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Contents

- Acknowledgments..... iv
- Abbreviations..... v
- Symbols..... v
- Summary vi
- 1 Introduction.....1**
 - Data interpretation guide.....3
- 2 The people in social housing4**
 - Demographic profile.....4
 - Changes in households over the 2003 CSHA6
- 3 Social housing dwellings.....7**
 - Location8
 - Dwelling type and size9
 - Dwelling condition and availability11
- 4 Providing social housing13**
 - Dwelling management13
 - Assisting those most in need15
 - Sustainability of tenure.....17
- 5 Social housing outcomes and social inclusion21**
 - Improving the lives of tenants.....21
 - Employment and educational participation.....23
 - Connecting with services and the community.....24
 - Having a say27
- 6 Moving on: from the CSHA to the NAHA28**
- Appendix tables.....31
- Glossary.....38
- References41
- List of tables46
- List of figures47

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Abbreviations

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
AIHW	Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
AHURI	Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute
CAP	Crisis Accommodation Program
CHINS	Community Housing and Infrastructure Needs Survey
CHIP	Community Housing and Infrastructure Program
CNOS	Canadian National Occupancy Standard
COAG	Council of Australian Governments
CPDP	Commonwealth Property Disposals Policy
CRA	Commonwealth Rent Assistance
CSHA	Commonwealth State Housing Agreement
FaCS	Australian Government Department of Families and Community Services
FaCSIA	Australian Government Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs
FaHCSIA	Australian Government Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs
GSS	General Social Survey
ICH	Indigenous community housing
NAHA	National Affordable Housing Agreement
NRAS	National Rental Affordability Scheme
NSHS	National Social Housing Survey
RMR	Roy Morgan Research
SAAP	Supported Accommodation and Assistance Program
SCRGSP	Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision
SOMIH	State owned and managed Indigenous housing

Symbols

..	not applicable
n.a.	not available
no.	number
n.p.	not provided
\$	Australian dollars

Summary

This report profiles social housing delivered under the 2003 Commonwealth State Housing Agreement (CSHA) and the first six months of the National Affordable Housing Agreement (NAHA), which came into effect 1 January 2009.

To the end of 2008, the CSHA funded housing assistance for Australians in need of support to meet their accommodation needs. Social housing was the primary vehicle for delivering this assistance, with public housing and community housing, both mainstream and targeted for Indigenous Australians, offering an affordable and more secure alternative to private rental. The most recent CSHA, which commenced in 2003 and ended on 31 December 2008, provided over 400,000 dwellings each year, for households in need.

During this time the sector saw increases in community housing dwellings and a simultaneous decline in public rental housing stock. The demographic profile of households in social housing changed little over the course of the 2003 CSHA: households were mostly on very low incomes, with the majority receiving a government pension as their main source; single people made up the highest proportion of household types, and were older than the general population.

With smaller than average households residing in dwellings that in almost 50% of cases are three bedrooms or more, overcrowding is rare in public rental housing, state owned and managed Indigenous housing (SOMIH) and mainstream community housing. Indigenous community housing (ICH) shows higher rates of overcrowding although the limited coverage and quality of data available on this sector limits comparability with other social housing programs.

As social housing generally offers affordable rents and some security of tenure, tenants largely report being satisfied. As might be expected then, the majority (55%) of households in public rental housing and 44% of households in mainstream community housing had lived in the same dwelling for more than 5 years.

At the close of the 2003 CSHA, the profile of social housing in Australia reflected the high demand for assistance. By 2008–09:

- occupancy rates were over 90% across social housing and higher in *Major cities*
- allocations to public rental housing were tightly rationed, with over 60% of newly assisted households assessed as being in 'greatest need' – more than double the rate of these allocations in 2003–04
- over 170,000 households were on waiting lists for public rental housing
- almost half of the new allocations to social housing were to mainstream community housing.

In order to address growing concerns about affordability in the private market, the National Affordable Housing Agreement (NAHA), introduced from 1 January 2009, and associated National Partnership Agreements, expanded the role of governments in supporting Australians to meet their housing needs. Initiatives such as the National Rental Affordability Scheme (NRAS) and various housing reforms are intended to address shortages in affordable housing and alleviate the pressure on the current social housing system. Whilst the focus has been widened, social housing will continue to play a key role in the provision of housing assistance in Australia.

1 Introduction

Over time, the focus of social housing in Australia has moved away from supplying affordable properties for rental or home purchase to low and middle income working families, towards providing accommodation on a priority needs basis to households with special needs or in challenging circumstances. Despite this changing profile, social housing has consistently offered an important safety net for households unable to secure or sustain appropriate housing in the private market.

In the decade to 2008, social housing under the Commonwealth State Housing Agreement (CSHA) placed primary emphasis on housing people with high needs for the duration of their need. Consistent with this philosophy, the programs delivered under these agreements centred on public rental housing and other targeted housing assistance. However, in a substantial shift from the CSHA, social housing programs have been combined with services for the homeless and broader 'affordable housing' initiatives under the National Affordable Housing Agreement (NAHA) and associated National Partnership Agreements from 1 January 2009 (see Box 1.1). This publication reports on the period of the 2003 CSHA and the first 6 months of the NAHA.

In moving to expand their role in the housing market, both federal and state and territory governments are seeking to support all Australians to achieve affordable and sustainable housing, whether in the rental market (both private and social housing) or in home purchase. This change is consistent with moves internationally to extend the scope of housing policies to cover the functions of the entire housing market, rather than just social housing (AHURI 2008).

Box 1.1: Housing agreements past and present

The 2003 CSHA was aimed at providing 'appropriate, affordable and secure housing for those who most needed it, for the duration of their need'. In 2007-08, it provided \$1.35b in funding to states and territories to deliver social housing in a variety of forms, both that funded and managed directly by governments and that provided by community housing organisations with varying funding arrangements. This agreement concluded on 31 December 2008.

The NAHA commenced on 1 January 2009 and like the CSHA, is an agreement between the Australian Government and all states and territories. However, the agreement has a much broader scope with an overarching objective to ensure that 'All Australians have access to affordable, safe and sustainable housing that contributes to social and economic participation' (COAG 2008a). The agreement is centred on the achievement of six outcomes:

- People who are homeless or at risk of homelessness achieve sustainable housing and social inclusion
- People are able to rent housing that meets their needs
- People can purchase affordable housing
- People have access to housing through an efficient and responsive housing market
- Indigenous people have the same housing opportunities as other Australians
- Indigenous people have improved housing amenity and reduced overcrowding, particularly in remote areas and discrete communities.

Social housing programs funded under the 2003 CSHA (see Box 1.2) and discussed in this report, include public rental housing, state owned and managed Indigenous housing (SOMIH), mainstream and Indigenous community housing (ICH) and the Crisis Accommodation Program (CAP). Along with the programs described in Box 1.2, Commonwealth Rent Assistance (CRA) and support services for the homeless – previously provided under the Supported Accommodation and Assistance Program (SAAP) and now funded under the NAHA – complete the spectrum of accommodation support services in Australia.

Box 1.2: Social housing programs in Australia

- Public rental housing encompasses the publicly owned or leased dwellings administered by state and territory governments. It provides appropriate, affordable and accessible housing for largely low income households who are in housing need.
- State owned and managed Indigenous housing (SOMIH) is also administered by state and territory governments but is targeted specifically to households with at least one Indigenous member. It also provides appropriate, affordable and accessible housing for low to moderate income households.
- Mainstream community housing differs from public housing as it is managed by not-for-profit organisations. It offers short-, medium- or long-term tenure for low income individuals and families.
- The Crisis Accommodation Program (CAP) provides dwellings for use by governments, churches and welfare organisations to provide assistance to people experiencing homelessness or to those in situations of present or imminent crisis.
- Indigenous community housing (ICH) has been funded in a variety of arrangements by state, territory and Australian governments and managed by community housing organisations for Indigenous tenants. A significant source of funding was provided through the former Community Housing and Infrastructure Program (CHIP) which was provided separately. ICH is now funded with mainstream housing services under the NAHA with services for remote housing provided under the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing.

Sources: FaCSIA 2006, 2007; FaHCSIA 2008a.

In this report:

- Chapter 2 describes the people who are assisted through social housing; the patterns of assistance and their demographic characteristics.
- Chapter 3 presents information on the ‘bricks and mortar’; the dwellings funded under the agreement.
- Chapter 4 looks at the process of allocation, presenting data on dwelling occupancy and utilisation, newly assisted households and how a limited supply is rationed to those most in need.
- Finally, Chapter 5 discusses the outcomes that social housing delivers for these households with a focus on social inclusion.

The report concludes with a discussion of the future of social housing in Australia, including how the information presented can support policy and also, how it may be improved to underscore a more reliable and robust evidence base.

Data interpretation guide

Data in this publication are drawn from administrative data collected by State Housing Authorities (SHAs) and collated nationally by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) as well as the National Social Housing Survey of tenants, most recently run in 2007 (see Box 1.3 for details). The majority of data reported are reliable and comprehensive and provide good to excellent coverage of dwellings and households under social housing. Therefore, wherever possible, this report presents data for all five social housing programs.

However, due to limitations with data collected for CAP and ICH, namely the use of aggregate rather than unit record data, some sections focus only on public rental, SOMIH and mainstream community housing. Readers should also note that the mainstream community housing collection is also subject to survey response rates and while recent data have improved response rates, trends should be interpreted with caution for this reason.

Data for ICH are drawn from both administrative data and the 2006 Community Housing and Infrastructure Needs Survey (CHINS). CHINS can only provide community-level estimates rather than dwelling level meaning that variation within a community may not be captured. The significant quality issues in the ICH data collection means that the results can only be interpreted with considerable caution. In many cases complete data are not available for the whole jurisdiction, and so totals may not be representative of the entire jurisdiction. Caution should be used when comparing data across or between jurisdictions as a range of unit record and aggregate data sources are used by different jurisdictions and may show variations in scope and/or definition.

Analysis of changes over time are presented in this report and where appropriate, caveats and footnotes are provided if differences in data collection or processing methods may have impacted on comparability. Discussions of trends are only included where these issues are not so significant as to affect interpretation. The inclusion of the first 6 months of the NAHA is not expected to have a significant impact on the data for 2008–09. Many of the new initiatives under the new agreements were still to take effect and no changes were made to the 2008–09 collections.

Box 1.3 2007 National Social Housing Survey

The most recent National Social Housing Surveys (NSHS) of public rental housing, mainstream community housing and SOMIH were conducted in 2007. The public rental housing and mainstream community housing surveys received 13,246 and 3,100 responses respectively, representing sample response rates of 37% and 31%. The SOMIH survey methodology involved face-to-face interviews with 1,259 tenants. Further information on the methodology of each survey can be found in Roy Morgan Research (2007, 2008a and 2008b).

2 The people in social housing

The 2003 CSHA focused on providing housing assistance to those in most need, for the duration of their need. At 30 June 2009, this translated to around 406,000 households being assisted by social housing nationally (Table 2.1). The majority (81%) were residing in public rental housing and a further 9% in mainstream community housing.

Over the life of the 2003 agreement, the number of households assisted by public rental housing has fallen. However there has been a notable increase in the number of households assisted through mainstream community housing. This trend is likely to continue in future years, with reforms planned to increase the proportion of community housing stock (AIHW 2009a).

Table 2.1: Total households in social housing, at 30 June 2009

Program type		NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Total
Public rental housing	No.	117,242	62,565	50,579	30,616	40,774	11,364	10,620	4,976	328,736
	%	81.5	82.6	75.8	77.8	84.6	91.8	93.6	58.9	81.0
SOMIH	No.	4,083	198	3,048	2,152	1,758	343	..	..	11,582
	%	2.8	0.3	4.6	5.5	3.6	2.8	..	..	2.9
Mainstream community housing	No.	16,639	7,556	5,610	2,650	4,329	406	643	n.a.	37,833
	%	11.6	10.0	8.4	6.7	9.0	3.3	5.7	n.a.	9.3
Indigenous community housing ^{(a) (b)}	No.	4,429	1,701	6,192	3,366	1,031	135	24	3,354	20,232
	%	3.1	2.2	9.3	8.6	2.1	1.1	0.2	39.7	5.0
Crisis Accommodation Program ^(a)	No.	1,511	3,705	1,326	543	293	127	60	122	7,687
	%	1.1	4.9	2.0	1.4	0.6	1.0	0.5	1.4	1.9
Total households	No.	145,230	77,822	68,854	39,327	48,185	12,375	11,347	8,452	406,070

(a) Total dwellings are provided in lieu of households.

(b) Includes improvised dwellings. Dwellings managed by the Australian government but located in Victoria, Queensland and Tasmania are included in the respective state's totals.

Source: AIHW 2010.

Demographic profile

The picture of households living in social housing contrasts with that of the general population. Households in social housing are typically on low incomes, with their main source of income from government pensions and payments (Table 2.2). For the 88% of public rental housing tenants receiving reduced rent (rebated), the most common form of government payment is the Disability Support Pension (31% of total rebated households) and the Age Pension (28% of total rebated households). This split is different in the SOMIH program where only 20% of government benefit and pension recipients are on the Disability Support Pension and 11% are on the Age Pension.

Table 2.2: Total rebated households, by principal source of income of main tenant, at 30 June 2009^(a)

	Public rental housing	SOMIH
Employee cash income	19,492	871
Unincorporated business income	483	3
Youth Allowance	921	28
Newstart Allowance	25,499	1,231
Other allowances for students and unemployed	1,210	131
Age Pension	82,077	1,034
Disability Support Pension	90,042	1,911
Other government pension / payment	63,931	4,182
Other cash income	2,466	43
Nil income	862	26
Unknown and Missing	2,446	219
Total	289,429	9,679

(a) Data are not available for mainstream community housing (CH), ICH and CAP.

Source: AIHW analysis of National Housing Assistance Data Repository.

In addition to the 11,582 households assisted in SOMIH, Indigenous households are over-represented in mainstream social housing. At 30 June 2009, 8% and 7% of households in public rental housing and mainstream community housing, respectively, identified as Indigenous (AIHW 2010) compared with 2% of the general population (ABS & AIHW 2008).

The most common type of household in public rental and mainstream community housing includes only a single person (Table 2.3). Sole parents with children are the most common household type in SOMIH and the second most common household type in other programs. This is consistent with the fact that the majority of main tenants in public rental housing, SOMIH and mainstream community housing are female (63%, 76% and 65% respectively) (Table 2.4); a profile which has remained relatively consistent over the period of the 2003 CSHA.

Table 2.3: Household composition of public rental housing, SOMIH and mainstream community housing households, at 30 June 2009 (per cent)^(a)

	Public rental housing	SOMIH	Mainstream community housing
Single adult	50.6	21.7	50.7
Couple only	9.1	5.1	12.3
Sole parent with kids	18.8	40.2	20.3
Couple with kids	6.7	13.4	8.4
Group and mixed composition	14.8	19.7	8.3
Total	100	100	100

(a) Data are not available for ICH and CAP.

Sources: Public rental housing and SOMIH data sourced from AIHW data repository; Mainstream community housing sourced from RMR 2008a.

Tenants in social housing are usually older on average than the general population, particularly in public rental housing (Table 2.4). The median age for main tenants is 54 years in public rental housing and 44 years for SOMIH compared with a median age of 37 years for people in the general population (ABS 2009a). Nearly 20% of main tenants in community housing were aged 45–54 years (RMR 2008a).

Table 2.4: Demographics of public rental housing, SOMIH and community housing, 2008–09^(a)

All households at 30 June 2009	Male (%)	Female (%)	Median age of main tenant (years)
Public rental housing^(b)	37.1	62.9	54
SOMIH^{(b) (c)}	24.3	75.7	44
All households at Mar–Apr 2007	Male (%)	Female (%)	
Mainstream community housing	35.0	65.0	

(a) Data are not available for ICH and CAP.

(b) These figures show the percentage of those for whom the sex of the main tenant is known.

(c) National figures exclude ACT and NT as territories do not have SOMIH.

Sources: AIHW analysis of National Housing Assistance Data Repository; Mainstream community housing sourced from RMR 2008a.

In 2007, roughly one-half of public rental housing and mainstream community housing tenants and one-third of tenants in SOMIH reported that a member of their household had a disability, health or other condition (RMR 2007, 2008a, b). Furthermore, 22%, 28% and 21% of tenants in public rental housing, SOMIH and mainstream community housing, respectively, reported that their homes had been modified because of a disability or health condition. High proportions of disability and health or other long-term conditions are related to the age of the population, particularly in public rental and mainstream community housing; in the survey, older tenants were more likely on average to report having support needs in general.

Changes in households over the 2003 CSHA

The profile of households living in social housing has changed little throughout the 2003 CSHA:

- In 2004, around nine in ten rebated public rental and SOMIH households were receiving a government pension or benefit as their main tenant's principal source of income (FaCS 2005); a figure very similar to that reported for 2009.
- Also in 2004 and 2005, households in public rental and mainstream community housing were most commonly single people (TNS 2005) and those in SOMIH were still most likely to be sole parents with children, as they were in 2009.

An exception is that households are now more likely to be in circumstances of need with a notable increase in the proportion given priority allocation due to greatest need over the life of the agreement. This is explored in detail in Chapter 4, 'Providing social housing'.

3 Social housing dwellings

In 2009, there were almost 420,000 social housing dwellings in Australia (Table 3.1). The majority of these were in public rental housing with a further 41,718 dwellings provided as mainstream community housing by not-for-profit organisations.

Table 3.1: Social housing dwellings, at 30 June 2009

Program type	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Total
Public rental housing	118,907	64,741	51,131	31,668	42,448	11,585	10,789	5,195	336,464
SOMIH	4,169	198	3,193	2,275	1,873	348	..	..	12,056
Mainstream community housing	16,214	7,477	7,012	5,110	4,531	603	640	131	41,718
Indigenous community housing ^{(a) (b)}	4,429	1,701	6,192	3,366	1,031	135	24	3,354	20,232
Crisis Accommodation Program	1,511	3,705	1,326	543	293	127	60	122	7,687
Total	145,230	77,822	68,854	42,962	50,176	12,798	11,513	8,802	418,157

(a) Total number of dwellings includes improvised dwellings.

(b) Dwellings managed by the Australian Government but located in Victoria, Queensland and Tasmania are included in the respective state's totals.

Source: AIHW 2010.

The size of the total social housing dwelling stock grew little during the 2003 CSHA, with only a 1% change between 30 June 2004 and 2009 (Table 3.2). Of note is the decline in public rental housing stock which reduced by approximately 9,000 dwellings (3%) in this period. Simultaneously, growth is observable in the mainstream community housing sector, which increased steadily from 31,496 dwellings at 30 June 2005 to 41,718 dwellings at 30 June 2009.

Table 3.2: Number of Social housing dwellings, 2003-04 to 2008-09

At 30 June	Public rental housing	SOMIH	Mainstream community housing	Indigenous community housing ^(c)	Crisis Accommodation Program	Total
2004	345,335	12,725	26,753 ^(a)	21,717	6,916	413,446
2005	343,301	12,860	31,496 ^(b)	18,261	7,314	413,232
2006	341,378	12,893	32,349 ^(b)	22,192	7,350	416,162
2007	339,771	13,098	35,161	22,018	7,516	417,564
2008	337,866	12,778	38,519	23,279	7,567	420,009
2009	336,464	12,056	41,718	20,232	7,687	418,157

(a) Mainstream community housing data for 2004 are subject to survey response rate.

(b) Mainstream community housing data for 2005 and 2006 were sourced from the trial collection of unit record level dwellings and organisation administrative data which excluded the Australian Capital Territory (ACT). ACT's figures have been included but sourced from CSHA national data reports.

(c) Indigenous community housing figures include improvised dwellings. Caution should be used when comparing dwelling numbers over time for reasons of data quality and changes to data definitions and scope.

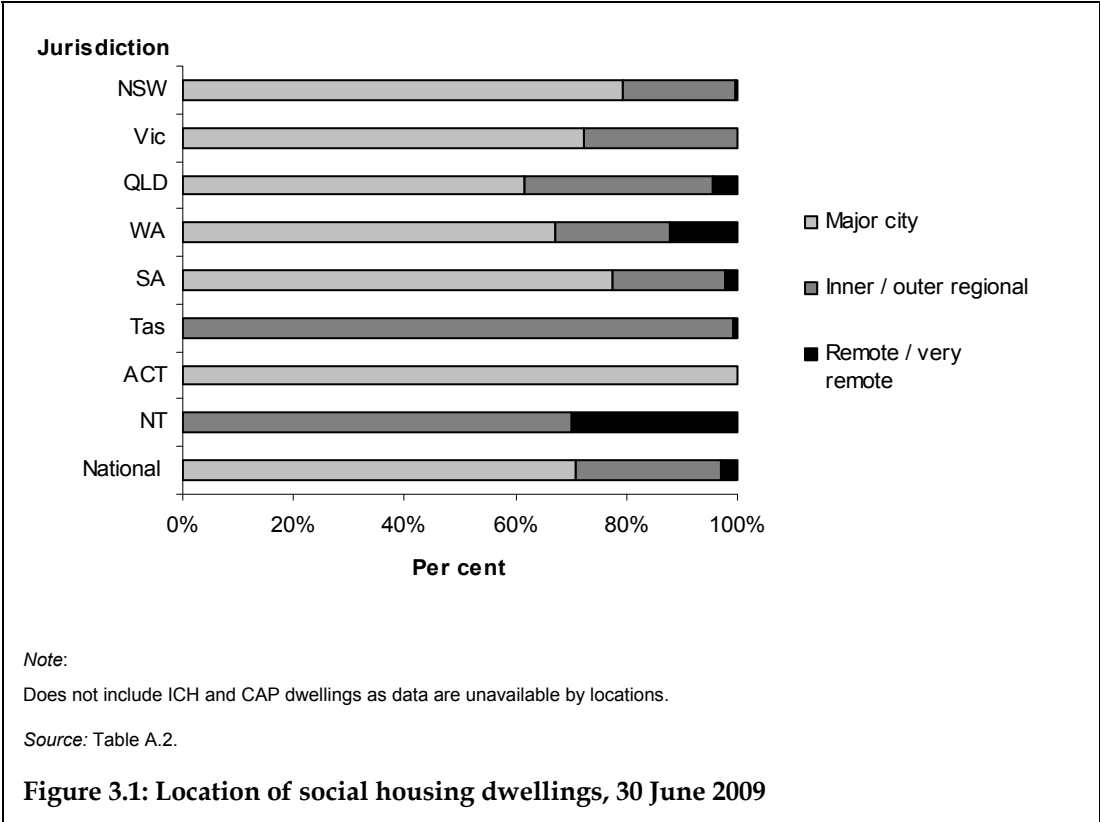
Sources: AIHW 2005a, 2005b, 2005c, 2005d, 2006a, 2006b, 2006c, 2006d, 2007b, 2007c, 2007d, 2007e, 2007f, 2007g, 2008a, 2008b, 2008c, 2008e, 2008f, 2009b, 2009c, 2009d, 2009e, 2010.

The minimal growth in social housing dwelling stock stands in marked contrast to the significant increase in Australia’s total dwelling stock seen over a similar period (AIHW 2009a). Attempting to redress this trend, the Commonwealth Government has committed to build 20,000 public housing dwellings, under the Nation Building plan (COAG 2009a), with 75 per cent of these dwellings to be completed by the end of December 2010. A significant proportion of these dwellings are expected to be transferred to the not-for-profit sector (FaHCSIA 2009a), consistent with the trend of increasing community housing stock (see Table 3.2).

A substantial proportion of the community housing stock is managed by larger providers. At 30 June 2009, fewer than 5% of the 931 mainstream community housing organisations managed nearly two-thirds (62%) of all government-funded mainstream community housing dwellings in Australia (Table A.1).

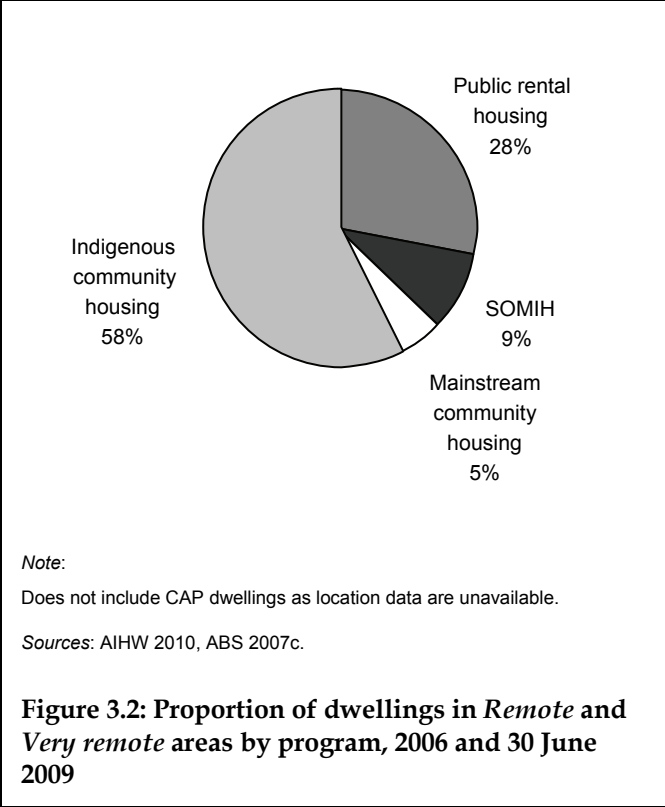
Location

While most social housing dwellings are located in *Major cities* (Figure 3.1), the geographic distribution varies in each state and territory, depending on whether capital cities are designated as *Major cities* or *Regional*. Therefore, the majority of dwellings in New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, Western Australia, South Australia and the Australian Capital Territory were located in *Major cities* while dwellings in Tasmania and the Northern Territory were largely located in *Inner or Outer regional* areas. Only 3% were in *Remote and Very remote* areas.



National data on the location of Indigenous community housing (ICH) dwellings are only available from the Community Housing Infrastructure Needs Survey (CHINS). In 2006, 57%

of dwellings managed by ICH organisations were in *Very remote* areas (ABS 2007c). Consistent with this distribution, the majority of social housing dwellings in *Remote* and *Very remote areas* operate under the ICH program (Figure 3.2). Public rental housing made up 28% of total stock in *Remote* and *Very remote* areas while SOMIH and mainstream community housing made up 9% and 5% respectively.



Dwelling type and size

The types of social housing dwellings that are available to let, influence how effectively providers are able to support tenants’ needs through appropriate accommodation. While the CSHA focused on dwelling type and size largely in the context of assessing how well dwelling size matched a household, the NAHA has a broader focus. At the tenant level this is described in terms of meeting needs; at the dwelling management level, the NAHA refers to better utilisation of existing stock (COAG 2008b) which in time, may result in greater flexibility and increased choice for prospective and existing tenants.

Consistent with the makeup of Australia’s private dwelling stock (ABS 2009b), the majority of social housing dwellings in Australia (for which details were known) were separate houses in 2009 (Table 3.3). This is particularly pronounced in areas outside *Major cities*, hence the very high proportion of dwellings in SOMIH (84%) that are separate houses. Flats, units and apartments were common in public rental housing and mainstream community housing, comprising 32% and 36% respectively.

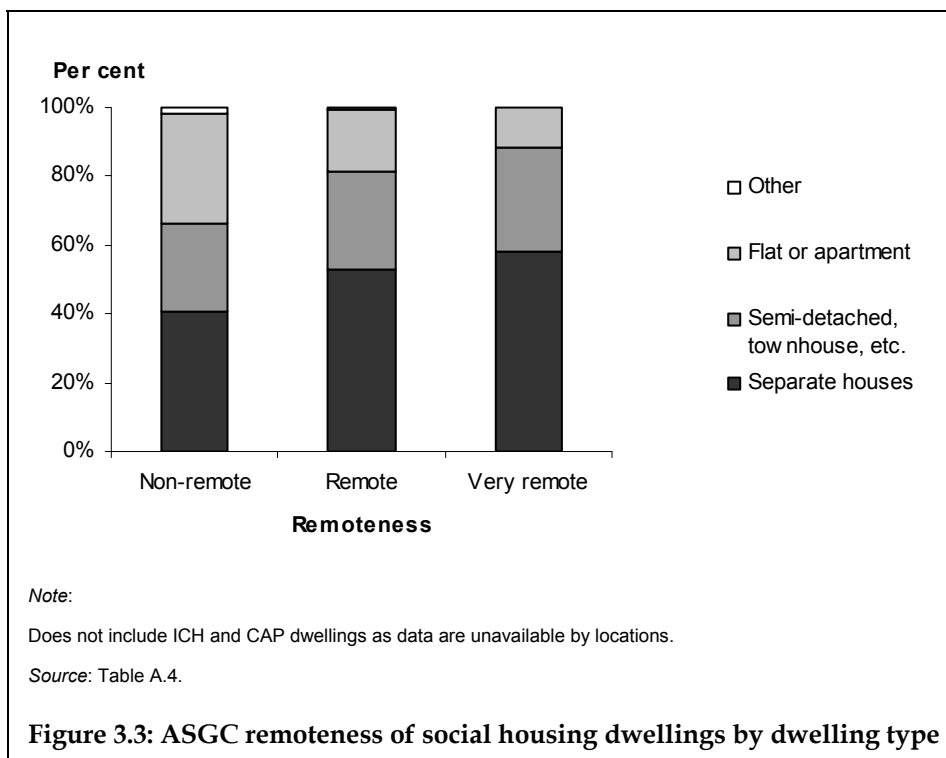
Table 3.3: Social housing dwellings by dwelling type, 30 June 2009^(a)

		Public rental housing	SOMIH	Mainstream community housing
Separate house	%	39	84	40
Semi-detached, row or terrace house, townhouse etc.	%	28	13	14
Flat, unit or apartment	%	32	3	36
Other (including Boarding/rooming house unit)	%	1	0	10
Total	%	100	100	100

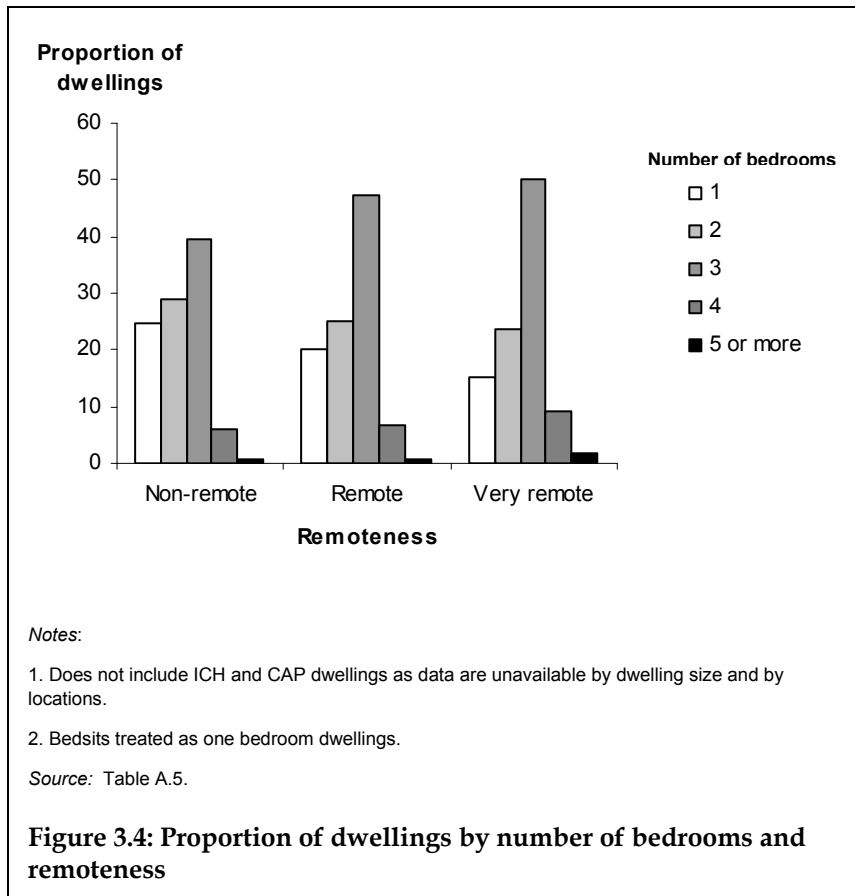
(a) Data are not available for ICH and CAP.

Source: Table A.3.

The most common dwelling type in remote areas is separate houses (Figure 3.3), representing 53% of all dwellings in *Remote* areas and 58% of all dwellings in *Very remote* areas. Semi-detached dwellings, row or terrace houses, townhouses, flats and apartments were most common in non-remote areas.



Almost half of the total social housing dwellings had three bedrooms with 40% of all dwellings being this size (Table A.5). Dwellings in mainstream community housing had, on average, fewer bedrooms (2.1 bedrooms per dwelling) whilst SOMIH were larger on average with 3.1 bedrooms per dwelling. Figure 3.4 illustrates how dwelling size was related to remoteness with smaller dwellings (those with one or two bedrooms) more common in non-remote areas and number of bedrooms gradually increasing with remoteness.



Dwelling condition and availability

Maintaining social housing dwellings in good condition is essential to ensuring the ongoing sustainability of stock and the health and safety of tenants. While national data regarding dwelling condition are not available for public housing, SOMIH or mainstream community housing, jurisdictions do report the extent to which dwellings are deemed 'tenantable' (see Glossary).

It should be noted that tenantability reflects the availability of a dwelling for letting, which requires not only that the dwelling be habitable, but legally available for tenancy. Conversely, an untenable dwelling may be habitable, but not legally available for tenancy. For example dwellings may be untenable due to them currently being upgraded, pending sale, or undergoing maintenance.

The vast majority of social housing dwellings (in public rental housing, SOMIH and mainstream community housing) are tenantable (Table 3.4). Nationally at 30 June 2009:

- 1,907 public rental housing dwellings were undergoing major redevelopment (AIHW 2010) and 2,733 were listed as untenable; combined this represents 1.4% of stock.
- 1.6% of all permanent SOMIH dwellings were classified as untenable, totalling 191 dwellings. A further 93 dwellings were listed as undergoing major redevelopment.
- 547 mainstream community housing tenancy units were untenable representing 1.4% of all mainstream community housing stock.

Table 3.4: Social housing availability at 30 June 2009^(a)

	Public rental housing	SOMIH	Mainstream community housing
Total number of untenable dwellings	2,733	191	547
% of total dwellings	0.8	1.6	1.4
Total number of dwellings undergoing major redevelopment	1,907	93	n.a.
% of total dwellings	0.6	0.8	n.a.
Total number of dwellings	336,464	12,056	39,770

(a) Data are not available for ICH and CAP.

Source: AIHW 2010.

The condition of social housing stock shown in Table 3.4 contrasts with the condition of Indigenous community housing dwellings, information on which is only available through the Community Housing Infrastructure Needs Survey (CHINS). In the 2006 CHINS, 70% of Indigenous community housing dwellings required minor or no repair, 23% required major repair (repairs costing between \$33,000 and \$100,000) and 7% required replacement (repairs costing more than \$100,000) in order to meet a basic standard of dwelling condition (ABS 2007c). In *Remote* areas, over one-third of dwellings required major repair or replacement.

The poor standard of housing and infrastructure in dwellings provided to Indigenous people in remote areas is noted in the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing (COAG 2009b). The Nation Building and Jobs Plan (COAG 2009b) provides for repairs and maintenance to around 2,500 existing public housing dwellings nationally, to allow them to remain available for occupancy. Dwellings constructed and repaired through funding delivered under this agreement, along with the National Partnership Agreement on the Nation Building and Jobs Plan for Remote Indigenous Housing, represents the largest ever investment by any Australian Government; \$5.5 billion investment over 10 years in remote Indigenous housing (FaHCSIA 2009b).

4 Providing social housing

Social housing providers aim to efficiently and effectively use designated stock to assist the people in need of accommodation. This chapter presents information on the processes involved in allocating dwellings, the capacity of dwellings to match the people housed, and the continuity of tenure once allocated.

As has been discussed, the largest social housing program – public rental housing – has seen a decline in total stock over the CSHA: at 30 June 2004 there were 345,335 dwellings which had fallen to 336,464 by 2009. Over this period, while all social housing programs have maintained very high occupancy rates and provided assistance to new households on a priority needs basis, the supply has been effectively rationed to those households most in need. It has previously been noted that public rental housing and SOMIH in particular were not used simply to house those with low incomes, but, in accordance with targeting policies, were increasingly used to house tenants with complex needs and from disadvantaged backgrounds (AIHW 2008g).

Dwelling management

Almost all social housing dwellings were occupied at 30 June 2009, with high occupancy rates seen across all programs: 98% in public rental housing; 96% in SOMIH; 97% in mainstream community housing and 97% in ICH dwellings (Table 4.1).

Table 4.1: Social housing occupancy at 30 June 2009 (per cent)^(a)

Program type	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	AG ^(b)	Total
Public rental housing	98.6	96.6	98.9	96.7	96.1	98.1	98.4	94.7	..	97.7
SOMIH	97.9	100.0	95.5	94.6	93.9	98.6	..	..	..	96.1
Mainstream community housing	98.2	95.0	99.3	88.7	96.8	99.0	95.7	100.0	..	96.9
Indigenous community housing	99.2	97.9	96.8	89.8	87.7	..	100.0	n.a.	95.3	96.5

(a) Data are not available for CAP.

(b) AG includes Indigenous community housing organisations in Victoria, Queensland and Tasmania which were under the administrative responsibility of the Australian Government.

Source: Table A.6.

While dwellings in more populated states and *Major cities* generally show rates of higher occupancy, differences are small with occupancy rates overall very high. At 30 June 2009, 98% of public rental and SOMIH dwellings in non-remote areas were occupied; compared with 94% (public rental housing) and 91% (SOMIH) of dwellings in remote areas (Table 4.2). Data were unavailable for occupancy in mainstream and Indigenous community housing by remoteness.

Table 4.2: Occupancy by remoteness, at 30 June 2009^(a) ^(b)

Program type			Non-remote	Remote	Very remote	Total
Public rental housing	Occupied dwellings	No.	321,885	5,281	1,498	328,664
	Total dwellings	No.	329,208	5,644	1,596	336,449
		%	98	94	94	98
SOMIH	Occupied dwellings	No.	9,469	998	1,115	11,582
	Total dwellings	No.	9,710	1,101	1,244	12,056
		%	98	91	90	96

(a) These figures show the number of dwellings where location details are known.

(b) Data are not available for CH, ICH and CAP.

Source: AIHW analysis of National Housing Assistance Data Repository.

Under the CSHA, turnaround time was measured for public rental housing and SOMIH in order to describe the extent to which jurisdictions can relet their properties quickly and efficiently meet demand¹. Turnaround time is generally lower for public rental housing with fewer dwellings compared with SOMIH located in *Outer regional, Remote and Very remote* areas, which can take longer to let. In 2009, nationally it took on average 26 days to relet public rental housing dwellings while the mean turnaround time for SOMIH dwellings was 36 days (AIHW 2010).

Matching dwelling size to household size

The capacity of social housing to flexibly meet the changing needs of households, in line with shrinking household size (AIHW 2009a) and an ageing population (ABS 2009b) will be a key challenge into the future. While providers aim to appropriately match households to dwellings, circumstance may dictate that a larger house be used to accommodate a smaller family (e.g. to enable other needs to be met – educational, job placement, health care).

Box 2: Occupancy standards

Matching of dwellings to household size is measured by a range of standards for occupancy; the proxy occupancy standard was used for reporting under the CSHA while the Canadian National Occupancy Standard will be used for NAHA reporting (see Glossary for definitions). By using these standards, we can determine whether dwellings are overcrowded, underutilised or appropriately matched to the size of the household.

Nationally, 12% of all social housing dwellings were underutilised (Table 4.3). The highest rate of underutilisation was seen in SOMIH with 18% of dwellings underutilised, compared with 12% of public rental dwellings and 10% of mainstream community housing dwellings. Underutilisation in public rental housing was most pronounced in *Outer regional* areas, where 16% of dwellings were underutilised (Table A.8). In SOMIH, underutilisation was most commonly seen in *Major cities*, where 19% of dwellings were underutilised.

¹ States and territories record vacancies differently; vacancies may be variously excluded if they are undergoing redevelopment, if jurisdictions lack the ability to relet the dwelling immediately (e.g., when tenants abandon a property and court orders are required to relet the dwelling) or for other reasons.

Table 4.3: Percentage of households underutilised in social housing, at 30 June 2009^(a)

Program type	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Total
Public rental housing	11.7	10.5	10.9	8.8	17.7	10.9	14.3	4.6	11.8
SOMIH	23.5	16.5	11.4	12.5	23.3	15.8	..	..	17.5
Mainstream community housing	7.8	6.7	5.5	4.9	31.4	4.7	0.8	n.a.	9.6
Total	11.5	10.1	10.5	8.8	19.0	10.9	13.5	4.6	11.8

(a) Data are not available for ICH and CAP.

Source: Table A.7.

Overcrowded housing has been associated with poorer health and welfare outcomes for households (AIHW 2007a). It is more common among Indigenous households (ABS & AIHW 2008) and all governments have made reducing overcrowding for Indigenous Australians a priority under the NAHA. It should be noted that definitions of overcrowding differ between jurisdictions and nationally; see the Glossary for the definition used in this report.

Nationally at 30 June 2009, 2% of dwellings were overcrowded in public rental housing. While rates were generally low across the board, overcrowding was most prominent in *Remote* and *Very remote* areas (Table A.8). Consistent with the higher rates seen among Indigenous households in general, overcrowding was most pronounced in SOMIH where 7% of dwellings were overcrowded, while mainstream community housing dwellings had the lowest rate of overcrowding with 0.7% (Table 4.4).

Table 4.4: Percentage of households overcrowded in social housing, at 30 June 2009^(a)

Program type	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Total
Public rental housing	1.5	2.1	2.3	1.9	1.2	1.7	1.2	2.8	1.7
SOMIH	3.6	2.9	10.9	7.8	7.2	2.7	..	..	7.1
Mainstream community housing	0.7	0.1	1.6	0.2	1.0	0.9	0.0	n.a.	0.7
Total	1.4	1.9	2.7	2.2	1.4	1.7	1.1	2.8	1.8

(a) Data are not available for ICH and CAP.

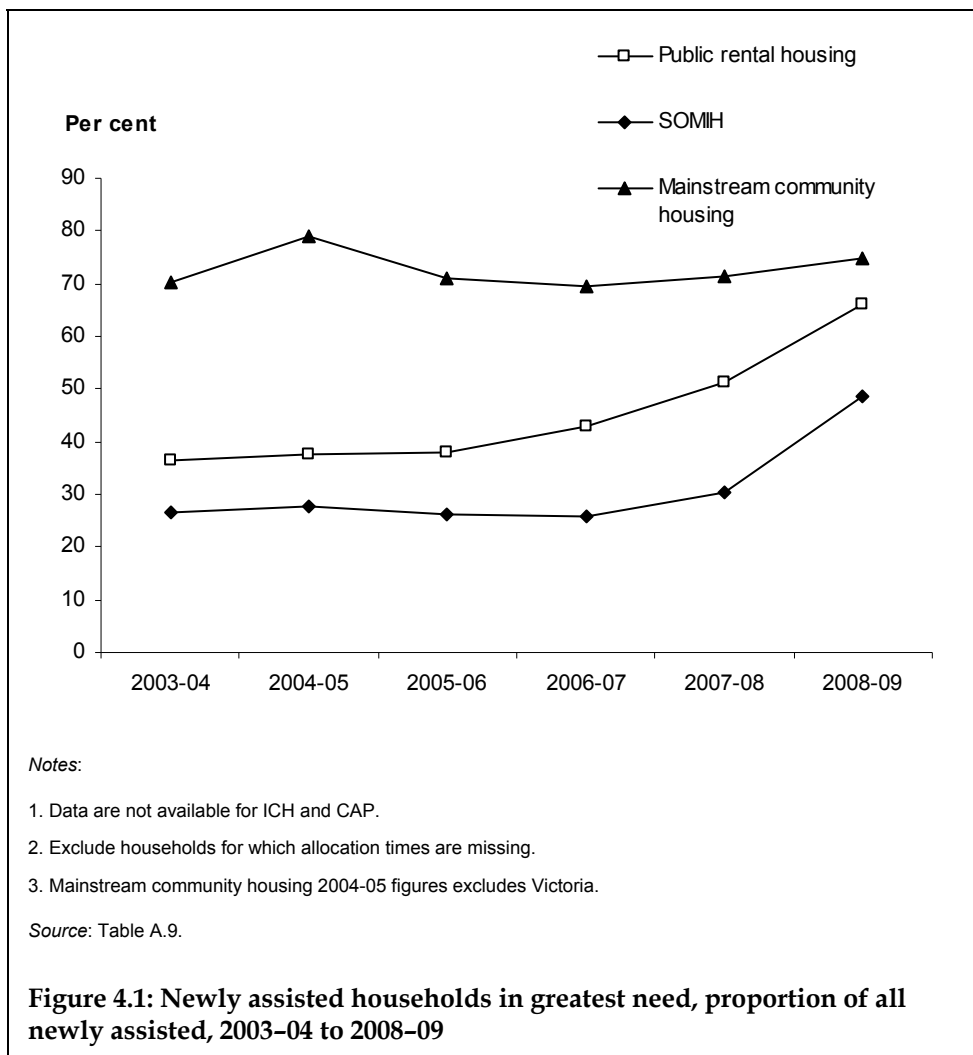
Source: Table A.7.

Assisting those most in need

In line with the objectives of the 2003 CSHA, states and territories rationed their stock over this period, allocating on a priority needs basis. As a consequence, the proportion of households newly assisted that are in greatest need has steadily risen, particularly in public rental housing. While reasons for priority allocation differ substantially across states and territories, reflecting the differences in allocation policies and criteria, younger households, group and mixed households, and single parent families have been more likely than other household types to have been given priority allocation due to homelessness (AIHW 2008g).

In 2008–09, 66% of newly allocated households in public rental housing were to those in ‘greatest need’ (Figure 4.1), 30 percentage points higher than in 2003–04 (36%). A similar but less pronounced trend occurred in SOMIH, with 49% of new allocations in 2008–09 made to

those in greatest need, compared with 27% in 2003–04. By comparison, targeting to households in greatest need in mainstream community housing has been consistently high (over 70%).

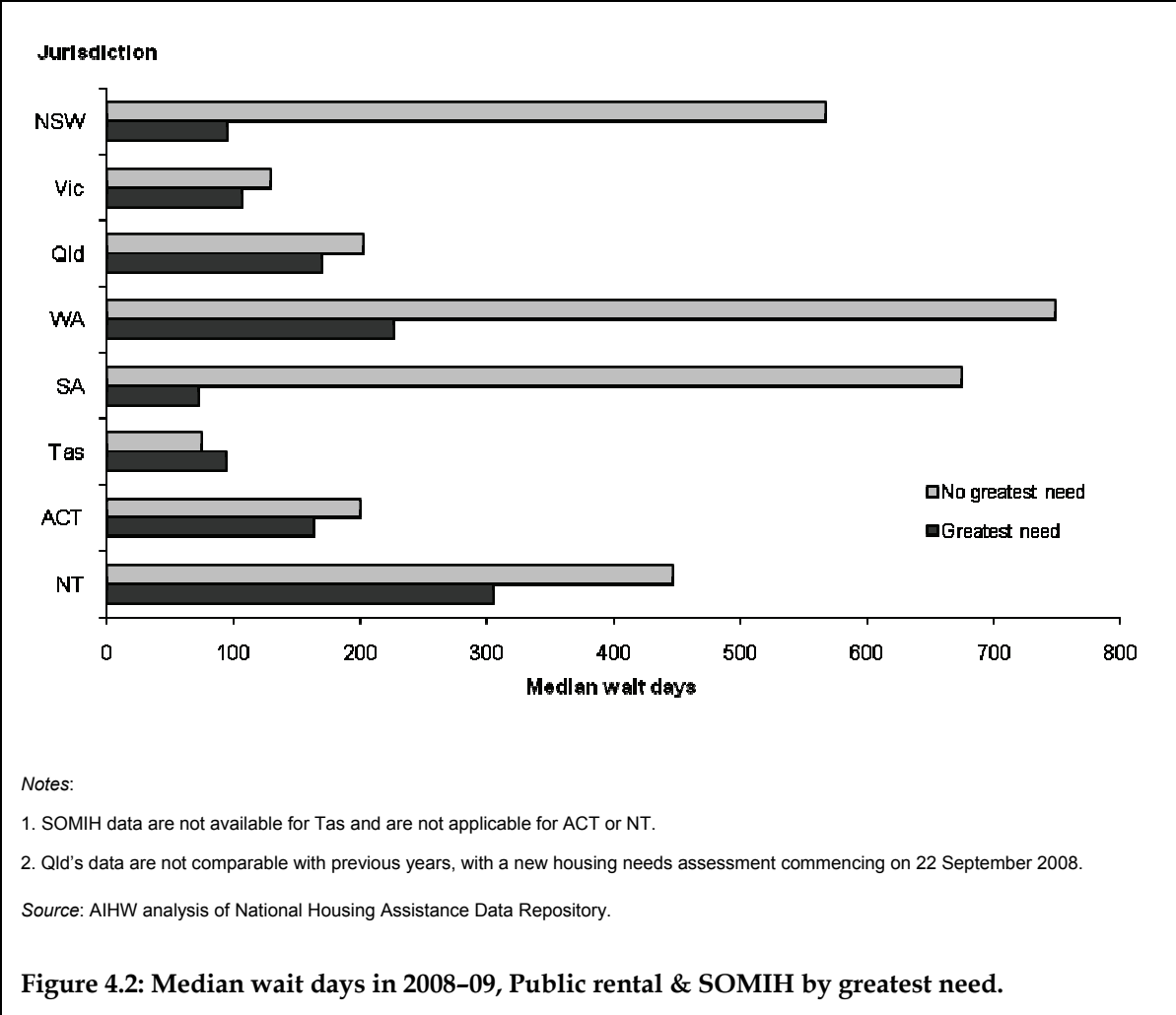


Although wait times can be measured only for those households that have been assisted, households deemed in greatest need waited less time on average than households not given priority status (Figure 4.2). While even those in greatest need can wait between 1 and 2 years (AIHW 2009a), this may be attributed to the challenges of housing those with additional or complex needs. In these circumstances, jurisdictions will often provide alternate interim support while someone is still on the list, for example, Housing NSW’s Special Assistance Subsidy (Housing NSW 2009).

These actions notwithstanding, consistently high waiting lists over the period of the CSHA demonstrate the unmet demand for social housing assistance (Table A.10). It should be noted that as waiting lists have not yet been consistently integrated in all states and territories, households may be on more than one list.

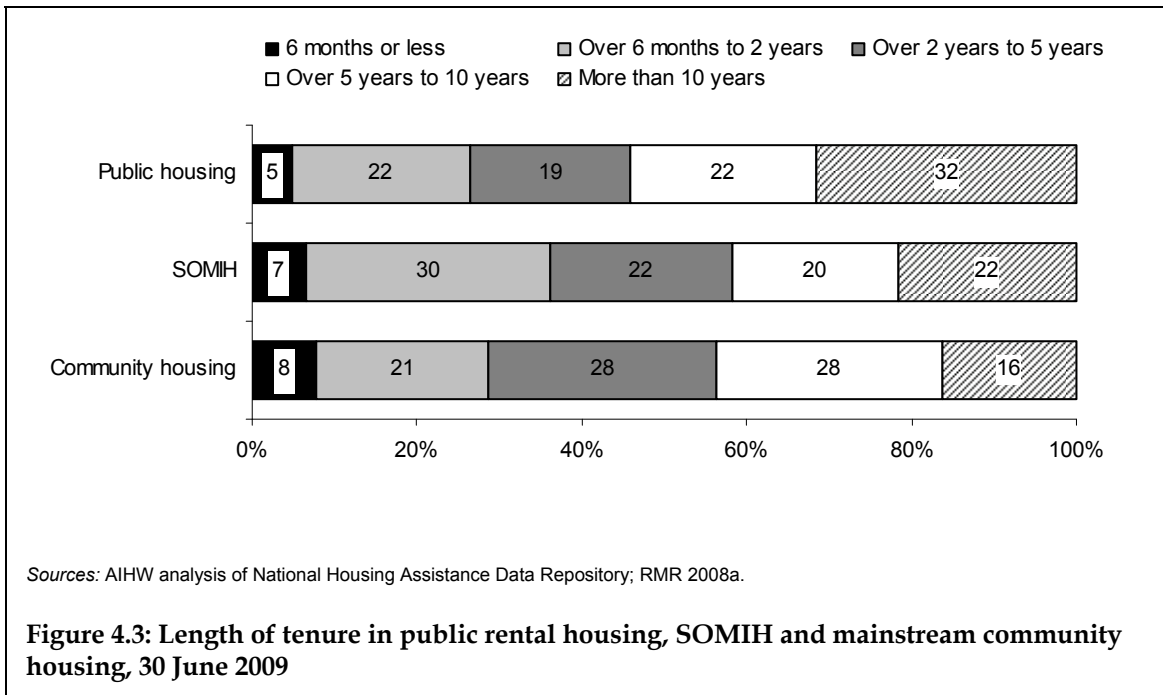
Aimed at supporting increased flexibility in the system and a ‘one-stop shop’, integration of waiting lists is a reform to be delivered by housing ministers by July 2011 (COAG 2009a). Moreover, an integrated waitlist which offers comprehensive information about people

waiting to be assisted, their current housing circumstances and affordability will result in better understanding of the location and source of housing need.



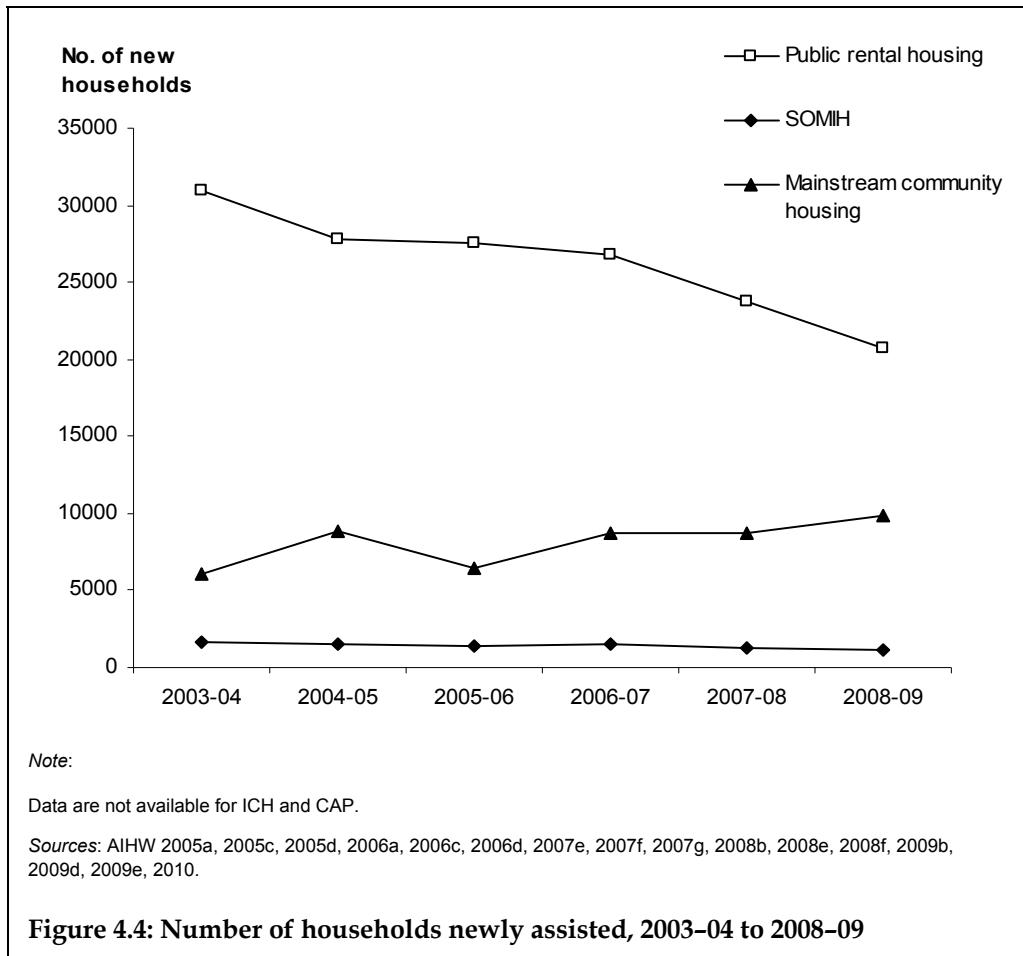
Sustainability of tenure

Security of tenure has been shown to enhance household health and education outcomes (Phibbs & Young 2005) especially for those in high need; it is also seen to relate to social connectedness (AHURI 2009). Figure 4.3 shows that the majority of households in public rental housing have resided in the same dwellings for more than 5 years and 44% of households in SOMIH and mainstream community housing respectively, had similarly long tenures. The higher proportion of shorter tenures of 6 months or less in mainstream community housing may be attributed to flexible housing options which are designed to meet tenants' short-term needs provided through transitional or boarding house accommodation.



The long tenure of households in social housing, combined with the lack of growth in the sector, has however, resulted in fewer dwellings being available for those on the waitlist. Figure 4.4 shows that the number of newly-assisted households in public rental housing has fallen considerably over the life of the CSHA with the only program showing an increase being mainstream community housing.

While an emphasis on sustainable tenancies has been continued under the NAHA, the new environment also aims to allow for seamless transitions from social housing to private rental or home ownership. This is consistent with a policy shift in states and territories towards fixed-term leases of public rental housing in order to provide greater flexibility in an era of high demand for assistance (Housing NSW 2008, SCRGSP 2009: Table 16.6).



Transfers and exits

Those seeking more suitable accommodation to meet their needs or change in circumstances may be able to move within the same housing program. Transfer policies vary between each jurisdiction but reasons for transfer may include medical conditions or disability, family breakdown, change in employment, severe overcrowding or those at risk due to domestic violence. Transfers of tenancy management (e.g., between different housing programs) may also occur. Transfer data are only supplied for public rental housing and SOMIH.

During 2008-09 only 3% of households in both public rental housing and SOMIH transferred (Table 4.5). A higher proportion of households exited during the year with a larger proportion of households exiting SOMIH (14%) than public rental housing (7%). This low level of exits and transfers overall is consistent with tenants' own reports. When asked in the 2007 NSHS where they saw themselves living in 5 years, the majority of tenants expected to remain in their current home (RMR 2007, 2008a, b)

While limited information is known about households that transfer, the low proportions reported may indicate that the high demand on the waitlist reduces the capacity of social housing providers to enable transfers. Under the new federal framework of agreements, increasing the portability of tenants in public housing is established as a reform priority. It is hoped that by providing tenants with the flexibility to move to meet changing circumstances, or to better access appropriate services, the result will be improved social and economic participation.

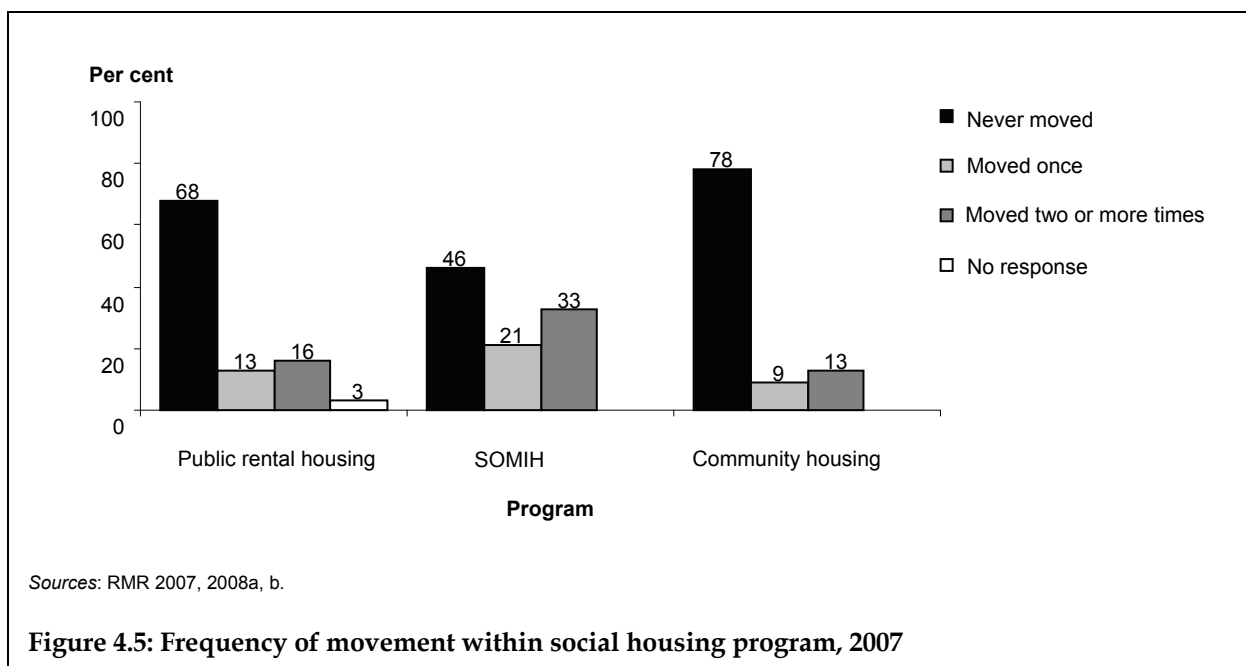
Table 4.5: Transfers and exits from public rental housing and SOMIH, 2008–09

Program	NSW	Vic ^a	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Total
Percentage of total households that transferred									
Public rental housing	2.6	3.0	1.9	4.2	2.4	2.3	1.9	3.8	2.7
SOMIH	2.7	n.a.	2.8	4.4	2.5	1.3	..	..	2.8
Total	2.6	3.0	2.0	4.2	2.4	2.3	1.9	3.8	2.7
Percentage of total households that exited									
Public rental housing	6.2	6.2	7.0	7.2	6.7	8.2	5.7	8.8	6.6
SOMIH	7.4	n.a.	7.9	12.9	8.3	8.5	..	..	14.1
Total	6.3	7.3	7.0	7.6	6.8	8.2	5.7	8.8	6.9

a) As a part of a transition to independence for Aboriginal Housing Victoria (AHV), Victoria has transferred tenancy management functions of Indigenous specific housing stock to AHV. By 30 June 2009, tenancy management for 1,102 properties had been transferred, with the remainder in the process of transferring. For this reason, transfer and exit data are not provided.

Source: Table A.11.

The frequency of transfers within social housing programs varies across the sector. Whilst over three-quarters (78%) of mainstream community housing tenants, and 68% of public rental housing tenants surveyed in the 2007 NSHS, had never moved, less than half (46%) of SOMIH tenants had remained in the same dwelling (Figure 4.5). Of those who had moved, around one-third (33%) of SOMIH tenants had moved two or more times whereas only around one-sixth of public rental and mainstream community housing tenants (16% and 13% respectively) had moved as frequently.



5 Social housing outcomes and social inclusion

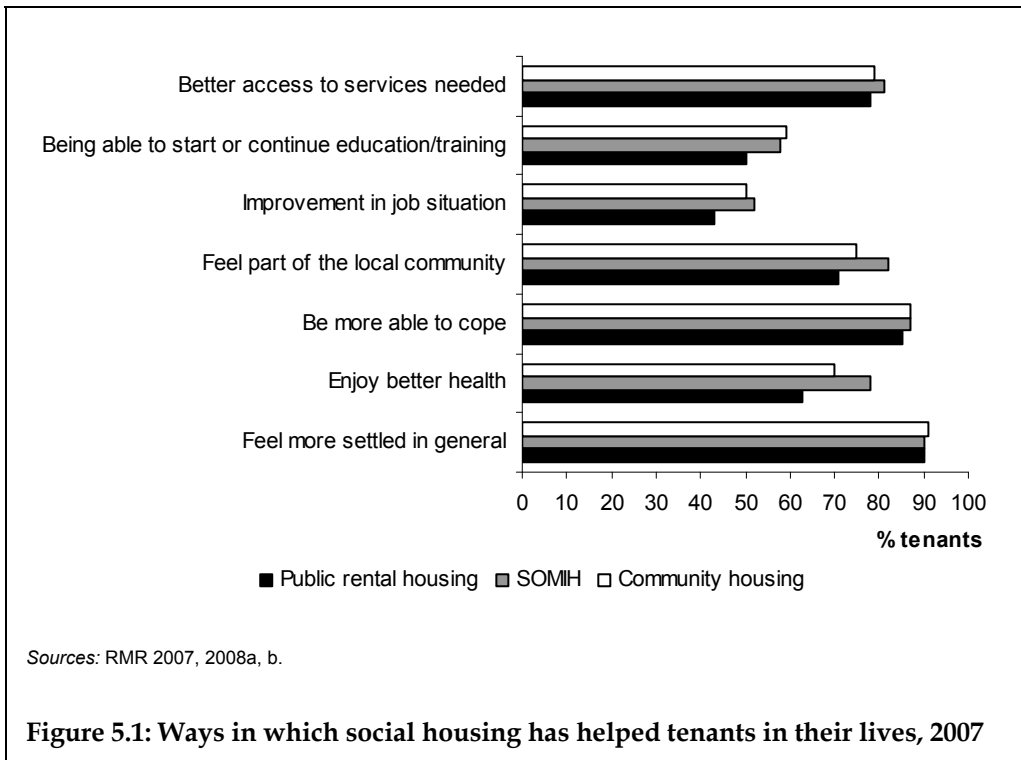
To be socially included Australians need to have the opportunity to secure a job, access services, connect with family, friends, work, personal interests and the local community, deal with personal crisis and have their voices heard (Australian Government 2010). Conversely, social exclusion is 'the process of being shut out from the social, economic, political and cultural systems which contribute to the integration of a person into the community' (Cappo 2002).

Through priority allocation, social housing often assists the socially excluded, including those who have experienced homelessness, Indigenous people, those on income support and working-age people not in the labour force. This chapter explores these issues for households living in public rental, SOMIH and mainstream community housing in Australia (data are unavailable for Indigenous community housing tenants and those assisted by the CAP) compared with the general population.

Improving the lives of tenants

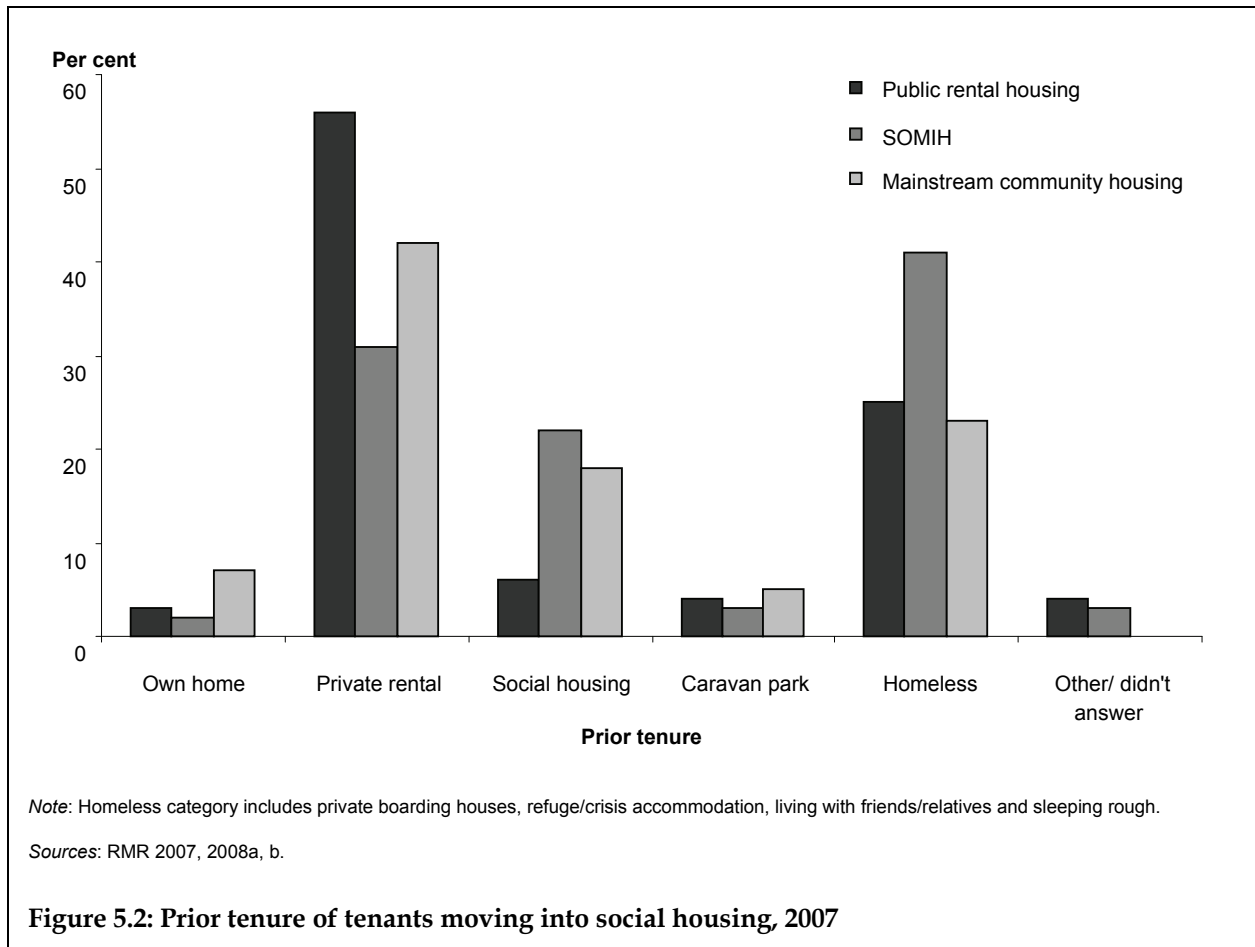
Social housing programs variously assist tenants in becoming more socially included. In the 2007 NSHS, the majority of public rental housing tenants reported that public rental housing allowed them better access to services (78%) and to feel part of the community (71%). Similar results were seen for SOMIH (81% and 82% respectively) and mainstream community housing tenants (79% and 75% respectively).

Respondents to the NSHS also indicated how social housing had helped them in their lives (Figure 5.1). The vast majority of tenants in all social housing programs reported that they felt more settled in general, were better able to cope and had better access to the services they needed as a result of living in social housing. In the same survey, tenants of public rental and mainstream community housing were asked whether they thought living in social housing had changed their quality of life. Almost three-quarters of mainstream community housing tenants stated that their quality of life had improved since moving, compared with only 59% of public rental housing tenants. Only 1% of mainstream community housing tenants and 2% of public rental housing tenants reported that their quality of life had worsened (RMR 2007, 2008a).



Prior tenure

Before being allocated social housing, tenants living in public rental housing and mainstream community housing were most likely to have been renting privately (56% and 42% respectively), whereas 41% of SOMIH tenants had been in circumstances described as primary, secondary or tertiary homelessness (Chamberlain & McKenzie 2008), that is, living with friends or relatives, in a boarding house, refuge or crisis accommodation or sleeping rough (Figure 5.2). Around one-quarter of public rental and mainstream community housing tenants also reported living in these circumstances prior to being housed.



Employment and educational participation

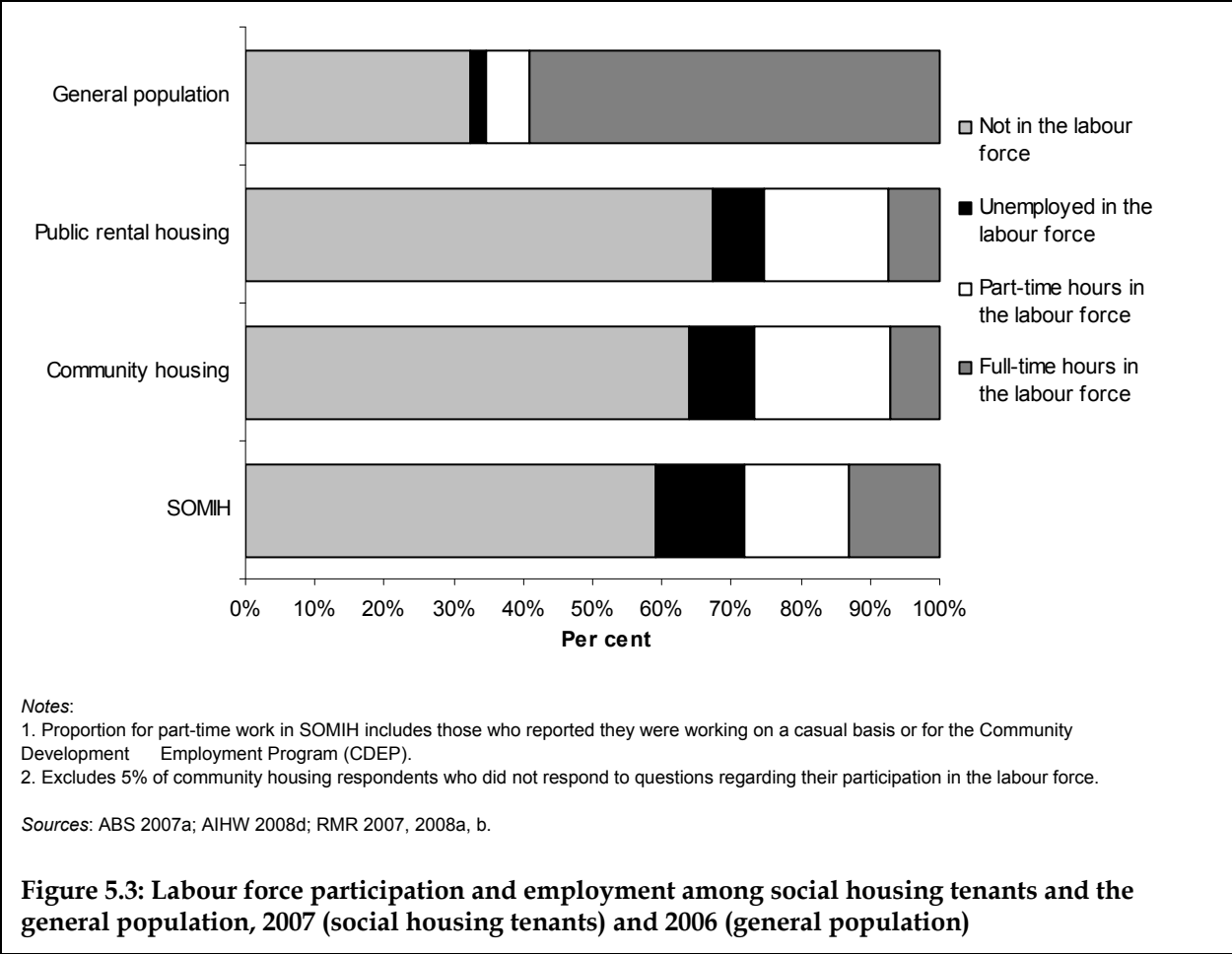
The General Social Survey (GSS) was used to compare tenants residing in social housing and those in private rental (see Box 5.1). In this survey, social housing tenants reported having less formal education than other renters (Table A.12). The majority of people in social housing discontinued formal education during secondary school (years 9 through 12) and a higher proportion of social housing renters (18%) compared with others (5%) had finished at year 8 or below. By contrast, 22% of other renters had completed a university qualification while only 4% of social housing tenants reported the same.

Box 5.1: 2006 General Social Survey

The General Social Survey (GSS) was conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) through interviews between March and July 2006. The survey collects information about personal and household characteristics from people aged 18 years and over who are residents of private dwellings located in non-remote areas of Australia. In 2006, information was collected from 13,375 dwellings which represented full responses from approximately 87% of the total 15,500 dwelling survey sample. Weighting was applied to the survey and the survey was benchmarked to the estimated resident population (ABS 2007b) aged 18 years and over, in private dwellings, in each jurisdiction at 30 June 2006, excluding the estimated resident population of very remote areas in Australia.

In 2007, the majority of tenants residing in public rental, SOMIH or mainstream community housing were not in the labour force (Figure 5.3). By contrast, about three-quarters of the general population were participating in the labour force (AIHW 2008d). Further differences are shown when looking at full-time employment, with 86% of those in the labour force employed full-time (ABS 2007a) compared with:

- 22% of public rental housing tenants (AIHW 2008d)
- 32% of SOMIH tenants (RMR 2008b)
- 19% of mainstream community housing tenants (RMR 2008a).



Connecting with services and the community

Location and access

The location of social housing can play a large role in people’s social inclusion. Nationally, 86% of public rental housing households and 89% of SOMIH and mainstream community housing households felt their housing location met their needs (Table 5.1). Of all the location aspects, public rental housing tenants were least satisfied with the safety and security of their neighbourhood (73%). Tenants in SOMIH and mainstream community housing were similarly least satisfied with this aspect (84% each).

Table 5.1: Percentage of tenants whose location needs have been met, 2007

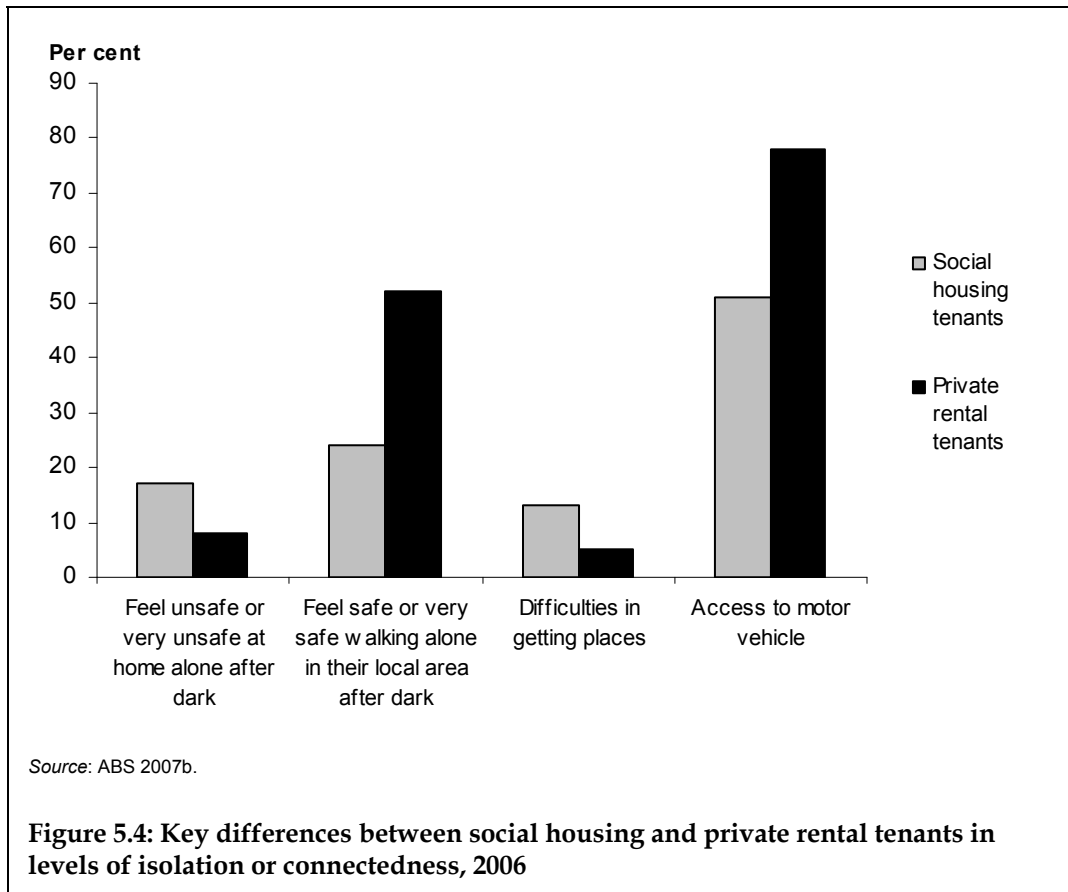
Location aspect	Public rental housing	SOMIH	Mainstream community housing
Shops and banking	90	92	92
Public transport	91	93	91
Parks and recreational facilities	89	90	91
Emergency medical services/hospitals	88	87	89
Child care facilities	87	86	89
Educational/training facilities	87	92	89
Employment/place of work	82	87	87
Community and support needs	88	89	90
Family and friends	87	88	88
Safety and security of the neighbourhood	73	84	84
Total	86	89	89

Sources: RMR 2007, 2008a, b.

While tenants generally report being satisfied with their housing as has been seen above, the GSS (ABS 2007b) found that social housing tenants are more isolated from the community than private rental tenants, in terms of transport and information technology. Key differences include:

- Social housing tenants are more than twice as likely to not be able to, or have difficulties in getting to the places needed, with 13% of tenants having difficulties in accessing places they require in comparison with 5% of private rental tenants.
- Social housing tenants are less likely to have access to drive a motor vehicle than private rental tenants (51% compared with 78%).
- Almost twice as many private rental tenants than social housing tenants had accessed a home computer in the last 12 months, and more than twice as many had accessed the internet at home in the last 12 months.

Furthermore, social housing tenants are more likely to feel unsafe or very unsafe at home alone after dark, with 17% of tenants in comparison with 8% of private rental tenants. Social housing tenants are also much less likely to feel safe or very safe walking alone in their local area after dark than people living in private rental (24% compared with 52%) (Figure 5.4).



Support networks

Connection with family and friends varies little between social housing tenants and private rental tenants (ABS 2007b). While social housing and private rental tenants are about as likely to have everyday face-to-face contact with family and friends (22% and 21% of tenants respectively), social housing tenants are slightly less likely to have other forms of everyday contact such as telephone, mail and email (41% compared with 45%).

The majority of social housing tenants report that they are able to get support in times of crisis (83%). However, this proportion is lower than for those in private rental (94%). A similar pattern is seen in relation to asking for small favours of people outside the household. Whilst the majority of social housing tenants feel they could ask someone outside their household for a favour, this proportion was smaller than for private renters (84% compared with 91%) (ABS 2007b).

Social housing tenants are also less involved in social/cultural and sporting events than private rental tenants. Over one-fifth of social housing tenants had not attended a cultural venue or event in the last 12 months compared with 9% of private rental tenants. Whilst just under two-thirds of private rental tenants had been involved in a sporting or recreational physical activity in the last 12 months, just under two-thirds of social housing tenants had not (64% and 62% respectively).

Having a say

To be socially included Australians should feel their voices are heard, and that they can have input regarding important issues. Whilst the majority of social housing tenants feel that, at least some of the time, they can have a say with their family and friends about important issues, 7% feel they cannot, compared with 3% of tenants living in private rental. When it comes to important issues in their community, a higher proportion of social housing tenants (36%) feel they cannot have a say about important issues, compared with private rental tenants (23%) (AIHW analysis of ABS 2007b).

Involvement in community housing

Respondents to the mainstream community housing NSHS are given the opportunity to rate their level of involvement in their housing organisation. Around half of all tenants nationally reported that they had 'little or no involvement' with their housing organisation (RMR 2008a). However, close to one-quarter had 'helped with general maintenance/working bees' or 'co-ordinated or managed maintenance matters' (27% and 25%, respectively) and a further 13% said they 'helped when they can/when they are asked'. Finally, 20% of tenants were members of a social club. While not all tenants were involved in their organisation, 39% agreed there is a good social network for those who want it and one-third agreed that tenants have a lot of input into the decisions that are made.

6 Moving on: from the CSHA to the NAHA

This report has outlined the work and achievements under the 2003 CSHA and has shown that while many households received much-needed assistance during this period, there remained high demand for services. The renewed focus on housing in Australia under the National Affordable Housing Agreement offers the opportunity to meet these challenges. Furthermore, the target of the Commonwealth Government to halve homelessness by 2020 places emphasis on housing assistance to support those experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

Social housing under the NAHA

With over \$17 billion in funding under the NAHA, the National Partnership Agreement on Social Housing 6, the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing and the Social Housing component of the National Partnership Agreement on the Nation Building and Jobs Plan (see Box 6.1), the Australian Government has made a significant investment into social housing in Australia. Priority areas for reform identified in the NAHA (COAG 2008a) include:

- reducing concentrations of social housing by creating mixed communities that promote social and economic opportunities
- establishing a nationally consistent approach to social housing to create a more transparent, accountable and efficient sector
- enhancing the capacity and growth of the not-for-profit housing sector
- improving access for Indigenous people
- increasing capacity to match new housing supply with underlying demand.

Box 6.1: Housing National Partnership Agreements

The objectives of the Social Housing NPA are to increase the supply of social housing through new construction, provide increased opportunities for persons who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, to gain secure long-term accommodation and develop options for reform that will address supply shortfalls (COAG 2008b).

The objectives of the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous housing are aimed at significantly reducing overcrowding, increasing the supply of new houses and improving the condition of existing houses in remote Indigenous communities and ensuring that rental houses are well maintained and managed in remote Indigenous communities (COAG 2009b).

The objectives of the Nation Building and Jobs Plan social housing component are to increase the supply of social housing through new construction and the refurbishment of existing stock that would otherwise be unavailable for occupancy, provide increased opportunities for persons who are homeless or at risk of homelessness to gain secure long term accommodation and to stimulate the building and construction industry (COAG 2009a).

Other housing initiatives

The NAHA also looks beyond traditional social housing towards affordable housing and the improved functioning of the private housing market. Initiatives under this banner include the National Rental Affordability Scheme (NRAS), First Home Saver Accounts, National Housing Supply Council, Housing Affordability Fund, A Place to Call Home, audit of surplus Commonwealth land that can be made available for new housing (FaHCSIA 2008c) and a revamp of the Commonwealth Property Disposals Policy (CPDP) (Australian Government 2009). Further information in relation to these initiatives is provided in Box 6.2.

Box 6.2: New housing initiatives

National Rental Affordability Scheme (NRAS): Announced in July 2008, this scheme aims to boost the supply of affordable housing. Up to 50,000 rental dwellings will become available over 5 years and, given adequate demand. (FaHCSIA 2009c). These dwellings will be rented to low and moderate income households at a rate 20 per cent lower than market rent and unlike traditional social housing, are not necessarily targeted to targeted for high need households.

First Home Saver Accounts: The Accounts provide assistance for people saving for their first home through a combination of Australian Government contributions and preferential taxation. Those planning on buying their first home in 4 or more years time may be eligible to receive a 17% government contribution on the first \$5,000 worth of savings in a financial year, whilst paying a reduced (15%) tax rate on interest or earnings. First home saver accounts have been offered by various banks, credit unions and building societies since 1 October 2008 (Australian Government 2008) although official figures on take-up of the accounts are unavailable.

National Housing Supply Council: The Council assists the government to assess current and future demand for housing across Australia by publishing an annual 'State of supply' report to analyse the adequacy of construction rates and land supply to meet demand and improve housing affordability for the next 20 years (FaHCSIA 2008b).

Housing Affordability Fund: With an investment of up to \$512 million over 5 years, this fund aims to reduce the costs involved in building new homes. It will target developments that make entry into the property market more affordable for home buyers and increase new housing supply.

A Place to Call Home: This initiative is designed to assist homeless individuals and families by creating an additional 600 houses over 5 years. The aims are to improve the reintegration of homeless people into society, break the potential cycle of homelessness and reduce the number of people who are turned away from homeless shelters every year by half.

Commonwealth land audit: Audit of surplus property identified as potentially suitable for disposal and advancing housing or community outcomes (Australian Government 2009).

Commonwealth Property Disposals Policy: The guidelines for release of surplus Commonwealth land have been revised and will optimise the government's commitments to increasing housing supply without adversely affecting surrounding property prices; improve community amenity; and create jobs. In addition, federal government agencies will be required to justify their land holdings through the Commonwealth land audit (Australian Government 2009).

Expansion of the community housing sector

In addition to the policy initiatives contained in the NAHA, activity aimed at expanding and supporting the social housing sector is continuing, particularly the not-for-profit sector.

These include activities to:

- encourage housing providers to manage larger housing portfolios to increase efficiency and cost effectiveness
- encourage private sector investment in order to increase the capacity of housing providers to broker partnerships and bring additional resources
- increase the capacity of housing providers via stock transfers, (e.g. from public to mainstream community housing)
- support the increased capacity and growth of housing providers through a national regulatory framework.

The NRAS is also expected to provide a boost to the not-for-profit sector with providers becoming involved in the scheme in a range of different capacities:

- organisations may provide tenancy and/or property management services for dwellings funded by other entities;
- community housing organisations may invest or leverage their own funds into NRAS-funded projects, to add to their own asset base (FaHCSIA 2010).

The growth in the community housing sector presents a number of significant challenges to governments, not least of which is the regulatory framework which needs to simultaneously support expansion whilst minimising risk to governments, investors and tenants. Consistent with this drive, the need for an expanded evidence base on the not-for-profit housing sector is widely understood and activity is underway to support improved data collection and reporting systems for providers.

Conclusion

By funding social housing, the 2003 CSHA provided much-needed support for thousands of households. In analysing the functions of social housing during the period this report provides a crucial evidence base upon which the NAHA and future policies can be built.

This report comes at a time of significant change in housing policy and provides valuable context to the new environment under the National Affordable Housing Agreement. Whilst the focus of the NAHA and associated National Partnership Agreements has broadened, social housing programs will continue to be a fundamental component in the provision of housing assistance in Australia.

Appendix tables

Table A.1: Percentage of community housing organisations by organisation size in each jurisdiction, 2008–09

	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Total	Per cent of dwellings ^(a)
200 or more dwellings	10.2	8.3	1.9	2.1	7.1	0.0	14.3	0.0	4.8	62.3
100–199 dwellings	1.6	8.3	3.9	1.1	3.0	1.8	0.0	0.0	3.0	9.0
50–99 dwellings	3.7	3.7	4.6	4.7	7.1	0.0	14.3	0.0	4.3	6.7
20–49 dwellings	5.9	16.7	18.9	19.5	24.2	7.3	28.6	3.8	15.7	10.5
Less than 20 dwellings	78.6	63.0	70.7	72.6	58.6	90.9	42.9	96.2	72.2	11.5
<i>Total</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>
Total (number)	187	108	259	190	99	55	7	26	931	41,670

(a) Excludes 48 dwellings managed by state housing departments.

Source: AIHW analysis of National Housing Assistance Data Repository.

Table A.2: Location of social housing dwellings, at 30 June 2009^{(a) (b) (c) (d)}

		NSW	Vic	QLD	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Total
Major cities	No.	110,014	53,120	37,867	26,401	37,794	0	11,449	0	276,645
	%	79.3	72.5	61.7	67.2	77.4	0.0	99.9	0.0	70.8
Inner and Outer regional Australia	No.	28,140	20,155	20,807	8,087	9,913	12,433	12	3,731	103,278
	%	20.3	27.5	33.9	20.6	20.3	99.2	0.1	70.1	26.4
Remote and Very remote Australia	No.	629	31	2,661	4,805	1,145	103	0	1,595	10,969
	%	0.5	0.0	4.3	12.2	2.3	0.8	0.0	29.9	2.8
Total	No.	138,783	73,306	61,335	39,293	48,852	12,536	11,461	5,326	390,892

(a) Does not include ICH and CAP dwellings as data are unavailable by locations.

(b) These figures show the number of dwellings where location details are known.

(c) Mainstream community housing report the number of tenancy (rental) units rather than dwellings.

(d) ACT and NT do not have SOMIH.

Source: AIHW 2010.

Table A.3: Social housing dwellings by dwelling type, at 30 June 2009^(a)

		Public rental housing	SOMIH	Mainstream community housing ^(b)
Separate house	No.	132,896	10,115	15,143
Semi-detached, row or terrace house, townhouse etc.	No.	93,187	1,562	5,478
Flat, unit or apartment	No.	108,458	378	13,714
Other (including Boarding/rooming house unit)	No.	1,923	1	3,868
Total	No.	336,464	12,056	38,203

(a) Data are not available by dwelling type for ICH and CAP.

(b) Dwelling data sourced from jurisdiction administrative systems amount to 41,718 dwellings. Only those dwellings where dwelling type is known are reported.

Source: AIHW analysis of National Housing Assistance Data Repository.

Table A.4: ASGC remoteness of social housing dwellings by dwelling type, at 30 June 2009^{(a) (b)}

Program type	Dwelling type	Non-remote	Remote	Very remote	Total
Public rental housing	Separate houses	129,173	2,854	869	132,896
	Semi-detached, townhouse, etc.	90,850	1,760	562	93,172
	Flat or apartment	107,296	996	166	108,458
	Other	1,889	34	0	1,923
	Total	329,208	5,644	1,597	336,449
SOMIH	Separate houses	8,368	861	886	10,115
	Semi-detached, townhouse, etc.	1,050	203	309	1,562
	Flat or apartment	291	38	49	378
	Other	1	0	0	1
	Total	9,710	1,102	1,244	12,056
Mainstream community housing ^(c)	Separate houses	14,879	109	138	15,126
	Semi-detached, townhouse, etc.	5,281	94	103	5,478
	Flat or apartment	13,278	259	169	13,706
	Other	3,855	16	2	3,873
	Total	37,293	478	412	38,183

(a) These figures show the number of dwellings where location details are known.

(b) Data are not available by dwelling type for ICH and CAP.

(c) Dwelling data sourced from jurisdiction administrative systems amount to 41,718 dwellings. Only those dwellings where dwelling type and location details are known are reported.

Source: AIHW analysis of National Housing Assistance Data Repository.

Table A.5: Dwellings by number of bedrooms and remoteness, at 30 June 2009^(a) ^(b)

Program type	No. of bedrooms	Non-remote	Remote	Very remote	Total
Public rental housing	1	80,680	964	202	81,846
	2	96,491	1,551	443	98,485
	3	132,065	2,851	856	135,772
	4	18,478	266	87	18,831
	5 or more	1,495	13	8	1,516
	Total		329,209	5,645	1,596	336,450
SOMIH	1	143	37	58	238
	2	1,113	158	196	1,467
	3	6,268	651	727	7,646
	4	1,927	230	211	2,368
	5 or more	259	25	52	336
	Total		9,710	1,101	1,244	12,055
Mainstream community housing ^(c)	1	12,896	528	255	13,679
	2	11,945	206	158	12,309
	3	11,501	92	111	11,704
	4	2,503	25	11	2,539
	5 or more	563	3	2	568
	Total		39,408	854	537	40,799

(a) These figures show the number of dwellings where location details are known.

(b) Data are not available by number of bedrooms for ICH and CAP.

(c) Dwelling data sourced from jurisdiction administrative systems amount to 41,718 dwellings. Only those dwellings where number of bedrooms and location details are known are reported.

Source: AIHW analysis of National Housing Assistance Data Repository.

Table A.6: Social housing occupancy, at 30 June 2009

		NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	AG ^(a)	Total
Public rental housing	Occupied dwellings	117,242	62,565	50,579	30,613	40,774	11,364	10,620	4,922	..	328,679
	Total dwellings	118,907	64,741	51,131	31,668	42,448	11,585	10,789	5,195	..	336,464
SOMIH	Occupied dwellings	4,083	198	3,048	2,152	1,758	343	..	..	..	11,582
	Total dwellings	4,169	198	3,193	2,275	1,873	348	..	..	..	12,056
Mainstream community housing ^(b)	Occupied dwellings	15,858	7,531	6,976	2,650	4,329	406	643	131	..	38,524
	Total dwellings	16,141	7,930	7,026	2,987	4,473	410	672	131	..	39,770
Indigenous community housing ^{(c)(d)}	Occupied dwellings	4,299	1,207	3,963	622	891	..	24	n.a.	733	11,739
	Total dwellings	4,333	1,233	4,096	693	1,016	..	24	n.a.	769	12,164
Total ^(e)	Occupied dwellings	141,482	71,501	64,566	36,037	47,752	12,113	11,287	5,053	733	390,524
	Total dwellings	143,550	74,102	65,446	37,623	49,810	12,343	11,485	5,326	769	400,454

(a) AG includes Indigenous community housing organisations in Victoria, Queensland and Tasmania which were under the administrative responsibility of the Australian Government.

(b) When measuring dwelling utilisation, mainstream community housing report the number of tenancy (rental) units rather than dwellings. Generally, there will only be one tenancy (rental) unit within a dwelling structure, but in a small number of cases (e.g. special group homes) there may be more than one tenancy (rental) unit within a dwelling. Data for this item are dependant on survey response.

(c) Total dwellings relate to the total number of permanent dwellings for which occupancy status is known.

(d) WA data are based on a representative sample of 693 permanent dwellings as complete household level data were not available. For 80 dwellings in the sample it was unknown whether the dwellings were vacant or not reported by the Indigenous community housing organisation.

(e) Total does not include CAP dwellings.

Source: AIHW 2010

Table A.7: Underutilisation and overcrowding, at 30 June 2009^{(a) (b)}

Program type		NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Total
Public rental housing	Underutilisation	12,305	5,270	5,530	2,706	7,203	1,207	1,340	205	35,766
	Overcrowding	1,545	1,032	1,179	582	500	184	111	125	5,258
	Total households	105,400	50,186	50,579	30,605	40,774	11,025	9,370	4,432	302,371
SOMIH	Underutilisation	776	23	348	270	410	52	..	..	1,879
	Overcrowding	120	4	332	167	127	9	..	..	759
	Total households	3,298	139	3,048	2,152	1,758	330	..	..	10,725
Mainstream community housing	Underutilisation	1,268	411	297	96	1,201	16	5	n.a.	3,294
	Overcrowding	110	9	85	3	39	3	0	n.a.	249
	Total households	16,182	6,120	5,449	1,964	3,824	337	614	n.a.	34,490

(a) These figures show the number of households for which tenancy composition and dwelling details are known.

(b) Data are not available for ICH and CAP.

Source: AIHW 2010.

Table A.8: Underutilisation and overcrowding by location, at 30 June 2009^{(a) (b)}

Program type			Major cities	Inner regional	Outer regional	Remote	Very remote	Total
Public rental housing	Overcrowded	No.	3,713	734	597	154	59	5,257
		%	1.7	1.5	2.2	3.1	4.1	1.7
	Underutilised	No.	24,370	6,364	4,296	561	172	35,763
		%	11.0	13.3	15.8	11.2	11.9	11.8
	Total households	No.	220,907	47,869	27,114	5,027	1,441	302,358
	SOMIH	Overcrowded	No.	221	125	230	68	115	759
%			6.0	5.3	8.5	7.6	10.4	7.1
Underutilised		No.	691	416	487	144	142	1,880
		%	18.8	17.6	18.1	15.9	12.9	17.5
Total households		No.	3,672	2,362	2,688	904	1,100	10,726

(a) These figures show the number of households for which tenancy composition, dwelling and location details are known.

(b) Data are not available for CH, ICH and CAP.

Source: AIHW analysis of National Housing Assistance Data Repository.

Table A.9: Newly assisted households in greatest need^{(a) (b)}

Program type		2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09
Public rental housing	New greatest need households	11,183	10,442	10,463	11,461	12,105	13,659
	Total new households	30,787	27,702	27,482	26,770	23,627	20,702
	%	36	38	38	43	51	66
SOMIH	New greatest need households	426	396	361	377	388	537
	Total new households	1,667	1,492	1,371	1,462	1,284	1,105
	%	26	27	26	26	30	49
Mainstream community housing	New greatest need households	4,281	6,074	4,610	6,081	6,218	7,428
	Total new households	6,108	7,696	6,489	8,741	8,728	9,910
	%	70	79	71	70	71	75

(a) Exclude households for which allocation times are missing.

(b) Data are not available for ICH and CAP.

Sources: AIHW 2005a, 2005c, 2005d, 2006a, 2006c, 2006d, 2007e, 2007f, 2007g, 2008b, 2008e, 2008f, 2009b, 2009d, 2009e, 2010.

Table A.10: Total number of applicants on waiting list including applicants for transfer at 30 June^(a)

	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09
Total number of applicants						
Public rental housing	204,247	203,905	186,934	176,321	177,652	173,456
SOMIH	10,660	11,174	9,815	10,835	10,726	10,526
Mainstream community housing	31,719	37,384	36,983	25,504	36,946	49,187
Total number of new applicants who have a 'greatest need'						
Public rental housing	11,127	11,708	11,224	11,700	14,638	29,661
SOMIH	479	575	653	717	965	2,730
Mainstream community housing	19,089	19,197	19,485	11,133	13,828	22,235

(a) Data are not available for ICH and CAP.

Sources: AIHW 2005a, 2005c, 2005d, 2006a, 2006c, 2006d, 2007c, 2007f, 2007g, 2008b, 2008e, 2008f, 2009b, 2009d, 2009e, 2010.

Table A.11: Total number of households transferred and exited from public rental housing and SOMIH, 2008–09^(a)

Program type		NSW	Vic	QLD	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Total
Public rental housing	Relocated from one public rental housing dwelling to another public rental housing dwelling	3,287	2,004	1,033	1,379	1,028	282	219	208	9,440
	Exits from public rental housing	7,782	4,151	3,786	2,370	2,934	1,014	636	480	23,153
	Total assisted ^(b)	125,024	66,716	54,365	32,986	43,708	12,378	11,256	5,456	351,889
SOMIH	Relocated from one SOMIH dwelling to another SOMIH dwelling	121	n.p.	93	108	48	5	..	..	375
	Exits from SOMIH	324	804	263	318	159	32	..	..	1,900
	Total assisted ^(b)	4,407	1,002	3,311	2,470	1,917	375	..	..	13,482

(a) Data are not available for CH, ICH and CAP.

(b) Sum of households at 30 June 2008 and new households assisted in 2008–09.

Sources: AIHW 2009d, 2009e, 2010.

Table A.12: Educational participation

	Social housing tenants	Other tenants
Postgraduate Degree, Graduate Diploma/Graduate Certificate	0.9	6.6
Bachelor Degree	3.4	15.0
Advanced Diploma/Diploma	3.6	7.8
Certificate III/IV	13.1	17.6
Certificate I/II	2.4	1.9
Certificate not further defined	0.4	0.3
Year 12	12.2	18.0
Year 11	7.2	8.1
Year 10	23.2	14.4
Year 9	14.8	4.7
Year 8 or below including never attended school	18.2	4.6
Level not determined	0.6	1.1

Source: ABS 2007b.

Glossary

Canadian National Occupancy Standard

A measure of the appropriateness of housing which is sensitive to both household size and composition. The CNOS specifies that:

- no more than two people shall share a bedroom
- parents or couples may share a bedroom
- children under 5 years, either of the same sex or opposite sex may share a bedroom
- children under 18 years of the same sex may share a bedroom
- a child aged 5 to 17 years should not share a bedroom with a child under 5 of the opposite sex
- single adults 18 years and over and any unpaired children require a separate bedroom.

Community housing (mainstream and Indigenous)

Community housing properties include those:

- leased from the private rental sector, government or non-government agencies for the provision of community housing (head leasing)
- purchased using state and territory housing or community housing authority funds from the CSHA community housing program (*mainstream only*)
- purchased under joint venture arrangements where the purpose of the arrangement is to provide housing which falls into the scope of community housing (e.g. when assistance is funded by the CSHA and the Building Better Cities Program or the Social Housing Subsidy Program).

Disability

The umbrella term for any or all of: an impairment of body structure or function, a limitation in activities, or a restriction in participation. Disability is a multi-dimensional and complex concept and is conceived as a dynamic interaction between health conditions and environmental and personal factors (WHO 2001).

In social housing, a proxy for a household meeting the above definition of disability may be provided through receipt of the Disability Support Pension.

Dwelling

A structure or a discrete space within a structure intended for people to live in or where a person or group of people live. Thus a structure that people actually live in is a dwelling regardless of its intended purpose, but a vacant structure is only a dwelling if intended for human residence. A dwelling may include one or more rooms used as an office or workshop, provided the dwelling is in residential use. Dwelling types include:

- a separate house
- a semi-detached, row or terrace house, townhouse, etc.
- a flat, unit or apartment; caravan, tent, cabin etc. either in or not in a caravan park, houseboat in marina, etc.

- an improvised home, tent, camper
- a house or flat attached to a shop, office, etc.
- a boarding/rooming house unit.

Greatest need

A low-income household is seen to be in greatest need if at the time of allocation they were subject to one or more of the following circumstances:

- they were homeless
- their life or safety was at risk in their accommodation
- their health condition was aggravated by their housing
- their housing was inappropriate to their needs
- they had very high rental housing costs.

Homeless

A person is homeless if he or she does not have access to safe, secure and adequate housing. Unsafe, insecure and inadequate housing includes housing:

- in which the client did not feel safe (this can include the client's own home)
- in which the client did not have a legal right to continued occupation of their home (security of tenure)
- that lacked the amenities or resources necessary for living (such as adequate heating, plumbing or cooking facilities)
- that was provided by a Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) agency of other emergency accommodation agency.

Household

A group of two or more related or unrelated people, who usually reside in the same dwelling, and who make common provision for food or other essentials for living. A household can also be single person living in a dwelling who makes provision for his or her own food and other essentials for living, without combining with any other person.

Indigenous household

A household which contains one or more Indigenous people.

Overcrowding

When two or more additional bedrooms are required to meet the Proxy Occupancy Standard or one or more to meet the Canadian National Occupancy Standard.

Priority allocation

Provided to individuals classified as in greatest need.

Proxy Occupancy Standard

This specifies the bedroom requirements of a household, based on their household size and composition.

Household composition	Dwelling size required
Single adult only	1 bedroom
Single adult (group)	1 bedroom per adult
Couple with no children	2 bedrooms
Sole parent or couple with 1 child	2 bedrooms
Sole parent or couple with 2 or 3 children	3 bedrooms

For sole parent or couple households with four or more children the dwelling size in terms of bedrooms should be the same value as the total number of children in the household.

Public housing (or public rental housing)

Rental housing provided under the CSHA. Included are households residing in public rental dwellings where the dwelling is either:

- owned by the housing authority
- leased from the private sector or other housing program areas and used for provision of public rental housing
- leased to public housing tenants.

Rebated households

A household receiving housing assistance, (usually via a state or territory or community housing provider), who pays less than the market rent value of the dwelling.

Social housing

Rental housing provided by not-for-profit organisations either government (public housing) or non-government (community housing).

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List of tables

Table 2.1:	Total households in social housing, at 30 June 2009.....	4
Table 2.2:	Total rebated households, by principal source of income of main tenant, at 30 June 2009	5
Table 2.3:	Household composition of public rental housing, SOMIH and mainstream community housing households, at 30 June 2009 (per cent).....	5
Table 2.4:	Demographics of public rental housing, SOMIH and community housing, 2008-09	6
Table 3.1:	Social housing dwellings, at 30 June 2009.....	7
Table 3.2:	Number of Social housing dwellings, 2003-04 to 2008-09	7
Table 3.3:	Social housing dwellings by dwelling type, 30 June 2009	10
Table 3.4:	Social housing stock condition at 30 June 2009	12
Table 4.1:	Social housing occupancy at 30 June 2009 (per cent)	13
Table 4.2:	Occupancy by remoteness, at 30 June 2009	14
Table 4.3:	Percentage of households underutilised in social housing, at 30 June 2009	15
Table 4.4:	Percentage of households overcrowded in social housing, at 30 June 2009	15
Table 4.5:	Transfers and exits from public rental housing and SOMIH, 2008-09	20
Table 5.1:	Percentage of tenants whose location needs have been met, 2007	25
Table A.1:	Percentage of community housing organisations by organisation size in each jurisdiction, 2008-09.....	31
Table A.2:	Location of social housing dwellings, at 30 June 2009	31
Table A.3:	Social housing dwellings by dwelling type, at 30 June 2009.....	32
Table A.4:	ASGC remoteness of social housing dwellings by dwelling type, at 30 June 2009.....	32
Table A.5:	Dwellings by number of bedrooms and remoteness, at 30 June 2009	33
Table A.6:	Social housing occupancy, at 30 June 2009	34
Table A.7:	Underutilisation and overcrowding, at 30 June 2009.....	35
Table A.8:	Underutilisation and overcrowding by location, at 30 June 2009	35
Table A.9:	Newly assisted households in greatest need.....	36
Table A.10:	Total number of applicants on waiting list including applicants for transfer at 30 June	36
Table A.11:	Total number of households transferred and exited from public rental housing and SOMIH, 2008-09	37
Table A.12:	Educational participation.....	37

List of figures

- Figure 3.1: Location of social housing dwellings, 30 June 2009 8
- Figure 3.2: Proportion of dwellings in *Remote* and *Very remote* areas by program, 2006 and 30 June 2009..... 9
- Figure 3.3: ASGC remoteness of social housing dwellings by dwelling type..... 10
- Figure 3.4: Proportion of dwellings by number of bedrooms and remoteness 11
- Figure 4.1: Newly assisted households in greatest need, proportion of all newly assisted, 2003-04 to 2008-09 16
- Figure 4.2: Mean wait days in 2008-09, Public rental & SOMIH by greatest need. 17
- Figure 4.3: Length of tenure in public rental housing, SOMIH and mainstream community housing, 30 June 2009 18
- Figure 4.4: Number of households newly assisted, 2003-04 to 2008-09 19
- Figure 4.5: Frequency of movement within social housing program, 2007..... 20
- Figure 5.1: Ways in which social housing has helped tenants in their lives, 2007..... 22
- Figure 5.2: Prior tenure of tenants moving into social housing, 2007 23
- Figure 5.3: Labour force participation and employment among social housing tenants and the general population, 2007 (social housing tenants) and 2006 (general population)..... 24
- Figure 5.4: Key differences between social housing and private rental tenants in connecting with the community, 2006..... 26