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# 15 Protection and support services

Protection and support services aim to assist individuals and families who are in crisis or experiencing difficulties that hinder personal or family functioning. These services assist by alleviating the difficulties and reducing the potential for their recurrence.

This chapter reports on:

- *child protection services*: the functions of government that receive and assess allegations of child abuse and neglect, and/or harm to children and young people, provide and refer clients to family support and other relevant services, and intervene to protect children
- *out-of-home care services*: care for children placed away from their parents for protective or other family welfare reasons
- *juvenile justice services*: services that aim to promote community safety and reduce youth offending by assisting young people to address their offending behaviour
- *supported accommodation and assistance services*: services to assist young people, adults and families who are homeless or at imminent risk of becoming homeless. (Only limited updated data were available for this section for this Report).

Several improvements to the chapter have been made this year including:

- reporting on juvenile justice services has moved from the Community services preface to this chapter, in recognition of the important role of juvenile justice services in assisting young people experiencing difficulties that involve contact with the criminal justice system
- four jurisdictions are now reporting experimental results for the ‘pathways’ project, and indicative unit costs (program dollars per placement day) for out-of-home care services are reported for the first time for most jurisdictions
- a partial measure for the outcome indicator ‘Improved education, health and wellbeing of the child’ is included this year.

A profile of child protection and out-of-home care services appears in section 15.1. A framework of performance indicators is outlined in section 15.2 and data are

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discussed in section 15.3. Future directions in child protection and out-of-home care performance reporting are outlined in section 15.4.

A profile of juvenile justice services appears in section 15.5. Section 15.6 notes the ongoing development of a performance indicator framework and future directions in juvenile justice performance reporting are discussed in 15.7.

A profile of supported accommodation and assistance services funded under the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) appears in section 15.8. A framework of performance indicators for these services is outlined in section 15.9. The limited updated data available are discussed in section 15.10. Future directions in SAAP performance reporting are discussed in section 15.11.

Jurisdictions' comments on child protection and out-of-home care services, juvenile justice services and supported accommodation and assistance services are reported in section 15.12. Definitions of data descriptors and indicators are provided in section 15.13. A list of supporting tables is provided in section 15.14. Attachment tables are identified in references throughout this chapter by an 'A' suffix (for example, table 15A.3 is table 3 in the attachment). Attachment tables are provided on the CD-ROM enclosed with the Report and on the Review website: <http://www.pc.gov.au/gsp/reports/rogs/2008>. Section 15.15 lists references used in this chapter.

## **15.1 Profile of child protection and out-of-home care services**

### **Service overview**

#### *Child protection services*

Child protection services are provided to protect children and/or young people aged 0–17 years who are at risk of harm within their families, or whose families do not have the capacity to protect them. These services include:

- receiving and responding to reports of concern about children or young people, including investigation and assessment where appropriate
- providing support services (directly or through referral), where harm or a risk of significant harm is identified, to strengthen the capacity of families to care safely for children

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- initiating intervention where necessary, including applying for a care and protection order through a court and, in some situations, placing children or young people in out-of-home care to secure their safety
  - ensuring the ongoing safety of children and young people by working with families to resolve protective concerns
  - working with families to reunite children (who were removed for safety reasons) with their parents as soon as possible (in some jurisdictions, restoration may occur in voluntary placements as well)
  - securing permanent out-of-home/alternative care when it is determined that a child is unable to be returned to the care of his or her parents, and working with young people to identify alternative supported living arrangements where family reunification is not possible.

Research suggests that children and families who come into contact with the protection and support services system often share common social and demographic characteristics. Families with low incomes or that are reliant on pensions and benefits, those that experience alcohol and substance abuse, or a psychiatric disability, and those that have a family history of domestic violence are over-represented in the families that came into contact with the protection and support services system (Department of Human Services 2002).

#### *Child protection concerns and Indigenous communities*

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

#### *Out-of-home care services*

Out-of-home care services provide care for children and young people aged 0–17 years who are placed away from their parents or family home for reasons of safety or family crisis. These reasons include abuse, neglect or harm, illness of a

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parent and the inability of parents to provide adequate care. The placements may be voluntary or made in conjunction with care and protection orders.

Out-of-home care services are either home-based care (for example, foster care, care with the child's extended family or other home-based arrangements), facility-based care (for example, community residential care) or independent living (which is often intensively supported) as a transition to full independence or supported placements. Across jurisdictions, there has been a shift away from the use of facility-based (or residential) care towards foster care and other forms of home-based care, including relative/kinship care.

Intensive family support services are increasingly perceived as an alternative to the removal of the child from his or her home for child protection reasons (box 15.1).

**Box 15.1 Intensive family support services**

Intensive family support services are specialist services, established in each jurisdiction, that aim to:

- prevent the imminent separation of children from their primary caregivers as a result of child protection concerns
- reunify families where separation has already occurred.

Intensive family support services differ from other types of child protection and family support services referred to in this chapter, in that they:

- are funded or established explicitly to prevent the separation of, or to reunify, families
- provide a range of services as part of an integrated strategy focusing on improving family functioning and skills, rather than providing a single type of service
- are intensive in nature, averaging at least four hours of service provision per week for a specified short term period (usually less than six months)
- generally receive referrals from a child protection service.

Intensive family support services may use some or all of the following strategies: assessment and case planning; parent education and skill development; individual and family counselling; anger management; respite and emergency care; practical and financial support; mediation, brokerage and referral services; and training in problem solving.

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### Box 15.1 (Continued)

#### *Expenditure on intensive family support services*

Recurrent expenditure on intensive family support services across all jurisdictions was at least \$148.3 million in 2006-07. This expenditure has increased in real terms each year from \$81.8 million in 2002-03 (table 15A.24). This represents an average annual increase in expenditure of 16.1 per cent over this four year period. Tables 15A.24–27 provide additional information about families and children who were involved with intensive family support services, including the cost of providing these services per child commencing intensive family support services.

#### *Child protection treatment and support services*

A complementary suite of services not currently included in this Report, but intended for inclusion in future Reports, are known as child protection treatment and support services. These are targeted to at-risk families where there are concerns about the safety and wellbeing of children. They may be less intensive in nature and include services that strengthen family relationships in response to concerns about the welfare of a child and may focus on either early intervention or reunification support.

Child protection treatment and support services provide educational services, clinical services including counselling, group work and other therapeutic interventions, and domestic violence services, where the child is the direct recipient of the service and s/he is, has, or is likely to become, a client of child protection.

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

*Source:* AIHW (unpublished).

## **Roles and responsibilities**

State and Territory governments fund child protection, out-of-home care, family support (including intensive family support) and other relevant services. These services may be delivered by the government or the non-government sector. State and Territory departments responsible for child protection are responsible for investigating and assessing reports to the department, providing, or referring families to, support services, and intervening where necessary (including making court applications when an order is required to protect a child, and placing children in out-of-home care).

Other areas of government also have roles in child protection and provide services for children who have come into contact with relevant departments for protective reasons. These include:

- police services, which investigate serious allegations of child abuse and neglect, particularly criminal matters, and may also work on child protection assessments with State and Territory departments responsible for child protection
- courts, which decide whether a child will be placed on an order
- education and child care services, which provide services for these children and also conduct mandatory reporting and protective behaviours education in some jurisdictions
- health services, which support the assessment of child protection matters and deliver therapeutic, counselling and other services.

A range of appointments, schemes and charters have been introduced by jurisdictions in recent years, to enable additional protection for clients of the child protection system. Examples of these are listed in box 15.2.

**Box 15.2 Initiatives to enable additional protection for clients**

- NSW* The Commission for Children and Young People initiates and influences broad and positive change for children and young people. The Office of the Children's Guardian promotes the best interests and rights of all children in out-of-home care, through accreditation and monitoring of out-of-home care agencies to ensure services are of the highest standard.
- VIC* The Child Safety Commissioner promotes child safe practices and environments across the community. Part of the Commissioner's role is to monitor the quality of out-of-home care services. A charter of rights for children has been completed and was launched on 28 November 2007.
- QLD* The Commission for Children and Young People and the Child Guardian monitors and reports on child protection services, investigates complaints and conducts a Community Visitor Program to regularly visit children and young people in out-of-home care. The Department of Child Safety has also established a departmental complaints system which is available to clients, family members, advocates and members of the public.
- WA* The Advocate for Children in Care provides advocacy and complaints management services for children and young people in care. The Department's general Consumer Advocacy Service has been redesignated as a Complaints Management Unit from January 2008 and is available to all customers. Formal monitoring of protection and care service standards by a Standards Monitoring Unit began on 1 July 2007. Sixteen Districts are monitored on a two-year cycle and the monitoring regime will be extended across all care providers in due course.

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**Box 15.2 (Continued)**

- SA** The Office of the Guardian monitors and assesses care, advocates for, and advises on, the circumstances and needs of children and systemic issues affecting the quality of out-of-home care.
- TAS** The Commissioner for Children's functions include promoting the rights and wellbeing of children, examining the policies, practices and services provided for children and any laws affecting the health, welfare, care, protection and development of children.
- ACT** The ACT Public Advocate's functions include monitoring the provision of services, and protecting and acting as an advocate for the rights of children and young people. The Public Advocate must refer systemic issues concerning young people to the Human Rights Commission for consideration. The Official Visitors' role is to investigate complaints made by or on behalf of children and young people in institutions or shelters concerning their care. The Commissioner for Human Rights and Discrimination ensures the rights of children and young people are upheld.
- NT** A review of the *NT Community Welfare Act* has resulted in the development of a new *Care and Protection of Children Act* — which was introduced in late 2007. The Act includes provisions for a Children's Commissioner and a child death review committee.

Source: State and Territory governments (unpublished).

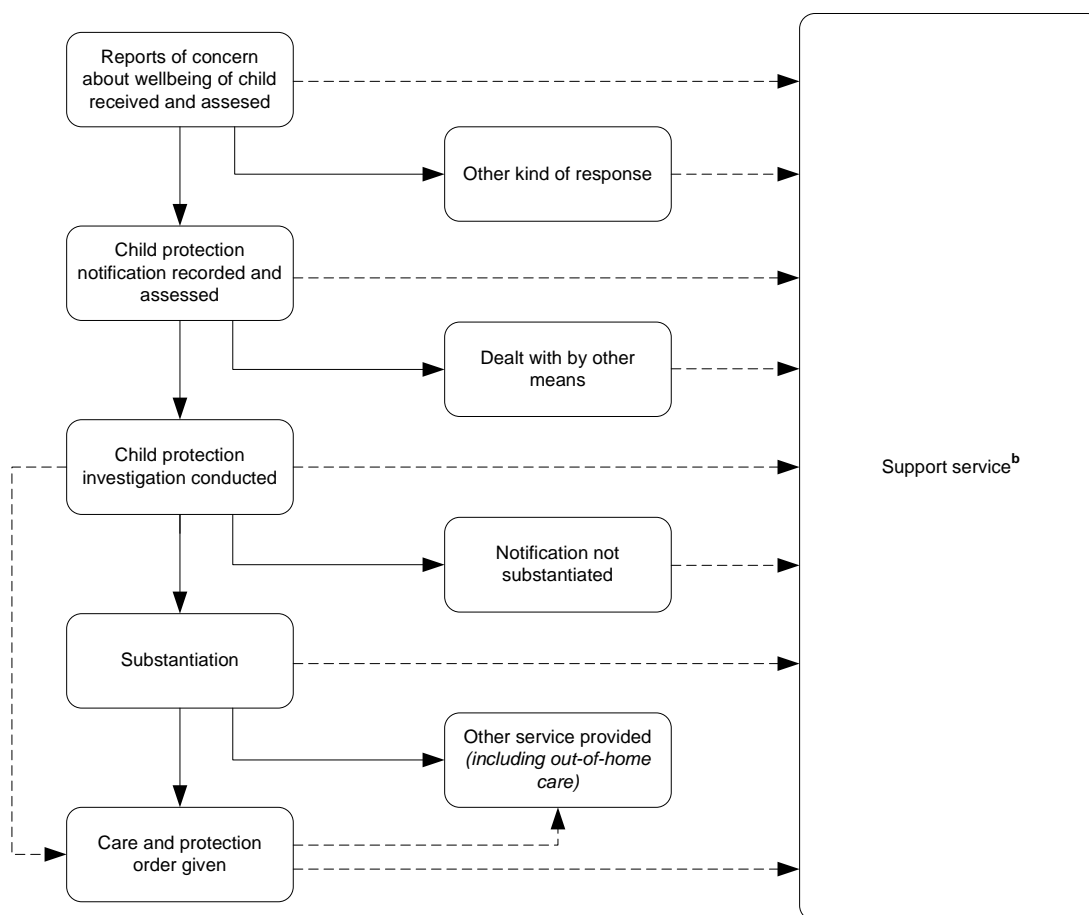
## Size and scope

### *The child protection system*

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

State and Territory departments with responsibility for child protection are advised of concerns about the wellbeing of children through reports to these departments. Reports may be made by people mandated to report or by other members of the community. Individuals and organisations mandated to report vary across the states and territories, and may include medical practitioners, police services, school teachers and principals. These reports are assessed and classified as child protection notifications, child concern reports, or matters requiring some other kind of response. The most common sources of notification for finalised investigations in 2006-07 were school personnel, police, hospitals and other health centres (AIHW 2008).

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



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

### Notification

Jurisdictions count notifications at different points in the response to a report, ranging from the point of initial contact with the source of the report to the end of a screening and decision making process. This means the number of notifications is not strictly comparable across jurisdictions.<sup>1</sup>

All jurisdictions except Tasmania and the ACT screen incoming reports before deciding whether they will be counted as a notification, thus reducing the proportion of reports that become notifications.

<sup>1</sup> Child protection services, care and protection orders and out-of-home care relate to children aged 0–17 years. However, rates of children subject to notifications, investigations and substantiations, are calculated for children aged 0–16 years, given differences in jurisdictions’ legislation, policies and practices regarding children aged 17 years. Rates of children on care and protection orders and in out-of-home care are calculated for children aged 0–17 years.



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In all jurisdictions, notifications are investigated, based on the policies and practices in that jurisdiction. Once it has been decided that an investigation is required, the investigation process is similar across jurisdictions. The department responsible for child protection may obtain further information about the child and his or her family by checking information systems for any previous history, undertaking discussion/case planning with agencies and individuals, interviewing/sighting the child and/or interviewing the caregivers/parents. At a minimum, the child is sighted whenever practicable, and the child's circumstances and needs are assessed. This investigation process determines whether the notification is substantiated or not substantiated (figure 15.1).

Nationally, 186 335 children aged 0–16 years were the subject of child protection notifications in 2006-07. The rate of notifications per 1000 children in the population aged 0–16 years was 40.2 in 2006-07 (table 15A.8). The total number of notifications for each jurisdiction for 2006-07 (including cases where a child is the subject of more than one child protection notification) by Indigenous status of the child is reported in table 15A.5.

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

### *Substantiation*

The criteria for substantiation vary across jurisdictions. In the past, child protection legislation and policy focused on the identification and investigation of narrowly defined incidents that were broadly grouped as types of abuse or neglect. Across all jurisdictions, the focus is now shifting away from the actions of parents and guardians, toward the desired outcomes for the child, the identification and investigation of actual and/or likely harm to the child, and the child's needs.

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

Nationally, 32 423 children aged 0–16 years were the subject of a substantiation in 2006-07. The rate of children who were the subject of a substantiation per 1000 children in the population aged 0–16 years was 7.0 (table 15A.8). The number and rate of children aged 0–16 years who were the subject of a substantiation has increased since 2002-03. Nationally, 30 784 children were the

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subject of a substantiation in 2002-03. This represented a rate of 6.8 per 1000 children in the population aged 0–16 years (SCRGSP 2004).

Nationally, 6554 Indigenous and 25 869 non-Indigenous children were the subject of a substantiation in 2006-07. The rate of children who were the subject of a substantiation per 1000 children in the target population aged 0–16 years was 31.8 for Indigenous children and 5.8 for non-Indigenous children (table 15A.8).

### *Care and protection orders*

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

Nationally, 29 406 children aged 0–17 years were on care and protection orders at 30 June 2007. The rate of children on care and protection orders per 1000 children in the population aged 0–17 years was 6.0 (table 15A.8). The number and rate of children aged 0–17 years who were the subject of a care and protection order has increased since 2002–03. At 30 June 2003, 22 130 children were the subject of a care and protection order, which represented a rate of 4.6 per 1000 children in the population aged 0–17 years (SCRGSP 2004).

Nationally, 7301 Indigenous and 22 105 non-Indigenous children were on care and protection orders at 30 June 2007. The rate of children on care and protection orders per 1000 children in the target population aged 0–17 years was 33.4 for Indigenous children and 4.7 for non-Indigenous children (table 15A.8).

Further information on children on care and protection orders is included in the attachment tables to this Report. Table 15A.6 identifies the number of children admitted to, and discharged from care and protection orders by Indigenous status, 2006-07. Table 15A.7 identifies the number of children on care and protection orders by type of order and Indigenous status at 30 June 2007.

### *Out-of-home care*

Out-of-home care is one of a range of services provided to families and children where there is a need to provide safe care for a child. The services are intended to place a child in out-of-home care only if this will improve the outcome for the child and only when it is not possible to maintain the child within their family. If it is necessary to remove the child from his or her home, then placement with the wider

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family or community is sought where possible, particularly in the case of Indigenous children (AIHW 2006b). Continued emphasis is placed on improving case planning and case management processes to facilitate the safe return home of children in out-of-home care and to maximise case workers' contact time with children and families.

Nationally, 28 441 children were in out-of-home care at 30 June 2007. The rate of children in out-of-home care per 1000 children in the population aged 0–17 years was 5.8 (table 15A.14). The number and rate of children aged 0–17 years in out-of-home care has increased since 2002-03. At 30 June 2003, 20 297 children were in out-of-home care. This represented a rate of 4.2 per 1000 children in the population aged 0–17 years (SCRGSP 2004).

Nationally, 7892 Indigenous children and 20 549 non-Indigenous children were in out-of-home care at 30 June 2007. The rate of children in out-of-home care per 1000 children in the target population aged 0–17 years was 36.1 for Indigenous children and 4.4 for non-Indigenous children (table 15A.14).

Further information on children in out-of-home care is included in the attachment tables to this Report. Table 15A.15 identifies the number of children in out-of-home care by Indigenous status and placement type at 30 June 2007. Table 15A.16 identifies the number of children in out-of-home care by Indigenous status and whether they were on a care and protection order at 30 June 2007. Table 15A.17 identifies the number of children in out-of-home care by Indigenous status and length of time in continuous out-of-home care as at 30 June 2007. Table 15A.18 identifies the number of children who exited care during 2006-07, by Indigenous status and length of time spent in care.

## **Funding**

Recurrent expenditure on child protection and out-of-home care services was approximately \$1.7 billion across Australia in 2006-07 — a real increase of \$199.8 million (13.7 per cent) from 2005-06. Of this expenditure, out-of-home care services accounted for the majority (63.7 per cent, or \$1.1 billion). Nationally, annual real expenditure on child protection and out-of-home care services has increased by \$597.1 million from \$1.1 billion since 2002-03, an average annual increase over the four year period of 11.8 per cent (table 15A.1).

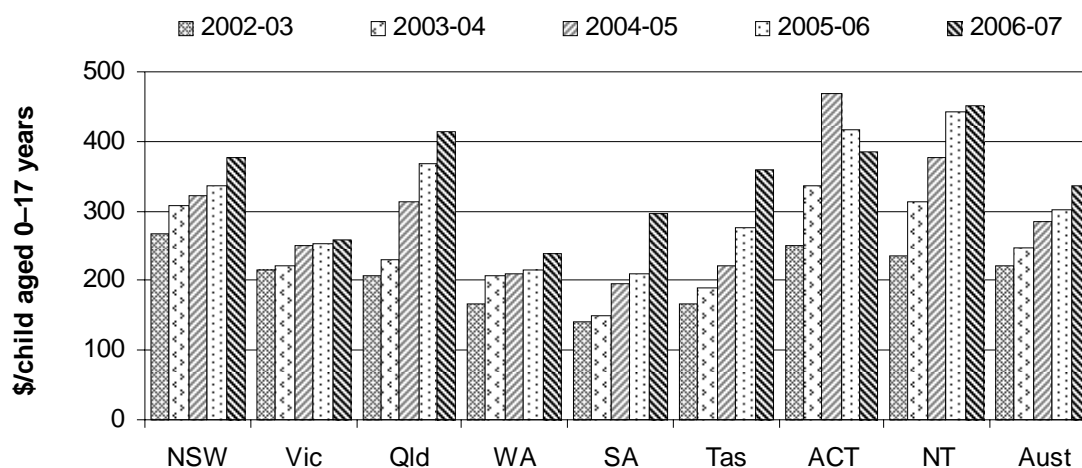
In 2006-07, real recurrent expenditure per child aged 0–17 years in child protection and out-of-home care services was \$336 nationally (figure 15.2). Real recurrent expenditure per child aged 0–17 years increased in all jurisdictions between 2002-03 and 2006-07 and has increased nationally each year since 2002-03. In

2002-03 the real recurrent expenditure per child aged 0–17 years was \$221 (table 15A.1). This represents an average annual increase over the four year period of 11.0 per cent.

It is an objective of the Review to report comparable estimates of costs. Ideally, the full range of costs to government would be determined on a comparable basis across jurisdictions. Where full costs cannot be counted, costs should be estimated on a consistent basis across jurisdictions. However, in the area of child protection, there are differences across jurisdictions in the calculation of expenditure.

Table 15A.4 identifies the level of consistency across jurisdictions for a number of expenditure items. The scope of child protection systems also varies across jurisdictions, and expenditure on some services may be included for some jurisdictions, but not for others.

**Figure 15.2 Real recurrent expenditure on child protection and out-of-home care services per child (2006-07 dollars)<sup>a</sup>**



<sup>a</sup> Refer to table 15A.1 for detailed jurisdiction-specific footnotes on expenditure data and table 15.A4 for information on the comparability of expenditure data.

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

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

The framework of performance indicators for child protection and out-of-home care services is based on shared government objectives (box 15.3).

### Box 15.3 Objectives for child protection and out-of-home care services

The aims of child protection services are to:

- protect children and young people at risk of harm within their family or in circumstances in which the family of the child or young person does not have the capacity to protect them
- assist families to protect children and young people.

The aim of out-of-home care services is to provide quality care for children and young people aged 0–17 years who cannot live with their parents for reasons of safety or family crisis.

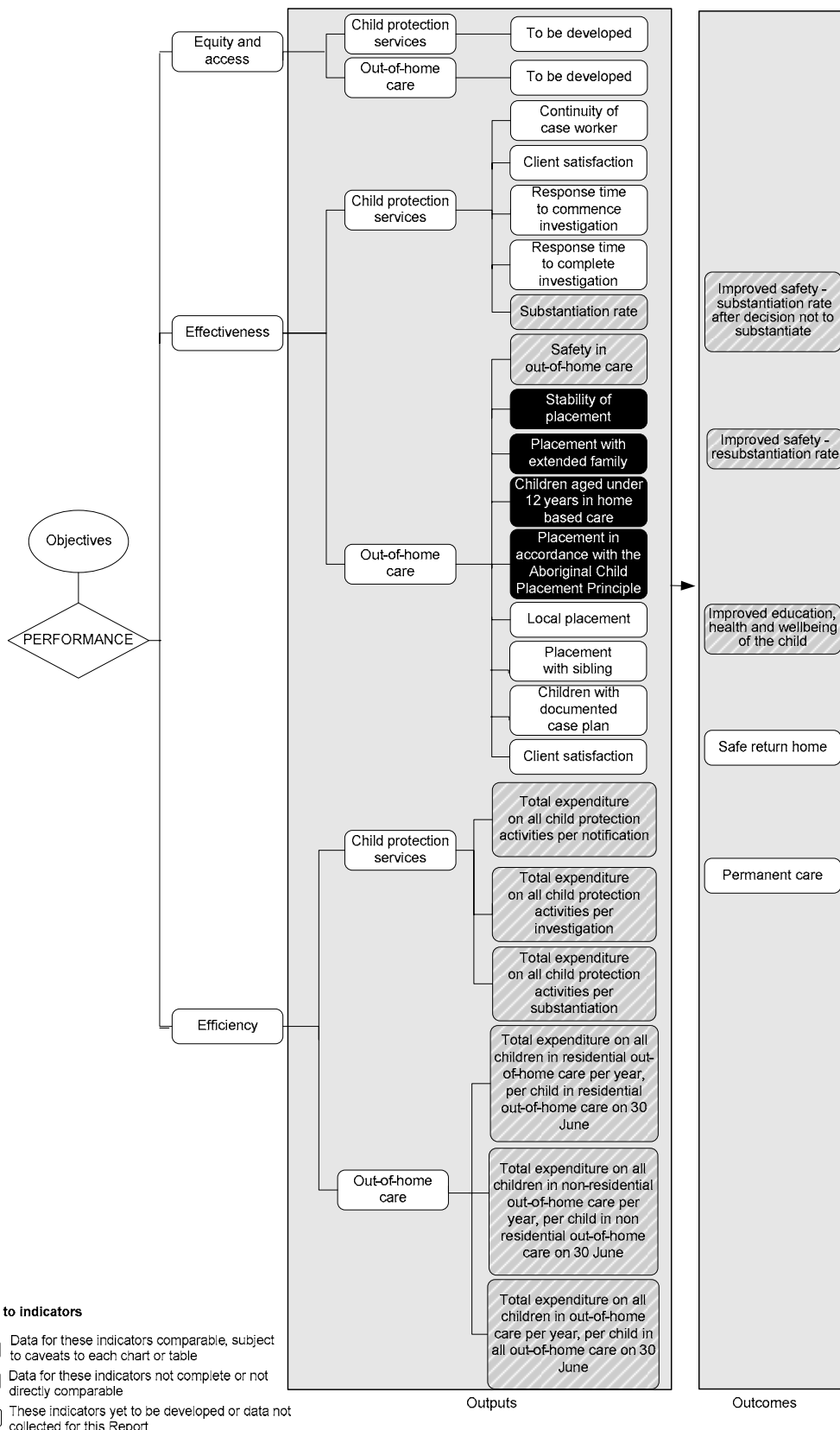
Child protection and out-of-home care services should be provided in an efficient and effective manner.

The performance indicator framework shows which data are comparable in the 2008 Report (figure 15.3). For data that are not considered directly comparable, the text includes relevant caveats and supporting commentary. Chapter 1 discusses data comparability from a Report-wide perspective (see section 1.6).

## 15.3 Key child protection and out-of-home care services performance indicator results

Different delivery contexts, locations and types of client may affect the equity/access, effectiveness and efficiency of child protection services. Appendix A contains detailed statistics that may assist in interpreting the performance indicators.

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



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## Outputs

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

### *Equity and access*

Equity and access indicators are a key area for further development in future reports (box 15.4).

**Box 15.4 Access to child protection and out-of-home care services by equity groups**

These will be indicators of governments' objective to ensure that all clients have fair and equitable access to services on the basis of relative need and available resources. These indicators are under development.

### *Effectiveness*

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

'Continuity of case worker' is an indicator of the effectiveness of the delivery of child protection services (box 15.5).

**Box 15.5 Continuity of case worker**

'Continuity of case worker' is an indicator of governments' objective to ensure child protection services are delivered in an effective manner. The turnover of workers is a frequent criticism of the quality of child protection services. Effective intervention requires a productive working relationship between the worker and the child and family. This indicator has been identified for development and reporting in future. Data were not available for the 2008 Report.

#### *Child protection services — client satisfaction*

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

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**Box 15.6 Client satisfaction**

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

This indicator has been identified for development and reporting in future. Data were not available for the 2008 Report.

Box 15.7 provides examples of steps taken in seven jurisdictions to monitor, assess and promote client satisfaction in relation to child protection and out-of-home care.

**Box 15.7 Developments in client satisfaction**

*NSW* An evaluation of the Early Intervention Program is planned. This program targets vulnerable families with children aged 0–8 years. A sample of families and children receiving services will be surveyed during the evaluation to determine whether they are satisfied the program is meeting their needs.

*VIC* A survey of child protection clients and families in 2001 was designed to gather information on the clients' and families' experience of child protection, in order to enhance future service delivery, and to improve client and family outcomes. The survey findings identified a range of specific strengths in child protection practice, including that in the majority of cases, child protection intervention improved the safety and life circumstances of young people. The survey also identified a range of areas for practice improvement.

*Qld* The Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian undertakes regular surveys of children in out-of-home care to seek their views and opinions about their current placement, their Child Safety Officer and their experience with the child protection system. Information collected from these surveys forms important measures about the performance of the child protection system. CREATE is also funded to engage samples of children and young people to gain more detailed information about how child protection services affect them.

*WA* The Department of Child Protection administers an annual customer perception survey across the majority of its provided and funded services. For ethical and practical reasons, children and young people in care are not routinely surveyed. However, the Department includes foster carers and young people receiving leaving care services in the survey. Children and young people in care are also interviewed as part of the standards monitoring process described in box 15.2.

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**Box 15.7 (Continued)**

**TAS** A Quality Improvement Unit dedicated to service development and improvement has recently been established within Children and Family Services. A key priority of this unit will be investigating and responding to complaints and serious incidents relating to child protection services and developing structured processes to address identified issues. Once complaint and incident management processes are successfully embedded in the services, the Quality Improvement Unit will also develop and implement a process to monitor client satisfaction.

**ACT** CREATE released a report in July 2004 based on qualitative interviews of children and young people in out-of-home care in the ACT. This report recommended the development of a charter of rights for children and young people in care in the ACT. The Government will develop a charter in consultation with children and young people.

**NT** A participation survey of children and young people in care was funded in 2005 and an evaluation of case work attitudes was also undertaken. As a result, out-of-home care core training for staff has been restructured to incorporate the participation of young people in care planning.

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

*Child protection services — response time to commence investigation*

‘Response time to commence investigation’ is an indicator of the effectiveness of child protection services through the timely response to a notification (box 15.8).

**Box 15.8 Response time to commence investigation**

‘Response time to commence investigation’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to minimise the risk of harm to the child by responding to notifications of possible child protection incidents and commencing investigations in a timely manner.

This indicator has been identified for reporting in future, with data anticipated to be available for the 2009 Report.

Significant developmental work has occurred on the counting rules for this indicator, with progress underway to complete a third pilot collection of these data in early 2008.

*Child protection services — response time to complete investigation*

‘Response time to complete investigation’ is an indicator of the effectiveness of child protection services through the timely completion of investigations (box 15.9).

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**Box 15.9 Response time to complete investigation**

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

This indicator has been identified for reporting in future, with data anticipated to be available for the 2009 Report.

Significant developmental work has occurred on the counting rules and output categories for this indicator, with progress underway to complete a third pilot collection of these data in early 2008.

*Child protection services — substantiation rate*

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

**Box 15.10 Substantiation rate**

The ‘substantiation rate’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to target investigations to those notifications where a substantive child abuse/neglect incident has occurred. It also provides an indication of the extent to which government has avoided the human and financial costs of an investigation where no harm has occurred.

This indicator is defined as the proportion of finalised investigations where harm or risk of harm was substantiated.

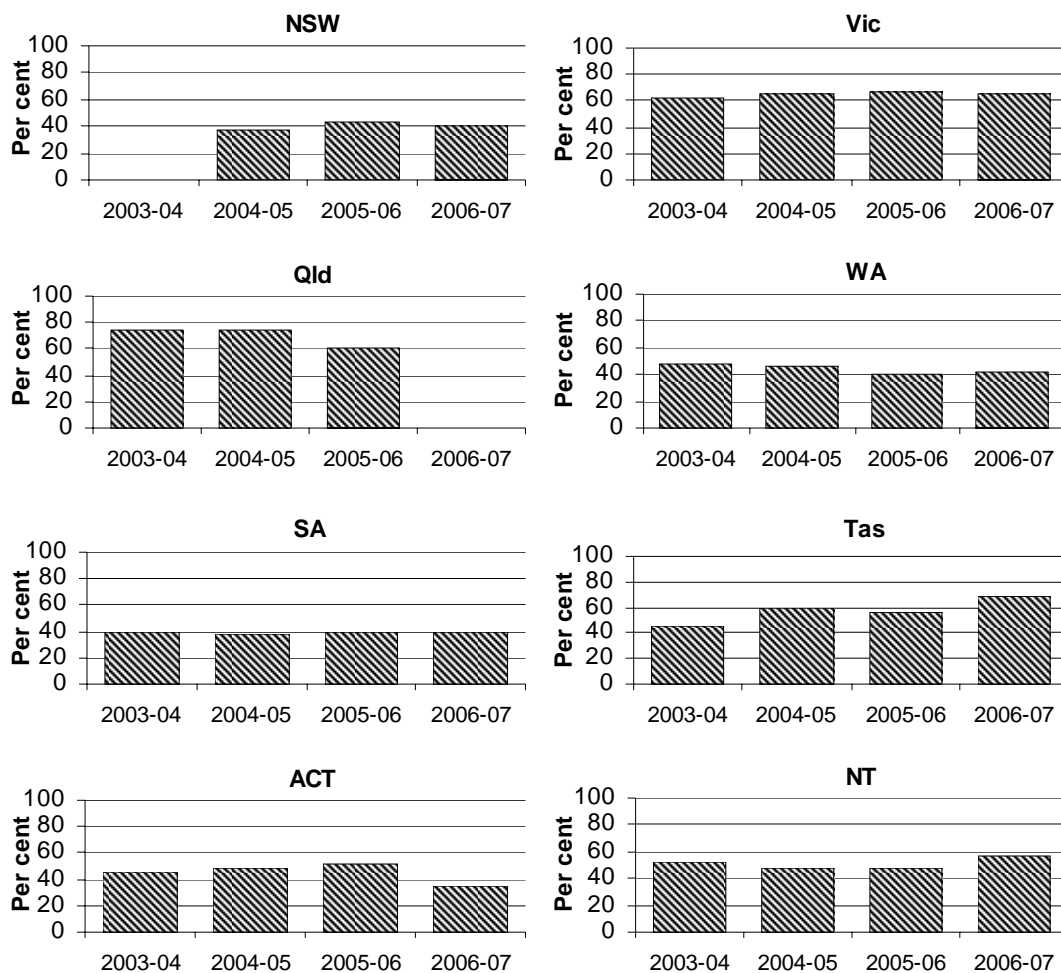
The substantiation rate should be neither ‘very high’ nor ‘very low’. A very low substantiation rate may suggest that notifications and investigations are not accurately targeted at appropriate cases, with the undesirable consequence of distress to families and undermining the chances that families will voluntarily seek support. Very low substantiation rates may also indicate that the scarce resources of the child protection system are being overwhelmed and that screening should be tightened. A very high substantiation rate may indicate that either some appropriate cases are being overlooked at notification and investigation, or that the criteria for substantiation are bringing ‘lower risk’ families into the statutory system.

Finalised investigations that were substantiated may fluctuate because of policy, funding and practice change, such as better targeting of investigative resources, the impact of mandatory reporting or other factors such as increased community awareness and willingness to notify suspected instances of child abuse, neglect or harm.

Data that are comparable across jurisdictions are not available for this indicator because definitions of substantiation vary across jurisdictions, but data are comparable within each jurisdiction over time unless otherwise stated (figure 15.4).

Due to the difficulties in identifying the source of annual fluctuations in substantiation rates, changes over time within jurisdictions are more appropriately used to prompt further analysis, rather than used as definitive performance information.

Figure 15.4 Proportion of finalised child protection investigations that were substantiated<sup>a, b, c, d</sup>



<sup>a</sup> Data are not comparable across jurisdictions because definitions of substantiation vary significantly. Consequently, rates should not be compared across jurisdictions. <sup>b</sup> NSW was unable to provide data for 2003-04 due to the introduction of a new client information system. <sup>c</sup> During 2006-07 Victoria introduced new service and data reporting arrangements. Therefore data for 2006-07 may not be fully comparable to previous years' data. See table 15A.54 for more details on these arrangements. <sup>d</sup> Queensland data for 2006-07 have not been provided due to the recent transition to a new information management system.

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

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

‘Safety in out-of-home care’ is an indicator of the effectiveness of out-of-home care services in providing a safe home environment for children (box 15.11).

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

‘Safety in out-of-home care’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to provide children who are under the care of the State with a safe home environment. The indicator reflects the safety of clients in care situations.

This indicator is defined as the proportion of substantiations where those responsible for harm or risk were carers or other people living in households providing out-of-home care.

A low proportion of substantiations is desirable.

Three jurisdictions (WA, SA and ACT) provided 2006-07 data on the incidence of child protection substantiations where the person believed responsible for harm or risk to the child was either the carer or another person living in the household providing out-of-home care. The proportion of children who were the subject of a child protection substantiation and the person believed responsible was in the household was 0.4 per cent in each reporting jurisdiction. WA provided data on abuse by foster carers or workers in placement services, but not abuse by others living in the household (table 15A.23).

*Out-of-home care — stability of placement*

‘Stability of placement’ is an indicator of the effectiveness of out-of-home care services (box 15.12).

**Box 15.12 Stability of placement**

‘Stability of placement’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to provide high quality services that meet the needs of recipients on the basis of relative need and available resources.

This indicator is defined as the proportion of children who had 1 or 2 placements during a period of continuous out-of-home care.

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**Box 15.12 (Continued)**

A low number of child placements (one or two) per period of care is desirable, but must be balanced against other placement quality indicators, such as placements in compliance with the Aboriginal Child Placement Principle, local placements and placements with siblings.

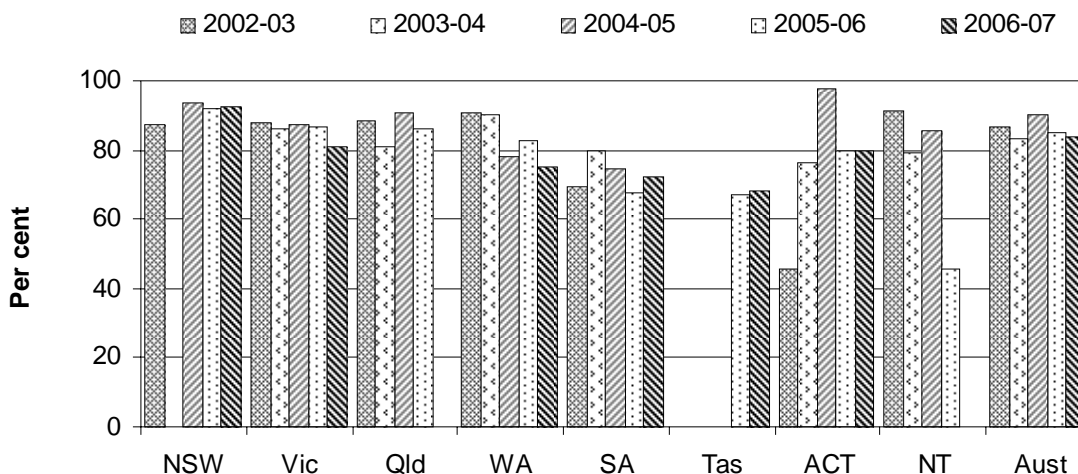
Children may have multiple placements for good reasons, (for example, an initial placement followed by a longer term placement) or it may be desirable to change placements to achieve better child–family compatibility. It is not desirable for a child to stay in an unsatisfactory or unsupportive placement.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

Data are collected only for children who are on orders and who exit care during the reporting period. There are limitations to counting placement stability using an exit cohort rather than entry cohort longitudinal data, because the sample is biased to children from recent entry cohorts with relatively short stays in care, and these children are likely to have experienced fewer placements.

For children placed away from their family for protective reasons, stability of placement is an important indicator of service quality, particularly for those children who require long term placements. Data are collected on the number of different placements for children on a care and protection order who exited out-of-home care in 2006-07. Data are grouped according to the length of time in care (less than 12 months and 12 months or more).

Nationally, 83.9 per cent of the children on a care and protection order who exited care after less than 12 months in 2006-07 experienced only one or two placements. This proportion varied across jurisdictions (figure 15.5).

**Figure 15.5 Proportion of children on a care and protection order exiting care after less than 12 months, who had 1 or 2 placements<sup>a, b, c, d, e, f</sup>**

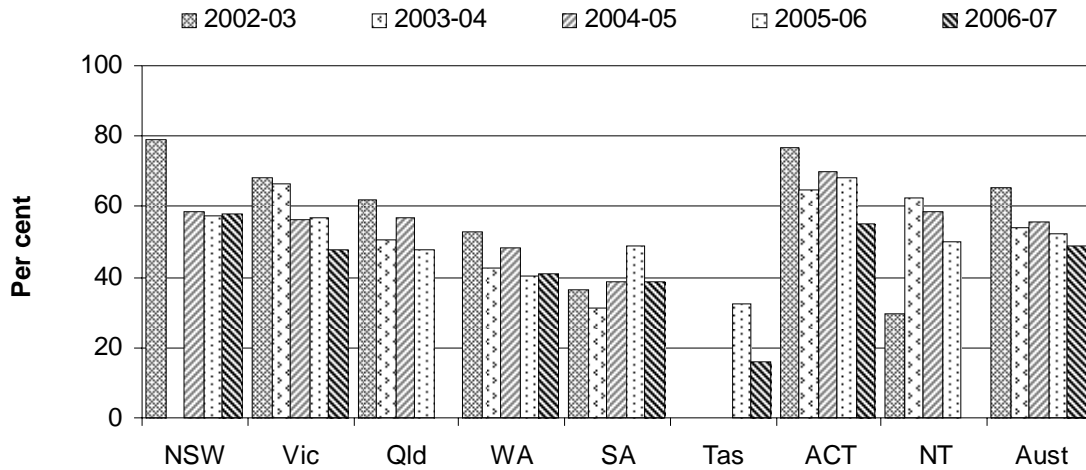


<sup>a</sup> Data refer to children exiting care during the relevant financial year. <sup>b</sup> Refer to footnotes in the source tables for information about what each jurisdiction's data include. <sup>c</sup> NSW was unable to provide data for 2003-04 due to the introduction of a new client information system. <sup>d</sup> During 2006-07 Victoria introduced new service and data reporting arrangements. Therefore data for 2006-07 may not be fully comparable to previous years' data. <sup>e</sup> Queensland data for 2006-07 have not been provided due to the recent transition to a new information management system. <sup>f</sup> Data for Tasmania were not available prior to 2005-06. <sup>f</sup> NT data for 2006-07 were not available at the time of publication.

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

Across jurisdictions, children who had been in out-of-home care longer tended to have had more placements. The proportion of children exiting care in 2006-07 after 12 months or more who had experienced one or two placements was 49.0 per cent nationally but varied across jurisdictions (figure 15.6).

Figure 15.6 Proportion of children on a care and protection order exiting care after 12 months or more, who had 1 or 2 placements<sup>a, b, c, d, e, f</sup>



<sup>a</sup> Data refer to children exiting care during the relevant financial year. <sup>b</sup> Refer to footnotes in the source table for information about what each jurisdiction's data include. <sup>c</sup> NSW was unable to provide data for 2003-04 due to the introduction of a new client information system. <sup>d</sup> During 2006-07 Victoria introduced new service and data reporting arrangements. Therefore data for 2006-07 may not be fully comparable to previous years' data. <sup>e</sup> Queensland data for 2006-07 have not been provided due to the recent transition to a new information management system. <sup>f</sup> Data for Tasmania were not available prior to 2005-06. <sup>f</sup> NT data for 2006-07 were not available at the time of publication.

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

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

'Placement with extended family' is an indicator of the effectiveness of out-of-home care services (box 15.13).

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### **Box 15.13 Placement with extended family**

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

This indicator is defined as the proportion of all children in out-of-home care who are placed with relatives or kin who receive government financial assistance to care for that child.

A reasonably high rate for this indicator is considered desirable.

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

Placing children with their relatives or kin is generally the preferred out-of-home care placement option. This option is generally associated with better long term outcomes due to increased continuity, familiarity and stability for the child. Relatives are more likely to have or form long term emotional bonds with the child. Placement with familiar people can help to overcome the loss of attachment and belonging that can occur when children are placed in out-of-home care.

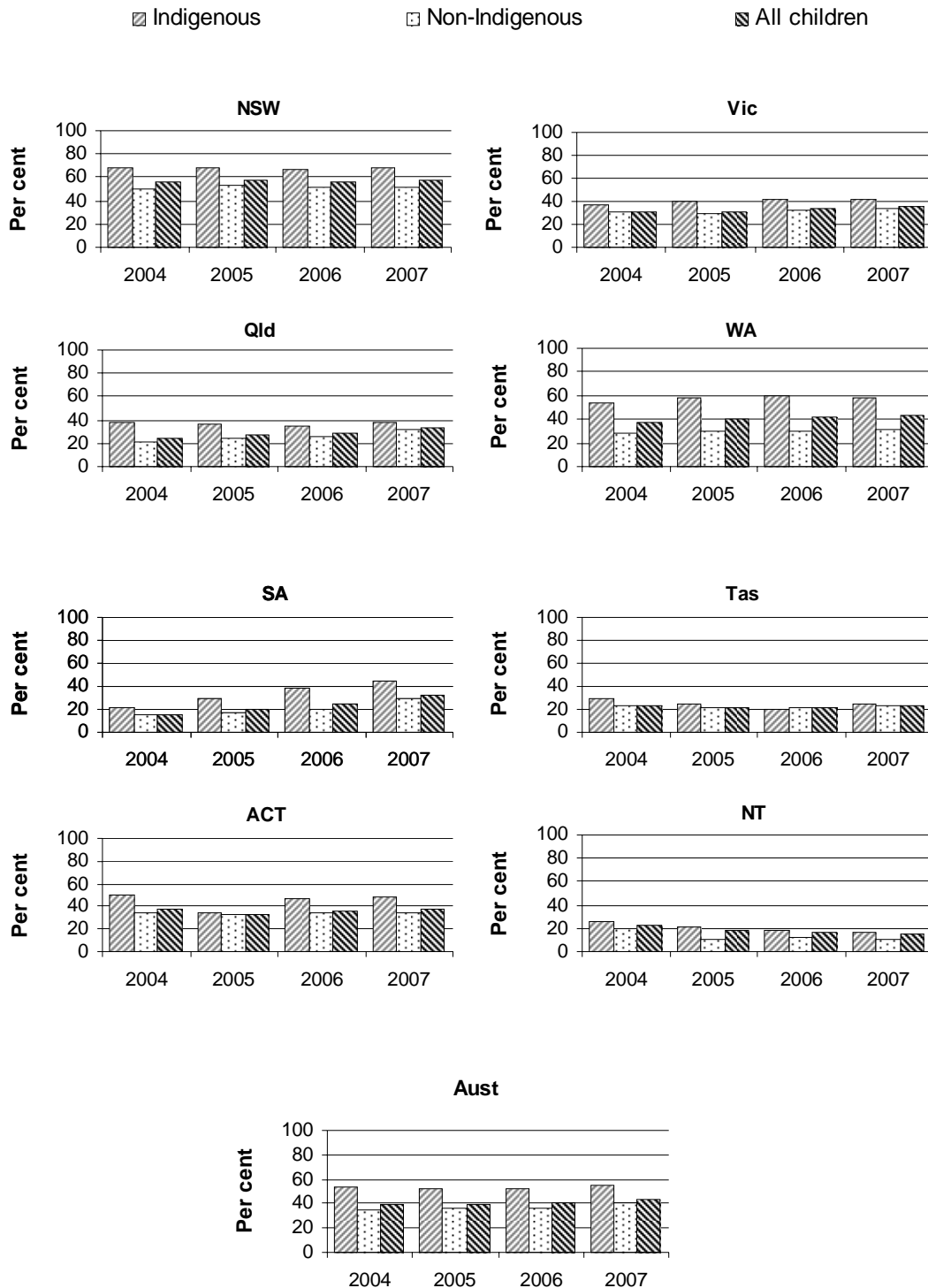
Placements with extended family may not always be the best option. Long standing family dynamics may undermine the pursuit of case goals such as reunification, and the possibility of intergenerational abuse needs to be considered. In addition, depending on the individual circumstances of children, it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

Figure 15.7 shows the proportion of children placed with relatives or kin by Indigenous status for the past 4 years. Although these data are comparable, each jurisdiction is shown separately for simpler presentation. The proportion of children placed with relatives or kin at 30 June 2007 was greater for Indigenous children than for non-Indigenous children in all jurisdictions and nationally (figure 15.7).

In addition, the Aboriginal Child Placement Principle places additional emphasis on the placement of Indigenous children with extended family. This principle is discussed in box 15.15.



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



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

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

‘Children aged under 12 years in home-based care’ is an indicator of the effectiveness of out-of-home care services (box 15.14).

**Box 15.14 Children aged under 12 years in home-based care**

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

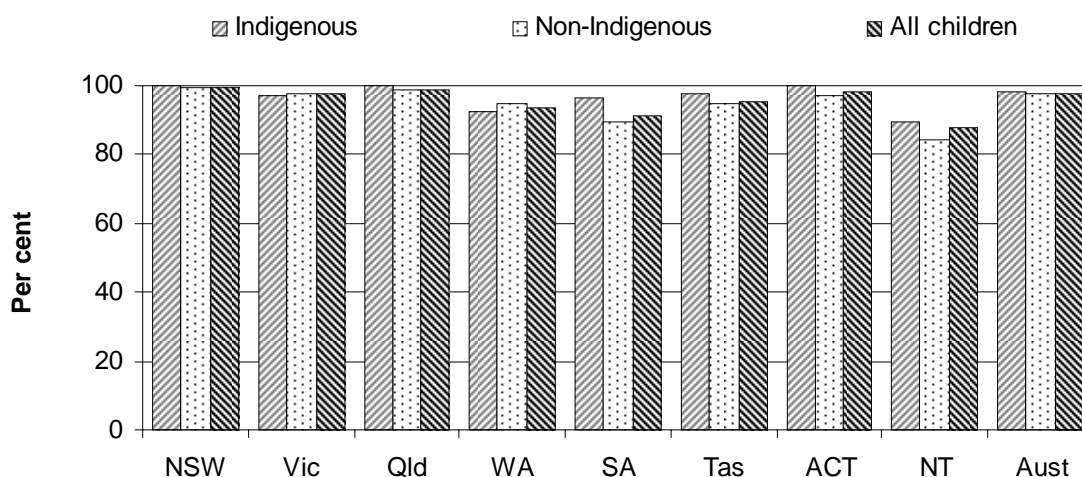
A high rate for this indicator is considered desirable.

Placing children in home-based care is generally considered to be in their best interests, particularly for younger children. Children will generally make better developmental progress (and have more ready access to normal childhood experiences) in family settings rather than in residential care.

This indicator should be interpreted in conjunction with other placement indicators.

The proportion of all children aged under 12 years in care who were placed in home-based care (excluding family group homes) at 30 June 2007 was 97.9 per cent nationally. In all jurisdictions the proportion of Indigenous children aged under 12 years who were placed in home-based care was similar to that of non-Indigenous children, within seven percentage points (figure 15.8).

Figure 15.8 Proportion of children aged under 12 years in out-of-home care and in a home-based placement, by Indigenous status, 30 June 2007<sup>a</sup>



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

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

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

‘Placement in accordance with the Aboriginal Child Placement Principle’ is an indicator of the effectiveness of out-of-home care services (box 15.15). Subject to an over-riding concern for the safety and wellbeing of Indigenous children, the principle supports the maintenance of the Indigenous child’s cultural ties and identity while in out-of-home care.

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

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

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

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**Box 15.15 Placement in accordance with the Aboriginal Child Placement Principle**

'Placement in accordance with the Aboriginal Child Placement Principle' is an indicator of governments' objective to protect the safety and welfare of Indigenous children while maintaining the cultural ties and identity of Indigenous children in out-of-home care.

Placing Indigenous children in circumstances consistent with the Aboriginal Child Placement Principle is considered to be in their best interests. However, it is one factor among many considerations for the child's safety and wellbeing that must be carefully considered in the placement decision. In the application of this principle, consultation with and involvement of appropriate Indigenous individuals or organisations occurs in the placement decision.

If the preferred options are not available, the child may be placed (after appropriate consultation) with a non-Indigenous family or residential setting. The principle does not preclude the possibility that in some instances, placement in a non-Indigenous setting, where arrangements are in place for the child's cultural identity to be preserved, may be the most appropriate placement for the child.

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

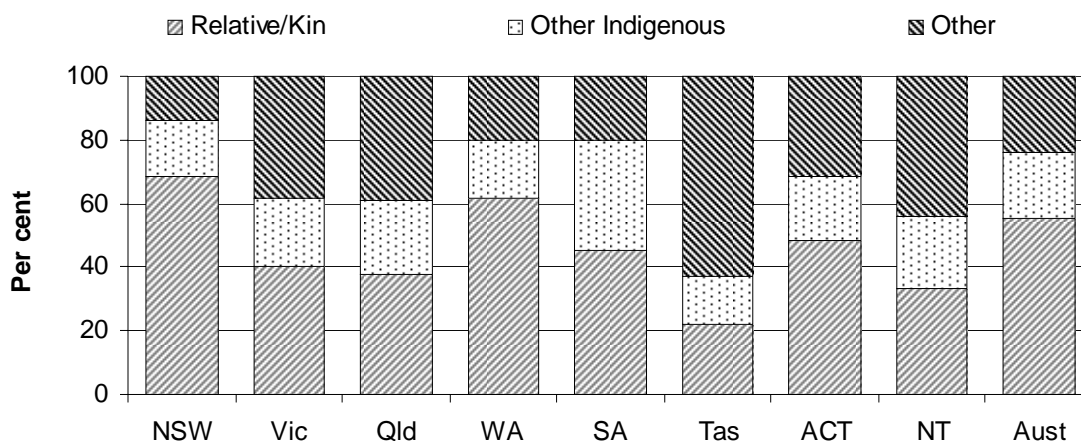
A high proportion of children placed in accordance with the principle is desirable.

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

Nationally, at 30 June 2007, 55.6 per cent of Indigenous children in out-of-home care were placed with a relative/kin, 20.3 per cent placed with other Indigenous carer or Indigenous residential care, and 24.1 per cent were not placed with relative/kin, or other Indigenous residential care (figure 15.9).

The proportion of Indigenous children in out-of-home care at 30 June 2007 who were placed with Indigenous or non-Indigenous relatives or kin or with another Indigenous carer or in Indigenous residential care varied across jurisdictions (figure 15.9).

Figure 15.9 **Placement of Indigenous children in out-of-home care, 30 June 2007<sup>a, b, c, d</sup>**



Relative/Kin = Placed with relative/kin. Other Indigenous = Placed with other Indigenous carer or Indigenous residential care. Other = Not placed with relative/kin, other Indigenous carer or Indigenous residential care. <sup>a</sup> Excludes Indigenous children living independently and those whose living arrangements were unknown. <sup>b</sup> During 2006-07 Victoria introduced new service and data reporting arrangements. Therefore data for 2006-07 may not be fully comparable to previous years' data. <sup>c</sup> 2006-07 data for Queensland are preliminary and will be revised in 2008. <sup>d</sup> Data for Tasmania and the ACT relate to a small number of Indigenous children (113 and 89 respectively) in care at 30 June 2007.

Source: AIHW *Children in out-of-home care, Australia* data collection (unpublished); table 15A.20.

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

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

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

Local placement is an indicator of governments' objective to provide services which meet the needs of the recipients.

A high rate of 'local placement' is desirable.

A placement close to where a child lived prior to entering out-of-home care is considered to enhance the stability, familiarity and security of the child. It enables some elements of the child's life to remain unchanged (for example, they can continue attending the same school and retain their friendship network). It may also facilitate family contact if the child's parents continue to live nearby.

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**Box 15.16 (Continued)**

This indicator is defined as the proportion of children attending the same school after entering out-of-home care. Data will be provided for 3 and 12 months after entering care. Data collections for local placement are being developed. Data were not available for the 2008 Report.

This indicator should be balanced against other quality indicators. This is one factor among many that must be considered in the placement decision. For example, placement with a sibling or relative might preclude a local placement. Also, a child might move from a primary school to a secondary school.

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

‘Placement with sibling’ is an indicator of the effectiveness of out-of-home care services (box 15.17).

**Box 15.17 Placement with sibling**

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

This indicator is defined as the proportion of children who are on orders and in out-of-home care at 30 June who have siblings also on orders and in out-of-home care, who are placed with at least one of their siblings.

A high rate of placement with siblings is desirable.

Placement of siblings together promotes stability and continuity. It is a long standing placement principle that siblings should be placed together, where possible, in the interests of their emotional wellbeing. Children are likely to be more secure and have a sense of belonging within their family when placed with siblings.

This is one factor among many that must be considered in the placement decision. In circumstances of sibling abuse, or when a particular child in a family has been singled out as the target for abuse or neglect, keeping siblings together may not be appropriate.

Data collections for placement with sibling are being developed. Data were not available for the 2008 Report.

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

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

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**Box 15.18 Children with documented case plan**

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

This indicator is defined as the proportion of children on an order and in out-of-home care who have a documented case plan.

A high rate is desirable because all children should have a case plan.

The quality of the case plan must also be considered and the mere existence of a case plan does not guarantee that appropriate case work is occurring that meets the child’s needs.

Case planning is essential to structured and purposeful work to support children’s optimal development. Case plans outline intervention goals such as improved parent–child attachments, reunification or other forms of permanency, and set out the means to achieve these goals, such as frequency of family contact and any remedial or special services considered appropriate for the individual child. Case plans also allow for the monitoring of a child’s time in care.

Data collections for children with a documented case plan are being developed. Data were not available for the 2008 Report.

*Out-of-home care — client satisfaction*

‘Client satisfaction’ is an indicator of the effectiveness of out-of-home care services (box 15.19).

**Box 15.19 Client satisfaction**

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

This indicator has been identified for development and reporting in future. Data were not available for the 2008 Report.

Some information on jurisdictions’ development of initiatives which may assist to measure client satisfaction in the future is included in box 15.7.

*Efficiency*

Understanding the efficiency of the child protection systems that they administer helps State and Territory governments to identify the key cost drivers of their systems and to weigh the efficacy of options for addressing child protection issues.

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

Current efficiency data for child protection services has several limitations, including:

- *different systems and priorities across jurisdictions* — child protection systems in Australia have evolved independently under the auspices of State and Territory governments. This has resulted in variations in the processes and emphases placed on different service delivery paradigms, such as different approaches to diversionary options
- *limitations of current information systems* — in most jurisdictions, it is difficult to identify explicit resources expended on child protection services, out-of-home care services and other support services for families. This is due in part to the historic structure of information systems and the embedding of the government agencies responsible for child protection issues within larger community services departments. Table 15A.4 identifies the level of consistency in expenditure data across jurisdictions.

As a result of these limitations, cost allocations reflect the historic nature of information systems and do not necessarily provide an accurate reflection of the costs involved in provision of various child protection and out-of-home care services.

In April 2002, the Review initiated a project to improve efficiency data for a national framework of protection and support pathways (box 15.20). Until this can be fully implemented, reporting on efficiency has been limited to relatively poor proxy indicators (box 15.21 and box 15.22).

#### **Box 15.20 The pathways project**

The pathways project developed and tested a model that will ultimately allow jurisdictions to calculate more meaningful, comparable and robust efficiency measures (the 'pathways method'). The model is based on a top-down application of the activity-based costing method. A set of eight national pathways has been developed as a high level representation of the services that a protection and support client could receive in any jurisdiction. Each pathway consists of common activity groups which act as the 'building blocks' for each of the pathways. The aggregate cost of each activity group within the pathway will allow for the unit cost of an individual pathway to be determined.

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**Box 15.20 (Continued)**

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

The activity groups are:

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

Detailed definitions of activity groups are included in section 15.13.

Before jurisdictional reporting against the activity groups can be undertaken with confidence, further refinement of activity group definitions and counting rules is required. Development work, including further data testing in these areas will continue.

*Source:* SCRCSSP (2003).

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

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

Table 15.1 provides an approximation of the proportionate allocation of expenditure amongst the eight activity groups for each participating jurisdiction. The expenditure base used for the pathways project differs from the expenditure base used to calculate the existing proxy efficiency indicators for child protection and out-of-home care services (box 15.21 and box 15.22).

The proportion of expenditure allocated to Activity group 8 (Out-of-home care) is the most significant and varies from 41 per cent to 46 per cent across reporting jurisdictions. The proportions allocated to Activity groups 1 (Receipt and assessment of initial information about a potential protection and support issue), 6 (Seeking a court order) and 7 (Provision of longer term protective intervention, support and coordination services) each accounted for 10 per cent or less across all reporting jurisdictions.

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

	AG1	AG2 <sup>e</sup>	AG3	AG4	AG5	AG6	AG7	AG8	Total
NSW	7	17	18	6	2	3	2	46	<b>100</b>
Vic	3	24	4	5	4	7	8	44	<b>100</b>
SA	4	8	4	13	10	8	7	45	<b>100</b>
Tas	6	2	4	12	17	9	10	41	<b>100</b>

AG = Activity Group. AG1 Receipt and assessment of initial information about a potential protection and support issue. AG2 Provision of generic/non-intensive family support services. AG3 Provision of intensive family support services. AG4 Secondary information gathering and assessment. AG5 Provision of short term protective intervention and coordination services. AG6 Seeking a court order. AG7 Provision of longer term protective intervention, support and coordination services. AG8 Provision of out-of-home care services. <sup>a</sup> Includes direct and indirect expenditure. <sup>b</sup> These experimental data have been derived from expenditure allocations in different years by the various participating jurisdictions, but may be applied indicatively to 2006-07. <sup>c</sup> These experimental percentage allocations are derived from total expenditure allocations which vary from totals used to derive costs presented elsewhere in the chapter. <sup>d</sup> Totals may not add to 100 as a result of rounding. <sup>e</sup> Expenditure items included in calculating proportional expenditure for Activity Group 2 may vary across jurisdictions.

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

### *Out-of-home care services unit costs – program expenditure per placement day*

Indicative unit costs for out-of-home care services are provided in table 15.2. Out-of-home care program expenditure per placement day varied across jurisdictions (table 15.2).

**Table 15.2 Indicative unit costs of out-of-home care services, 2006-07<sup>a, b</sup>**

	<i>NSW<sup>c</sup></i>	<i>Vic</i>	<i>Qld<sup>d</sup></i>	<i>WA</i>	<i>SA</i>	<i>Tas<sup>e</sup></i>	<i>ACT</i>	<i>NT</i>
Real expenditure on out-of-home care services (\$m)	364.7	199.7	263.2	89.0	73.1	28.8	18.7	19.2
Placement days in out-of-home care (no. '000) <sup>f</sup>	na	1 900.1	na	783.6	594.5	235.8	141.6	134.1
Out-of-home care program expenditure per placement day (\$)	na	105.1	na	113.6	123.0	122.3	132.0	143.1

<sup>a</sup> These data should not be interpreted as unit costs for Activity Group 8 as they are derived using reported program expenditure and not activity group expenditure. <sup>b</sup> Caution should be used when interpreting results due to the variability of activities that are included in out-of-home care services. <sup>c</sup> Comparable data for NSW were not available. <sup>d</sup> Data on placement days were unable to be reported due to the recent transition to a new information management system. <sup>e</sup> Children in facility-based care placements contribute to a significant proportion of out-of-home care expenditure and may inflate the average unit cost. <sup>f</sup> A placement day in out-of-home care only counts children who stay overnight in an out-of-home care placement. **na** Not available.  
*Source:* State and Territory Governments (unpublished); table 15A.30.

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

### *Child protection services proxy efficiency indicators*

There are three proxy indicators of the efficiency of child protection services (box 15.21).

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

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

These indicators are defined, respectively, as:

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

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

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

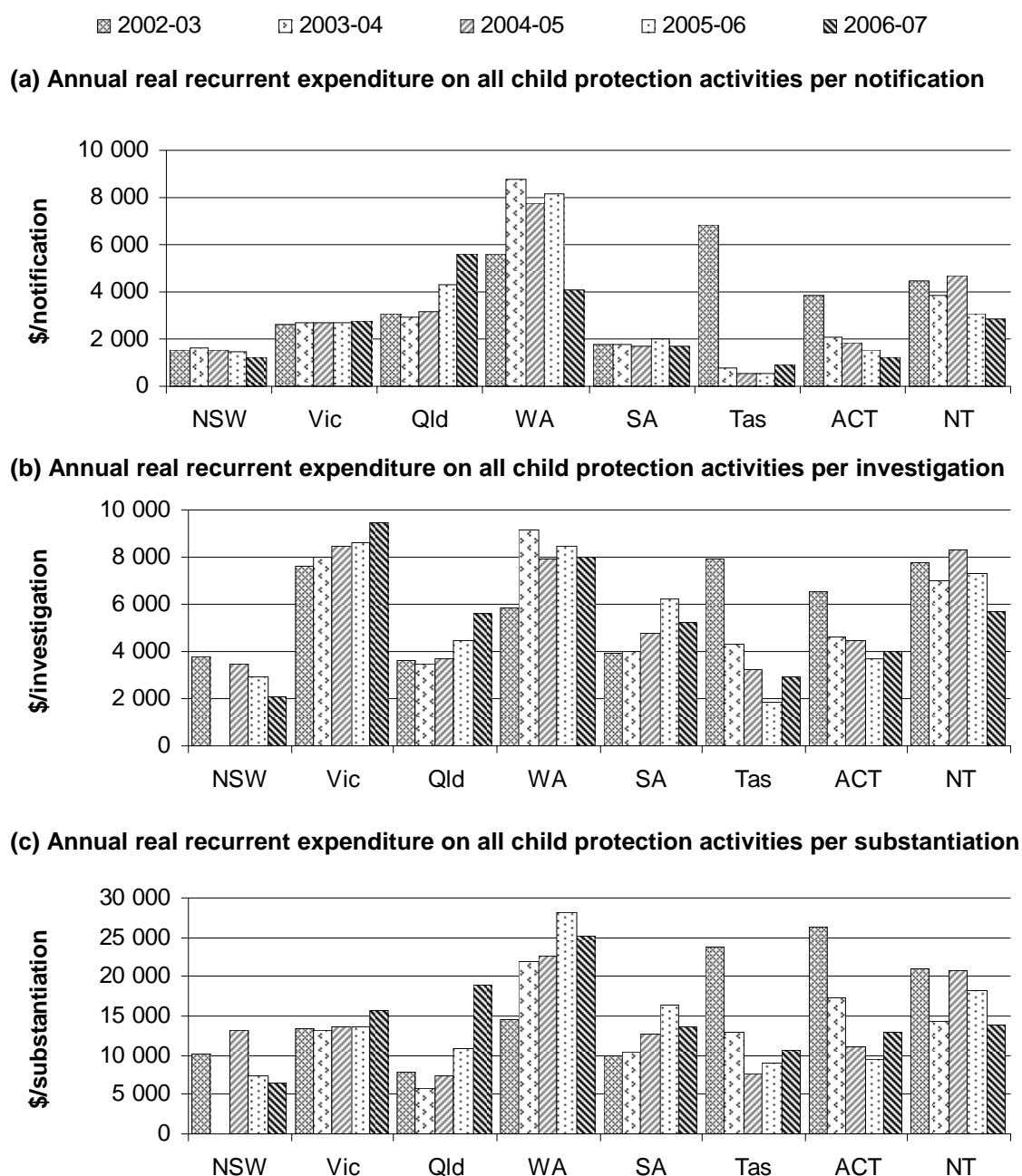
These proxy indicators cannot be added together to determine overall cost of child protection services.

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

Better efficiency indicators would relate expenditure on particular child protection activities to a measure of output of those activities. Work is in progress to develop an activity-based costing method that will allow this type of reporting from existing information systems (box 15.20).

Total expenditure on all child protection activities per notification, per investigation and per substantiation from 2002-03 to 2006-07 varied between jurisdictions (figure 15.10).

Figure 15.10 Child protection efficiency indicators (2006-07 dollars)<sup>a, b, c, d</sup>



<sup>a</sup> Real expenditure based on ABS gross domestic product price deflator (2006-07 = 100) (table AA.26).  
<sup>b</sup> These data are derived from proxy indicators and cannot be interpreted as the unit costs for 'expenditure per notification', 'expenditure per investigation' or 'expenditure per substantiation' because each is based on the total expenditure of all child protection activities. They cannot be added together to derive a total cost for child protection activities. Differences across jurisdictions reflect the quantity of the three activities rather than a difference in unit costs. <sup>c</sup> 2006-07 data for some jurisdictions for 'annual real expenditure per notification' and 'annual real expenditure per investigation' may not be strictly comparable with previous years, due to the introduction of a new investigation category 'Investigation closed—no outcome possible'. <sup>d</sup> See table 15A.2 for detailed jurisdiction-specific footnotes.

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

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

There are three proxy indicators of the efficiency of out-of-home care services (box 15.22).

#### **Box 15.22 Out-of-home care proxy efficiency indicators**

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

These indicators are defined respectively as:

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

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

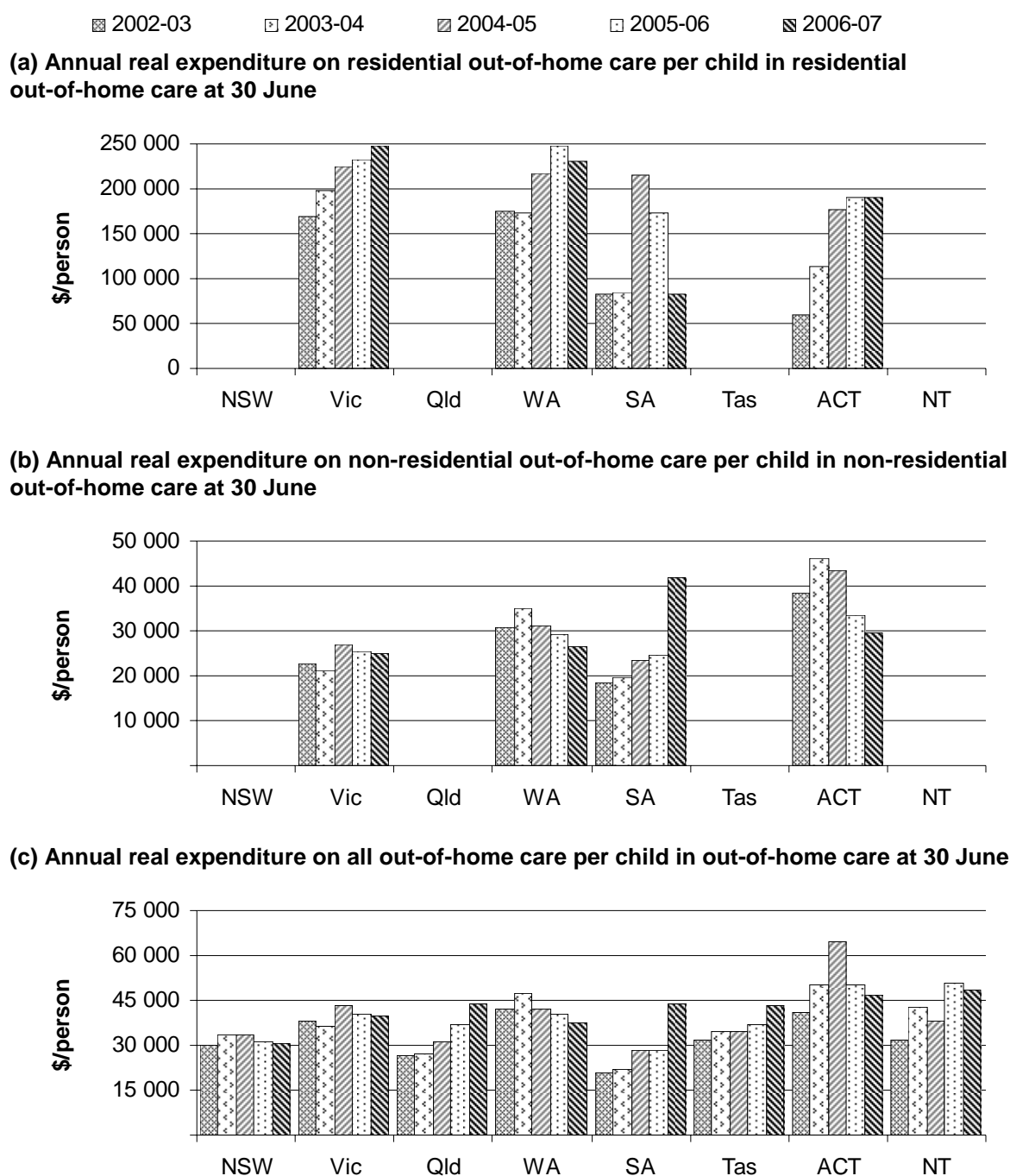
These indicators should be interpreted with care because they do not represent unit cost measures. Expenditure per child in care at 30 June overstates the cost per child because significantly more children are in care during a year than at a point in time. In addition, the indicator does not reflect the length of time that a child spends in care.

Better efficiency indicators would relate expenditure on particular out-of-home care activities to a measure of output of those activities. Work is currently in progress to develop an activity-based costing method which will allow this type of reporting from existing information systems (box 15.20).

Victoria, WA, SA and the ACT were able to separate expenditure on out-of-home care into residential care and non-residential care. This annual expenditure to 30 June for 2002-03 to 2006-07 per child in residential care and non-residential care at 30 June, varied across these jurisdictions (figures 15.11(a) and figure 15.11(b)).

All jurisdictions provided data on total expenditure on out-of-home care per child in care at 30 June for 2002-03 to 2006-07, which varied across jurisdictions (figure 15.11(c)).

Figure 15.11 Out-of-home care efficiency indicators (2006-07 dollars)<sup>a, b, c</sup>



<sup>a</sup> Real expenditure based on ABS gross domestic product price deflator (2006-07 = 100) (table AA.26).

<sup>b</sup> These data do not represent unit costs of providing out-of-home care services. <sup>c</sup> NSW, Qld, Tasmania and the NT could not disaggregate expenditure on out-of-home care into residential care and non-residential care.

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

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## Outcomes

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

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

‘Substantiation rate after decision not to substantiate’ is an indicator of the outcomes of child protection and out-of-home care services (box 15.23).

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

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

This indicator is defined as the proportion of children who were the subject of an investigation in the previous financial year that led to a decision not to substantiate, and who were later the subject of a substantiation within three or 12 months of the initial decision not to substantiate. The year reported relates to the year of the initial decision not to substantiate.

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

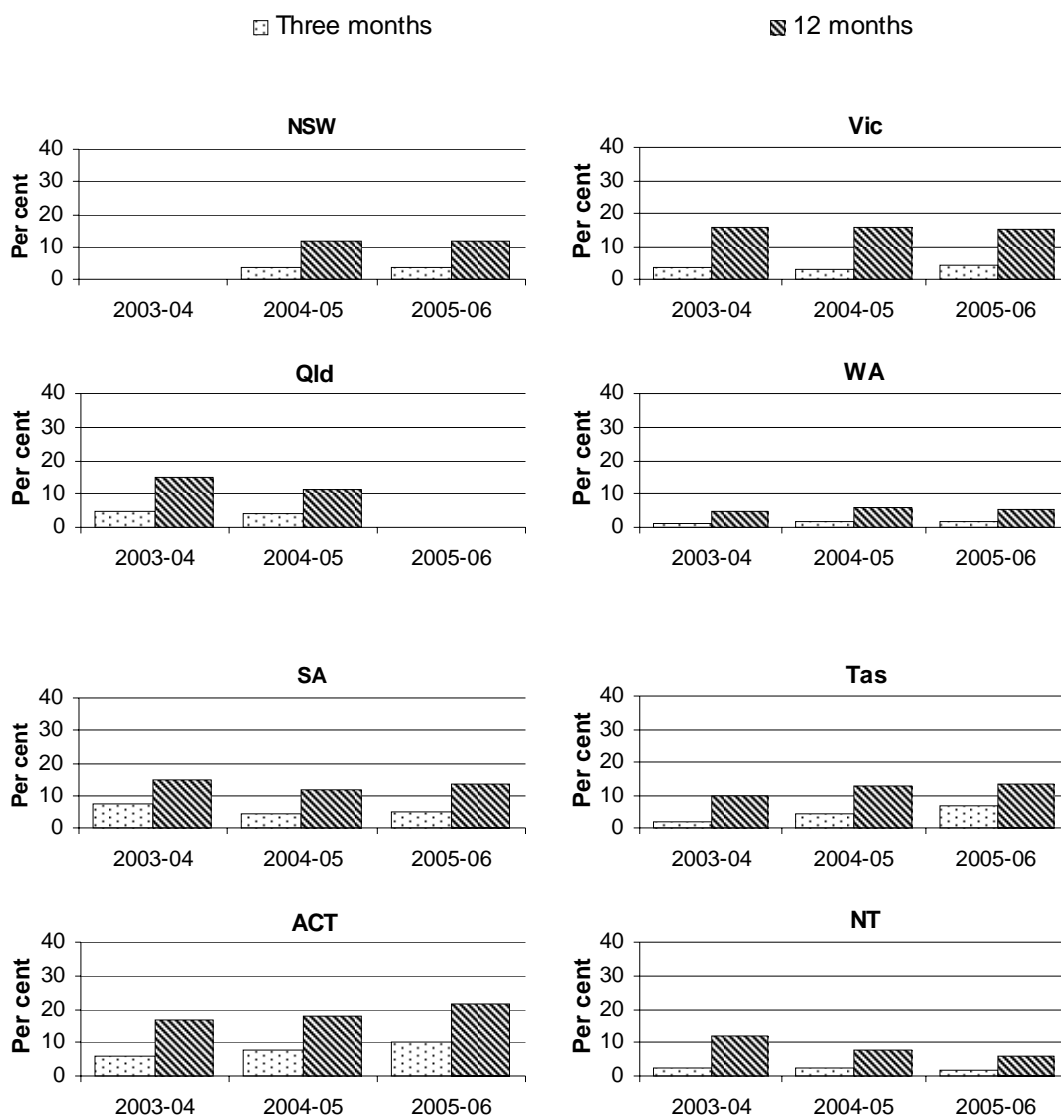
A low rate for this indicator is generally desirable. However, reported results may be affected by the finalisation of investigations, factors beyond the control of child protection services, or a change in circumstances after the initial decision not to substantiate was made. A demonstrable risk of harm might not have existed in the first instance. In addition, this indicator does not distinguish between subsequent substantiations which are related to the initial notification (that is, the same source of risk of harm), and those which are unrelated to the initial notification (that is, a different source of risk of harm).

This indicator should be considered with other outcome indicators.

Data that are comparable across jurisdictions are not available for this indicator, because definitions of substantiations vary across jurisdictions. Data are comparable within each jurisdiction over time unless otherwise stated (figure 15.12).



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



<sup>a</sup> Data are not comparable across jurisdictions because definitions of substantiation vary significantly. Consequently, rates cannot be compared across jurisdictions. <sup>b</sup> Jurisdictions have provided the denominator for this indicator for this Report. In previous Reports the denominator was derived by the AIHW. Data in this Report may therefore differ from previous Reports. <sup>c</sup> NSW was unable to provide data for 2003-04 due to the introduction of a new client information system. <sup>d</sup> The counting rule for this indicator changed from 2003-04 onwards. SA applied the earlier counting rule up to and including 2004-05. <sup>e</sup> During 2006-07 Victoria introduced new service and data reporting arrangements. Therefore data for 2006-07 may not be fully comparable to previous years' data. See source table 15A.52 for more details on these arrangements. <sup>f</sup> Queensland data have not been provided due to the recent transition to a new information management system. As this indicator is calculated using two years of data, 2005-06 rates are not available for Queensland. <sup>g</sup> Data relating to substantiations after a decision not to substantiate in Tasmania for 2006-07 should be interpreted carefully due to the high proportion of investigations in process at 31 August 2007.

Source: AIHW *Child protection notifications, investigations and substantiations, Australia* data collection (unpublished); tables 15A.9, 15A.35, 15A.52, 15A.69, 15A.86, 15A.103, 15A.120, 15A.137 and 15A.154.

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### *Improved safety — resubstantiation rate*

The ‘resubstantiation rate’ is an indicator of the outcomes of child protection and out-of-home care services (box 15.24).

#### **Box 15.24 Improved safety — resubstantiation rate**

‘Resubstantiation rate’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to reduce the risk of harm and to prevent the recurrence of abuse and neglect or harm to children. This indicator also partly reveals the extent to which intervention by child protection services has succeeded in preventing further harm.

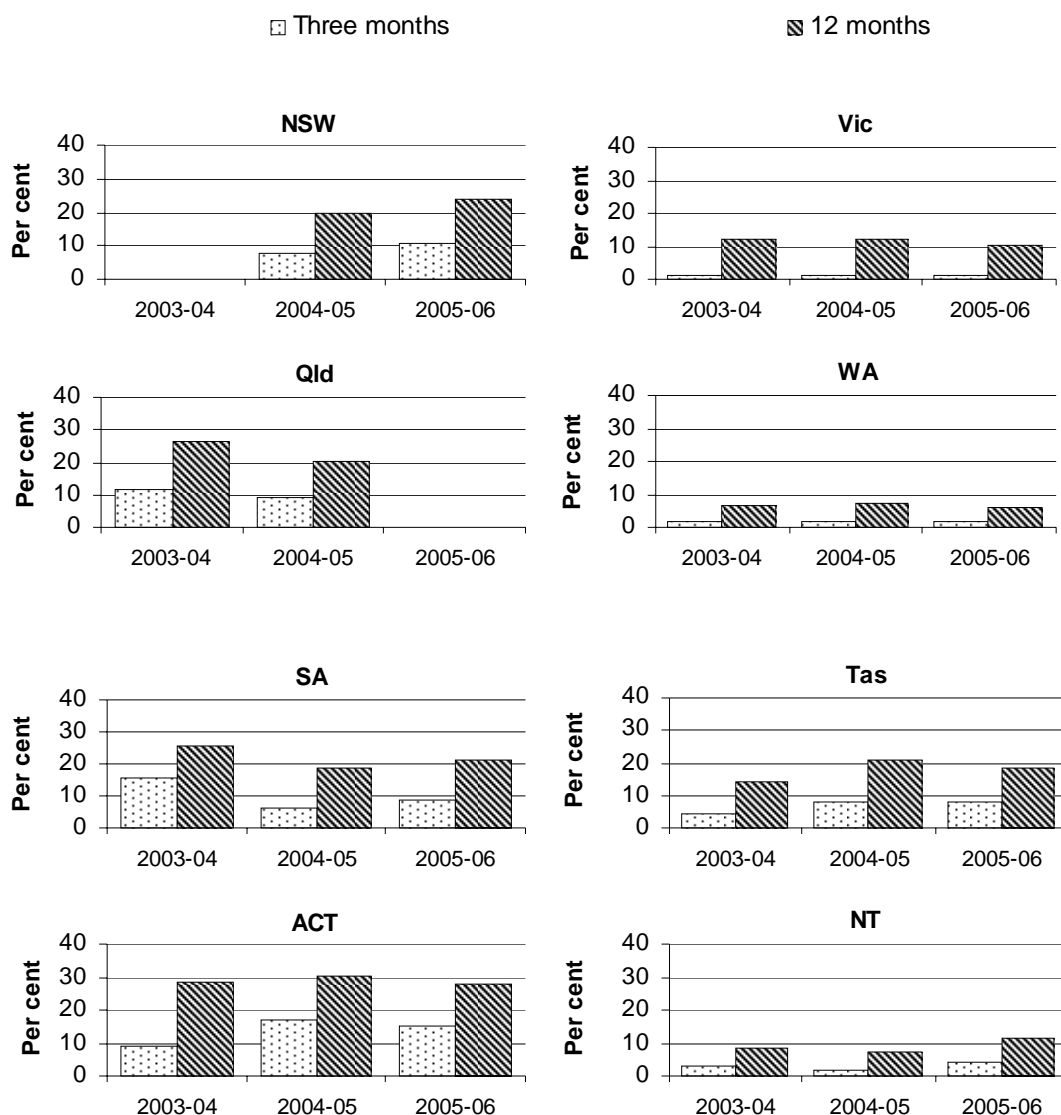
This indicator is defined as the proportion of children who were the subject of a substantiation in the previous financial year, who were subsequently the subject of a further substantiation within the following three or 12 months. The year reported relates to the year of the original substantiation.

A low rate for this indicator is generally desirable. However, reported results may be affected by the finalisation of investigations, factors beyond the control of child protection services, such as changes in the family situation (for example, illness, unemployment or a new partner). In addition, this indicator does not distinguish between subsequent substantiations that are related to the initial notification (that is, the same source of risk of harm) and those that are unrelated to the initial notification (that is, a different source of risk of harm).

This indicator should be considered with other outcome indicators.

Data that are comparable across jurisdictions are not available for this indicator, because definitions of substantiations vary across jurisdictions. Data are comparable within each jurisdiction over time unless otherwise stated (figure 15.13).

**Figure 15.13 Improved safety — resubstantiation rate within 3 and/or 12 months after a substantiation<sup>a, b, c, d, e, f, g</sup>**



<sup>a</sup> Data are not comparable across jurisdictions because definitions of substantiation vary significantly. Consequently, rates cannot be compared across jurisdictions. <sup>b</sup> Jurisdictions have provided the denominator for this indicator for this Report. In previous Reports the denominator was derived by the AIHW. Data in this Report may therefore differ from previous Reports. <sup>c</sup> NSW was unable to provide data for 2003-04 due to the introduction of a new client information system. <sup>d</sup> The counting rule for this indicator changed from 2003-04 onwards. SA applied the earlier counting rule up to and including 2004-05. <sup>e</sup> During 2006-07 Victoria introduced new service and data reporting arrangements. Therefore data for 2006-07 may not be fully comparable to previous years' data. See source table 15A.53 for more details on these arrangements. <sup>f</sup> Queensland data have not been provided due to the recent transition to a new information management system. As this indicator is calculated using two years of data, 2005-06 rates are not available for Queensland. <sup>g</sup> Data relating to resubstantiations in Tasmania for 2006-07 should be interpreted carefully due to the high proportion of investigations in process at 31 August 2007.

Source: AIHW *Child protection notifications, investigations and substantiations, Australia* data collection (unpublished); tables 15A.10, 15A.36, 15A.53, 15A.70, 15A.87, 15A.104, 15A.121, 15A.138 and 15A.155.

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*Improved education, health and wellbeing of the child*

‘Improved education, health and wellbeing of the child’ is an indicator of the outcomes of child protection and out-of-home care services (box 15.25).

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

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

Information on the change over time in learning outcomes for children on guardianship or custody orders provides a partial measure against this outcome indicator. An increase in learning outcomes over time for children on guardianship or custody orders indicates that their educational outcomes are improving.

However, factors outside the control of protection and support services may also influence the educational outcomes of children on guardianship or custody orders, and care needs to be exercised when interpreting results.

For the 2008 Report, data are available on the proportion of children in years 3, 5 and 7 on guardianship or custody orders (attending government schools) achieving the national reading and numeracy benchmarks in 2003, relative to all children (attending government and non-government schools) achieving these benchmarks over the same period (see tables 15A.11–15A.13). Until information on the learning outcomes for these children is available at a later point in time, changes over time are not able to be presented.

Development is currently under way to produce information on the educational outcomes for these same children two years after their assessment in 2003. These data are anticipated to be available for the 2010 Report.

*Safe return home*

‘Safe return home’ is an indicator of the outcomes of child protection and out-of-home care services (box 15.26).

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**Box 15.26 Safe return home**

‘Safe return home’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to remove the risk of harm to the child while maintaining family cohesion. For children who cannot be protected within their family and are removed from home, often the best outcome is when effective intervention to improve their parents’ skills or capacity to care for them enables them to return home.

This indicator has been identified for development and reporting in future. Data were not available for the 2008 Report.

*Permanent care*

‘Permanent care’ is an indicator of the outcomes of child protection and out-of-home care services (box 15.27).

**Box 15.27 Permanent care**

‘Permanent care’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to provide appropriate care for children who cannot be safely reunified with their families. Appropriate services are those that minimise the length of time before stable, permanent placement is achieved.

This indicator has been identified for development and reporting in future. Data were not available for the 2008 Report.

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

### **Improving national child protection data**

Between 2000 and 2003, the National Child Protection and Support Services (NCPASS) Data Working Group, under the auspices of the National Community Services Information Management Group, reviewed the reporting framework used to collect the national child protection data.

The review resulted in the development of a broader framework to count responses to calls received by departments responsible for child protection about the safety and wellbeing of children. The responses include those that occur outside the formal child protection system. The new framework incorporates data elements such as the provision of advice and information, the assessment of needs, and the provision of general and intensive family support services.

The AIHW, in conjunction with the NCPASS, has developed data dictionaries to support the new reporting framework. These dictionaries have undergone initial data testing and it is envisaged that they will be used by jurisdictions to provide unit record data. This will provide more detailed child protection and out-of-home care data than is currently available with aggregated data.

Further development of the pathways activity-based costing project will reduce the reliance on proxy efficiency indicators for child protection and out-of-home care and enable more detailed and comparative analysis of efficiency indicators. Developments planned for the next Report include the implementation of revised definitions for some activity groups and the development of a common survey tool to facilitate greater consistency across reporting jurisdictions.

Significant progress is underway to develop comparative data in relation to two effectiveness indicators (response times to commence and complete investigations) for inclusion in the 2009 Report. Further work is occurring on the collection of additional material relating to the educational outcomes for children on orders for potential inclusion in the 2010 Report.

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## 15.5 Profile of juvenile justice services

### Service overview

Juvenile justice services aim to promote community safety and reduce youth offending by assisting young people to address their offending behaviour and take responsibility for the effect their behaviour has on victims and the wider community. In doing this, juvenile justice services recognise the importance of the families and communities of young offenders, particularly Indigenous communities, in the provision of services. Consequently, services are designed to maximise opportunities to maintain offending free lifestyles by rehabilitating young people who commit offences and reintegrating them into their community.

The juvenile justice system is responsible for dealing with young people (predominantly aged 10–17 years) who have committed or allegedly committed an offence while considered by law to be a juvenile. Key elements of juvenile justice systems in all jurisdictions include:

- the diversion of young people from the more formal criminal justice system (courts) where appropriate
- detention as a last resort
- victims' rights
- ensuring a young person fulfils their sentencing obligations
- responsibility appropriate to the developmental stage of the young person
- community safety.

The juvenile justice information in the Report is sourced from the Juvenile Justice National Minimum Data Set (JJ NMDS), the Australian Institute of Criminology (AIC) and the AIHW.

### Roles and responsibilities

The responsibility for juvenile justice in Australia resides with State and Territory governments. Each jurisdiction has its own legislation that determines the policies and practices of its juvenile justice system. While this legislation varies in detail, its intent is similar across jurisdictions. National coordination takes place through the Australasian Juvenile Justice Administrators (AJJA). AJJA is a Standing Committee of the Community and Disability Services Ministerial Advisory Council.

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The juvenile justice system in each jurisdiction comprises several organisations, each with a different primary role and responsibility in dealing with young people. These include:

- police, who are usually the young person's first point of contact with the system
- courts (usually a special children's or youth court), where matters relating to the charges against the young person are heard. The courts are largely responsible for decisions regarding bail (and remand) and sentencing options
- juvenile justice agencies, which are responsible for the supervision and case management of young people on a range of community-based legal arrangements and in detention, and for the provision of a wide range of services aimed at crime prevention and reduction. Many of the services provided by juvenile justice agencies are aimed at: rehabilitating young people; minimising the level and future involvement of young people in the juvenile justice system; reducing the over representation of Indigenous young people in the justice system; maintaining the young person's connection with family, culture and community; providing young people with an appropriate level of care and safety (duty of care); increasing young people's accountability to victims; and improving community safety.

### *Diversion of young offenders*

In most jurisdictions, the majority of young people who come into contact with the juvenile justice system are diverted through a range of mechanisms such as police cautions, conferences and unsupervised orders, and do not generally become clients of juvenile justice agencies. These mechanisms are now part of the spectrum of legislated responses to juvenile crime.

Responsibility for administering the options available for more minor offences — warnings (informal cautions), formal cautions, and infringement notices — rests mainly with police in all jurisdictions. Responsibility for administering the diversionary processes available for more serious offences lies with juvenile justice authorities and courts in each jurisdiction.

Diverting appropriate young people from the formal court system, or minimising the involvement of young people with the justice system through a conferencing process, can take considerable resources, depending on the judicial system in the jurisdiction and the number of young people involved. While comparable national data are not yet available to illustrate the level of diversion, the juvenile justice agencies in NSW and Queensland have provided information on the number of young people dealt with by means of diversion. These data are not comparable across the two jurisdictions.



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The 2005-06 data from the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research that are available to the NSW Department of Juvenile Justice show that 19 349 warnings were administered to young people, 9449 cautions were given and 978 police referrals to youth justice conferences were made. The NSW Department of Juvenile Justice data show 1111 conferences (from 1555 police and court referrals) were convened for young people in 2005-06 (NSW Department of Juvenile Justice 2007). In Queensland, 2040 conferences were held for people aged 10–17 years in 2006-07, representing an increase of 6 per cent from 1927 in 2005-06 (Queensland Department of Communities unpublished).

Juvenile justice agencies in all jurisdictions provide pre-sentence reports for young people (who may or may not subsequently become clients) to the courts as required.

## **Funding**

Data on Australian, State and Territory government expenditure on juvenile justice services are not currently available. This information is anticipated to be available for future Reports.

## **Size and scope**

### *Clients of juvenile justice agencies*

The third report of the JJ NMDS covers the period 2005-06 and was released in August 2007 (AIHW 2007a). The JJ NMDS provides information about young people who are supervised by juvenile justice agencies. Pre-sentenced and sentenced supervision both within the community and in detention are included in the JJ NMDS. Elements of the juvenile justice system which do not require juvenile justice agency supervision (such as police and court actions) are not within the scope of the JJ NMDS.

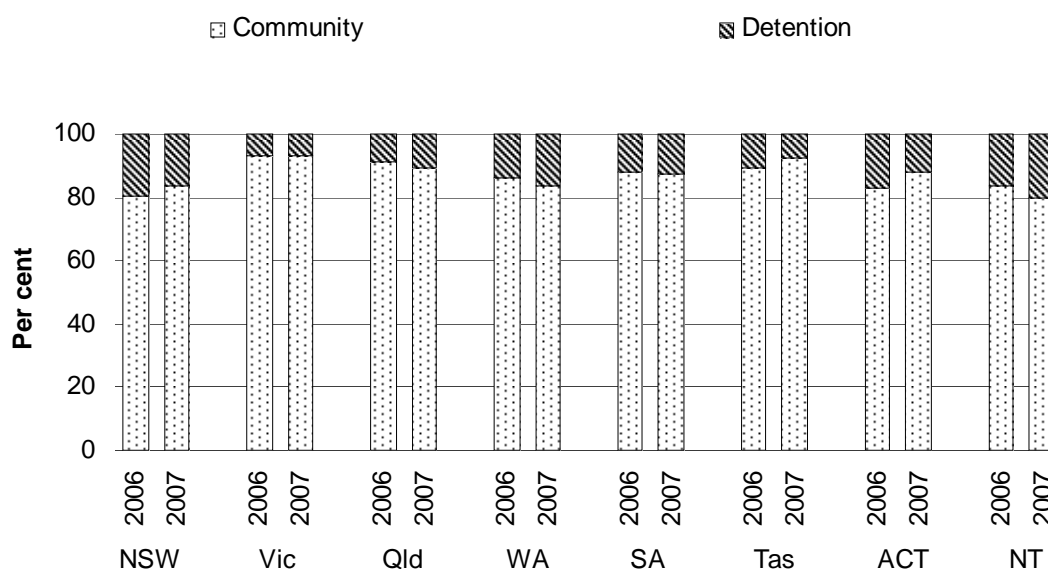
Of those young people who become clients of juvenile justice agencies, most are supervised on community-based orders, including parole. The JJ NMDS shows that, during 2005-06, 13 254 young people experienced juvenile justice supervision in Australia. Of these young people, 11 150 had community-based supervision, 5137 had detention-based supervision, with some young people experiencing both (AIHW 2007a).

The majority of young people aged 10–17 years supervised by juvenile justice jurisdictions (between 79.8 per cent and 92.8 per cent) were in the community,

rather than in detention (figure 15.14). These figures do not include any juveniles aged 10–17 years who were supervised in the adult correctional system.

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

**Figure 15.14 Proportion of juvenile justice clients aged 10–17 years who were supervised in the community and in detention centres, at 30 June<sup>a, b, c, d</sup>**



<sup>a</sup> Includes only those young people who were under the supervision or case management of juvenile justice agencies on a pre- or post-sentence legal arrangement or order (for example, supervised bail, remand, a community services order, parole and detention). <sup>b</sup> Juvenile justice agencies also have additional clients in detention and community supervision who are over 17 years of age. The figure does not include juvenile justice clients over 17 years of age at 30 June 2006 or 30 June 2007. <sup>c</sup> Clients may be on multiple orders at any one time. The distribution in the figure, therefore, is based not on order type but on where the client was located at 30 June 2006 or 30 June 2007. <sup>d</sup> Refer to source table 15A.167 for detailed footnotes.

Source: AIHW unpublished (data supplied by State and Territory governments); table 15A.167.

### *Juvenile detention*

As outlined above, the majority of juvenile offenders are supervised in community-based services. The following data relate to juvenile detention only. As jurisdictions have different definitions of a juvenile, this may affect the number and rates reported for young people aged 10–17 years.

The data from the AIC cover young people aged 10–17 years in juvenile justice centres at the end of each quarter. They include young people in detention, both on remand or sentenced.

Nationally, the daily average number of people aged 10–17 years detained in juvenile detention centres increased from 590 to 634 between 2001-02 and 2005-06 (table 15.3).

**Table 15.3 Daily average population of people aged 10–17 years in juvenile detention (number)<sup>a, b</sup>**

	<i>NSW<sup>c</sup></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>
2001-02	217	62	89	108	56	27	17	16	590
2002-03	220	64	96	106	65	25	17	24	616
2003-04	209	62	91	122	50	26	18	13	590
2004-05	218	53	89	110	58	33	15	22	596
2005-06	244	53	127	115	39	27	13	17	634

<sup>a</sup> Average based on population of juvenile detention centres on the last day of each quarter of the financial year. <sup>b</sup> Due to rounding, the Australian total may differ from the combined total of all jurisdictions. <sup>c</sup> NSW data from 31 March 2005 include Kariiong Juvenile Correction Centre detainees, sourced from the NSW Department of Corrective Services. Numbers for NSW in each quarter in 2005-06 and the quarters of 31 March and 30 June 2005 include young people in the care of both the NSW Department of Juvenile Justice and the Department of Corrective Services.

Source: AIC (unpublished); table 15A.168.

The average rate of detention of young people aged 10–17 years per 100 000 in the population aged 10–17 years increased from 27.2 per 100 000 in 2001-02 to 28.4 per 100 000 in 2005-06, although rates varied across jurisdictions (table 15A.169).

Nationally, females made up 7.7 per cent of the total population of juvenile detention centres at 30 June 2006. Males made up 92.3 per cent of the national population of juvenile detention centres at 30 June 2006 (table 15A.170).

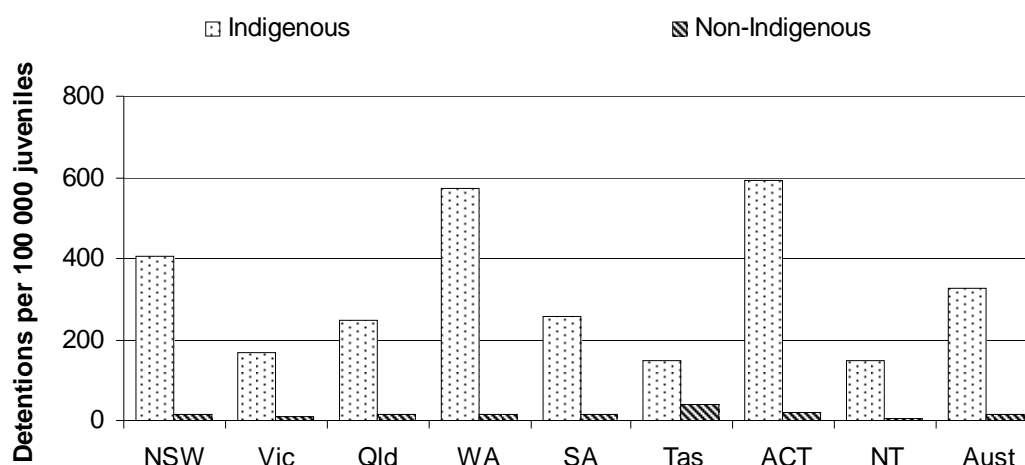
### *Numbers and rates of Indigenous young people placed in detention*

The daily average number of Indigenous young people aged 10–17 years detained in juvenile detention centres was 334 in 2005-06 (table 15A.171). Nationally, the daily average detention rate for Indigenous people aged 10–17 years in 2005-06 was 324.1 per 100 000 Indigenous people aged 10–17 years. This rate compared to 14.1 per 100 000 for the non-Indigenous population aged 10–17 years (table 15A.172).

Jurisdictional comparisons need to be treated with caution, especially for those states and territories with low Indigenous populations, where small number effects can introduce statistical variations that do not accurately represent trends over time or consistent differences from other jurisdictions. The AIC uses ABS experimental projections for its estimates of the Indigenous population (ABS 2004). These data include a range of estimates (low and high). The AIC data are based on high level estimates, unlike other sections of this Report, which use the low level estimates.

The over-representation of Indigenous young people in detention across jurisdictions in 2005-06 is shown in figure 15.15.

**Figure 15.15 Average rate of detention of Indigenous and non-Indigenous people aged 10–17 years in juvenile detention, per 100 000 people, 2005-06<sup>a</sup>**



<sup>a</sup> Rates of detention for Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in NSW in each quarter in 2005-06 include young people in the care of both the NSW Department of Juvenile Justice and the Department of Corrective Services.

Source: AIC (unpublished); table 15A.172.

## 15.6 Framework of performance indicators for juvenile justice services

A framework of performance indicators for juvenile justice services is under development. It is anticipated that this framework will be available for the 2010 Report.

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## **15.7 Future directions in juvenile justice reporting**

The AJJA have formed a working group to develop national performance indicators for juvenile justice. Two types of measures, relating to the performance of juvenile justice agencies and the performance of the broader juvenile justice system, are being considered by this group.

When available, the Steering Committee will consider these indicators for inclusion in future editions of this Report.

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## 15.8 Profile of supported accommodation and assistance services

### Service overview

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

The Supported Accommodation and Assistance Program (SAAP) was established in 1985 to bring homelessness programs funded by individual State and Territory governments and the Australian Government under one nationally coordinated program. The current program (SAAP V) is governed by the *Supported Accommodation Assistance Act 1994*. This specifies that the overall aim of SAAP is to provide transitional supported accommodation and related support services to assist homeless people achieve the maximum degree of self-reliance and independence (AIHW 2007b).

Clients are offered a range of services through SAAP. These include:

- supported accommodation
- counselling
- advocacy
- links to housing
- health, education and employment services
- outreach support
- brokerage and meals services
- financial and employment assistance.

The main source of SAAP information in this Report is the SAAP National Data Collection (NDC). In 2005-06, the Client Collection of the SAAP NDC underwent some significant changes resulting from the introduction of a new Core Data Set and statistical linkage key. Some of the data items in the Client Collection subsequently changed. These changes mean that some SAAP data for 2005-06 are not directly comparable to those in previous years. In addition, since 2004-05 there has been a change in the definition of a SAAP support period. This may have an effect on the reported number of support periods.

The Steering Committee anticipated that SAAP data for 2006-07 would be available for this Report. Unfortunately, the majority of 2006-07 data were not available.

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Financial data for 2006-07 are included, and the 2005-06 demand for SAAP accommodation and turn-away updates the 2004-05 data provided in the 2007 Report. All other data for 2005-06 have been revised from the preliminary data provided in the 2007 Report, and these are included in the attachment tables of this Report (tables 15A.173–202).

The Steering Committee is disappointed that the remaining 2006-07 data were not available for this Report. It is anticipated that SAAP data for 2006-07 and 2007-08 will be available for the 2009 Report.

### **Size and scope**

Support services funded by SAAP are provided by agencies to a range of groups. These include homeless families, single men and women, young people and adults and children escaping domestic violence.

At least 1300 agencies were funded under the SAAP program in 2005-06 and included non-government, community or local government agencies (AIHW 2007b), the most recent year for which data are available.

SAAP agencies vary in their service delivery model. Common models include the provision of medium term to long term supported accommodation and the provision of crisis or short term supported accommodation. Agencies also provide services other than accommodation, such as outreach support, day support, and telephone information and referral. Agencies may also provide multiple types of services and agency support. The proportions of agencies delivering particular service models have remained relatively stable since 2002-03 (table 15A.175).

#### *SAAP and the link with other services*

Families and children in crisis (such as those escaping domestic violence or experiencing homelessness) are often subject to considerable stress, violence and transience, all of which have a negative impact on children. As a result, some children assisted by SAAP may have also had contact with child protection and out-of-home care services or may have been subject to a current or past care and protection order.

Close links also exist with other forms of housing assistance reported in the Housing chapter of the Report (chapter 16), which focuses on the performance of government in providing public, Indigenous and community housing under the Commonwealth State Housing Agreement (CSHA), and the Commonwealth Rent Assistance (CRA) program. The Crisis Accommodation Program (CAP) is a special

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purpose program funded under the CSHA which provides funding to State and Territory housing authorities to support SAAP agencies, by providing infrastructure funding for SAAP accommodation.

Some individuals and families utilise both SAAP services and services described in the Housing chapter, as people tend to move from homelessness to social housing, or may be in receipt of SAAP services and accommodated in social housing.<sup>2</sup>

## **Roles and responsibilities**

SAAP is jointly funded by the Australian, State and Territory governments. The Coordination and Development Committee (CAD) of senior Australian and State government officials oversight the development and implementation of the program at the national level. The State and Territory governments are responsible for the day-to-day management of the program including the distribution of funding to SAAP funded agencies. Non-government agencies, with some local government participation, deliver most SAAP services.

Research, strategy, and other planning and development activities are coordinated at the national level by the SAAP National Coordination and Development Committee (which comprises representatives of the Australian Government and each State and Territory government).

## **Funding**

Recurrent funding of SAAP services was approximately \$356.1 million in 2006-07 (table 15A.177), of which the Australian Government contributed 51.1 per cent and the State and Territory governments contributed 48.9 per cent (table 15A.176). These proportions have remained relatively stable since 2002-03. An additional \$0.5 million was provided to allow the Australian Government to manage and administer national research and evaluation projects.

Nationally, real recurrent SAAP funding per person has decreased from \$18 in 2002-03 to \$17 in 2006-07 (table 15A.178). These figures varied across jurisdictions (figure 15.16).

In 2006-07, in addition to the amounts determined in agreements between jurisdictions and the Australian Government, some jurisdictions made recurrent allocations to SAAP services (for example, to assist service viability), and/or SAAP

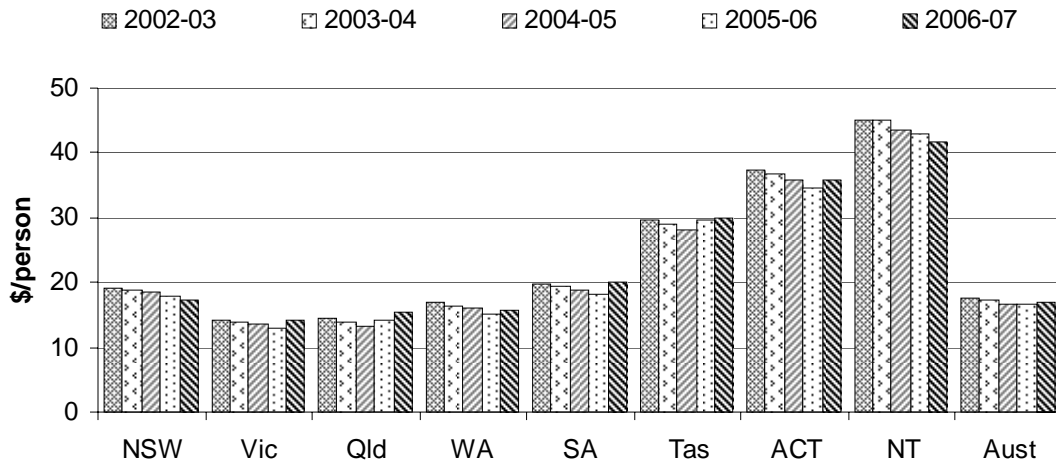
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<sup>2</sup> Social housing is generally understood to include public and community housing. For further information on these forms of housing assistance, see chapter 16 (box 16.2).



like activities. These additional funds are not included in the above figures, but may be included in future Reports.

**Figure 15.16 Real recurrent SAAP funding per person in the residential population (2006-07 dollars)<sup>a, b, c</sup>**



<sup>a</sup> Includes total recurrent allocations (including State and Territory level allocations for program administration). <sup>b</sup> The total population figure used to derive program funding per person in the total population has changed from previous Reports. The total population figure uses a mid-point estimate for 31 December at the end of each year. In previous Reports, the financial year average was used. The total population figure is not indicative of the demand for SAAP services. <sup>c</sup> Real recurrent funding is calculated using ABS gross domestic product expenditure implicit price deflator (2006-07=100) (table AA.26).

Source: Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaCSIA) (unpublished); table 15A.178.

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

The framework of performance indicators for supported accommodation and assistance services is based on the shared government objectives for SAAP services (box 15.28).

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**Box 15.28 Objectives for SAAP services**

The overall aim of SAAP is to provide transitional supported accommodation and a range of related support services, to help people who are homeless or at imminent risk of homelessness to achieve the maximum possible degree of self-reliance and independence. Within this aim, the goals are to:

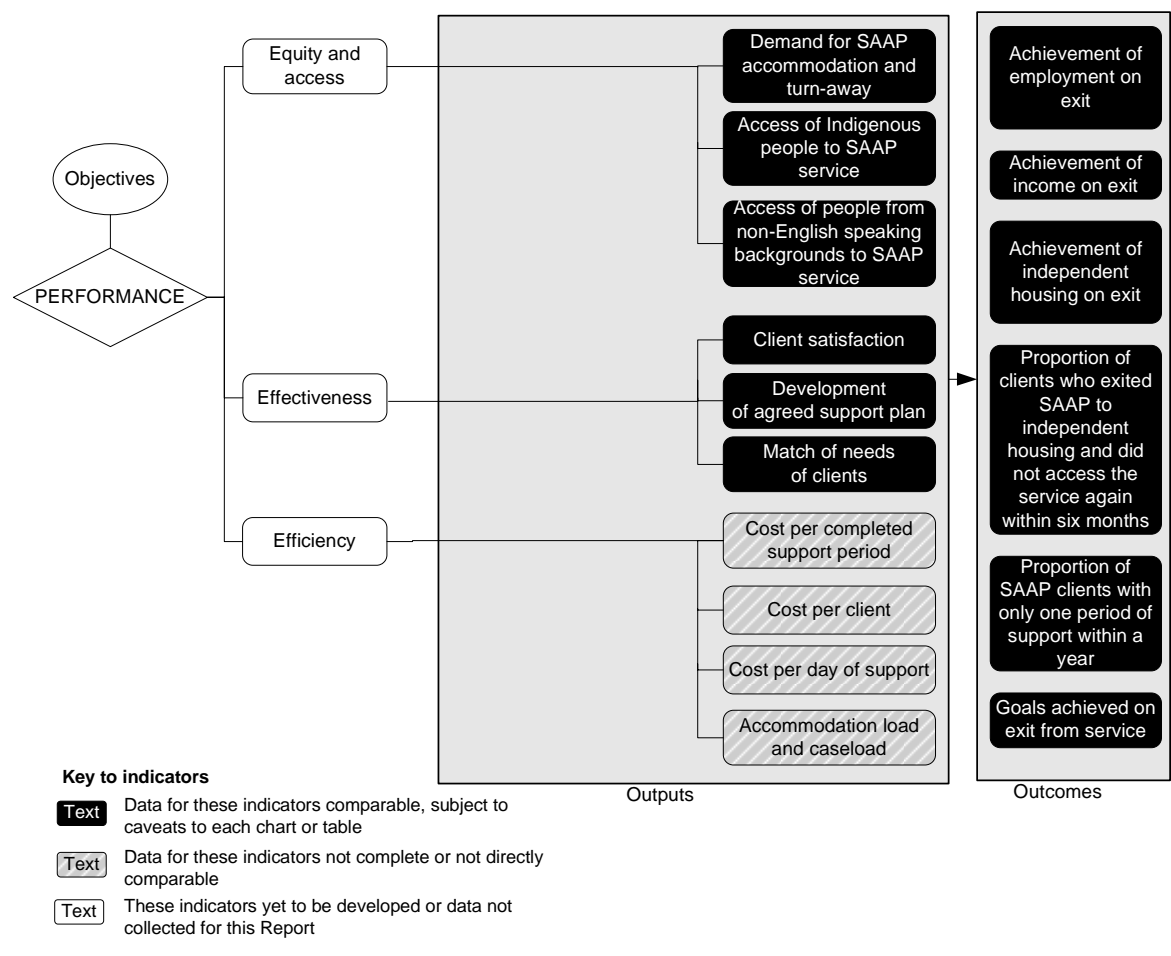
- resolve crises
- re-establish family links where appropriate
- re-establish the capacity of clients to live independently of SAAP.

SAAP services should be provided in an equitable and efficient manner.

The performance indicator framework provides information on equity, efficiency and effectiveness, and distinguishes the outputs and outcomes of SAAP services (figure 15.17).

The performance indicator framework shows which data are comparable in the 2008 Report. For data that are not considered directly comparable, the text includes relevant caveats and supporting commentary. Chapter 1 discusses data comparability from a Report-wide perspective (see section 1.6).

Figure 15.17 Performance indicators for SAAP services



## 15.10 Key supported accommodation and assistance performance indicator results

Preliminary data for 2005-06 were presented in the 2007 Report. Updated data for 2005-06, which includes substantial revisions to some data items, are included in the attachment tables of this Report (15A.173–202).

The data collection for SAAP allows for the measurement of the number of clients and of the number and types of services provided to clients, but is subject to some limitations (box 15.29).

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**Box 15.29 Information to be considered when analysing SAAP data**

The following information needs to be considered when analysing SAAP data.

- Informed consent is an essential component of the integrity of the data. The principle of client/consumer rights (which underpins informed consent) recognises that clients do not receive services under a mandatory order. They have the right to accept or reject the services offered and they have the right to provide or not provide information while receiving SAAP services.
- Clients consented to provide personal details for the SAAP client collection for 86.6 per cent of support periods in 2005-06. A weighting system has been developed to adjust for agency non-participation (92.9 per cent of agencies participated in the client collection) and non-consent (SAAP NDCA *Administrative Data and Client Collection*, unpublished).

## Outputs

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

### *Equity and access*

#### *Demand for SAAP accommodation and turn-away*

'Demand for SAAP accommodation and turn-away' is an indicator of the equity of access to SAAP services (box 15.30).

**Box 15.30 Demand for SAAP accommodation and turn-away**

'Demand for SAAP accommodation and turn-away' is an indicator of governments' objective to ensure all Australians have equitable access to SAAP services on the basis of relative need. The indicator measures the extent to which the demand for accommodation is met or unmet. Unmet demand occurs when a homeless person expressly asking for supported accommodation cannot be provided with that assistance (although one-off assistance may be provided).

Two measures of the proportion of people whose valid request for immediate SAAP accommodation cannot be met are reported: turn-away as the proportion of people requiring new SAAP accommodation; and turn-away as the proportion of total demand for SAAP accommodation.

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**Box 15.30 (Continued)**

Turn-away as the proportion of people requiring new accommodation is defined as the average daily percentage of people who could not be accommodated relative to all people making valid requests for immediate SAAP accommodation. This provides an indication of a person's likelihood of obtaining SAAP accommodation.

Turn-away as the proportion of total demand for SAAP accommodation is defined as the average daily percentage of people who could not be accommodated relative to all people who required new and immediate SAAP accommodation or who were continuing their accommodation from the previous day. This provides a measure of the overall ability of SAAP to meet the demand for accommodation on an average day during the Demand for Accommodation Collection period.

A higher proportion of valid requests receiving accommodation is desirable.

Data for assessing access to SAAP services are sourced from the Demand for Accommodation Collection and the Client Collection. The Demand for Accommodation Collection measures the levels of met and unmet demand for SAAP accommodation by collecting information about requests for accommodation by individuals or groups over two weeks each year. These data are used in conjunction with Client Collection data to calculate the 'turn-away' rate for demand for SAAP accommodation.

The Demand for Accommodation Collection collects data on 'valid unmet requests' for immediate accommodation. 'Valid unmet requests' excludes requests made at an agency, where the person or group is determined to be inappropriate for the agency, where there is no fee-free accommodation available at that time<sup>3</sup>, or where offered assistance is refused. For the Client Collection, the accommodation status of a client on a particular day is based on the reported periods of accommodation within a support period.

As only data from agencies that participated in both the Client Collection and the Demand for Accommodation Collection are used for the calculations, data included in this Report may understate activities of SAAP agencies. Additionally, the two week sample period over which data are collected may not be representative of the eventual success of clients accessing SAAP services over the full year (see notes to tables 15A.179-180).

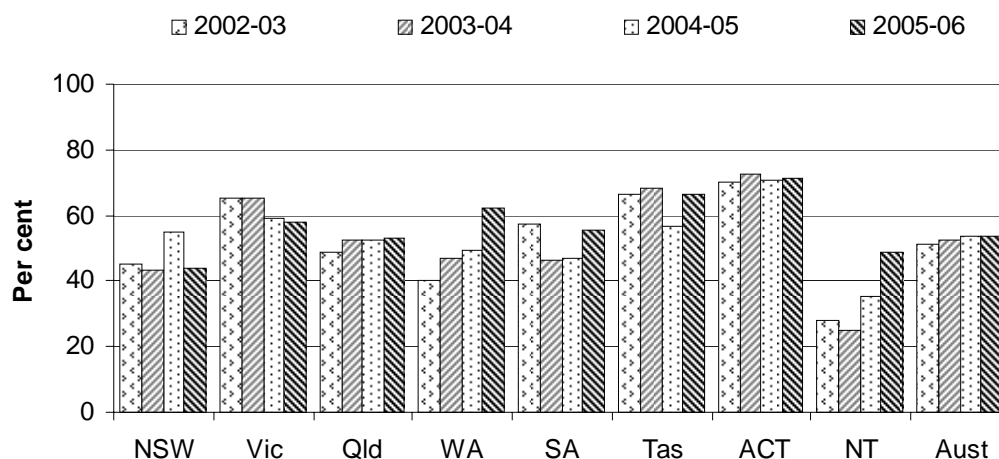
Data on the proportion of people with valid requests for SAAP accommodation who were turned away are included for the years 2002-03 to 2005-06. Data provided for

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<sup>3</sup> 'No fee-free accommodation available' refers to situations where the person/group is not given accommodation because they cannot meet the financial requirements (for example, fees) for that accommodation.

2005-06 are new for this Report. Nationally, 53.6 per cent of adults and unaccompanied children requesting immediate new SAAP accommodation on a given day were turned away in 2005-06. This proportion varied across jurisdictions (figure 15.18).

**Figure 15.18 Turn-away of adults and unaccompanied children as the proportion of people requiring new SAAP accommodation<sup>a, b, c</sup>**

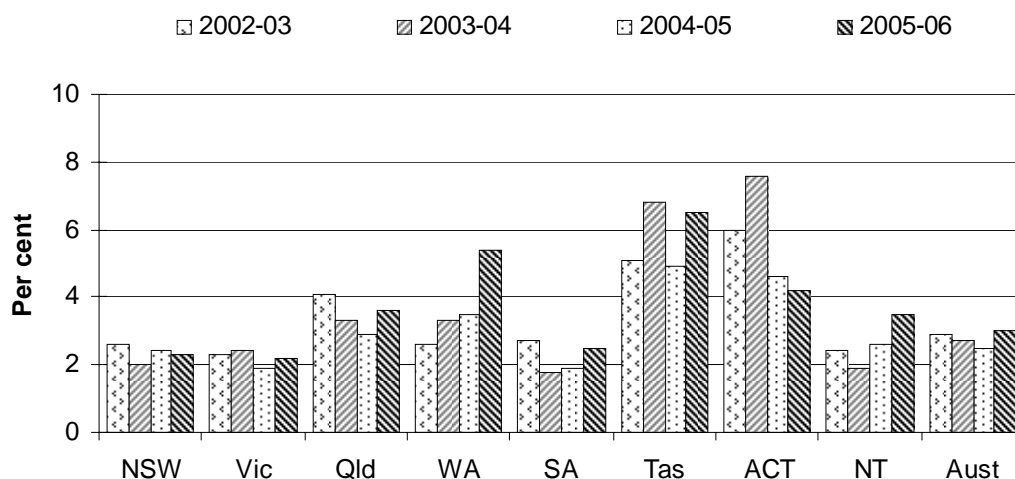


<sup>a</sup> A two-week Demand for Accommodation Collection is conducted annually to gather information about homeless people whose requests for accommodation were unable to be met by SAAP agencies. The collections were held in December and May of each financial year. <sup>b</sup> Comparisons between years should be treated with caution, due to variation in participation rates, differing imputation methods and because the collections were held on different dates each year. <sup>c</sup> See notes to table 15A.179 for more detailed data caveats.

Source: AIHW (2004, 2006, 2007); SAAP NDCA *Client and Demand for Accommodation Collections* (unpublished); table 15A.179.

Nationally, the number of adults and unaccompanied children who made valid requests for SAAP accommodation but could not be accommodated accounted for 3.0 per cent of the total demand for SAAP accommodation in 2005-06. This proportion varied across jurisdictions. Total demand for SAAP accommodation is measured by the total number of people who made requests for immediate SAAP accommodation, and those who were continuing their accommodation from the previous day (figure 15.19).

Figure 15.19 Turn-away of adults and unaccompanied children as the proportion of total demand for SAAP accommodation<sup>a, b, c</sup>



<sup>a</sup> A two-week Demand for Accommodation Collection is conducted annually to gather information about homeless people whose requests for accommodation were unable to be met by SAAP agencies. The collections were held in December and May of each financial year. <sup>b</sup> Comparisons between years should be treated with caution, due to variation in participation rates, differing imputation methods and because the collections were held on different dates each year. <sup>c</sup> See notes to table 15A.180 for more detailed data caveats.

Source: AIHW (2004, 2006, 2007); SAAP NDCA *Client and Demand for Accommodation Collections* (unpublished); table 15A.180.

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

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

‘Access of Indigenous people to SAAP service’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to ensure all Australians have equitable access to SAAP services on the basis of relative need. The indicator measures the extent to which the demand for assistance from Indigenous people is met or unmet. Unmet demand occurs when a homeless person expressly asking for supported accommodation, or support, cannot be provided with that assistance (although one-off assistance may be provided).

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

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

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

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Data for this indicator for 2006-07 were not available for the 2008 Report. Revised data for 2005-06 are reported in table 15A.181.

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

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

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

‘Access of people from non-English speaking backgrounds to SAAP service’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to ensure all Australians have equitable access to SAAP services on the basis of relative need. The indicator measures the extent to which the demand for assistance from people from non-English speaking backgrounds is met or unmet. Unmet demand occurs when a homeless person expressly asking for supported accommodation, or support, cannot be provided with that assistance (although one-off assistance may be provided).

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

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

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

Data for this indicator for 2006-07 were not available for the 2008 Report. Revised data for 2005-06 are reported in table 15A.182.

*Effectiveness*

*Client satisfaction*

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



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**Box 15.33 Client satisfaction**

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

This indicator is defined as the proportion of clients whose overall satisfaction with the assistance they had received from the SAAP service was either ‘good’ or ‘really good’.

A higher proportion suggests greater client satisfaction with the overall SAAP service.

Data for the client satisfaction indicator are sourced from the national SAAP client satisfaction survey, which is conducted periodically. As a result, new data for this indicator are not available for this Report. Data on client satisfaction relating to a four week period beginning 11 November 2003 were included in the 2005 Report (SCRGSP 2005, pp. 15.47-48; CBSR 2004).

*Development of agreed support plan*

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

**Box 15.34 Development of agreed support plan**

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

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

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

Data for this indicator for 2006-07 were not available for the 2008 Report. Revised data for 2005-06 are reported for all SAAP clients and separately for Indigenous clients in tables 15A.183-184 respectively.

*Match of needs of clients*

‘Match of needs of clients’ is an indicator of the effectiveness of SAAP services (box 15.35).

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**Box 15.35 Match of needs of clients**

'Match of needs of clients' is an indicator of governments' objective to ensure that SAAP services meet their client's individual needs. This is a measure of appropriateness. The range of services needed is broad (ranging from meals to laundry facilities to long term accommodation), so the effect of not providing these services varies.

This indicator is defined as the number of clients who were provided with the services they needed and clients who were referred to another agency, divided by the total number of SAAP clients.

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

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

Data for this indicator for 2006-07 were not available for the 2008 Report. Revised data for 2005-06 for all SAAP clients, Indigenous clients and clients from non-English speaking backgrounds are reported in tables 15A.185-187 respectively.

### *Efficiency*

Across jurisdictions, there are varying treatments of expenditure items (for example, superannuation) and different counting and reporting rules for generating financial data. Results reported on efficiency indicators may reflect these differences.

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

### *Cost per completed support period*

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

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**Box 15.36 Cost per completed support period**

'Cost per completed support period' is an indicator of governments' objective to maximise the availability and quality of services through the efficient use of taxpayer resources. This is a proxy indicator of efficiency, measuring government inputs per unit of output (unit cost).

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

A lower cost per completed support period is desirable, but may also indicate lesser service quality.

Unit cost analyses include only expenditure by service delivery providers. Unit cost indicators should also include administration costs borne by State and Territory departments in administering services, but this is not yet possible. In addition, capital costs are excluded because capital funding for SAAP is provided under the CSHA through a special purpose program (the CAP).

As data on completed support periods were unavailable for 2006-07, the 'cost per completed support period' was unable to be derived for 2006-07. Revised data for 2005-06 are reported in table 15A.189.

*Cost per client*

'Cost per client' is an indicator of the efficiency of SAAP services (box 15.37).

**Box 15.37 Cost per client**

'Cost per client' is an indicator of governments' objective to maximise the availability and quality of services through the efficient use of taxpayer resources. This is a proxy indicator of efficiency, measuring government inputs per unit of output (unit cost).

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

A lower cost per client is desirable, but may also indicate lesser service quality.

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**Box 15.37 (Continued)**

Unit cost analyses include only expenditure by service delivery providers. Unit cost indicators should also include administration costs borne by State and Territory departments in administering services, but this is not yet possible. In addition, capital costs are excluded because capital funding for SAAP is provided under the CSHA through a special purpose program (the CAP).

As data on the number of clients accessing a bed or place over the year were unavailable for 2006-07, the 'cost per client' was unable to be derived for 2006-07. Revised data for 2005-06 are reported in table 15A.190.

*Cost per day of support*

'Cost per day of support' is an indicator of the efficiency of SAAP services (box 15.38).

**Box 15.38 Cost per day of support**

'Cost per day of support' is an indicator of governments' objective to maximise the availability and quality of services through the efficient use of taxpayer resources. This indicator provides a proxy indicator of efficiency, measuring government inputs per unit of output (unit cost).

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

A lower cost per day of support is desirable, but may also indicate lesser service quality.

Unit cost analyses include only expenditure by service delivery providers. Unit cost indicators should include administration costs borne by State and Territory departments in administering services, but this is not yet possible. In addition, capital costs are excluded because capital funding for SAAP is provided under the CSHA through a special purpose program (the CAP).

As data on the number of days of support were unavailable for 2006-07, the 'cost per day of support' was unable to be derived for 2006-07. Revised data for 2005-06 are reported in table 15A.191.

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### *Accommodation load and caseload*

‘Accommodation load’ and ‘caseload’ are indicators of the efficiency of SAAP services (box 15.39).

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

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

The average accommodation load is defined as the average number of people accommodated per day per agency. The average caseload is defined as the average number of people being supported per day per agency.

Accommodation load and caseload are likely to be affected by the size of the agencies funded under the SAAP Program.

Data for this indicator for 2006-07 were not available for the 2008 Report. Revised data for 2005-06 are reported in table 15A.192.

### **Outcomes**

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

An important outcome of SAAP services is clients’ achievement of self-reliance and independence. Characteristics that may indicate whether clients can live independently include their income, housing status and workforce status. These characteristics are recorded at the end of a client’s support period.

#### *Achievement of employment on exit*

‘Achievement of employment on exit’ is an indicator of the outcomes of SAAP services (box 15.40).

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**Box 15.40 Achievement of employment on exit**

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

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

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

This indicator relates to relatively short term outcomes — that is, outcomes for clients immediately after their support period. Longer term outcomes are important, but more difficult to measure.

Higher proportions of achievement of employment are desirable.

Data for this indicator for all SAAP clients and Indigenous SAAP clients for 2006-07 were not available for the 2008 Report. Clients who provided no information or provided a ‘Don’t know’ response have been removed from 2005-06 data. Revised data for 2005-06 are reported in tables 15A.195-196.

*Achievement of income on exit*

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

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**Box 15.41 Achievement of income on exit**

'Achievement of income on exit' is an indicator of governments' objective to enable clients to participate independently in society at the end of their support period. This indicator compares these clients' income status before and after they received SAAP support. A client's independence and self-reliance is enhanced when the client experiences a positive change in income source (for example, from having no income support to obtaining some income, including wages and/or benefits) on exit from SAAP services.

This indicator is defined as the number of clients who requested assistance to obtain or maintain a pension or benefit and exited SAAP with an income source, divided by the total number of clients who requested assistance to obtain or maintain a pension or benefit. Data are reported for all SAAP clients, and separately for Indigenous clients.

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

Data for this indicator for all SAAP clients and Indigenous SAAP clients for 2006-07 were not available for the 2008 Report. Clients who provided no information or provided a 'Don't know' response have been removed from 2005-06 data. Revised data for 2005-06 are reported in tables 15A.200-201.

*Achievement of independent housing on exit*

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

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

'Achievement of independent housing on exit' is an indicator of governments' objective to enable clients to participate as productive and self-reliant members of society at the end of their support period. This indicator compares the proportion of clients who were in independent housing before and after they received SAAP support.

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

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**Box 15.42 (Continued)**

This indicator relates to relatively short term outcomes — that is, outcomes for clients immediately after their support period. Longer term outcomes are important, but more difficult to measure. Data are reported for all SAAP clients, and separately for Indigenous clients.

Higher proportions of clients who are in independent housing are desirable.

Data for this indicator for all SAAP clients and Indigenous SAAP clients for 2006-07 were not available for the 2008 Report. Revised data for 2005-06 are reported in tables 15A.193-194.

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

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

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

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

This indicator is defined as the number of clients who exit to independent housing and do not return to SAAP within six months, divided by the total number of SAAP clients.

A higher proportion of clients not returning to the program within six months is desirable.

A number of SAAP clients who need long term assistance may access SAAP services a number of times before their needs are met on a permanent basis. Ongoing contact with SAAP agencies may also lead to an improvement in living skills and self-reliance.

Data for this indicator for 2005-06 and 2006-07 were not available for the 2008 Report. Final data for 2004-05 are reported in table 15A.199.

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

‘Proportion of SAAP clients with only one period of support within a year’ is an indicator of the outcomes of SAAP services (box 15.44).



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

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

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

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

It may be appropriate for some clients to receive more than one support period in a given period of time (for example, moving from crisis accommodation to medium term accommodation). One group that makes multiple use of SAAP is single adults, especially older single men. A number of SAAP clients who need long term assistance may access SAAP services a number of times before their needs are met on a permanent basis. Ongoing contact with SAAP agencies may also lead to an improvement in living skills and self-reliance.

Data for this indicator for 2006-07 were not available for the 2008 Report. Revised data for 2005-06 are reported separately for all SAAP clients and Indigenous clients in tables 15A.197-198 respectively.

*Goals achieved on exit from service*

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

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

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

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

The data is identified from a questionnaire completed by clients.

A high proportion of achieved goals is desirable.

Data for this indicator for 2006-07 were not available for the 2008 Report. Revised data for 2005-06 are reported in table 15A.202.

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## **15.11 Future directions in supported accommodation and assistance performance reporting**

The Steering Committee is disappointed that SAAP data for 2006-07 were not available for this Report. The Steering Committee anticipates that SAAP data for 2006-07 and 2007-08 will be available for the 2009 Report.

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

An Evaluation Working Group (EWG) consisting of representatives from the Australian and State and Territory governments has been established to develop and manage the SAAP V National Evaluation on behalf of CAD. Additional data and research activities identified by the EWG as necessary for input to the national evaluation of SAAP V include: research on longer term housing outcomes for SAAP clients entering public and community housing and private rental housing; a survey of SAAP agencies to determine views on the achievement of SAAP V strategic priorities; an analysis of the evaluations undertaken on each of the Innovation and Investment Fund projects; the three client outcome projects mentioned above; and other data and research projects. These developments are likely to provide improved outcome focussed data for future Reports. The CAD is undertaking a mid-term review of SAAP V. The SAAP V Mid-term Review Report will be published in early 2008.

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

An Indigenous data training package has been developed by the National Data Collection Agency (NDCA) at the AIHW in collaboration with the Information Sub-committee of the CAD. Members of the Indigenous Reference Group consist of SAAP Indigenous representatives from NSW, Victoria, Queensland, WA and NT, together with staff from the NDCA, Queensland Department of Communities, and FaCSIA. The Reference Group provided input to develop the package based on

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current SAAP data training content but with an Indigenous-specific focus. It is expected that the package will encourage more Indigenous agencies to participate in the SAAP data collection and demonstrate to Indigenous agencies the value of collecting SAAP data for Indigenous clients. This development will improve the quality and coverage of Indigenous data in future Reports.

## **15.12 Jurisdictions' comments**

This section provides comments from each jurisdiction on the services covered in this chapter. Appendix A contains data that may assist in interpreting the performance indicators presented in this chapter. These data cover a range of demographic and geographic characteristics, including age profile, geographic distribution of the population, income levels, education levels, tenure of dwellings and cultural heritage (including Indigenous and ethnic status).

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## Australian Government comments

### *Child protection and supported placements*

“ The Australian Government provides funding for early intervention and prevention initiatives and specifically addresses better outcomes for vulnerable children and families. These include the \$490 million Stronger Families and Communities Strategy 2004–09 initiatives such as Communities for Children and the ‘Every Child is Important’ initiatives. National projects include the National Child Protection Clearinghouse, which researches, draws together and disseminates information on child protection activities and research to professionals and organisations in this field; National Child Protection Week; and national conferences that focus on child abuse and neglect. Each year the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare collects and reports on child protection and out-of-home care data from each of the states and territories.

The Australian Government contributes to the wellbeing of children and young people in foster and grandparent/relative care, mainly through the provision of Australian Government payments for eligible carers. In particular, the Government provides Family Tax Benefit and Child Care Benefit and provides all children in foster or grandparent/relative care with access to a Health Care concession card.

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

In 2006-07, the Australian Government spent approximately \$231.4 million on programs for homeless persons. These include the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP), the Household Organisational Management Expenses (HOME) Advice Program, the National Homelessness Strategy, Reconnect and other related programs.

The Australian Government contributed \$182.4 million to SAAP during 2006-07. This amount represented 51 per cent of total SAAP funding for the financial year.

Through the HOME Advice Program, the Government provides assistance to families who are at risk of homelessness. This program builds on the success of the Family Homelessness Prevention Pilots (FHPP) which is an Australian Government initiative under the National Homelessness Strategy. The recent evaluation of the program found that it had been highly effective in preventing family homelessness.

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

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## New South Wales Government comments

### “ *Child protection and supported placements*

- In December 2002, the NSW Government announced a \$1.2 billion reform program for the child protection system to run over five full years from 2002-03 to 2007-08. The Department of Community Services (DoCS) is progressively implementing a suite of reforms across early intervention, child protection and out-of-home care in an environment of increasing demand for services.
- Amendments to the *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998*, effective 30 March 2007, enable information to be exchanged about an unborn child who is the subject of a pre-natal report, and enable a primary care-giver of a child or young person to enter into a Parent Responsibility Contract with DoCS, where they voluntarily agree to accept support to improve their parenting skills.
- DoCS Brighter Futures program is a voluntary, targeted program that supports vulnerable children and families to prevent them from entering or escalating in the child protection system. This Program will deliver \$150 million for early intervention services and the employment of 350 new dedicated early intervention caseworkers. Families in the Brighter Futures Program can access core funded services, which include parenting programs and quality childcare.
- Approximately \$613 million has been committed to expanding and improving the out-of-home care (OOHC) system. A key aim of this process is to develop an integrated OOHC service system that allows children and young people to move seamlessly through a continuum of services that responds to their changing needs.

### *Juvenile justice*

- The NSW Government is committed to providing restorative justice services to young offenders, victims and the community through administering youth justice conferences. The Department of Juvenile Justice supervises juvenile offenders on community-based or custodial orders or young people remanded into custody pending finalisation of their court matters. The Government's commitment to reducing re-offending is reflected in the programs across the department including Community Intervention and Intensive Bail Supervision Programs.

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

- During the second year of the SAAP V Agreement in New South Wales, each of the seven DoCS regions developed a regional plan in line with the SAAP V strategic priorities to improve early intervention and post crisis strategies. These plans also identified priorities for funding under the national Innovation and Investment Fund.
- DoCS began the implementation of funding reforms with increased accountability. This involves service agreements that reflect Program priorities; results-based service specifications, and implementation of a performance monitoring framework.”

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## Victorian Government comments

### *Child protection and supported placements*

The *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005* came into effect during 2007 and implementation of the legislation and its associated *every child every chance* reforms have dominated the year.

As part of the reforms, significant additional resources have been provided to Family Services to create a greater system capacity to provide prevention and early intervention services, and confidential referrals can now be made directly to those services. As a result the Child Protection service will be able to focus more exclusively on children at risk of significant harm.

In out-of-home care, the focus has been on developing new models of therapeutic home-based and residential care. Emerging models of care combine a focus on better assessment and treatment, consistent and stable relationships and improving access to social, educational and cultural opportunities that all children need for their healthy development.

### *Juvenile Justice*

The Youth Justice Group Conferencing Program was rolled out statewide in Victoria in 2006-07. This program is an intervention based on restorative justice principles and is available as a community rehabilitation intervention to the Children's Court at the pre-sentence stage. The aim of the program is to divert young people from more intensive supervisory court outcomes, to increase their sense of responsibility for offending and to encourage reparation to the victim and community.

Other rehabilitative initiatives implemented this year include CHART – Changing Habits And Reaching Targets – an offending behaviour change program using a skills-oriented, cognitive-behavioural focus, BRAVE (Be Real About Violence) and RAVE (Relationships and Violence) which are cognitive behavioural violence prevention group programs for young men and women respectively who have displayed or threatened physical violence in familial or community settings.

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

Victoria has continued to implement enhanced services in line with the three key directions of the SAAP V agreement. In 2006-07 additional funding of \$12 million over four years was allocated to implement enhanced integrated services for young people and increased services for people with mental health issues who are at risk of homelessness when exiting from mental health accommodation services and acute mental health services. In conjunction with this initiative Victoria has also implemented new services through the Innovation and Investment funds for intensive case management for young people and single adults, assistance for young people to access education, training and employment opportunities and support for young parents. Victoria has also begun initiatives to consolidate the service sector including integrated family violence services, accreditation, workforce strategy, funding model review and access, assessment and referral frameworks.

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## Queensland Government comments

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### *Child protection and supported placements*

Major achievements during 2006-07 included completion of the most widespread child protection reforms in Queensland's history, with implementation of all 110 recommendations from the Crime and Misconduct Commission report *Protecting children: an inquiry into abuse of children in care* (2004), and launching of a world class child protection information management system across the state, providing frontline staff with comprehensive, up-to-date information about children and their families. Children's wellbeing was enhanced by the introduction of Child Health Passports and Education Support Plans to give children in care access to quality health and education services, as well as through creation of behavioural and therapeutic support services for children with challenging behaviours. Improvements to workforce planning, development and training as well as strategies to recruit, retain and support staff and carers were progressed and statewide Indigenous organisations to inform decision making for Indigenous children in the child protection system were established.

### *Juvenile justice*

As at 30 June 2007, Indigenous young people represented 61 per cent of young people in detention. The Department of Communities is committed to reducing the numbers of Indigenous young people in custody by exploring community-based options such as the Young Offender Community Response Service and the introduction of Indigenous Service Support workers at targeted locations in the state.

Remanded males accounted for 71 per cent of the total male population (143) as at 30 June 2007, whilst they accounted for 64 per cent of the total population (159). The Department of Communities is currently investigating options to address the current high level of remanded young people in the Queensland. The Department is also undertaking a review of the *Juvenile Justice Act 1992* to ensure a best practice framework for youth justice in Queensland.

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

In 2006-07, the Queensland Government continued to address homelessness as a whole-of-government issue requiring an integrated response. Work is continuing on the implementation of the 'Responding to Homelessness' initiative which will provide a continuum of integrated responses to the needs of homeless people.

The continuum of services ranges from Homelessness Early Intervention Services right through to Integrated Service Hubs and Crisis Accommodation and Support services for rough sleepers. Over the year, Queensland continued to experience the fastest population growth of any state or territory, with an increase of 2.3 per cent over the past year, compared with national population growth of 1.25 per cent. This level of growth continues to put pressure on demand for services in Queensland and this is particularly evident in South East Queensland.

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## Western Australian Government comments

### *Child protection and supported placements*

“ The Department for Child Protection was created on 1 May 2007 in response to the Review of the Department for Community Development by Ms Prudence Ford. The Department for Child Protection provides a strengthened focus on the protection of vulnerable children, young people and families. 69 of the 70 recommendations from the Review are being implemented. A child safety director has been appointed in each key state government agency. In March 2007, the State Government announced the development of legislation for the mandatory reporting of child sexual abuse by doctors, nurses, teachers and police. The legislation was introduced into State Parliament on 28 November 2007. In the past 18 months the State Government has invested more than \$300 million in the new Department for Child Protection, including funding for additional field staff and the implementation of review recommendations.

### *Juvenile justice*

The Department of Corrective Services is responsible for delivering juvenile justice services in Western Australia. During 2006-07, the Department on average managed 139 juveniles in detention and 710 juveniles in the community.

Significant achievements during the year saw the expansion of the Intensive Supervision Program, the development of the Regional Youth Justice Strategy, funding for the development of the Young Women and Girls accommodation precinct, participation in an interagency round table to address the increasing number of young people held in custody on remand and an increased focus on staff development to ensure a better delivery of services to young people. A range of group and individual development and therapeutic programs was delivered to young people in detention and in the community throughout the year. Work has commenced on the development of an integrated juvenile justice service delivery model to ensure the system is able to meet future demand.

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

SAAP continues to operate under the SAAP V Multilateral Agreement, signed 30 September 2005 and the Western Australian Bilateral Agreement, signed 25 January 2006. In recognition of SAAP service viability concerns, the State Budget of 2006-07 included an allocation of \$5 million over four years. Additionally, funding of \$1.5 million was allocated over four years for a new refuge for women and children experiencing domestic violence. Ten pilot projects commenced in 18 SAAP services throughout the State as part of the SAAP V Innovation and Investment Fund. The projects cover all SAAP target groups and address the three strategic priorities of SAAP V. The Department for Child Protection conducted a review which enabled strategic reform of eight SAAP non-accommodation youth services. The sector is challenged by affordable housing issues and difficulty in recruiting and retaining trained staff.”



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## South Australian Government comments

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### *Child protection and supported placements*

Child protection notifications increased in South Australia, with neglect and emotional abuse being the predominant issues bringing children to the attention of the Department. Across government, partnerships are increasingly important in the provision of relevant and effective support to children and their families. Under the government's *Keeping them Safe* child protection policy reform, the Department for Families and Communities (DFC) and the Department of Health Child Protection Information Sharing protocol was launched in February 2007, to provide a framework for sharing information. The number of children in out-of-home care has increased by 12.1 per cent over the past twelve months, placing pressure on placement capacity. *The Keeping Them Safe — In Our Care* strategy for building the capacity and quality of alternative care services into the future has been welcomed both by young people in care, and by people who work with them.

### *Juvenile justice*

The South Australian Government has formed a Youth Justice Cabinet Committee and established a Taskforce made up of all major divisions of the public sector (for example justice, families and communities, health, education, police and statutory order management agencies). The Task force is implementing a whole of government approach to recommendations arising from the *To Break the Cycle Report* (2007) developed by the South Australian Commissioner for Social Inclusion.

Families SA Youth Justice Directorate administers statutory supervision of orders made by the Youth Court. Priority reform areas currently being addressed by Families SA as part of the whole of government approach arising from the Taskforce include development of a new case management system, formation of Youth Justice Teams in metropolitan Adelaide and development of service models to increase supervision and surveillance of serious and repeat offenders.

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

During 2006-07 a comprehensive consultation process across metropolitan and rural South Australia has been undertaken to engage all SAAP service providers in the development of strategies to meet the SAAP reform agenda.

Achievements for South Australia in 2006-07 included:

- Amalgamation of two domestic violence services in Ceduna to create a single regional response for women and children escaping domestic/family violence.
- Four Inner City centres were allocated extra funding to modify their service delivery to meet the priority directions of the SAAP V agreement and the Inner City Strategic Directions for DFC.

The data for SA in 2006-07 indicates that the number of Indigenous people who are homeless and Indigenous accompanying children continues to increase in significant numbers.

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## Tasmanian Government comments

### *Child Protection and Support Services*

The Tasmanian Government is currently engaged in a wide-ranging reform of the child protection system as part of *A Way Forward — the Implementation of Actions in Response to the Review of Child Protection Services in Tasmania*. Considerable progress has been made during 2006-07 against the recommendations of the review including:

- the establishment of a new structure for Children and Family Services to focus on the development of local area networks and provide greater access to services for vulnerable families
- the redevelopment of the Child Protection Information System.

Work is also advanced in the implementation of improvements to business practices, service delivery models, professional development and practice, quality improvement mechanisms, legislative amendments and the liaison with key stakeholders such as the Departments of Police and Education. The Tasmanian Government will provide an additional \$9 million in 2007-08 to continue this reform of child protection services.

### *Juvenile Justice*

In Juvenile Justice, current service reforms address a range of recommendations for improvement as proposed within the *Legislative Council Review of Ashley, Youth Justice and Detention (2007)*; the *Review of Resident Safety at Ashley Youth Detention Centre (2005)* and the *Review of Juvenile Remandees in Detention in Tasmania (2006)*. Reviews of both the Community Service Orders programs and the Community Conferencing services were completed with implementation of recommendations having commenced. A Service Delivery Framework will be published with operational guidelines and standard operating procedures being drafted. An evaluation of the Collaborative Case Conferencing program for management of clients with complex and exceptional needs has been finalised. In addition it is planned to further develop a framework to strengthen community capacity and engagement to support young offenders. Work has commenced on a quality and safety framework as part of the Service's risk management strategy.

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

Ensuring the flexible delivery of SAAP services was a focus in 2006-07 by continuing to decentralise immediate emergency accommodation. Shifting the focus from a shelter-based model in a number of agencies to a range of units dispersed within the wider community has improved privacy for clients, enabled more families to stay together, and improved outcomes for clients. In 2006-07 three significant projects began to improve SAAP service delivery in Tasmania. The first of these is developing an early intervention and referral training and information package for professionals who may come in contact with families and individuals with complex needs at risk of homelessness. The second is addressing the transitional support needs of children accompanying parents, and the third is a research project to identify and eliminate exclusionary practices within the sector.

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## Australian Capital Territory Government comments

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### *Child protection and supported placements*

During 2006-07 the ACT experienced significant changes in practice in working with vulnerable children and young people particularly in relation to infants and toddlers, drug related issues and family violence. Policy changes and practice initiatives that were introduced included: improved working relations with health; an increased focus on earlier intervention with children and families at risk; and improved multi-agency case conferencing.

The ACT has continued to focus on improving supported placements for children and young people on orders. Changes and initiatives include:

- In August 2006 an amendment was made to the *Children and Young People Act 1999* to ensure that all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children on orders have a cultural plan.
- In 2006-07 a review of children and young people in long-term care was conducted to establish if Enduring Parental Responsibility is an option for them.

### *Juvenile Justice Services*

Construction of a new youth detention centre commenced in 2006-07. When Bimberi Youth Justice Centre opens in mid-2008 it will be the first human rights compliant youth detention centre in Australia.

Significant work was initiated to enhance the range of education and vocational programs available to young people in detention.

Reviews of the 26 Standing Orders, which set out the minimum standards for staff when carrying out their duties in a detention centre, were completed. The Standing Orders were reduced to 11 new Human Rights compliant Standing Orders, and were notified in January 2007.

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

The ACT Homelessness strategy entered its final year of implementation and is currently being reviewed. Associated reforms of the sector continue, with all services participating in a pathways process to develop common operational principles and practices. This work includes the development of a Service Guarantee that outlines the rights of all SAAP clients to an agreed standard of service.

The establishment of a transitional housing program has enabled the ACT to utilise hard to let public housing properties and properties which are soon to be redeveloped. This increase in transitional accommodation allows crisis places to be targeted to those people most in need of intensive crisis support.

The ACT has worked with SAAP agencies to improve data collection, to ensure that the ACT data more accurately captures the experience of SAAP services and clients in the Territory.

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## Northern Territory Government comments

### *Child protection and supported placements*

The Northern Territory Government continued the development of the Family and Children's Services (FACS) program in 2007. Increased funding commenced in December 2003 with the intent of improving child protection services and systems over a period of 5 years. The increased funding has been primarily used to expand the child protection workforce, and investment to develop the capacity and quality of the out-of-home care system. In 2007 the *Care and Protection of Children Act* was passed and will replace the *Community Welfare Act 1983*.

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

A combined Police/FACS Child Abuse Task Force has been fully implemented to respond to systemic maltreatment and severe physical and sexual abuse notifications across the NT. The Child Abuse Taskforce is co-located with the Centralised Intake Team which receives all notifications across the NT.

Family and Children's Services actively contributed to the Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse resulting in the 'Little Children are Sacred' report. The subsequent "Closing the Gap" announcement by the NT Government has given further increased funding to FACS in the areas of Child Protection Workforce, Aboriginal Community Workers, Residential and Therapeutic Care, the expansion of Sexual Assault Services, and investment in the Child Abuse Taskforce.

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

During 2006-07, NT Shelter was funded to provide a Mentor who would work with individual SAAP agencies to improve their human and financial management. Most agencies requested assistance with governance, management including strategic planning, and staff retention as well as service delivery. The intervention was well received by the sector.

Projects approved for the SAAP Innovation and Investment Fund in 2006-07 include the Tenancy Support Service in Alice Springs, Family Violence projects in Milikapati and Borroloola, and a project aimed at providing therapeutic interventions for children in SAAP. Interest in providing these services has been low, as providers appear to find it more challenging to implement innovative projects than to deliver more familiar services. It appears that the SAAP sector is approaching capacity and the skills shortage in Central and Northern Australia is having a substantial effect on the capacity of organisations to provide both mainstream and innovative services.

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## 15.13 Definitions of key terms and indicators

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

#### Activity Group 1 (pathways)

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

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

#### Activity Group 2 (pathways)

Provision of generic/non-intensive family support services

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

#### Activity Group 3 (pathways)

Provision of intensive family support services

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

#### Activity Group 4 (pathways)

Secondary information gathering and assessment

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

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

#### Activity Group 5 (pathways)

Provision of short-term protective intervention and coordination services

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

- working with the family to address protective issues
- developing networks of support for the child
- monitoring and reviewing the safety of the child
- monitoring and reviewing family progress against case planning

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**Activity Group 6  
(pathways)**

Seeking a court order

goals

- case conferences with agencies providing services to the child and/or family, internal discussions and reviews
- specialist child-focused therapeutic support.

Activities that are typically associated with seeking court orders including:

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

**Activity Group 7  
(pathways)**

Provision of longer-term protective intervention and coordination services

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

- monitoring the child or young person's progress and development (for example, social development and education progress) and undertaking activities that facilitate progress and development
- meeting any specific requirements of any court order
- reviewing appropriateness of the order for the circumstances of the child or young person. This usually occurs at intervals established by the court or in legislation
- reporting back to court
- long term cases involving out-of-home care.

**Activity Group 8  
(pathways)**

Provision of out-of-home care services

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

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

**Care and  
protection orders**

Legal orders or administrative/voluntary arrangements involving the community services department, issued in respect of an individual child who is deemed to be in need of care and/or protection. Community services department involvement may include:

- total responsibility for the welfare of the child (for example, guardianship)
- responsibility for overseeing the actions of the person or authority caring for the child
- responsibility for providing or arranging accommodation, or reporting or considering the child's welfare.

The order may have been from a court, children's panel, minister of the Crown, authorised community services department officer or similar tribunal or officer.

Care and protection orders are categorised as:

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• finalised guardianship and finalised custody orders sought through a court</li> <li>• finalised supervision and other finalised court orders that give the department some responsibility for the child's welfare (excluding interim orders)</li> <li>• interim and temporary orders (including orders that are not finalised)</li> <li>• administrative or voluntary arrangements with the community services department, for the purpose of child protection.</li> </ul> <p>Children are counted only once, even if they are on more than one care and protection order.</p>
<b>Child</b>	A person aged 0–17 years.
<b>Child at risk</b>	A child for whom no abuse or neglect can be substantiated but where there are reasonable grounds to suspect the possibility of prior or future abuse or neglect, and for whom continued departmental involvement is considered warranted.
<b>Child concern reports</b>	Reports to departments responsible for child protection regarding concerns about a child, as distinct from notifications of child abuse and neglect. The distinction between the two differs across and within jurisdictions.
<b>Children in out-of-home care during the year</b>	The total number of children who are in at least one out-of-home care placement at any time during the year. A child who is in more than one placement is counted only once.
<b>Dealt with by other means</b>	A notification that is responded to by means other than an investigation, such as the provision of advice or referral to services.
<b>Exited out-of-home care</b>	Where a child does not return to care within two months.
<b>Family based care</b>	Home-based care (see 'placement types').
<b>Family group homes</b>	Residential child care single dwelling establishments that have as their main purpose the provision of substitute care to children. They are typically run like family homes, with a limited number of children who eat together as a family group and are cared for around the clock by resident substitute parents.
<b>Foster care</b>	Care of a child who is living apart from his or her natural or adoptive parents in a private household, by one or more adults who act as 'foster parents' and are paid a regular allowance by a government authority or non-government organisation for the child's support. The authorised department or non-government organisation provides continuing supervision or support while the child remains in the care of foster parents.
<b>Foster parent</b>	Any person (or such a person's spouse) who is being paid a foster allowance by a government or non-government organisation for the care of a child (excluding children in family group homes).
<b>Guardian</b>	Any person who has the legal and ongoing care and responsibility for the protection of a child.
<b>Indigenous person</b>	Person of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent who identifies as being an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and is accepted as such by the community with which he or she is associated. If Indigenous status is unknown, then a person is considered to be non-Indigenous.
<b>Investigation</b>	An investigation of child abuse and neglect that involves identifying

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



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**Stability  
of placement**

responsible for the child abuse, neglect or harm is living in the household (or was a worker in a residential care facility).

Number of placements for children who have exited out-of-home care and do not return within two months. Placements exclude respite or temporary placements lasting less than seven days. Placements are counted separately where there is:

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

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

**Substantiation**

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

## **Juvenile justice services**

**Juvenile justice  
centre**

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

**Juvenile justice  
department**

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

**Supervision period**

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

**Police caution**

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

**Pre-sentence  
community**

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

**Pre-sentence  
detention**

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

**Sentenced  
community-based  
supervision**

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

**Youth justice  
conference**

A youth justice conference is a facilitated meeting resulting in a formal agreement to repair the harm caused by the offence. Participants can include the victim, offender, convenor, police and

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other key stakeholders. Referrals may be initiated by the police or the courts.

## Supported accommodation and assistance services

<b>Accommodation</b>	Crisis or short term accommodation, medium term to long term accommodation, and other SAAP funded accommodation (which comprises accommodation at hostels, motels and hotels, accommodation in caravans, community placements and other SAAP funded arrangements).
<b>Accommodation load (of agencies)</b>	The number of accommodation days divided by the number of days for which the agency is operational during the reporting period, where the number of accommodation days equals the sum of accommodation days for all clients of an agency who are supported during the reporting period. The average accommodation load is the mean value of all agencies' accommodation loads. Support periods without valid accommodation dates are assigned the interquartile modal duration of accommodation for agencies of the same service delivery model in the same jurisdiction.
<b>Agency</b>	The body or establishment with which the State or Territory government or its representative agrees to provide a SAAP service. The legal entity has to be incorporated. Funding from the State or Territory government could be allocated directly (that is, from the government department) or indirectly (that is, from the auspice of the agency). The SAAP service could be provided at the agency's location or through an outlet at a different location.
<b>Caseload (of agencies)</b>	The number of support days (the sum of support days for all clients of the agency who are supported during the reporting period) divided by the number of days for which the agency is operational during the reporting period. The average caseload is the mean value of all agencies' caseloads. Support periods without valid support dates are assigned the interquartile modal duration of support for agencies of the same service delivery model in the same jurisdiction.
<b>Casual client</b>	A person who is in contact with a SAAP agency and receives one-off assistance for generally not more than one hour, and who does not establish an ongoing relationship with an agency.
<b>Client</b>	A person who receives supported accommodation or support.
<b>Crisis or short term supported accommodation</b>	Supported accommodation for periods of generally not more than three months (short term), and for persons needing immediate short term accommodation (crisis).
<b>Cross target/multiple/general services</b>	SAAP services targeted at more than one primary client group category — for example, SAAP services for single persons regardless of their gender.
<b>Day support</b>	Support provided only on a walk-in basis — for example, an agency that provides a drop-in centre, showering facilities and a meals service at the location of the SAAP agency.
<b>Homeless person</b>	A person who does not have access to safe, secure and adequate housing. A person is considered to not have such access if the only housing to which he or she has access: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• is damaged, or is likely to damage, the person's health</li></ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• threatens the person's safety</li> <li>• marginalises the person by failing to provide access to adequate personal amenities or the economic and social supports that a home normally affords</li> <li>• places the person in circumstances that threaten or adversely affect the adequacy, safety, security and affordability of that housing</li> <li>• is of unsecured tenure.</li> </ul> <p>A person is also considered homeless if living in accommodation provided by a SAAP agency or some other form of emergency accommodation.</p>
<b>Indigenous person</b>	A person who is of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Island descent, who identifies as being an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, and who is accepted as such by the community with which they are associated.
<b>Medium term to long term supported accommodation</b>	Supported accommodation for periods over three months. Medium term is around three to six months and long term is longer than six months.
<b>Multiple service delivery model</b>	SAAP agencies that use more than one service delivery model to provide SAAP services — for example, crisis or short term accommodation and support, as well as day support (that is, the provision of meals).
<b>Non-English speaking background services</b>	Services that are targeted at persons whose first language is not English.
<b>One-off assistance</b>	Assistance provided to a person who is not a client, such as the provision of a meal, a shower, transport, money, clothing, telephone advice, information or a referral.
<b>Ongoing support period</b>	A support period for which, at the end of the reporting period, no support end date and no after-support information are provided.
<b>Outlet</b>	A premise owned/managed/leased by an agency at which SAAP services are delivered. Excludes accommodation purchased using SAAP funds (for example, at a motel).
<b>Outreach support services</b>	Services that exist to provide support and other related assistance specifically to homeless people. These clients may be isolated and able to receive services and support from a range of options that enhance their flexibility (for example, advocacy, life skills and counselling). Generalist support and accommodation services may also provide outreach support in the form of follow-up to clients where they are housed. In this context, support is provided 'off site'.
<b>Providers</b>	Agencies that supply support and accommodation services.
<b>Real expenditure</b>	Actual expenditure adjusted for changes in prices. Adjustments are made using the GDP(E) price deflator and expressed in terms of final year prices.
<b>Recurrent funding</b>	Funding provided by the Australian, State and Territory governments to cover operating costs, salaries and rent.
<b>Referral</b>	When a SAAP agency contacts another agency and that agency accepts the person concerned for an appointment or interview. A referral is not provided if the person is not accepted for an appointment or interview.

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

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**Women escaping domestic violence services**

support. The person may receive one-off assistance.

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

**Youth/young people services**

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

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## 15.14 Attachment tables

Attachment tables are identified in references throughout this chapter by an 'A' suffix (for example, table 15A.3 is table 3 in the attachment). Attachment tables are provided on the CD-ROM enclosed with the Report and on the Review website ([www.pc.gov.au/gsp](http://www.pc.gov.au/gsp)). On the CD-ROM, the files containing the attachment tables are provided in Microsoft Excel format as `\Publications\Reports\2008\Attach15A.xls` and in Adobe PDF format as `\Publications\Reports\2008\Attach15A.pdf`. Users without access to the CD-ROM or the website can contact the Secretariat to obtain the attachment tables (see contact details on the inside front cover of the Report).

### All jurisdiction data

<b>Table 15A.1</b>	State and Territory Government real recurrent expenditure on child protection and out-of-home care services (2006-07 dollars)
<b>Table 15A.2</b>	State and Territory Government real recurrent expenditure on child protection services, per notification, per investigation and per substantiation (2006-07 dollars)
<b>Table 15A.3</b>	State and Territory Government real recurrent expenditure on out-of-home care services (2006-07 dollars)
<b>Table 15A.4</b>	Comparability of government recurrent expenditure — items included, 2006-07
<b>Table 15A.5</b>	Child protection notifications, investigations and substantiations by Indigenous status 2006-07
<b>Table 15A.6</b>	Children admitted to and discharged from care and protection orders by Indigenous status, 2006-07 (number)
<b>Table 15A.7</b>	Children on care and protection orders by type of order and Indigenous status, at 30 June 2007 (number)
<b>Table 15A.8</b>	Children in notifications, investigations and substantiations and children on care and protection orders: number and rate per 1000 children in the target populations by Indigenous status, 2006-07
<b>Table 15A.9</b>	Children who were the subject of a decision not to substantiate during the year and who were also the subject of a subsequent substantiation within 3 and/or 12 months, 2005-06
<b>Table 15A.10</b>	Children who were the subject of a substantiation during the year and who were also the subject of a subsequent substantiation within 3 and/or 12 months, 2005-06
<b>Table 15A.11</b>	Proportion of children on guardianship/custody orders achieving the national reading and numeracy benchmarks, Year 3 level, 2003 (per cent)
<b>Table 15A.12</b>	Proportion of children on guardianship/custody orders achieving the national reading and numeracy benchmarks, Year 5 level, 2003 (per cent)
<b>Table 15A.13</b>	Proportion of children on guardianship/custody orders achieving the national reading and numeracy benchmarks, Year 7 level, 2003

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	(per cent)
<b>Table 15A.14</b>	Children in out-of-home care: number and rate per 1000 children aged 0–17 years by Indigenous status, 2006-07
<b>Table 15A.15</b>	Children in out-of-home care by Indigenous status and placement type, 30 June 2007 (number)
<b>Table 15A.16</b>	Children in out-of-home care by Indigenous status and whether on a care and protection order, 30 June 2007 (number)
<b>Table 15A.17</b>	Children in out-of-home care by Indigenous status and length of time in continuous out-of-home care, 30 June 2007 (number)
<b>Table 15A.18</b>	Children who exited care during the year 2006-07 by Indigenous status and length of time spent in care (number)
<b>Table 15A.19</b>	Children in out-of-home care placed with relatives/kin by Indigenous status, 30 June
<b>Table 15A.20</b>	Indigenous children in out-of-home care by relationship of caregiver, 30 June 2007
<b>Table 15A.21</b>	Children aged under 12 years in out-of-home care and in a home based placement by Indigenous status, 30 June 2007
<b>Table 15A.22</b>	Children on a care and protection order and exiting out-of-home care during the year by number of placements, by the length of time in out-of-home care (number)
<b>Table 15A.23</b>	Children in out-of-home care by whether they were the subject of a child protection substantiation and the person believed responsible was in the household, 2006-07
<b>Table 15A.24</b>	Intensive family support services: total real recurrent expenditure, number of children aged 0-17 years commencing intensive family support services and real recurrent expenditure per child (2006-07 dollars)
<b>Table 15A.25</b>	Intensive family support services: number of children aged 0–17 years commencing intensive family support services by Indigenous status and gender
<b>Table 15A.26</b>	Intensive family support services: number of children aged 0–17 years commencing intensive family support services by age
<b>Table 15A.27</b>	Intensive family support services: number of children aged 0–17 years in intensive family support services by living situation at commencement of the program
<b>Table 15A.28</b>	Target population data used for annual data, December ('000)
<b>Table 15A.29</b>	Target population data used for end of financial year data, March ('000)
<b>Table 15A.30</b>	Out-of-home care services unit costs, 2006-07
<b>Single jurisdiction data NSW</b>	
<b>Table 15A.31</b>	Child protection notifications, investigations and substantiations by Indigenous status, New South Wales
<b>Table 15A.32</b>	Children admitted to and discharged from care and protection orders by Indigenous status, New South Wales (number)
<b>Table 15A.33</b>	Children on care and protection orders at 30 June by type of order and Indigenous status, New South Wales (number)
<b>Table 15A.34</b>	Children in notifications, investigations and substantiations and children

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	on care and protection orders: Number and rate per 1000 children in the target populations by Indigenous status, New South Wales
<b>Table 15A.35</b>	Children who were the subject of a decision not to substantiate during the year and who were also the subject of a subsequent substantiation within 3 and/or 12 months, New South Wales
<b>Table 15A.36</b>	Children who were the subject of a substantiation during the year and who were also the subject of a subsequent substantiation within 3 and/or 12 months, New South Wales
<b>Table 15A.37</b>	Resubstantiation rate, substantiation rate after a decision not to substantiate and substantiation rate, New South Wales
<b>Table 15A.38</b>	Children in out-of-home care at 30 June: number and rate per 1000 children aged 0–17 years, by Indigenous status, New South Wales
<b>Table 15A.39</b>	Children in out-of-home care at 30 June, by Indigenous status and placement type, New South Wales (number)
<b>Table 15A.40</b>	Children in out-of-home care at 30 June, by Indigenous status and whether on a care and protection order, New South Wales (number)
<b>Table 15A.41</b>	Children in out-of-home care at 30 June, by Indigenous status and length of time in continuous out-of-home care, New South Wales (number)
<b>Table 15A.42</b>	Children who exited care during the year by Indigenous status and length of time spent in care, New South Wales (number)
<b>Table 15A.43</b>	Children in out-of-home care at 30 June placed with relatives/kin, by Indigenous status, New South Wales
<b>Table 15A.44</b>	Indigenous children in out-of-home care at 30 June by Indigenous status and relationship of caregiver, New South Wales
<b>Table 15A.45</b>	Children aged under 12 years in out-of-home care in a home based placement at 30 June, by Indigenous status, New South Wales
<b>Table 15A.46</b>	Children exiting out-of-home care during the year, who were on a care and protection order, by number of different placements, by length of time in out-of-home care, New South Wales (number)
<b>Table 15A.47</b>	Children in out-of-home care by whether they were the subject of a child protection substantiation and the person believed responsible was in the household, New South Wales

#### **Single jurisdiction data Vic**

<b>Table 15A.48</b>	Child protection notifications, investigations and substantiations by Indigenous status, Victoria
<b>Table 15A.49</b>	Children admitted to and discharged from care and protection orders by Indigenous status, Victoria (number)
<b>Table 15A.50</b>	Children on care and protection orders at 30 June by type of order and Indigenous status, Victoria (number)
<b>Table 15A.51</b>	Children in notifications, investigations and substantiations and children on care and protection orders: Number and rate per 1000 children in the target populations by Indigenous status, Victoria
<b>Table 15A.52</b>	Children who were the subject of a decision not to substantiate during the year and who were also the subject of a subsequent substantiation within 3 and/or 12 months, Victoria
<b>Table 15A.53</b>	Children who were the subject of a substantiation during the year and



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	who were also the subject of a subsequent substantiation within 3 and/or 12 months, Victoria
<b>Table 15A.54</b>	Resubstantiation rate, substantiation rate after a decision not to substantiate and substantiation rate, Victoria
<b>Table 15A.55</b>	Children in out-of-home care at 30 June: number and rate per 1000 children aged 0–17 years, by Indigenous status, Victoria
<b>Table 15A.56</b>	Children in out-of-home care at 30 June, by Indigenous status and placement type, Victoria (number)
<b>Table 15A.57</b>	Children in out-of-home care at 30 June, by Indigenous status and whether on a care and protection order, Victoria (number)
<b>Table 15A.59</b>	Children who exited care during the year by Indigenous status and length of time spent in care, Victoria (number)
<b>Table 15A.58</b>	Children in out-of-home care at 30 June, by Indigenous status and length of time in continuous out-of-home care, Victoria (number)
<b>Table 15A.60</b>	Children in out-of-home care at 30 June placed with relatives/kin, by Indigenous status, Victoria
<b>Table 15A.61</b>	Indigenous children in out-of-home care at 30 June by Indigenous status and relationship of caregiver, Victoria
<b>Table 15A.62</b>	Children aged under 12 years in out-of-home care in a home based placement at 30 June, by Indigenous status, Victoria
<b>Table 15A.63</b>	Children exiting out-of-home care during the year, who were on a care and protection order, by number of different placements, by length of time in out-of-home care, Victoria (number)
<b>Table 15A.64</b>	Children in out-of-home care by whether they were the subject of a child protection substantiation and the person believed responsible was in the household, Victoria
<b>Single jurisdiction data Qld</b>	
<b>Table 15A.65</b>	Child protection notifications, investigations and substantiations by Indigenous status, Queensland
<b>Table 15A.66</b>	Children admitted to and discharged from care and protection orders by Indigenous status, Queensland (number)
<b>Table 15A.67</b>	Children on care and protection orders at 30 June by type of order and Indigenous status, Queensland (number)
<b>Table 15A.68</b>	Children in notifications, investigations and substantiations and children on care and protection orders: Number and rate per 1000 children in the target populations by Indigenous status, Queensland
<b>Table 15A.69</b>	Children who were the subject of a decision not to substantiate during the year and who were also the subject of a subsequent substantiation within 3 and/or 12 months, Queensland
<b>Table 15A.70</b>	Children who were the subject of a substantiation during the year and who were also the subject of a subsequent substantiation within 3 and/or 12 months, Queensland
<b>Table 15A.71</b>	Resubstantiation rate, substantiation rate after a decision not to substantiate and substantiation rate, Queensland
<b>Table 15A.72</b>	Children in out-of-home care at 30 June: number and rate per 1000 children aged 0–17 years, by Indigenous status, Queensland
<b>Table 15A.73</b>	Children in out-of-home care at 30 June, by Indigenous status and

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	placement type, Queensland (number)
<b>Table 15A.74</b>	Children in out-of-home care at 30 June, by Indigenous status and whether on a care and protection order, Queensland (number)
<b>Table 15A.75</b>	Children in out-of-home care at 30 June, by Indigenous status and length of time in continuous out-of-home care, Queensland (number)
<b>Table 15A.76</b>	Children who exited care during the year by Indigenous status and length of time spent in care, Queensland (number)
<b>Table 15A.77</b>	Children in out-of-home care at 30 June placed with relatives/kin, by Indigenous status, Queensland
<b>Table 15A.78</b>	Indigenous children in out-of-home care at 30 June by Indigenous status and relationship of caregiver, Queensland
<b>Table 15A.79</b>	Children aged under 12 years in out-of-home care in a home based placement at 30 June, by Indigenous status, Queensland
<b>Table 15A.80</b>	Children exiting out-of-home care during the year, who were on a care and protection order, by number of different placements, by length of time in out-of-home care, Queensland (number)
<b>Table 15A.81</b>	Children in out-of-home care by whether they were the subject of a child protection substantiation and the person believed responsible was in the household, Queensland
<b>Single jurisdiction data WA</b>	
<b>Table 15A.82</b>	Child protection notifications, investigations and substantiations by Indigenous status, Western Australia
<b>Table 15A.83</b>	Children admitted to and discharged from care and protection orders by Indigenous status, Western Australia (number)
<b>Table 15A.84</b>	Children on care and protection orders at 30 June by type of order and Indigenous status, Western Australia (number)
<b>Table 15A.85</b>	Children in notifications, investigations and substantiations and children on care and protection orders: Number and rate per 1000 children in the target populations by Indigenous status, Western Australia
<b>Table 15A.86</b>	Children who were the subject of a decision not to substantiate during the year and who were also the subject of a subsequent substantiation within 3 and/or 12 months, Western Australia
<b>Table 15A.87</b>	Children who were the subject of a substantiation during the year and who were also the subject of a subsequent substantiation within 3 and/or 12 months, Western Australia
<b>Table 15A.88</b>	Resubstantiation rate, substantiation rate after a decision not to substantiate and substantiation rate, Western Australia
<b>Table 15A.89</b>	Children in out-of-home care at 30 June: number and rate per 1000 children aged 0–17 years, by Indigenous status, Western Australia
<b>Table 15A.90</b>	Children in out-of-home care at 30 June, by Indigenous status and placement type, Western Australia (number)
<b>Table 15A.91</b>	Children in out-of-home care at 30 June, by Indigenous status and whether on a care and protection order, Western Australia (number)
<b>Table 15A.92</b>	Children in out-of-home care at 30 June, by Indigenous status and length of time in continuous out-of-home care, Western Australia (number)
<b>Table 15A.91</b>	Children in out-of-home care at 30 June, by Indigenous status and

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	whether on a care and protection order, Western Australia (number)
<b>Table 15A.93</b>	Children who exited care during the year by Indigenous status and length of time spent in care, Western Australia (number)
<b>Table 15A.94</b>	Children in out-of-home care at 30 June placed with relatives/kin, by Indigenous status, Western Australia
<b>Table 15A.95</b>	Indigenous children in out-of-home care at 30 June by Indigenous status and relationship of caregiver, Western Australia
<b>Table 15A.96</b>	Children aged under 12 years in out-of-home care in a home based placement at 30 June, by Indigenous status, Western Australia
<b>Table 15A.97</b>	Children exiting out-of-home care during the year, who were on a care and protection order, by number of different placements, by length of time in out-of-home care, Western Australia (number)
<b>Table 15A.98</b>	Children in out-of-home care by whether they were the subject of a child protection substantiation and the person believed responsible was in the household, Western Australia
<b>Single jurisdiction data SA</b>	
<b>Table 15A.99</b>	Child protection notifications, investigations and substantiations by Indigenous status, South Australia
<b>Table 15A.100</b>	Children admitted to and discharged from care and protection orders by Indigenous status, South Australia (number)
<b>Table 15A.101</b>	Children on care and protection orders at 30 June by type of order and Indigenous status, South Australia (number)
<b>Table 15A.102</b>	Children in notifications, investigations and substantiations and children on care and protection orders: Number and rate per 1000 children in the target populations by Indigenous status, South Australia
<b>Table 15A.103</b>	Children who were the subject of a decision not to substantiate during the year and who were also the subject of a subsequent substantiation within 3 and/or 12 months, South Australia
<b>Table 15A.104</b>	Children who were the subject of a substantiation during the year and who were also the subject of a subsequent substantiation within 3 and/or 12 months, South Australia
<b>Table 15A.105</b>	Resubstantiation rate, substantiation rate after a decision not to substantiate and substantiation rate, South Australia
<b>Table 15A.106</b>	Children in out-of-home care at 30 June: number and rate per 1000 children aged 0–17 years, by Indigenous status, South Australia
<b>Table 15A.107</b>	Children in out-of-home care at 30 June, by Indigenous status and placement type, South Australia (number)
<b>Table 15A.108</b>	Children in out-of-home care at 30 June, by Indigenous status and whether on a care and protection order, South Australia (number)
<b>Table 15A.109</b>	Children in out-of-home care at 30 June, by Indigenous status and length of time in continuous out-of-home care, South Australia (number)
<b>Table 15A.110</b>	Children who exited care during the year by Indigenous status and length of time spent in care, South Australia (number)
<b>Table 15A.111</b>	Children in out-of-home care at 30 June placed with relatives/kin, by Indigenous status, South Australia
<b>Table 15A.112</b>	Indigenous children in out-of-home care at 30 June by Indigenous status and relationship of caregiver, South Australia

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<b>Table 15A.113</b>	Children aged under 12 years in out-of-home care in a home based placement at 30 June, by Indigenous status, South Australia
<b>Table 15A.114</b>	Children exiting out-of-home care during the year, who were on a care and protection order, by number of different placements, by length of time in out-of-home care, South Australia (number)
<b>Table 15A.115</b>	Children in out-of-home care by whether they were the subject of a child protection substantiation and the person believed responsible was in the household, South Australia
<b>Single jurisdiction data Tas</b>	
<b>Table 15A.116</b>	Child protection notifications, investigations and substantiations by Indigenous status, Tasmania
<b>Table 15A.117</b>	Children admitted to and discharged from care and protection orders by Indigenous status, Tasmania (number)
<b>Table 15A.118</b>	Children on care and protection orders at 30 June by type of order and Indigenous status, Tasmania (number)
<b>Table 15A.119</b>	Children in notifications, investigations and substantiations and children on care and protection orders: Number and rate per 1000 children in the target populations by Indigenous status, Tasmania
<b>Table 15A.120</b>	Children who were the subject of a decision not to substantiate during the year and who were also the subject of a subsequent substantiation within 3 and/or 12 months, Tasmania
<b>Table 15A.121</b>	Children who were the subject of a substantiation during the year and who were also the subject of a subsequent substantiation within 3 and/or 12 months, Tasmania
<b>Table 15A.122</b>	Resubstantiation rate, substantiation rate after a decision not to substantiate and substantiation rate, Tasmania
<b>Table 15A.123</b>	Children in out-of-home care at 30 June: number and rate per 1000 children aged 0–17 years, by Indigenous status, Tasmania
<b>Table 15A.124</b>	Children in out-of-home care at 30 June, by Indigenous status and placement type, Tasmania (number)
<b>Table 15A.125</b>	Children in out-of-home care at 30 June, by Indigenous status and whether on a care and protection order, Tasmania (number)
<b>Table 15A.126</b>	Children in out-of-home care at 30 June, by Indigenous status and length of time in continuous out-of-home care, Tasmania (number)
<b>Table 15A.127</b>	Children who exited care during the year by Indigenous status and length of time spent in care, Tasmania (number)
<b>Table 15A.128</b>	Children in out-of-home care at 30 June placed with relatives/kin, by Indigenous status, Tasmania
<b>Table 15A.129</b>	Indigenous children in out-of-home care at 30 June by Indigenous status and relationship of caregiver, Tasmania
<b>Table 15A.130</b>	Children aged under 12 years in out-of-home care in a home based placement at 30 June, by Indigenous status, Tasmania
<b>Table 15A.131</b>	Children exiting out-of-home care during the year, who were on a care and protection order, by number of different placements, by length of time in out-of-home care, Tasmania (number)
<b>Table 15A.132</b>	Children in out-of-home care by whether they were the subject of a child protection substantiation and the person believed responsible was in

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the household, Tasmania

**Single jurisdiction data ACT**

<b>Table 15A.133</b>	Child protection notifications, investigations and substantiations by Indigenous status, Australian Capital Territory
<b>Table 15A.134</b>	Children admitted to and discharged from care and protection orders by Indigenous status, Australian Capital Territory (number)
<b>Table 15A.135</b>	Children on care and protection orders at 30 June by type of order and Indigenous status, Australian Capital Territory (number)
<b>Table 15A.136</b>	Children in notifications, investigations and substantiations and children on care and protection orders: Number and rate per 1000 children in the target populations by Indigenous status, Australian Capital Territory
<b>Table 15A.137</b>	Children who were the subject of a decision not to substantiate during the year and who were also the subject of a subsequent substantiation within 3 and/or 12 months, Australian Capital Territory
<b>Table 15A.138</b>	Children who were the subject of a substantiation during the year and who were also the subject of a subsequent substantiation within 3 and/or 12 months, Australian Capital Territory
<b>Table 15A.139</b>	Resubstantiation rate, substantiation rate after a decision not to substantiate and substantiation rate, Australian Capital Territory
<b>Table 15A.140</b>	Children in out-of-home care at 30 June: number and rate per 1000 children aged 0–17 years, by Indigenous status, Australian Capital Territory
<b>Table 15A.141</b>	Children in out-of-home care at 30 June, by Indigenous status and placement type, Australian Capital Territory (number)
<b>Table 15A.142</b>	Children in out-of-home care at 30 June, by Indigenous status and whether on a care and protection order, Australian Capital Territory (number)
<b>Table 15A.143</b>	Children in out-of-home care at 30 June, by Indigenous status and length of time in continuous out-of-home care, Australian Capital Territory (number)
<b>Table 15A.144</b>	Children who exited care during the year by Indigenous status and length of time spent in care, Australian Capital Territory (number)
<b>Table 15A.145</b>	Children in out-of-home care at 30 June placed with relatives/kin, by Indigenous status, Australian Capital Territory
<b>Table 15A.146</b>	Indigenous children in out-of-home care at 30 June by Indigenous status and relationship of caregiver, Australian Capital Territory
<b>Table 15A.147</b>	Children aged under 12 years in out-of-home care in a home based placement at 30 June, by Indigenous status, Australian Capital Territory
<b>Table 15A.148</b>	Children exiting out-of-home care during the year, who were on a care and protection order, by number of different placements, by length of time in out-of-home care, Australian Capital Territory (number)
<b>Table 15A.149</b>	Children in out-of-home care by whether they were the subject of a child protection substantiation and the person believed responsible was in the household, Australian Capital Territory

**Single jurisdiction data NT**

<b>Table 15A.150</b>	Child protection notifications, investigations and substantiations by Indigenous status, Northern Territory
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<b>Table 15A.151</b>	Children admitted to and discharged from care and protection orders by Indigenous status, Northern Territory (number)
<b>Table 15A.152</b>	Children on care and protection orders at 30 June by type of order and Indigenous status, Northern Territory (number)
<b>Table 15A.153</b>	Children in notifications, investigations and substantiations and children on care and protection orders: Number and rate per 1000 children in the target populations by Indigenous status, Northern Territory
<b>Table 15A.154</b>	Children who were the subject of a decision not to substantiate during the year and who were also the subject of a subsequent substantiation within 3 and/or 12 months, Northern Territory
<b>Table 15A.155</b>	Children who were the subject of a substantiation during the year and who were also the subject of a subsequent substantiation within 3 and/or 12 months, Northern Territory
<b>Table 15A.156</b>	Resubstantiation rate, substantiation rate after a decision not to substantiate and substantiation rate, Northern Territory
<b>Table 15A.157</b>	Children in out-of-home care at 30 June: number and rate per 1000 children aged 0–17 years, by Indigenous status, Northern Territory
<b>Table 15A.158</b>	Children in out-of-home care at 30 June, by Indigenous status and placement type, Northern Territory (number)
<b>Table 15A.159</b>	Children in out-of-home care at 30 June, by Indigenous status and whether on a care and protection order, Northern Territory (number)
<b>Table 15A.160</b>	Children in out-of-home care at 30 June, by Indigenous status and length of time in continuous out-of-home care, Northern Territory (number)
<b>Table 15A.161</b>	Children who exited care during the year by Indigenous status and length of time spent in care, Northern Territory (number)
<b>Table 15A.162</b>	Children in out-of-home care at 30 June placed with relatives/kin, by Indigenous status, Northern Territory
<b>Table 15A.163</b>	Indigenous children in out-of-home care at 30 June by Indigenous status and relationship of caregiver, Northern Territory
<b>Table 15A.164</b>	Children aged under 12 years in out-of-home care in a home based placement at 30 June, by Indigenous status, Northern Territory
<b>Table 15A.165</b>	Children exiting out-of-home care during the year, who were on a care and protection order, by number of different placements, by length of time in out-of-home care, Northern Territory (number)
<b>Table 15A.166</b>	Children in out-of-home care by whether they were the subject of a child protection substantiation and the person believed responsible was in the household, Northern Territory

#### **Juvenile justice data**

<b>Table 15A.167</b>	Proportion of juvenile justice clients aged 10–17 years who were supervised in the community and in detention centres, at 30 June
<b>Table 15A.168</b>	Daily average population of people aged 10–17 years in juvenile detention (number)
<b>Table 15A.169</b>	Average rate of detention of people aged 10–17 years in juvenile detention, per 100 000 people aged 10–17 years
<b>Table 15A.170</b>	Males and females as a proportion of the total population aged 10–17 years in juvenile detention (per cent)

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<b>Table 15A.171</b>	Daily average population of Indigenous people aged 10–17 years in juvenile detention (number)
<b>Table 15A.172</b>	Average rates of detention and Indigenous rate ratio, young people aged 10-17 years in juvenile detention, per 100 000 people
<b>SAAP data</b>	
<b>Table 15A.173</b>	Composition of support in SAAP support periods
<b>Table 15A.174</b>	SAAP agencies by primary target group
<b>Table 15A.175</b>	SAAP agencies by service delivery model
<b>Table 15A.176</b>	Nominal recurrent SAAP program funding by Australian Government, and State and Territory governments
<b>Table 15A.177</b>	Total recurrent SAAP program funding
<b>Table 15A.178</b>	Real recurrent SAAP program funding per person in the total population (2006-07 dollars)
<b>Table 15A.179</b>	Daily turn-away rate of adults and unaccompanied children requesting immediate SAAP accommodation, December and May
<b>Table 15A.180</b>	Daily total unmet demand for SAAP accommodation by adults and unaccompanied children, December and May
<b>Table 15A.181</b>	Proportion of Indigenous people among all accommodated SAAP clients and among people whose valid requests for accommodation were unmet
<b>Table 15A.182</b>	Proportion of people from non-English speaking backgrounds among all accommodated SAAP clients and among people whose valid requests for accommodation were unmet
<b>Table 15A.183</b>	Support periods, by the existence of a support plan, all clients
<b>Table 15A.184</b>	Support periods, by the existence of a support plan, Indigenous clients
<b>Table 15A.185</b>	Support needs of all clients, met and unmet
<b>Table 15A.186</b>	Support needs of Indigenous clients, met and unmet
<b>Table 15A.187</b>	Support needs of clients from non-English speaking backgrounds, met and unmet
<b>Table 15A.188</b>	Potential clients unable to be supported, main reason for support not provided, Australia
<b>Table 15A.189</b>	Recurrent cost per completed support period (2006-07 dollars)
<b>Table 15A.190</b>	Recurrent cost per client accessing services (2006-07 dollars)
<b>Table 15A.191</b>	Real recurrent cost per day of support for homeless clients (2006-07 dollars)
<b>Table 15A.192</b>	Average accommodation load and caseload per day
<b>Table 15A.193</b>	Change in clients' type of housing as a result of SAAP support
<b>Table 15A.194</b>	Change in type of housing as a result of SAAP support, Indigenous clients
<b>Table 15A.195</b>	Labour force status of clients before and after SAAP support
<b>Table 15A.196</b>	Change in labour force status of Indigenous clients after SAAP support
<b>Table 15A.197</b>	SAAP clients who exited from the service and who returned to SAAP agencies before the end of that year

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<b>Table 15A.198</b>	Indigenous SAAP clients who exited from the service and who returned to SAAP agencies before the end of that year
<b>Table 15A.199</b>	Indicative estimates of clients exiting to independent housing and not returning within six months
<b>Table 15A.200</b>	Source of income immediately before and after SAAP support of all clients who needed assistance to obtain/maintain a pension or benefit
<b>Table 15A.201</b>	Source of income immediately before and after SAAP support of Indigenous clients who needed assistance to obtain/maintain a pension or benefit
<b>Table 15A.202</b>	The extent that clients case management goals have been achieved



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