



Specialist homelessness services 2020–21: Australian Capital Territory

Homelessness can profoundly affect a person’s mental and physical health, their education and employment opportunities, and their ability to fully participate in society. Governments across Australia fund a range of specialist services to support people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. Specialist Homelessness Services (SHS) deliver services for specific groups (such as people experiencing family and domestic violence and young people) as well as more generic services for people in housing crisis.

How many people were assisted?

One in 107 people in the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) received homelessness assistance, lower than the national rate (1 in 92). The top 3 reasons for clients seeking assistance were:

- financial difficulties (45%, compared with 39% nationally)
- housing crisis (44% compared with 34%)
- housing affordability stress (44%, compared with 29%).

Quick facts

- 4,000 clients were assisted in the ACT—around 1% of the national SHS population (278,300 total clients).
- Of ACT clients:
- 55% were homeless on first presentation, higher than the national rate (43%).
 - 9 in 10 (86%) who were at risk of homelessness were assisted into housing.
 - One third (35%) who were homeless were assisted into housing.

Client characteristics, 2020–21

	ACT	Australia
Sex (%)	Male	40
	Female	60
Indigenous (%)	17	28
Remoteness (%)	Major cities	60
	Inner regional	23
	Outer regional	11
	Remote and very remote	6
Living arrangements (%)	Living alone	32
	One parent with child/ren	33
	Couple with child/ren	12
	Couple without child/ren	5
	Other family or group	18
Labour force (%)	Employed	13
	Unemployed	53
	Not in labour force	35
Education status (%)	Education/training	21
	Not in education/training	79
Median length of support (days)	103	51
Median nights of accommodation	219	31
Proportion receiving accommodation (%)	37	31

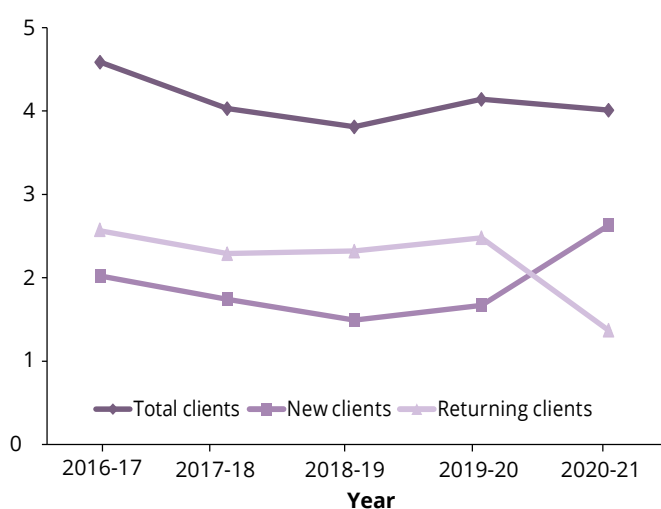
- not applicable

Note: Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

Source: SHSC supplementary tables 2020–21.

Trends in ACT client numbers

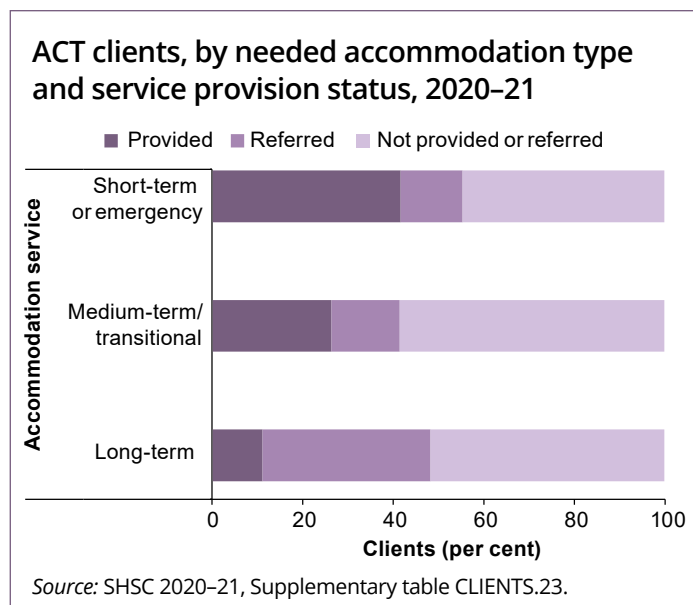
Number of clients ('000)



Source: Specialist Homelessness Services Collection (SHSC) unpublished data**.

Accommodation services

A greater proportion of clients in the ACT than nationally needed accommodation (78% and 60%, respectively).



Client groups of interest

The overall client rate in the ACT was lower in 2020–21 than the previous year, with lower or consistent rates reported for most client groups of interest apart from Indigenous clients, children on care and protection orders, clients leaving care, clients with problematic drug issues and clients with a current mental health problem.

Clients per 10,000, by interest groups

	ACT		Australia	
	2019–20	2020–21	2019–20	2020–21
All clients	97.1	93.1	114.5	108.3
Indigenous	710.1	745.2	799.9	810.6
Young people presenting alone (15–24)	18.1	17.6	16.7	16.2
Older people (55 and over)	6.9	5.9	9.6	9.3
Family and domestic violence	37.9	37.6	47.0	45.2
Disability	2.3	2.3	2.6	2.7
Mental health	40.9	42.7	34.8	34.3
Exiting custodial arrangements	3.9	3.1	3.7	3.5
Leaving care	3.5	4.2	2.7	2.5
Children on protection orders	2.3	2.7	3.5	3.2
Drug/alcohol use	13.3	14.5	11.2	10.6

Notes:

- Crude rates are used except for Indigenous rates which are directly age-standardised (see online technical information).
- Minor adjustments in rates may occur between publications reflecting revision of the estimated resident population by the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

Source: SHSC Supplementary tables 2019–20 to 2020–201.

Housing outcomes

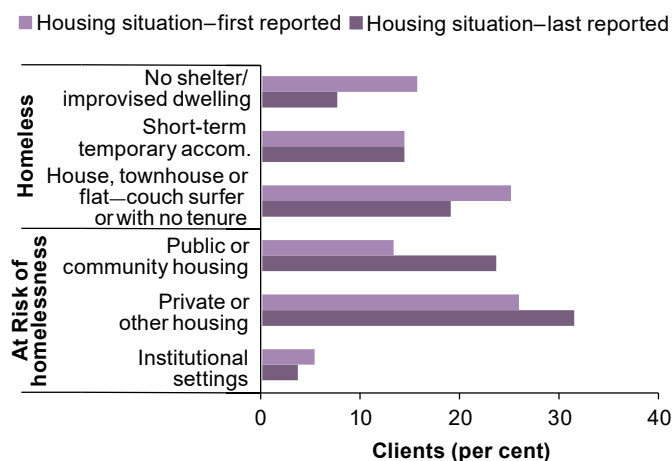
Housing outcomes are described for clients whose support ended in the financial year and detailed information about housing situation was known at the start and end of support.

Of the over 1,000 clients who began support homeless in 2020–21, 35% (360 clients) were assisted into housing. Of these clients, around 180 clients were housed in public or community housing, while more than 150 clients were housed in private or other housing.

Of the 920 clients who began support housed, but at risk of homelessness in 2020–21, around 9 in 10 (86% or 790 clients) were assisted to maintain housing. Of these clients at risk:

- 8 in 10 (80% or 230) of those in public or community housing were assisted to remain in their tenancy and a further 20 clients were assisted into private or other housing.
- 8 in 10 (78% or almost 420) of those in private or other housing were assisted to remain in their tenancy and a further 40 clients were assisted into public or community housing.

ACT clients, by housing situation at beginning and end of support, 2020–21



****Note:** Data for 2011–12 to 2016–17 have been adjusted for non-response. Due to improvements in rates of agency participation and SLK validity, 2017–18 data onwards are not weighted. For further information, please refer to the Technical notes.

More information

More information on ACT and national SHS data is available from [Specialist homelessness services annual report](#).