response, if a matter is initially assessed as a child welfare concern rather than a child protection matter, may be to refer the family to support services.

If an allegation of child abuse or neglect has been initially assessed as requiring a child protection response, the appropriate response will vary according to the level of alleged harm and the apparent needs of the child and family. It may include investigation or another protective response.

If investigation results in substantiation of harm, action including court action if warranted will be taken to protect the child. The family can be referred to appropriate support services at any point during the process of responding to a child protection notification (Figure 12.1).

Figure 12.1: Child protection/investigation process

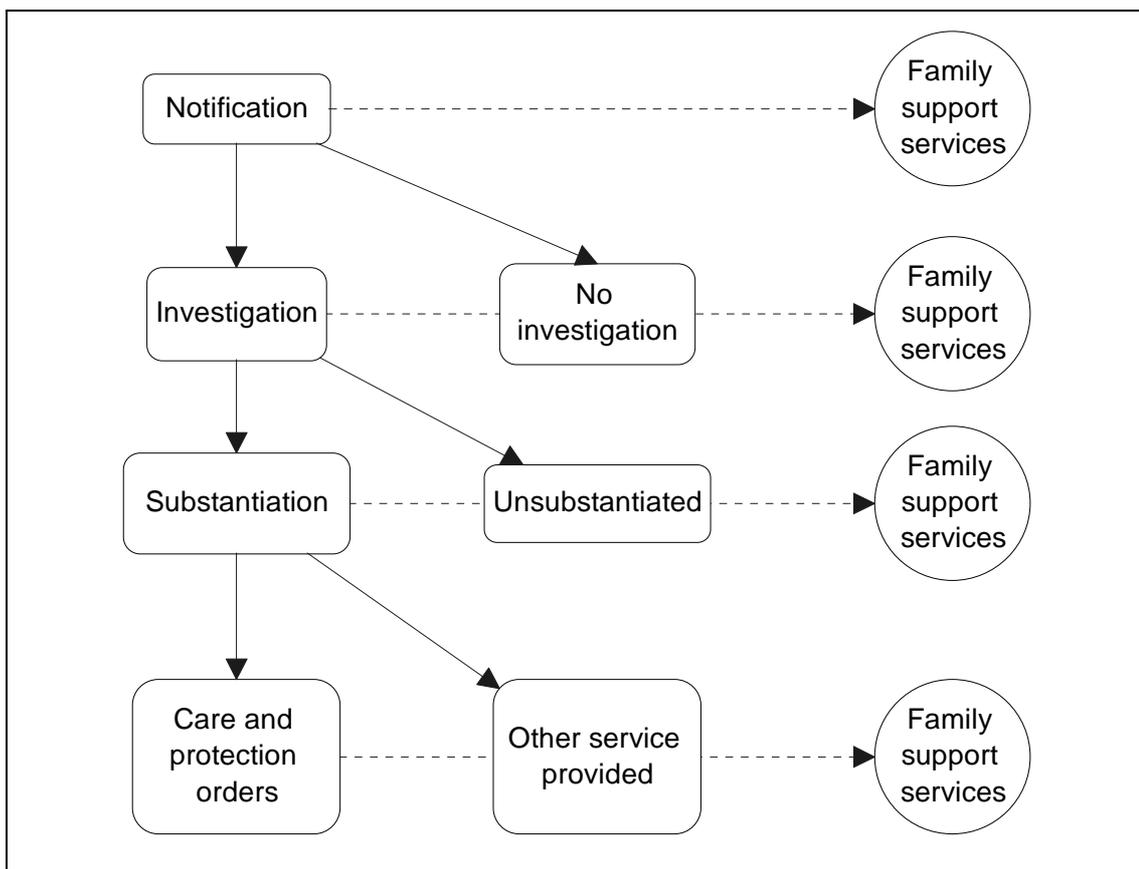


Table 12.1 provides data about numbers of notifications of child abuse and neglect in each state and territory. It is not possible to compare the data because data collection periods vary (as indicated in footnotes) and there are significant differences between jurisdictions over what constitutes a notification of child abuse and neglect, as definitions vary according to legislative and policy imperatives.

Table 12.1: Notifications of child abuse and neglect, 1996–97 (number)

	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Vic</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>WA</i>	<i>SA</i>	<i>Tas</i>	<i>ACT</i>	<i>NT</i>
Total notifications ^a	b	31 707	15 478 ^c	2 099	10 094	2 363	1 220	481

a Definitions of what constituted a notification vary. Refer to footnotes for each state and territory in the source tables for information about what has been included in each state's or territory's data.

b NSW data were available for the period 1 April 1997 to 30 June 1997, during which 7776 notifications were made.

c Queensland data related to 1996 calendar year.

Sources: Tables 12A.1; 12A.3; 12A.5; 12A.7; 12A.9; 12A.11; 12A.13; 12A.15

All jurisdictions respond to all notifications of child abuse and neglect. However the manner of response may vary from formal investigation to a referral to other services, or a determination that no response is necessary. Policies on the manner of responses vary significantly between jurisdictions.

If investigation and assessment result in a decision that the authorities must act to protect a child, this will in many cases occur without a court order. If a care and protection order is required, it may be issued by a Children's Court. A variety of care and protection orders are available under state and territory legislation. These include orders for exercising supervision by the authorities and giving part or full custody or guardianship to the state. At 30 June 1997, 15 680 children were on care and protection orders (Table 12.2).

Table 12.2: Care and protection orders, at 30 June 1997 (number)^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>
Total orders	5 764	3 865	3 249	785	1 172	508	264	111	15 720

a Types of care and protection orders varied. Refer to footnotes for each state and territory in the source tables for information about what has been included in each state's and territory's data.

Sources: Tables 12A.1; 12A.3; 12A.5; 12A.7; 12A.9; 12A.11; 12A.13; 12A.15

Orders included as "care and protection" orders include orders placing the child under the guardianship of the State, protective custody orders and supervision orders. The types of orders vary between jurisdictions — not all these types of orders are available within each jurisdiction. Also, the 1996–97 data included

for the first time, interim and temporary orders, administrative arrangements and permanent care orders for some states, where these types of orders/arrangements were available. The 1996–97 figures were therefore not comparable to figures for previous years.

Roles and responsibilities

The State or Territory Government departments that administer child protection legislation are responsible for investigating and assessing child abuse and neglect reports and making court applications when an order is required to protect a child. Police services also have a role in investigating allegations of child abuse and neglect, particularly criminal matters. Police services are covered in Chapter 5.

State and Territory Government departments also provide child protection-focused family support services and supported placement services. The degree to which these services are provided by government or by the government funded non-government sector varies across jurisdictions. However, the non-government sector plays a significant role in the provision of services in all states and territories.

Adding to the work of state and territory welfare departments and the non-government sector, the health sector has a role in assessing child protection matters and delivering preventative and therapeutic and counselling services.

12.2.2 Recent developments

All jurisdictions have continued to address the need to effectively target responses to an increasing number of reports of abuse and neglect. Some jurisdictions have developed differential response systems which commonly attempt to separate expressions of concern about children's general welfare from reports of child maltreatment.

A greater awareness of the need to provide the most effective and least intrusive response consistent with meeting the family's needs has led to an emphasis on increasing the quality of risk assessment during the intake stages and during initial contact with a family. Some states examined their risk assessment frameworks and risk assessment tools during 1997, with a view to increasing the accuracy of initial responses.

It has become increasingly clear that the role of family support services in child protection requires integration and coordination of statutory child protection services and government and non-government support services.

There is a continuing trend towards working with families where harm has been substantiated to provide child protection services without a formal order. To better report on this area of work, further definitional work around family support services is planned.

An increasing focus on the need for inter-agency coordination has led some jurisdictions to identify and formalise the roles and responsibilities of all statutory agencies in relation to child protection. An example of this recognition for interagency collaboration is the NSW Joint Investigation Teams which involve the police and the Department of Community Services.

There has been a continuing shift in emphasis away from child protection intervention that is concerned with parental actions, and towards responses to the identified needs of the child and family.

There is now a greater recognition of the benefits of working with families and involving families in decision making, thereby increasing the use of the family's own resources.

12.2.3 Framework of performance measures

The framework of performance indicators for child protection services is based on shared government objectives (Box 12.1).

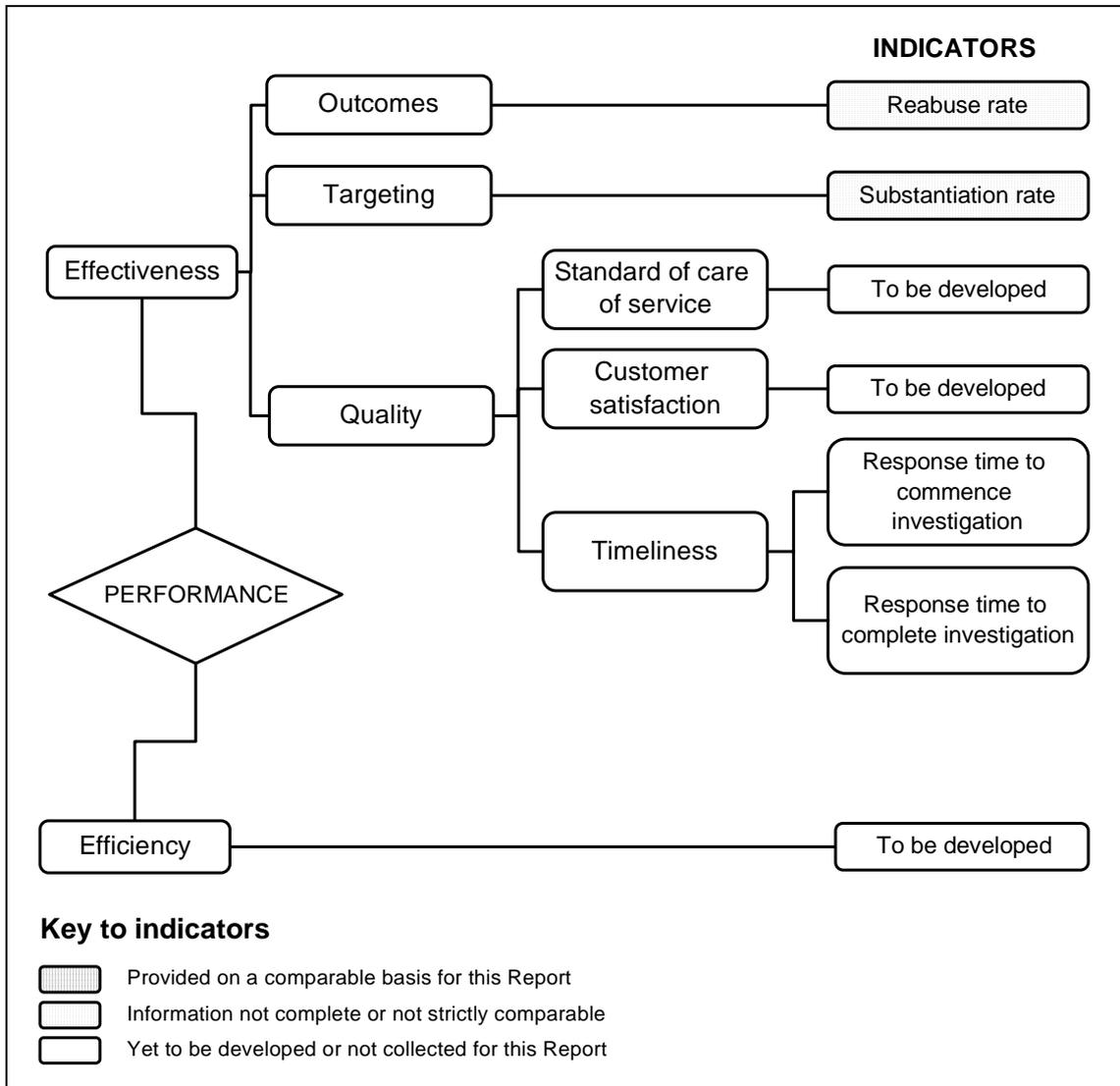
Box 12.1: Objective for child protection services

The aim of child protection services is 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; and
- to assist families to protect children and young people.

The framework identifies key result areas which measure the extent to which this broad objective is met (Figure 12.2).

Figure 12.2: Performance indicators for child protection services



12.2.4 Future directions

Outcomes for child protection

A review of international and Australian experiences in developing outcome measures for child protection service delivery is planned. Information gained from this research will feed into the development of improved outcome indicators for child protection and supported placement services.

Improving comparability of data

The data provided in this Report continue to be non-comparable in many respects. Definitions of 'notification', 'investigation' and 'substantiation' are different for many of the states and territories, reflecting differences in legislation and policy. However, the need to improve comparability of data is continuing to be actively addressed. The initial focus will be on defining the key tasks within the child protection process which are common to all jurisdictions. This will allow the use of generic definitions, which will improve comparable reporting of all activity-based indicators.

Family support data

Family support services are recognised as an important part of child protection responses. It is now more likely than in the past that a child will be protected through working with his or her family, without a formal order in place. To better report on this area, further scoping and definitional work is required.

12.2.5 Key performance results

Effectiveness

The substantiation rate attempts to measure the effectiveness of targeting of investigation, recognising the human as well as financial cost of investigation where no abuse or neglect can be substantiated. Comparable data were not available for this Report, non-comparable data are presented in Attachment 12A.

Repeat abuse and neglect is an important indicator of the outcomes of child protection services, as these services aim to prevent the recurrence of abuse and neglect towards children.

Little progress has been made in developing comparable repeat abuse data.

12.3 Supported placements

Supported placement services provide care for children and young people aged up to 18 years who are placed away from their parents or family home for reasons of safety or family crisis.

12.3.1 Profile of supported placements

Children are placed in supported placements for a variety of reasons related to their care and protection, including abuse and neglect, illness of parents, or the inability of parents to provide adequate care. Placements may be voluntary or made in conjunction with care and protection orders.

Use of the child's extended family to provide care is considered a priority when supported placements are made. If care cannot be provided within the child's family or kinship system, approved carers not related to the child are used. Such placements may be family-based or residential (such as family group homes).

Composition of clients

Across Australia, there were approximately 13 900 children in supported placements as at June 1997. As a proportion of the child population (aged 0 to 17 years), supported placement was highest in Tasmania (4 per 1000) and lowest in Queensland, WA, the ACT and the NT (2 per 1000) (Table 12.3).

Table 12.3: Children in supported placements, 30 June 1997
(number)^a

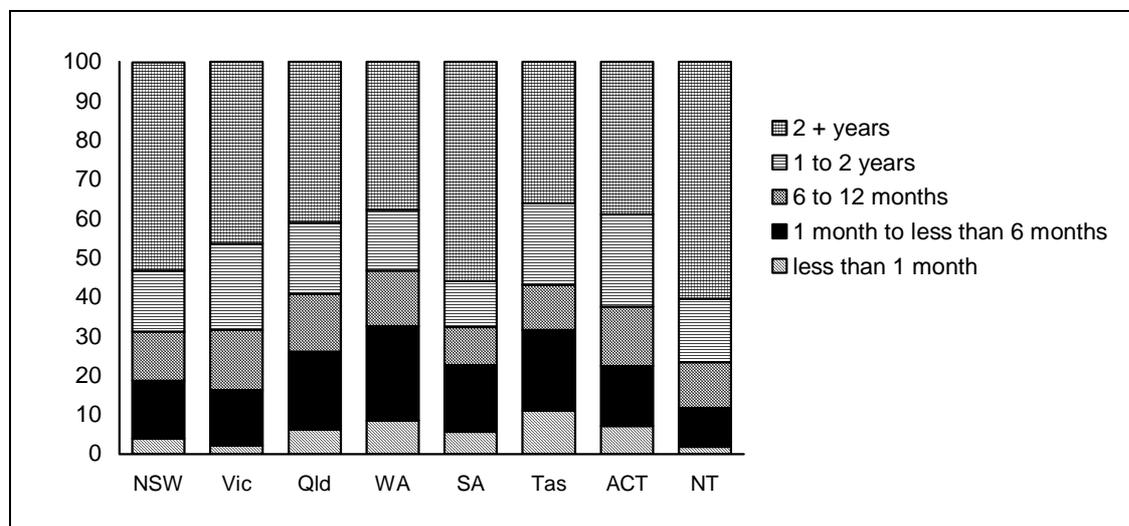
	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Vic</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>WA</i>	<i>SA</i>	<i>Tas</i>	<i>ACT</i>	<i>NT</i>
<i>Children aged 0 to 17 years in supported placement</i>								
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children	1 270	304	549	318	219	39	28	58
Other	4 147	3 089	1 662	732	930	422	145	53
All children	5 417	3 393	2 211	1 050	1 149	461	173	111
<i>Children in supported placement (per 1000 children aged 0 to 17 years)</i>								
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children	26	30	12	13	23	6	21	3
Other	3	3	2	2	3	4	2	1
All children	3	3	2	2	3	4	2	2

a Supported placements data were not the same for each state/territory. Refer to footnotes for each state and territory in the source tables for information about what has been included in each state's and territory's data.

Sources: Tables 12A.17; 12A.20; 12A.23; 12A.26; 12A.29; 12A.32; 12A.35; 12A.38

Children may enter supported placement for short-term care or for long-term placement. Generally less than half of children placed remain in continuous supported placement for two years or more (only SA and NT had more than 50 per cent of children in continuous supported placement for two years or more as at 30 June 1997). Only a small proportion of children had been in continuous supported non-respite placement for less than one month (ranging from 2.1 per cent in Victoria to 11.1 per cent in Tasmania) (Figure 12.3).

Figure 12.3: Distribution of children by length of time in continuous supported non-respite placement, 30 June 1997 (per cent)^{a, b}



a Included non-respite placements only.

b Supported placements data were not the same for each state/territory. Refer to footnotes for each state and territory in the source tables for information about what has been included in each state's and territory's data.

Sources: Tables 12A.17; 12A.20; 12A.23; 12A.26; 12A.29; 12A.32; 12A.35; 12A.38

Roles and responsibilities

State and Territory Governments are responsible for providing supported placement services. The non-government sector plays a major role in providing supported placement services in all states and territories, with government funding and supervision of standards. Governments in most jurisdictions also provide these services directly.

12.3.2 Recent developments

There is increasing emphasis across all states and territories on the out-sourcing of supported care and related support services. This form of service provision has been well-developed in some jurisdictions for many years, but others have only recently sought to transfer the bulk of delivery responsibility to the non-government sector under output-based funding arrangements.

12.3.3 Framework of performance indicators

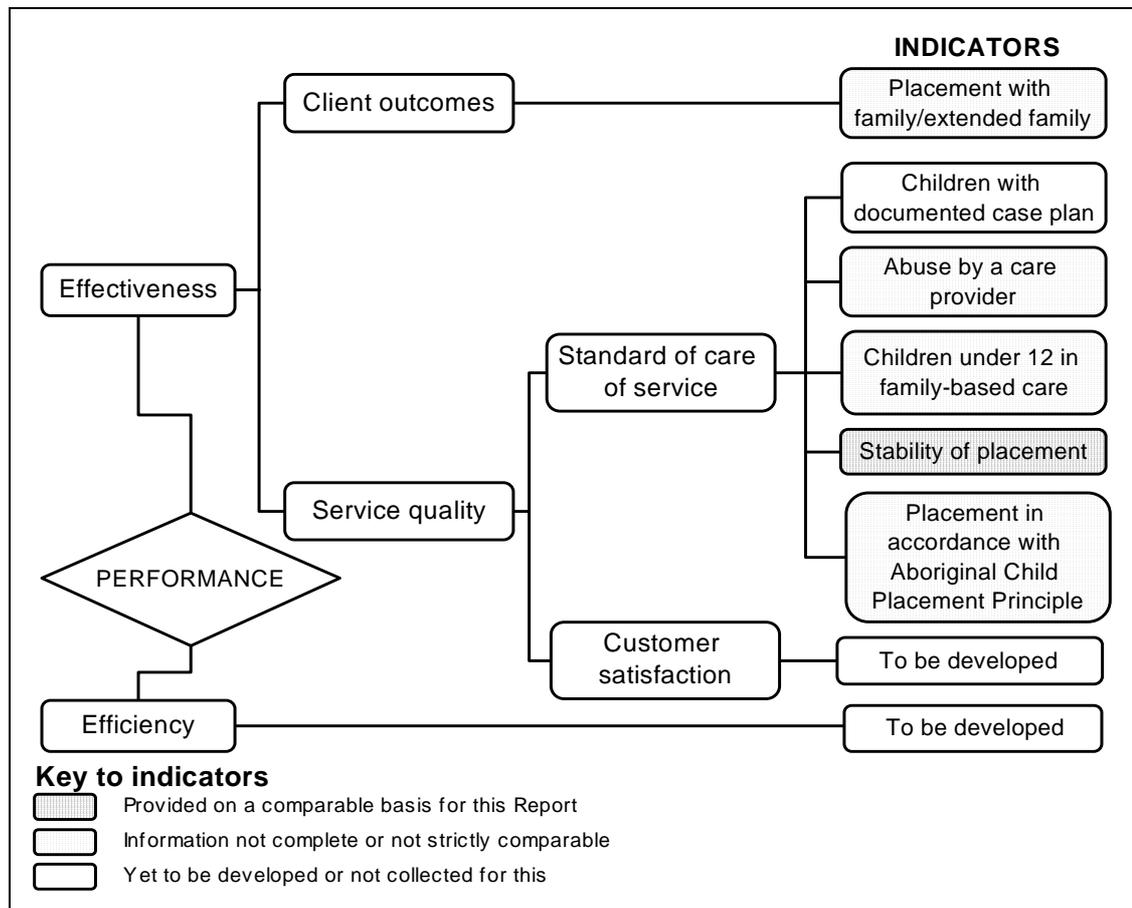
The framework of performance indicators for supported placement services is based on broad government objectives (Box 12.2).

Box 12.2: Objective for supported placement services

The objective of supported placement services is to care for children and young people aged 18 years who cannot live with their parents for reasons of safety or family crisis.

The framework identifies key result areas which measure the extent to which these broad objectives are met (Figure 12.4).

Figure 12.4: Performance indicators for supported placements



12.3.4 Future directions

It is now a well-established practice that the preferred placement of a child requiring placement away from home is with relatives and other members of the child’s community. Similarly, emphasis on safely reuniting (or retaining) children with their families has led to the development of specialist family

preservation services. It is now important to evaluate the success of these policies and services in achieving longer term protection of children.

It is also necessary to further examine the interaction between indicators relating to a child's placement with his or her extended family, abuse by care providers, and other forms of re-abuse.

It is proposed that a means of gauging client satisfaction with the use of supported placement services, possibly through survey methods, be considered.

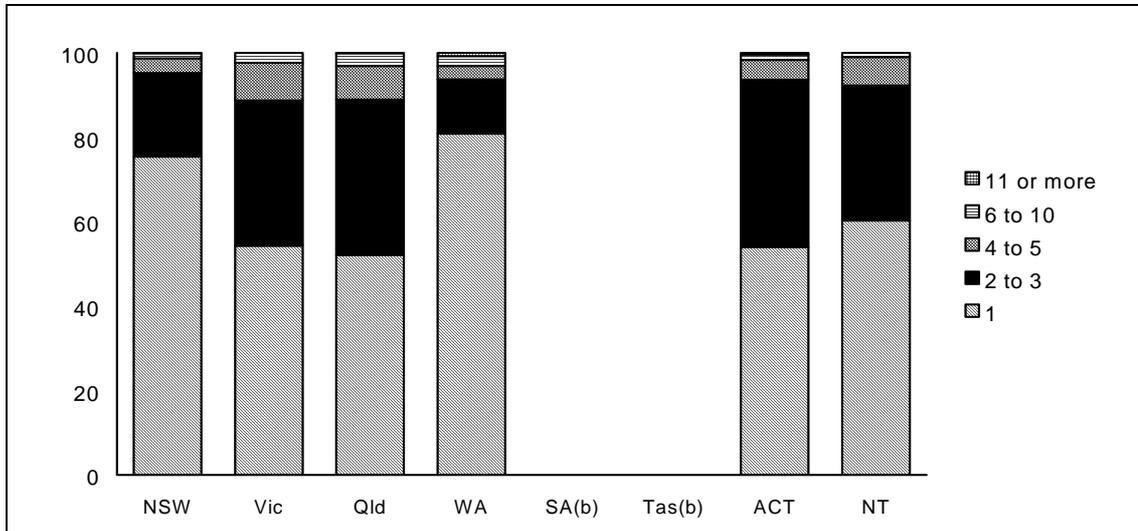
12.3.5 Key performance results

Number of placements and length of time in care

Stability in placements of children placed away from their family for protective reasons is an indicator of service quality, particularly for those children who require long-term placements. Instability may be indicated by the number of placement changes experienced by a child, especially when the number of placements exceeds two or three. Many children will be quite appropriately placed in more than one placement, for example an initial emergency placement followed by a longer placement with relatives.

Data were collected on the number of placements in the 12 months following admission to out-of-home care in 1995–96. A large proportion of all children in continuous placement for the 12 months following admission had between one and three placements, with more than half having only one placement during that period. The proportion of children having no more than three placements was highest in NSW (95 per cent) and lowest in Queensland and Victoria (89 per cent) (Figure 12.5).

Figure 12.5: Distribution of number of placements in the subsequent 12 months for children admitted to out-of-home care, 1996–97 (per cent)^a



a Supported placements data collection were not the same for each state and territory. Refer to footnotes for each state and territory in the source tables for information about what was included in each state's and territory's data.

b Data were not available for SA or Tasmania.

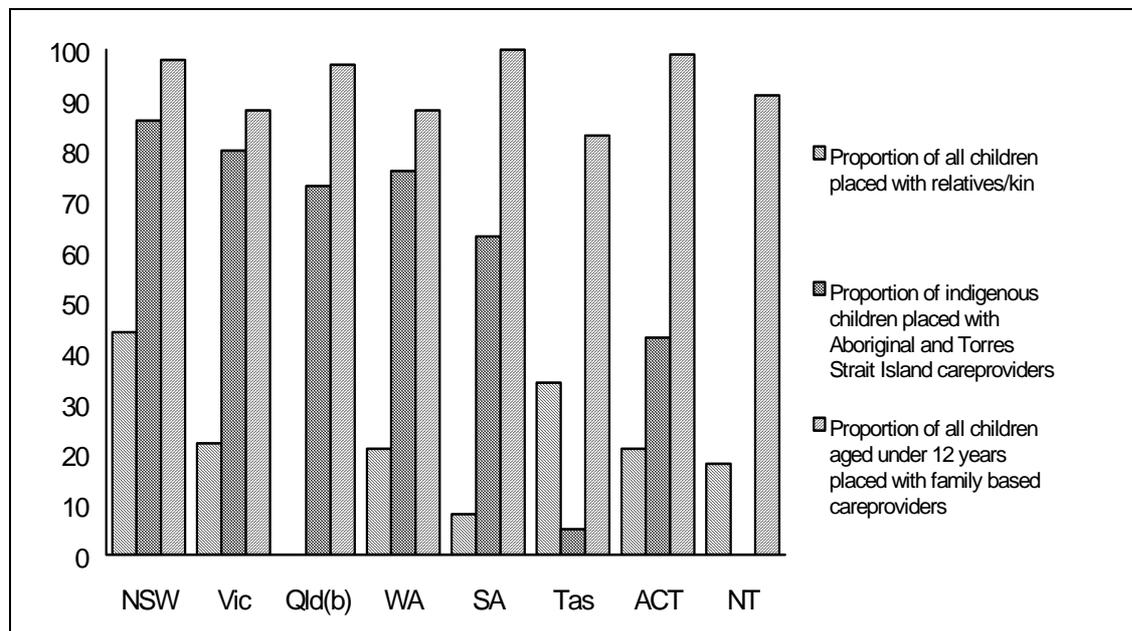
Sources: Tables 12A.19; 12A.22; 12A.25; 12A.28; 12A.37; 12A.40

A further indicator of the quality of child placement is the suitability of the type of placement. However, it is only possible to make limited jurisdictional comparisons of the nature of placement performance because data were either not collected or collected differently across jurisdictions.

Generally it is considered to be in the best interests of young children to be placed in family-based care. Most children aged 12 years and under were placed in family-based care in all jurisdictions. The proportion placed in family-based care ranged from 100 per cent in SA and 99 per cent in the ACT to 88 per cent in Victoria and 87 per cent in WA.

The proportion of indigenous children placed with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander care givers was also generally high (86 per cent in NSW, 80 per cent in Victoria, 76 per cent in WA). It was lowest in Tasmania (5 per cent) and the ACT (43 per cent), although this may have been influenced by the small indigenous population in that territory (Figure 12.6). The data relating to the proportion of indigenous children placed with indigenous care providers is likely to be an underestimation due to difficulties in some states in identifying the indigenous status of care providers and in reporting on all placements.

Figure 12.6: Proportions of children in preferred placements, 1996–97 (per cent)^a



a Refer to footnotes for each state and territory in the source tables for information about what has been included in each state's and territory's data.

b Separate data for Queensland on the proportion of all children placed with relatives/kin were not available.

Sources: Tables 12A.18; 12A.21; 12A.24; 12A.27; 12A.30; 12A.33; 12A.36; 12A.39

12.4 Supported accommodation and assistance

Supported accommodation and assistance services aim to assist people who are homeless, or are at imminent risk of becoming homeless as a result of a crisis. This includes women escaping domestic violence. Services include transitional supported accommodation and related support services which help people who are homeless to achieve the maximum possible degree of self-reliance and independence. This chapter reports on services provided under the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP). Other crisis and supported accommodation services, funded by the Commonwealth Government and provided under the Commonwealth State Housing Agreement, are not covered.

12.4.1 Profile of accommodation and assistance

Types of agencies

SAAP provides services to a wide range of clients. The support periods provided during 1996–97 were delivered by:¹

- agencies providing general support (20 per cent);
- agencies targeting single men only (9 per cent);
- agencies targeting young people (38 per cent);
- agencies targeting women escaping domestic violence (21 per cent);
- agencies targeting families (8 per cent); and
- agencies targeting single women only (4 per cent) (AIHW 1997b).

Not all agencies provided accommodation and some agencies also provided other types of services. Crisis accommodation agencies (short-term support) accounted for 34 per cent of SAAP agencies, while medium/long-term accommodation agencies made up a further 40 per cent. Other types of agencies included those providing day support (2.5 per cent), outreach support (3.3 per cent), telephone information (1.6 per cent) and support to other agencies (2.1 per cent). Multiple service agencies accounted for 12 per cent of all SAAP providers (AIHW 1997b).

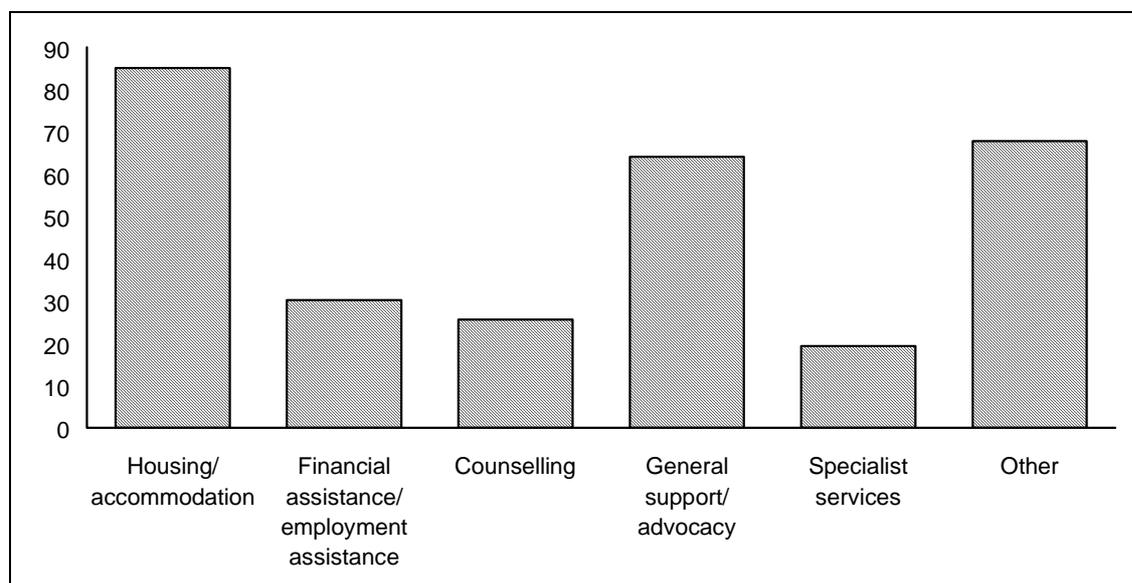
Services provided

SAAP not only aims to provide supported accommodation for homeless people, but also to resolve crises, re-establish family links where appropriate and re-establish a client's capacity to live without SAAP support.

Housing and accommodation services were provided in 85 per cent of support periods. Financial and employment assistance (30 per cent of supported periods), counselling (26 per cent of supported periods), general support and advocacy (64 per cent of supported periods) and specialist services (19 per cent of supported periods) were also commonly provided (Figure 12.7).

¹ A 'support period' is an occasion of support provided to a SAAP client. If a client receives more than one support period, it is recorded as only one client but multiple support periods.

Figure 12.7: Composition of SAAP support periods, 1996–97
(per cent)^a



a Agencies may provide more than one type of service as a part of a single support period, thus services provided did not sum to 100 per cent.

Source: Table 12A.41

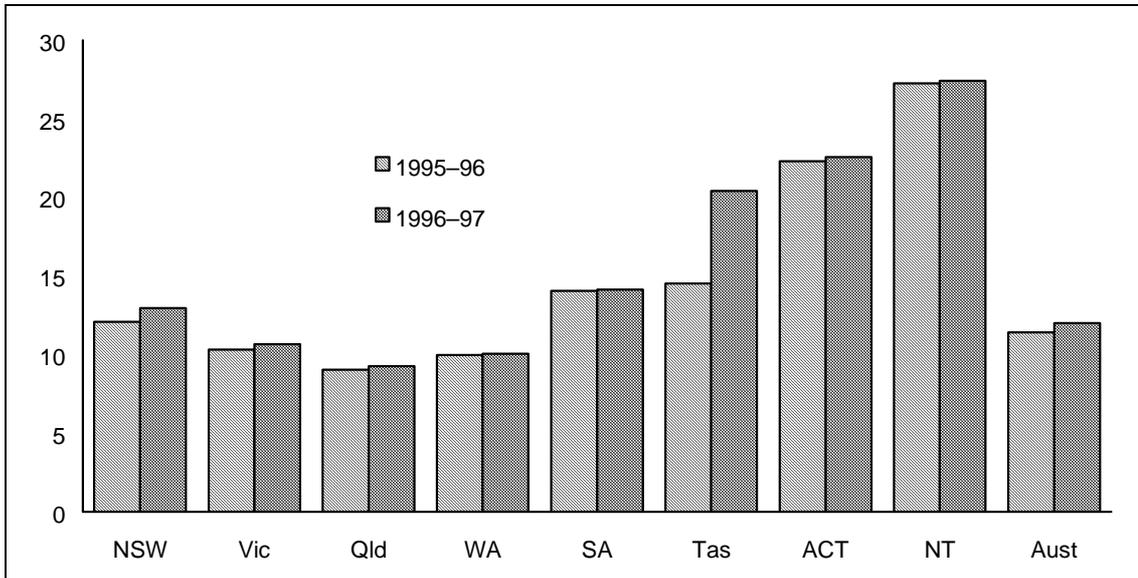
Roles and responsibilities

SAAP services are provided under bilateral agreements between the Commonwealth and each State or Territory Government. The funding of agencies, including setting funding conditions, is undertaken by State and Territory Governments. Research, strategy and other planning and development activities are coordinated at the national level by the National SAAP Coordination and Development Committee, (comprising Commonwealth, State and Territory Government representatives).

Recurrent funding on SAAP services was \$219.7 million in 1996–97. The Commonwealth Government contributed 56 per cent of funding and the State and Territory Governments contributed 44 per cent in 1996–97.

Combined Commonwealth and State and Territory Government funding increased in real terms in all jurisdictions from 1995–96 to 1996–97. The largest increase occurred in Tasmania where real funding rose by 40 per cent. SAAP funding per person in the total population in 1996–97 varied from \$9.28 in Queensland to \$27.42 in the NT (Figure 12.8).

Figure 12.8: Recurrent SAAP program funding per person in the total population, 1995–96 and 1996–97 (in 1996–97 dollars)^a



^a The total population figure is not indicative of the demand for SAAP services.

Source: Table 12A.42

12.4.2 Framework of performance indicators

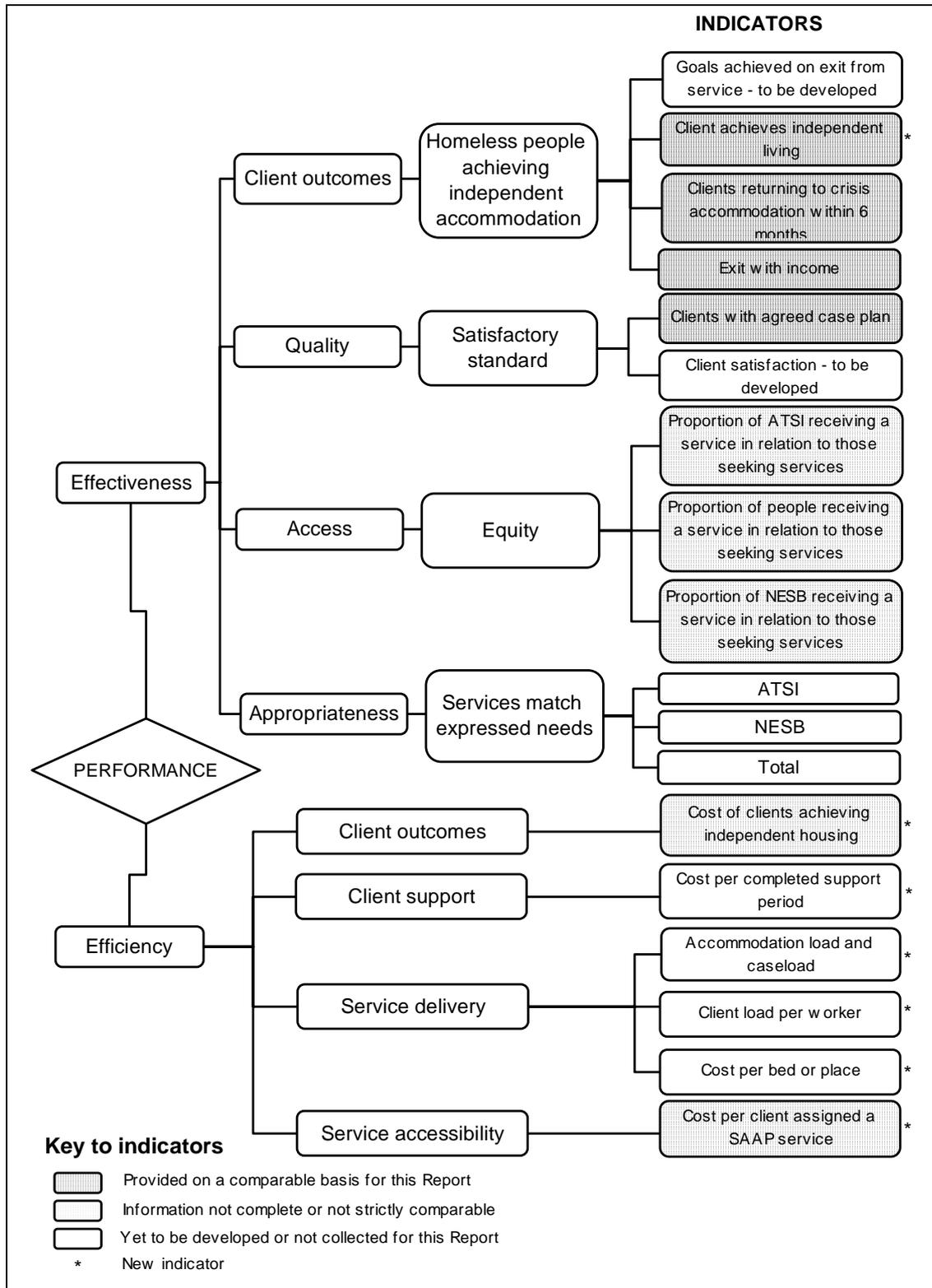
The framework of indicators for supported accommodation and assistance are based on the overarching objectives of SAAP (Box 12.3).

Box 12.3: Objectives of SAAP services

The objective of SAAP services is to provide transitional supported accommodation and related support services to help people who are homeless achieve the maximum possible degree of self-reliance and independence.

Effectiveness measures have been developed for quality, access, appropriateness and client outcomes. Data on effectiveness are reported for the first time in this Report. Efficiency measures in relation to the key outputs and outcomes have been incorporated into the framework of indicators for the first time in this Report (Figure 12.9).

Figure 12.9: Performance indicators for SAAP services



12.4.3 Future directions

Client satisfaction

An important indicator of quality is client satisfaction. A number of methodological issues need to be resolved before this measure can be applied to SAAP services. Nevertheless, it is hoped that a nationally-consistent instrument to measure client satisfaction can be developed.

Client outcomes

Further work is also being undertaken to identify client outcome indicators which better reflect the impact services have on the circumstances and wellbeing of homeless people.

Develop data collection for efficiency indicators

A set of six efficiency indicators have been developed for this Report, but data in relation to most of them are not yet available. Further work will be undertaken to improve the definitions for these indicators and to collect data which will allow full reporting against these indicators in the 1999 Report. Some differences in indicator results for jurisdictions may reflect different counting and reporting rules for generating financial data. Differences may also reflect the treatment of various expenditure items (for example, superannuation). These issues are being addressed and this should allow the reporting of fully comparable data in future reports.

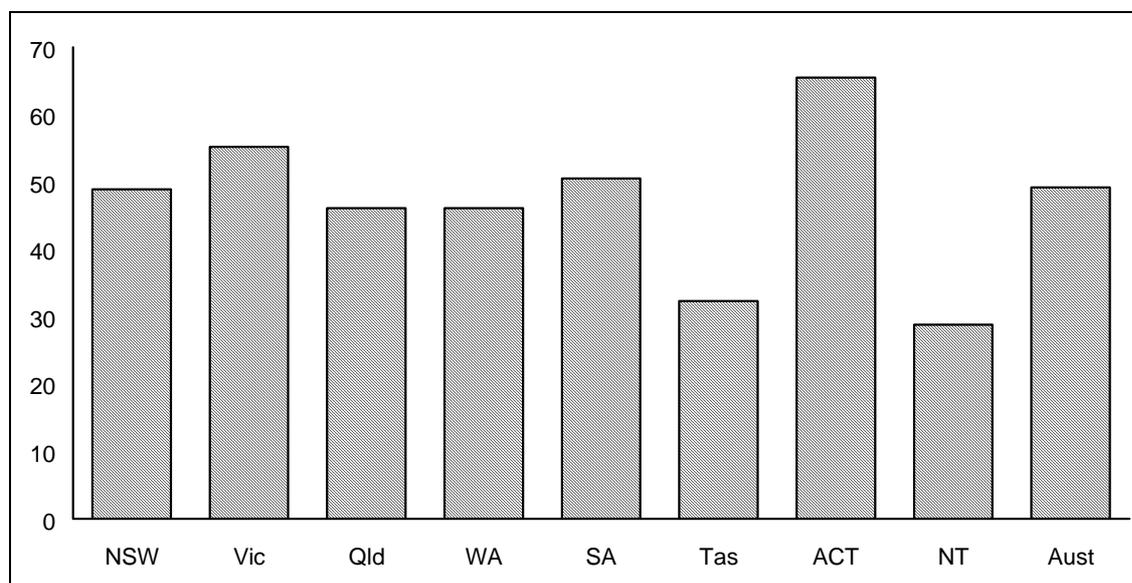
12.4.4 Key performance results

Quality

An indicator of the quality of the service provided by SAAP is the existence of an agreed support plan (reflecting an increased emphasis on case management).

Nationally, a support plan existed for 49 per cent of all support periods in 1996–97. However, an agreed support plan was not appropriate for 30 per cent of support periods. The highest proportion of support periods with a support plan was in the ACT (66 per cent). The lowest proportions were in Tasmania (32 per cent) and the NT (29 per cent) (Figure 12.10).

Figure 12.10: Proportion of support periods with a support plan, 1996–97 (per cent)



Source: Table 12A.43

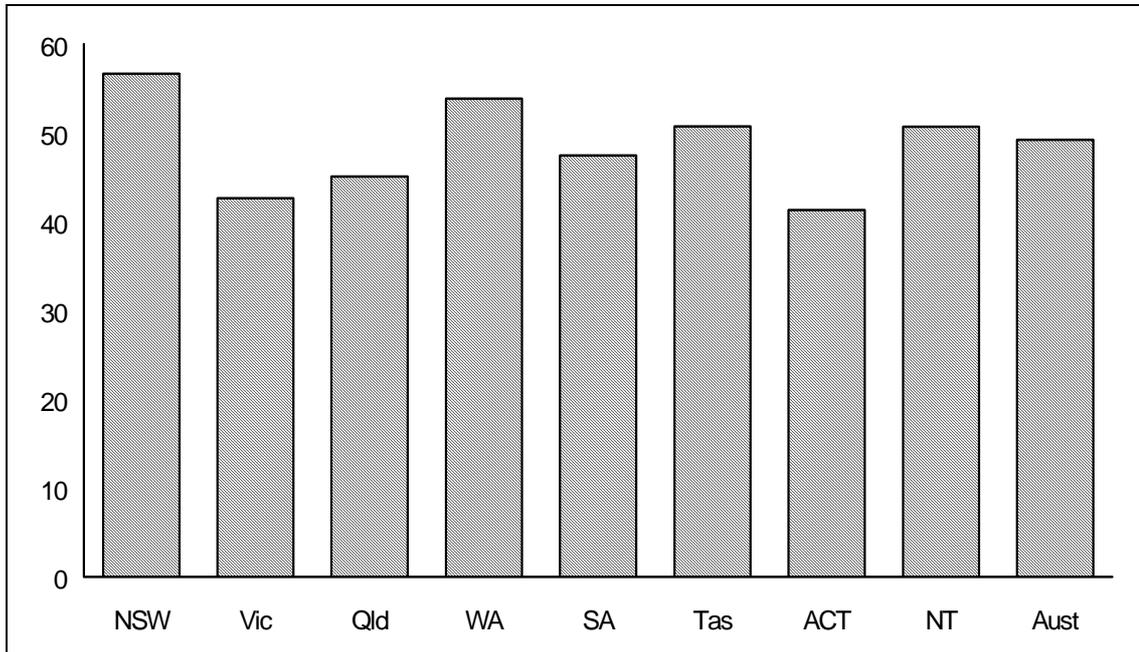
Access

A general indicator of access is the ability of services to provide assistance to those in need.² The proportion of all people seeking SAAP services who received assistance was 49 per cent nationally in 1996–97. The ability to give assistance varied across jurisdictions from a low of 41 per cent in the ACT to a high of 57 per cent in NSW (Figure 12.11). Note that the estimates should be treated with caution as they were based on a two week data collection and therefore, may not be representative of the eventual success of clients accessing SAAP services over the full year.

Data to support measurement of this indicator is poorly developed. The SAAP Unmet Demand Collection (unmet demand occurs when a person requests, but does not receive, support or supported accommodation) is a two week survey, and has not been validated in terms of either extrapolation across a full year, nor for the number of individuals that might be represented. Further validation needs to be undertaken in relation to individuals not provided with services. Consequently, the tables and graphs derived from the data in this section of the report should be treated with extreme caution.

² The ability of services to provide assistance to those in need included only support services that were directly provided to clients by a SAAP agency and not the act of referring clients to other agencies.

Figure 12.11: SAAP clients as a proportion of estimated total demand, 1996–97 (per cent)^a



a Estimated total demand included total SAAP clients and 'unmet demand'. 'Unmet demand' estimates were based on the SAAP Unmet Demand Collection and thus, should be treated with caution.

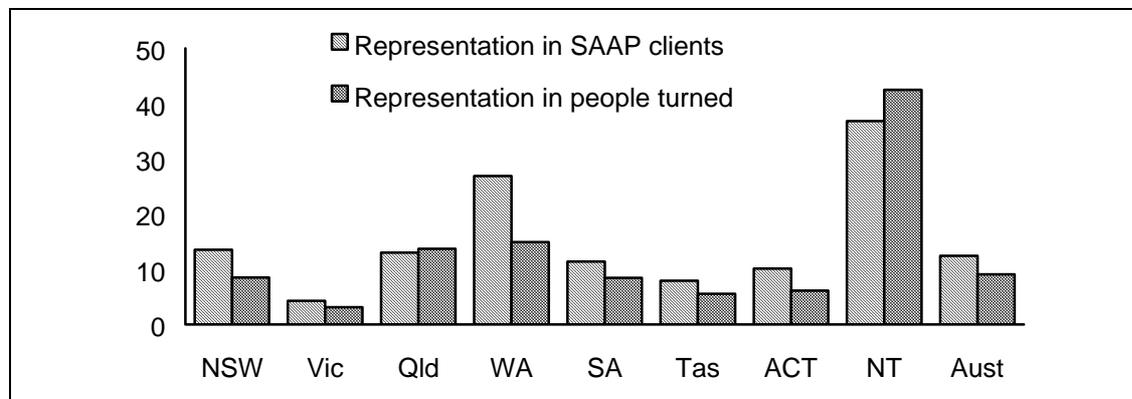
Source and additional notes: Table 12A.44

Potential clients were not provided with a service in 55 per cent of all cases because no accommodation was available. Thirteen per cent of potential clients were not be provided with a service because they were in the wrong target group, and a further 3 per cent were not serviced because there was insufficient staff at the agency (AIHW 1997b).

Supported accommodation services target homeless persons in general, but access by special needs groups, such as indigenous people and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, is also important.

Nationally, 9 per cent of people unable to be provided with a service were from indigenous backgrounds in 1996–97, while 12 per cent of SAAP clients were from indigenous backgrounds. The proportion of people unable to be provided with a service from indigenous backgrounds was lower than the proportion of SAAP clients from indigenous backgrounds in most jurisdictions. The exceptions were Queensland and the NT (Figure 12.12).

Figure 12.12: Representation of indigenous people in SAAP clients and people turned away from SAAP services, 1996–97 (per cent)^a

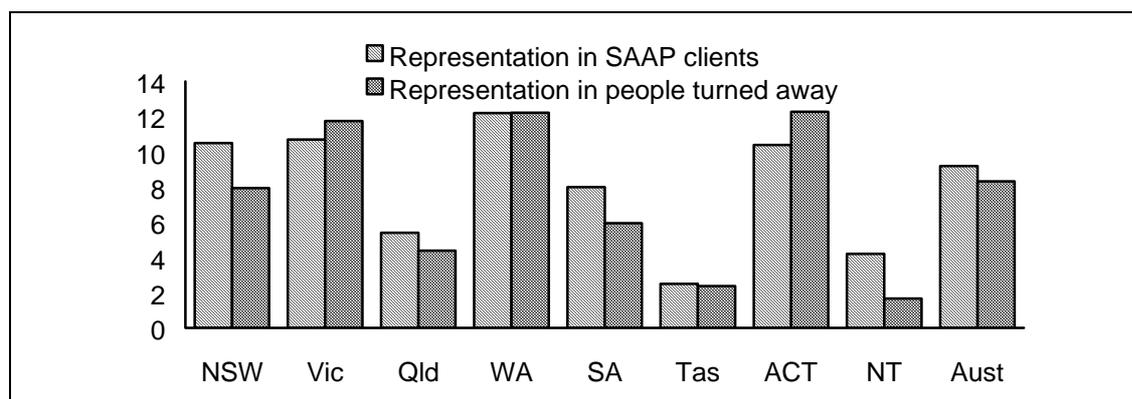


a The number of people turned away from SAAP services was the ‘unmet demand’. ‘Unmet demand’ estimates were based on the SAAP Unmet Demand Collection and thus, should be treated with caution.

Source and additional notes: Table 12A.45

The proportion of SAAP clients and people unable to receive a SAAP service from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds varied across jurisdictions in 1996–97. Nationally, the proportion of SAAP clients from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds was only 1 percentage point higher than people unable to receive a SAAP service from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. The smallest difference between clients from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds receiving a SAAP service and those not receiving a SAAP service was in WA and Tasmania (Figure 12.13).

Figure 12.13: Representation of culturally and linguistically diverse people in SAAP clients and people turned away from SAAP services, 1996–97 (per cent)^a



a The number of people turned away from SAAP services was the ‘unmet demand’. ‘Unmet demand’ estimates were based on the SAAP Unmet Demand Collection and thus, should be treated with caution.

Source and additional notes: Table 12A.46

Outcomes

An important measure of the success of supported accommodation and assistance is the change in status of the client — the client's ability to achieve self-reliance and independence. A number of key status characteristics linked to capacity to live independently, are recorded at the time of exit from SAAP services: income, housing status and workforce status. The status of clients after a further period of time would provide additional insights into the sustainability of independent living, but such information is not currently available.

There was little variation across jurisdictions in the income status of clients exiting SAAP services in 1996–97. Nationally, the majority of clients exiting SAAP did not change their source of income. Eighty-three per cent of clients had no substantive change in the source of their income from when they first accessed SAAP services. A further 7 per cent of clients had no income before and after support (Table 12.4).

Some clients gained greater independence after support, with 6 per cent moving from no income support prior to SAAP to obtaining some income, and a further 3 per cent obtaining their own benefit, an extra benefit or a wage. Only 1 per cent of clients exiting SAAP became more dependent (changing from a wage to government payments or some income to no income) (Table 12.4).

Victoria had the largest number moving to increased income independence with 10 per cent of clients obtaining further income after support. Tasmania had the lowest number improving their income independence with 6 per cent of clients gaining some income or own benefit, extra benefit or wages (Table 12.4).

Table 12.4: Change in client's income source after SAAP support, 1996–97 (per cent)

	<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>
No income to some income	6.6	7.4	6.7	4.6	4.9	4.3	7.1	3.9	6.3
Obtain own benefit/extra benefit/wages	2.2	2.8	2.8	3.0	2.6	1.2	1.6	4.9	2.6
No substantive change	80.1	82.6	80.7	86.7	86.7	89.8	80.4	86.9	82.8
No income before and after support	10.0	5.7	8.9	4.4	5.1	4.0	9.8	3.5	7.2
Wage to government payments/ some income to no income	1.0	1.7	0.9	1.2	0.7	0.7	1.2	0.8	1.2
Total	100.0								

Source: Table 12A.47

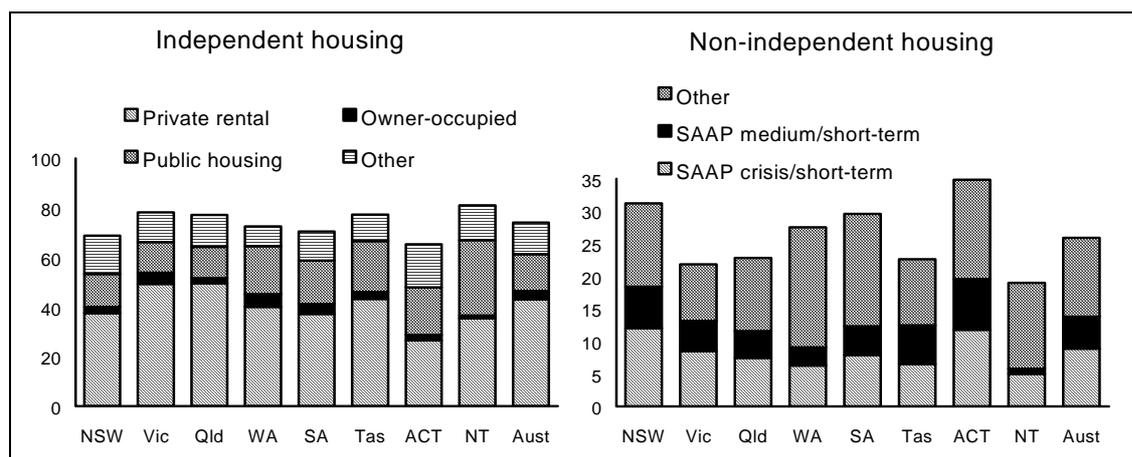
The effectiveness of supported accommodation and assistance is at least in part indicated by the proportion of clients achieving independent living at the end of

the support period. Nationally, 74 per cent of clients achieved independent housing at the end of a support period in 1996–97. Across jurisdictions, the proportion achieving independent housing was highest in the NT (81 per cent of clients) and lowest in the ACT (65 per cent) (Figure 12.14).

Nationally, of those achieving independent housing in 1996–97, an average of 43 per cent obtained private rental accommodation, 15 per cent moved to public housing accommodation, and 3 per cent of clients entered owner-occupied housing (Figure 12.14).

Of the 26 per cent of clients who did not achieve independent housing at the end of the support period, 14 per cent continued to live in SAAP accommodation (9 per cent crisis/short-term and 5 per cent medium/short-term). The highest proportion of clients remaining in SAAP accommodation was in the ACT (20 per cent) and the lowest was in the NT (6 per cent) (Figure 12.14).

Figure 12.14: Change in client's type of housing after SAAP support, 1996–97 (per cent)

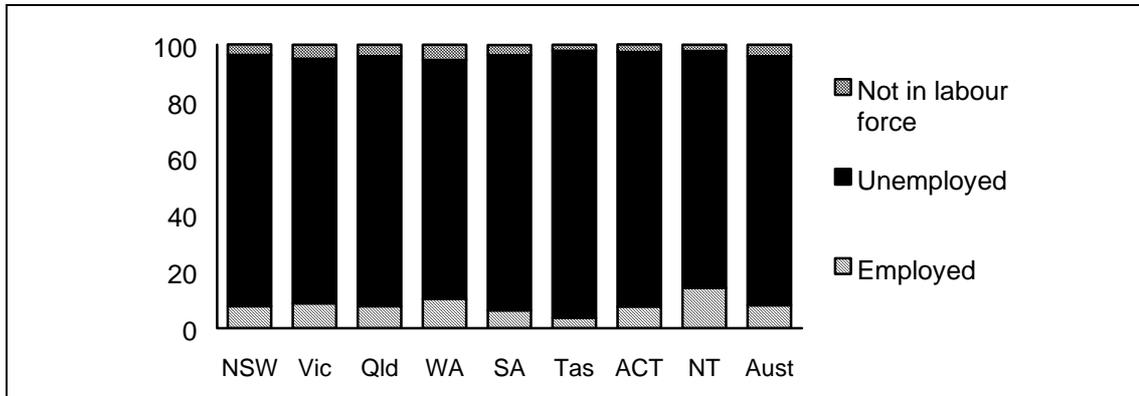


Source: Table 12A.48

The main focus of SAAP services is to provide accommodation support, with additional support given to assist clients achieve self-reliance and independence. One aspect of this is workforce participation, which is also influenced by many economic and social factors.

Nationally, only 47 per cent of people in a support period were participating in the workforce. Of those people who were unemployed when entering SAAP, 88 per cent remained unemployed at the end of the support period in 1996–97. Of the remaining 12 per cent, 4 per cent were studying and 8 per cent were employed (Figure 12.15).

Figure 12.15: Change in the labour force status of clients after SAAP support, formally unemployed, 1996–97 (per cent)^a



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

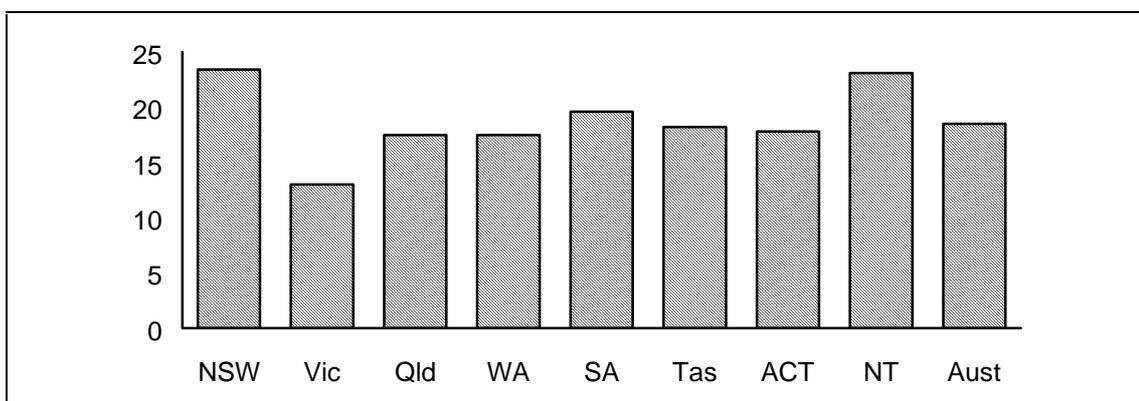
Source: Table 12A.49

The NT achieved the highest level of employment for previously unemployed people exiting SAAP (14 per cent). Tasmania had the lowest (4 per cent) (Figure 12.15). Nationally, of those achieving employment, 41 per cent were employed full-time, 36 per cent on a casual basis and 23 per cent part-time.

Some indication of the sustainability of independent living is provided by the proportion of clients who return to SAAP agencies within 12 months.

Nationally, 18.5 per cent of SAAP clients exiting from the service in 1996–97 returned to SAAP agencies before the end of the year. The highest proportions of clients returning were in NSW and the NT (23 per cent). The proportion was lowest in Victoria (13 per cent) (Figure 12.16).

Figure 12.16: Proportion of SAAP clients exiting from the service in 1996–97 who returned to SAAP agencies before the end of that year, 1996–97 (per cent)



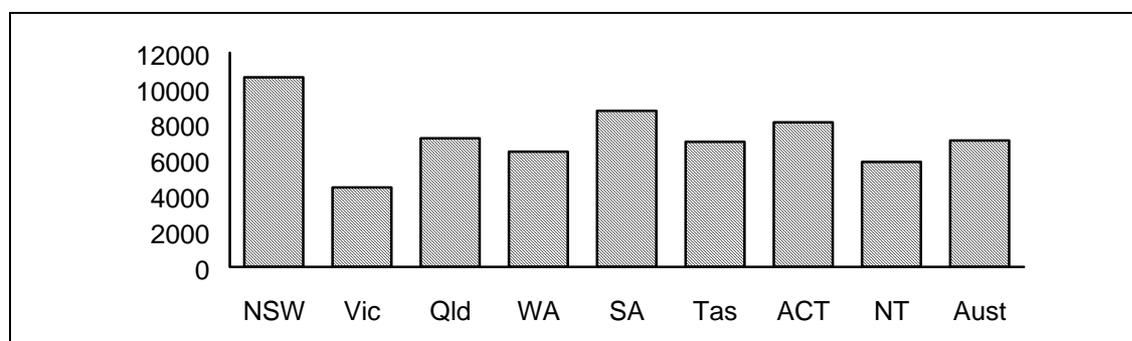
Source: Table 12A.50

Efficiency

Some differences in indicator results for jurisdictions may reflect different counting and reporting rules for generating financial data. Others may reflect the treatment of various expenditure items (for example, superannuation).

The program cost per client achieving independent living is a broad indicator of the cost of achieving SAAP outcomes. ‘Program cost’ is the general program costs incurred under the SAAP agreement — the recurrent cost to government, excluding capital. In 1996–97, NSW had the highest program cost of achieving independent housing(\$10 623), and Victoria the lowest (\$4452) (Figure 12.17).

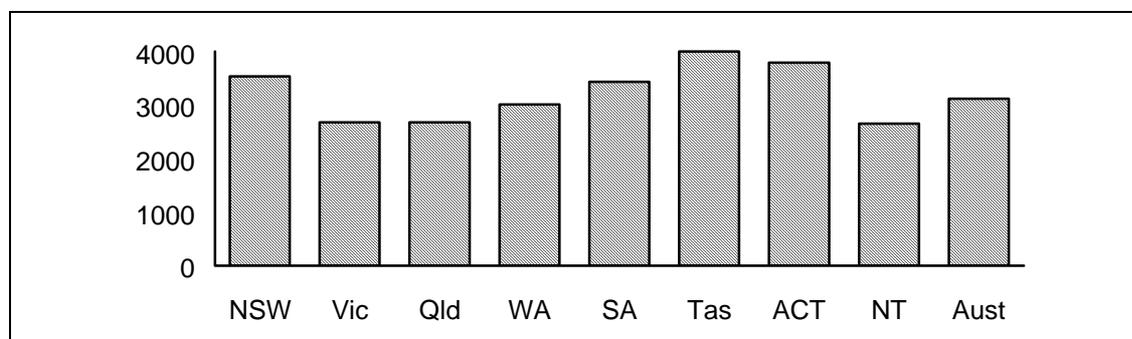
Figure 12.17: Program cost per client achieving independent housing, 1996–97 (\$)



Source: Table 12A.51

There was little variation across jurisdictions in the cost per client accessing SAAP services in 1996–97. It ranged from \$4000 per client in Tasmania to \$2700 per client in Victoria, Queensland and the NT (Figure 12.18). This indicator, however, does not include the cost of casual clients (who are provided with less than one hour of assistance and do not establish an ongoing relationship with a SAAP agency) accessing a SAAP service.

Figure 12.18: Program cost per clients access, 1996–97 (\$)



Source: Table 12A.52