

4 Total assistance provided

This chapter presents information on the overall level of assistance SAAP services provided during 1999–2000. First, for the fortnight 18–31 May 1999, the number of support periods and the number of casual contacts by individuals are discussed together. Second, the types of assistance provided on a one-off basis are examined in more detail. In particular, assistance given to people whose more substantial requests for assistance could not be met is discussed.

4.1 Daily assistance

The average number of support periods provided to clients on any day from 18 to 31 May was 17,370 (Table 4.1). In at least 6,350 of these support periods (about 37%), clients were accommodated; in the remainder, clients received other types of substantial support.³ This is complemented by the daily average of 2,300 individuals who received some type of one-off assistance from SAAP agencies on any one day in the period.⁴ Consequently, in May 2000 on a daily basis there were between 10 and 12 people accessing SAAP services for every 10,000 people aged 10 or more in the general population.⁵ This estimate does not include children accompanying their parent or guardian.

The difference between the percentage of support periods in which SAAP or CAP accommodation was provided throughout the year (63%, from Table 2.1) and the proportion in which accommodation was provided on any day (37%, as noted) can be explained by the different patterns of length of support for periods with and without accommodation and the length of accommodation within a support period. Specifically, support periods without accommodation, compared with those with accommodation, were more likely to be under 1 day long (30% versus 6%) or longer than 4 weeks (42% versus 27%). Further, for support periods with accommodation, clients were less likely to be accommodated for the entire period in support periods lasting over 3 months than in shorter support periods. The interaction of these patterns resulted in the relatively low daily accommodation rate of around 37% among all support periods current on a particular day, when compared with the annual rate of provision of accommodation.

The number of support periods in which clients were accommodated during the 2 weeks in May showed only slight variation, ranging from a low of 6,250 on the last day of the period to a high of 6,410 for much of the first week (Figure 4.1). Similarly, Figure 4.1 shows that support periods where clients were given substantial support but were not accommodated varied only slightly, ranging from 10,180 to 10,550. Even so, the lowest numbers of support

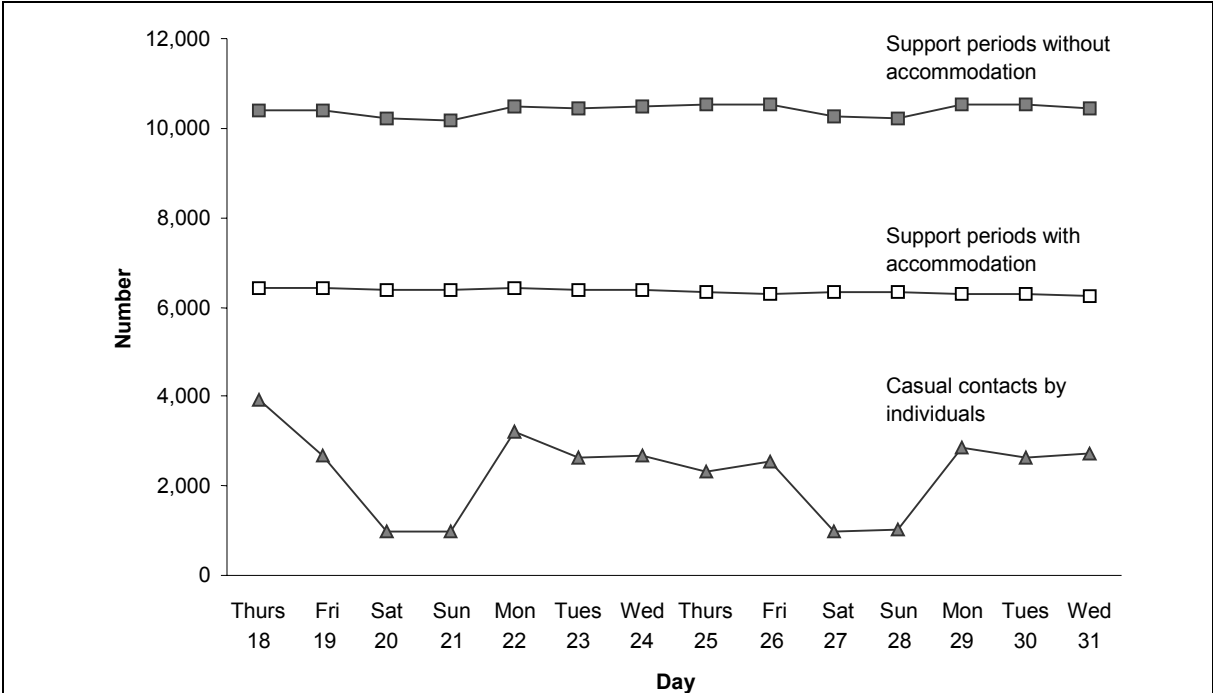
³ The figures of daily number of support periods and daily number of casual client contacts by individuals may be too low because not all in-scope agencies participated in the Client Collection and the Casual Client Collection. Over 1999–2000, 93% of in-scope SAAP agencies participated in the Client Collection (Table A2.1) and, in May 2000, 83% of in-scope SAAP agencies participated in the Casual Client Collection (Table A2.3). In addition, accompanying children are not included in the numbers.

⁴ The Casual Client Collection uses the family group as the basis for reporting one-off services provided. This has been converted to the number of individuals for purposes of comparison. In doing this, however, there has been a slight underestimation of the number of individuals receiving one-off services (see note 3 to Table 4.1).

⁵ The population aged 10 years or more as at 30 June 2000 was 16,560,000 (ABS 2001). The lower limit of usage per 10,000 is derived as $10,000 \times 17,370 / 16,560,000 = 10.5$. The upper limit of usage per 10,000 is derived as $10,000 \times (17,370 + 2,290) / 16,560,000 = 11.9$.

periods without accommodation during the 2 week period occurred at the weekends. In contrast, support periods with accommodation did not show this pattern; instead, they showed a small but gradual decline over the 2 weeks.

The numbers of contacts by individuals receiving one-off assistance showed much greater variation and, like new accommodations (see Figure 3.1), were at their lowest on the weekends (Table 4.1). On weekdays there were between 2,310 and 3,920 contacts by individuals receiving one-off services, with the maximum number of 3,920 being recorded on the first day of the period. On weekends the number of contacts by individuals receiving one-off assistance dropped to between 960 and 1,040. It should be noted that an individual may have more than one case of one-off assistance on a particular day, either by approaching a number of different agencies or by approaching the same agency a number of times—for example, for meals.



Source: Table 4.1

Figure 4.1: Daily numbers of support periods with accommodation, support periods without accommodation and casual contacts by individuals, Australia, 18–31 May 2000

Table 4.1: Daily SAAP support periods and estimated casual contacts by individuals, Australia, 18–31 May 2000 (number)

Date	SAAP support periods			Total	Estimated casual contacts by individuals
	Client accommodated	Client not accommodated	Accommodation unknown		
Thursday 18 May	6,410	10,400	620	17,430	3,920
Friday 19 May	6,410	10,410	640	17,450	2,690
Saturday 20 May	6,400	10,230	620	17,250	1,000
Sunday 21 May	6,400	10,180	590	17,180	970
Monday 22 May	6,410	10,480	620	17,510	3,190
Tuesday 23 May	6,380	10,460	620	17,460	2,610
Wednesday 24 May	6,390	10,470	610	17,470	2,680
Thursday 25 May	6,340	10,550	620	17,510	2,310
Friday 26 May	6,290	10,510	620	17,420	2,550
Saturday 27 May	6,320	10,260	590	17,170	960
Sunday 28 May	6,340	10,220	590	17,150	1,040
Monday 29 May	6,310	10,510	630	17,450	2,840
Tuesday 30 May	6,270	10,510	620	17,400	2,630
Wednesday 31 May	6,250	10,440	600	17,290	2,710
Daily average	6,350	10,400	610	17,370	2,290

Notes

1. Casual Client Collection cases excluded due to missing data: 0.
2. Client Collection cases excluded due to missing data: 0.
3. In the Casual Client Collection casual contacts are reported for the group receiving assistance. Casual contacts by individuals have been derived from data on 'person(s) receiving assistance' in a contact (see questionnaire in Appendix 3). 'Person alone' and 'person with children' are counted as a contact by one individual, and couples (with or without children) are counted as contacts by two individuals. Presenting units classified as 'other' are also counted as contacts by two individuals. Cases where there is no information on the type of presenting unit are counted as a contact by one individual. While this approach will lead to an understatement of individuals, this understatement will be less than if contacts of unknown composition were counted as missing.
4. In general, accommodation periods ending on a particular day are excluded from the estimate of the number accommodated for that day. However, if an accommodation period starts and ends on the same date the client is said to be accommodated on that day.
5. Clients are said to be supported on all days in a support period, including both the start and end dates.
6. Total support periods include those known to be active on the day but for which it is not known whether accommodation was provided.
7. Numbers exclude accompanying children.
8. Not all in-scope agencies participated in the Client Collection and the Casual Client Collection. No adjustment has been made for agency non-participation, so the table understates the level of assistance provided by agencies through SAAP. The agency participation rates for the two collections are presented in Tables A2.1 and A2.3. Anecdotal evidence suggests that agencies that do not participate in the Casual Client Collection do not have the same contact rates as agencies that participate.

Sources: SAAP Client Collection and Casual Client Collection

4.2 One-off assistance

As noted, an average of 2,300 instances of one-off assistance were provided to individuals on a daily basis in the 2 weeks of the Casual Client Collection. Overall, on around 30,000 occasions one-off services were provided to family groups in that period, including to those seeking assistance on their own.⁶ It should be noted that some of these one-off services were provided to people seeking more substantial assistance and to people who were already clients at another SAAP agency, as well as to those wanting only limited assistance (see Figure 1.1). For example, a person might be accommodated at one SAAP agency, or might be seeking accommodation at that agency, but might get a meal at another.

On average, 1.8 types of service were provided during a casual client contact (Table 4.2). Information was given in 53% of contacts (or 15,400), and meals were provided in 43% (12,700). Other services often provided were arrangement of referrals (in 19% of contacts) and emotional support (in 20%). In 10% of contacts people used shower and laundry facilities, and in a similar number financial assistance was provided. Other unidentified services were provided in one-quarter of casual contacts.

Some agencies (termed 'casual client' agencies) specialise in providing one-off assistance—for example, referral agencies and soup kitchens. The majority of agencies, however, provide a mixture of one-off assistance and more substantial support. Among this latter group are 'high-volume' agencies, characterised by having a relatively high client turnover. In the May collection period, agencies that provided a mixture of support accounted for the majority of contacts involving one-off assistance: general agencies accounted for 61% of the contacts and high-volume agencies accounted for 28% (Table 4.2). Agencies that provided assistance only to casual clients accounted for 12% of contacts involving one-off assistance.

The different types of agencies tend to provide different services. General agencies were more likely than other agencies to provide information: 65% of casual contacts at these agencies received information compared with 31% and 37% of contacts at high-volume and casual client agencies respectively. Other types of assistance also more likely to be provided by general agencies than other agencies were the arrangement of referrals (26% compared with under 14%) and emotional support (28% compared with under 10%). On the other hand, high-volume and casual client agencies were more likely to provide meals: meals were provided in around 63% of contacts at these agencies compared with 30% in general agencies.

As with more substantial support, unaccompanied males accounted for the greatest number of casual client contacts. This group accounted for 44% of support periods with substantial support and 53% of casual contacts by individuals (Tables 2.1 and 4.3). In contrast, females with children accounted for 12% of casual contacts but 20% of support periods. Nineteen per cent of contacts by individuals were by unaccompanied females, while couples with and without children each accounted for 5% of contacts by individuals; the corresponding figures for general support were 25%, 3% and 2% of support periods respectively.

⁶ The figures for casual client contacts may be an underestimation because not all in-scope agencies participated in the Casual Client Collection. In May 2000, 83% of in-scope SAAP agencies participated in the Casual Client Collection (Table A2.3).

Table 4.2: SAAP casual contacts: one-off assistance provided, by type of agency, Australia, 18–31 May 2000 (per cent contacts)

One-off assistance provided	General	High-volume	Casual client	Total	
		%		%	Number
Information	65.3	31.2	37.0	52.5	15,390
Referral arranged	25.8	7.4	13.9	19.3	5,640
Emotional support	28.2	6.9	9.4	20.1	5,890
Meals	30.2	64.0	62.7	43.4	12,730
Financial/ material aid	10.6	11.2	1.1	9.6	2,830
Transport	4.8	2.9	1.9	3.9	1,150
Laundry/shower facilities	9.2	16.4	2.8	10.4	3,060
Other	23.3	36.8	4.8	24.9	7,310
Mean number of types of assistance provided	2.0	1.8	1.3	. .	1.8
Total (%)	60.5	27.9	11.6	100.0	. .
Total (number)	17,720	8,190	3,410	. .	29,310

Notes

1. Cases excluded due to missing data: 736.
2. 'General' agencies includes a small number of agencies that operate both general and high-volume outlets.
3. In the Casual Client Collection casual contacts are reported for the group receiving assistance. As a result, the number of contacts understates the number of contacts by individuals (compare Table 4.1).
4. In any casual contact the assisted group was able to receive more than one type of one-off assistance, so percentages do not total 100.

Source: SAAP Casual Client Collection

The different client groups tended to receive different types of assistance (Table 4.3). Solo males were much more likely to receive meals than other groups: meals were provided in 60% of their contacts compared with 36% for couples without children and a low of 6% for females with children. Solo males were also more likely than others to use washing facilities: laundry and shower facilities were used by unaccompanied males in 14% of their contacts compared with under 7% for all other groups except couples without children. On the other hand, males on their own were less likely to use information services (37%) or receive a referral (11%) or emotional support (11%) than other casual clients, while females with children received these services most frequently (in 88%, 39% and 46% of their contacts respectively). Males with children and couples with children were proportionally more likely than others to receive financial aid, this being provided in 19% and 17% of their contacts respectively.

Table 4.3: SAAP casual contacts: one-off assistance provided, by client group, Australia, 18–31 May 2000 (per cent contacts)

One-off assistance provided	Male alone	Female alone	Couple without children	Male with children	Female with children	Couple with children	Other/unknown	Total	
				%				%	No.
Information	37.0	66.7	68.2	79.9	87.6	83.8	50.6	52.5	15,390
Referral arranged	11.0	25.5	29.8	31.5	39.0	35.7	20.7	19.3	5,640
Emotional support	11.2	25.7	19.3	41.8	45.8	35.2	22.5	20.1	5,890
Meals	60.3	25.4	35.5	18.7	5.7	13.8	46.4	43.4	12,730
Financial/ material aid	8.8	8.5	13.9	19.4	11.9	17.4	10.7	9.6	2,830
Transport	3.1	5.1	8.6	1.5	4.8	3.9	4.5	3.9	1,150
Laundry/shower facilities	14.4	6.6	12.9	5.5	1.6	3.4	5.7	10.4	3,060
Other	26.4	23.2	30.6	27.5	22.8	23.6	14.5	24.9	7,310
Mean number of types of assistance provided	1.7	1.9	2.2	2.3	2.2	2.2	1.8	. .	1.8
Total (% contacts)	56.8	20.7	2.7	0.9	12.5	2.7	3.6	100.0	. .
Total (number of contacts)	16,660	6,080	810	270	3,650	800	1,050	. .	29,310
Contacts by individuals (%)	53.2	19.4	5.1	0.9	11.7	5.1	4.5	100.0	. .
Contacts by individuals (number)	16,660	6,080	1,610	270	3,650	1,600	1,420	. .	31,290

Notes

1. Cases excluded due to missing data: 736 contacts; 795 contacts by individuals.
2. In the Casual Client Collection casual contacts are reported for the group receiving assistance. Casual contacts by individuals have been derived from data on 'person(s) receiving assistance' in a contact (see questionnaire in Appendix 3). 'Person alone' and 'person with children' are counted as a contact by one individual, and couples (with or without children) are counted as contacts by two individuals. Presenting units classified as 'other' are also counted as contacts by two individuals. Cases where there is no information on the type of presenting unit are counted as a contact by one individual. While this approach will lead to an understatement of individuals, this understatement will be less than if contacts of unknown composition were counted as missing (compare Table 4.1).
3. In any casual contact the assisted group was able to receive more than one type of one-off assistance, so percentages do not total 100.
4. 'Other/unknown' includes those cases where the assisted unit was reported as 'other', where it was not reported at all, or where the gender of the assisted person was unknown (where relevant).

Source: SAAP Casual Client Collection

One-off assistance to potential clients

As noted, casual assistance can be provided to people seeking more substantial assistance—that is, to potential clients. For example, a person seeking accommodation might not be accommodated but might be given some information and a meal. In the fortnight of the November 1999 Unmet Demand Collection, one-off assistance was provided following

6,250 (or 85%) of the reported 7,400 unmet requests for substantial assistance (Table 4.4).⁷ On average, people received 1.7 services directly after each unmet request.

Information was by far the most common assistance received, being provided following 72% of unmet requests. Referrals for accommodation were also commonly arranged—in 43% of cases. It is not known, however, if these referrals were for immediate accommodation, or if they were taken up. Emotional support was provided in just over one-fifth of cases (22%). All other types of assistance were provided following 10% or fewer unmet requests. Meals were provided after only 5% of unmet requests.

Table 4.4: Contacts by people with unmet requests for support or accommodation at SAAP agencies: one-off assistance, by client group, Australia, 11–24 November 1999 (per cent contacts by people)

One-off assistance provided	Male alone	Female alone	Couple without children	Male with children	Female with children	Couple with children	Other/unknown	Total	No.
				%				%	
Information	69.7	71.3	76.1	74.6	73.1	83.8	68.1	72.2	5,340
Referral for accommodation	38.0	43.7	53.1	42.6	44.5	50.6	45.6	43.1	3,190
Referral for non-accommodation	10.9	9.5	12.6	16.4	10.4	9.8	8.5	10.4	770
Emotional support	18.3	19.4	26.4	33.6	24.7	27.4	21.3	21.5	1,590
Meals	9.1	4.0	6.5	5.7	1.7	2.2	4.9	5.1	380
Financial /material aid	6.4	3.9	9.0	11.5	5.3	5.2	4.3	5.5	410
Transport	4.3	4.2	3.4	5.7	3.2	2.4	3.0	3.8	280
Laundry/shower facilities	4.1	1.6	2.8	1.6	0.5	0.8	1.5	2.1	160
Other	2.3	2.7	1.4	4.9	2.5	1.8	3.3	2.5	180
None	15.6	15.5	9.8	14.8	16.7	8.0	23.1	15.4	1,140
Mean number of types of assistance provided	1.6	1.6	1.9	2.0	1.7	1.8	1.6	. .	1.7
Total (%)	31.5	26.5	4.8	1.6	24.3	6.8	4.4	100.0	. .
Total (number)	2,330	1,960	360	120	1,800	500	330	. .	7,390

Notes

1. Cases excluded due to missing data: 0.
2. Adults seeking assistance together are counted separately.
3. Numbers exclude accompanying children.
4. People seeking assistance were able to receive more than one type of one-off assistance, so percentages do not total 100.
5. 'Other/unknown' includes those cases where the assisted unit was reported as 'other', where it was not reported at all, or where the gender of the assisted person was unknown (where relevant).

Source: SAAP Unmet Demand Collection

⁷ All unmet requests are included in this analysis, not just valid unmet requests (see Glossary). The numbers of unmet requests may be an underestimation because not all in-scope agencies participated in the Unmet Demand Collection. In November 1999, 71% of in-scope SAAP agencies participated in the Unmet Demand Collection (Table A2.2).

While there were some large differences across client groups in the types of one-off assistance received, the differences were not nearly so marked among people with unmet requests as they were among all casual contacts. Thus, although unaccompanied males with unmet requests had relatively low levels of provision of information (following 70% of unmet requests), referrals for accommodation (38%) and emotional support (18%), these levels of provision were much closer to those for other groups with unmet requests than among casual contacts in general (see Tables 4.3 and 4.4). Females with children received information, referrals for accommodation, and emotional support after 73%, 45% and 25% of unmet requests respectively.

4.3 Summary

The average number of support periods provided to clients on any day from 18 to 31 May was 17,370. On average, clients were accommodated in at least 6,350 of these support periods (about 37%), while in the remainder clients received other types of substantial support. In addition, on average on any day 2,300 individuals received some type of one-off assistance from SAAP agencies. As with the number of new accommodations and unmet requests for accommodation, casual assistance dropped considerably on weekends compared with weekdays. Information and meals were the most common forms of one-off assistance provided. Some of the casual assistance was given to people seeking more substantial support—very roughly, about 20% of contacts by individuals were by people seeking such support.⁸ Information and referrals for accommodation were the most common forms of casual assistance received by people seeking more substantial support.

8 This estimate is derived as $7,390 \times 0.846$ (from Table 4.4)/31,209 (from Table 4.3) = 0.20. The estimate is very rough because of the different collection periods for the Unmet Demand Collection (numerator) and the Casual Client Collection (denominator) and because of the different participation rates in the two collections (71% and 83%, respectively—Tables A2.2 and A2.3).