
Women experiencing homelessness:

*A gender analysis of the
Victorian SAAP Data Collection*

Hanover Welfare Services

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Compiled by Sharon Parkinson, Hanover Research & Development Unit for the Commonwealth Department of Family and Community Services

For further information contact
Sharon Parkinson or Michael Horn
Hanover Welfare Services
PO Box 1016, South Melbourne, Victoria, 3205
Telephone: (03) 9699 6388
Email: hanover@hanover.org.au

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Summary of Findings

Agency Participation and Funding

In Victoria, during 2001-02 the mean funding per agency increased to \$167,000 from \$133,248 in 1997-98. The number of agencies participating in the collection during 2001-02 increased from 310 to 348, reflecting both changes in agency funding and the agency participation rate.

Demographic Overview

During 1997-1998 a total number of 24,600 support periods (weighted) were recorded for women using Victorian SAAP services. This figure had increased to 26,650 recorded female support periods (weighted) by 2001-02. Over the five-year period the proportion of young females aged 19 years or less has steadily declined from 23.6 to 19.9 percent of clients. All other age groups have increased over time, suggesting that the age profile of women clients accessing support may be becoming older. The mean or average age of female clients has also increased from 28.9 years to 30.2. The cultural diversity of female clients has generally remained consistent over the analysis period at around 4-5 percent for indigenous clients and 20 percent for culturally and linguistically diverse clients. Non-indigenous Australians represent around 75 percent of clients.

The proportion of women seeking support is generally split between women presenting alone and those presenting with children and this has remained consistent over the five-year period. Whilst the majority of females were not in the labour force at the time of service contact (67.4%), this varied across different primary target and age groups. The main source of income for women was parenting payment (38%), which was highest for women accessing both family and domestic violence services. Women accessing both single women service and cross target services had the highest proportion receiving a disability support pension at the time of service contact, potentially indicating a high level of support needs for females accessing both these service types.

Stages of Homelessness

An analysis of housing situation prior to seeking support for the latest collection period of 2001-02 suggests that approximately a 1/5 of women were experiencing either primary, secondary, or tertiary homelessness for a period of time prior to SAAP support. Including those who were marginally housed, living in an institution, or living rent free in this figure indicates that well over half of women live in precarious housing and accommodation situations, which lack security of tenure before accessing SAAP support.

Domestic violence services (14.3%) and single women services (10.6%) had a higher proportion of women exiting from public housing dwellings compared to other target groups. Women accessing cross-target services (7.3%) were more likely to be experiencing primary homelessness at service contact compared to other target groups. Amongst those returning to independent housing, 18.8 percent moved into public housing and just under a quarter (23%) moved into the private rental market.

An analysis of high support needs also reveals some variance in the accommodation status of women prior to accessing SAAP support. In particular, female support periods

requiring drug and alcohol services (8.8%) were more likely to be experiencing primary homelessness at the time of service contact. The highest proportion of female support periods (31.7%) experiencing secondary homelessness at the time of service contact, were those requiring both drug and alcohol and psychiatric services combined (dual diagnosis) indicating that they are more likely to have had some engagement with support services prior to their current contact. This group were also more likely to be residing within an institutional setting (9.5%) immediately prior to service access, compared to 1.7 percent of all female support periods.

Service Needs

The current analysis has explored the way in which identified needs interact and the needs that are likely to result in multiple service requirements for the 2001-02 data collection period. Apart from young women aged less than 19 years, the main reasons women reported seeking assistance from SAAP was for domestic violence. Whilst domestic violence represents a significant precursor to homelessness for women, there was some variance across primary target groups. In particular, over a quarter of women with accompanying children (28.2%) using family services sought assistance as a result of evictions, indicating financial difficulty within the housing market as a contributing factor to their homelessness.

For the current analysis, the list of service needs identified in question 22 of the SAAP form were categorised into high support needs 1, high support needs 2, and general support needs. For all female support periods domestic violence (33%), followed by family relationship counselling (20.6%), assistance with legal issues (20.4%) and health and medical issues (16.6%) were the main support needs falling within high support needs 1 and 2. Females provided with accommodation support generally had higher support needs compared to total female support periods. Amongst females receiving accommodation, the main high support needs 1 and 2 were for domestic violence counselling (37.5%), health and medical services (33.3%), family relationship counselling (27.4%), and living skills (22.7%). The need for drug and alcohol support was also higher amongst accommodated female support periods at 12.5 percent compared to 7.5 percent for all female support periods. Females receiving accommodation also had a slightly higher proportion requiring incest and sexual assault counselling (7.8%), psychological (6.4%) and psychiatric services (5.4%).

A select analysis on the services needs of females within high support needs group 1 was undertaken. The support needs within this category included drug and alcohol, pregnancy, psychological, psychiatric, sexual assault, gambling, physical disability, and intellectual disability. In corresponding order of total number of support periods; the need for drug and alcohol support, sexual assault, psychological services, pregnancy support, and psychiatric services were the most frequently recorded issues within high support needs 1 group. The needs for gambling support, physical disability and intellectual disability services were recorded for 150 support periods respectively.

In particular, the data suggests that those with a need for psychiatric or psychological support were more likely to have a co-occurring need for drug and alcohol support. Specifically, amongst those support periods with a need for psychiatric support, 30 percent also required a need for drug and alcohol support compared to 7.5 percent recorded for all support periods. Female support periods requiring the need for psychiatric services were also more likely to score higher on the need for incest and sexual assault support (22%), greatly higher than the proportion of all support periods.

Amongst female support periods that had a need for incest/sexual assault counselling, 27.2 percent also required drug and alcohol support. A further 60 percent of those requiring sexual assault support also required domestic violence counselling.

Whilst women aged up to 24 years represent the largest group receiving support for six months to a year, there has been decline from 49.5 to 38.4 percent over the five-year period. At the same time, the proportion of women aged between 35-44 years receiving support for this duration has increased from 14.7 to 22.8 percent. The duration of support was generally longer for those within high support needs group 1, compared to all female support periods. There were a higher proportion of high support needs 1 receiving support for longer than six months compared to all female support periods. In particular, those with psychiatric and drug and alcohol service requirements combined (15.6%) had the highest proportion receiving support for longer than one year.

Current definitions of 'complex needs' typically take into account the presence of multiple high support needs that make it difficult to negotiate the various service responses required to assist clients. In exploring the way in which high support needs interact, the analysis suggests that the presence of two or more of high support needs 1, or combinations of high support needs 1 and 2, is likely to result in a high need for multiple services appearing in question 22. Those selected with two or more of high support needs 1 and 2 greatly deviate from the total percentage score of the services needed for all support periods, with the need for multiple responses identified down the list increasing dramatically.

1. Introduction

Whilst it is estimated that 40,000 single women experience homelessness annually, current Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) published data does not provide a comprehensive gender analysis of their service utilisation patterns and needs. SAAP data represent the largest and most consistent data collection on homeless service usage and demographics of those experiencing homelessness in Australia. Drawing on data collected by the National Data Collection Agency (NDCA), the following report provides an overview of service trends and patterns of women accessing Victorian SAAP services during a five-year period from 1997-02. This report represents stage 1 of a broader project seeking to develop more effective and integrated approaches to the growing complexity of needs of women presenting to SAAP services and the systems and communities in which they are required to negotiate.

The analysis is based on five years of Confidentialised Unit Record Files (CURFS) provided to Hanover. The CURFS are categorised and recoded by NDCA in order to prevent the identification of individuals from the data sets. Due to the categorisation of data there are some limits on the type of analyses that can be performed. In particular, in maintaining the confidentiality of presenting children and families, numbers of children are linked to adult support periods and cannot be enumerated individually from the data. Therefore the current report does not include an analysis of children accompanying female support periods. The CURFS also group support needed, provided, and referred into six main categories. As a key focus of the analysis was to understand service needs, additional data sets were provided to Hanover containing separate variables on service needs and other selected demographic and service indicators including gender, age, ethnicity, duration of support, region, and accommodation type prior to support. These data could not be linked to any identification codes such as an alpha code.

From the SAAP collection there are two units of analysis, individual clients and support periods. A support period refers to the length of service use between opening and closing a case file. Client refers to individuals accessing a particular SAAP service. The following analysis is predominately based on support periods.

Structure of the Report

The report is structured into four sections. The first provides an overview of agency participation and funding over the five-year analysis period as a context for data interpretation. The second section focuses on the service trends and patterns of women within SAAP over the five-year period. The analysis particularly focuses on understanding how female support periods differ across the main primary target groups funded within SAAP. Section three explores service needs (Q.22 on the SAAP form) of women during 2001-02, the most recent data period available at the time of the analysis. Service needs were grouped into three main categories, high support needs group 1, high support needs groups 2 and general support needs. The analysis predominately focuses on high support needs groups 1. The final section provides a summary of the key observations and issues emerging from the data.

2. Longitudinal Analysis of Agency Participation and Funding

The following section presents a longitudinal analysis of agency participation and recurrent funding from 1997-2002. An analysis of agency participation rates and recurrent funding provides a context for understanding some of the key trends and patterns emerging from service utilisation data over time. Since the collection commenced in 1996, agency participation rates have steadily increased. Similarly, changes within the distribution of funding within primary target groups has influenced the type of services provided and therefore demographic characteristics of those accessing services. Both of these factors will influence observed changes over the analysis period.

2.1. Trends in Agency Participation

The total number of forms received has increased from 39,630 in 1997-98 to 43,133 in 2001-02. Table 1 illustrates that whilst there has been a decline in the number of agencies participating in the collection during 1997-98 to 2000-01, the agency participation rate fluctuates, probably corresponding with fluctuations in the number of agencies funded during each collection year. As can be seen, fluctuations in the total number of forms returned matched fluctuations in the agency participation rate rather than the number of agencies participating in the collection. This observation may be partly attributed to some smaller SAAP agencies combining with other agencies during 1999-01. The number of agencies participating in the collection during 2001-02 increased from 310 to 348 also reflecting changes in agency funding as shown in table 3.

Table 1. Agency participation in SAAP Client Collection, 1997- 2002

Year	Number Agencies Vic	Participation rate	Total forms	Consent	Valid alpha code
1997-98	322	92.9	39,630	79.9	74.7
1998-99	321	96	42,477	78.5	75.4
1999-00	311	93.6	39,948	83	81
2000-01	310	95.2	40,281	82.2	80.7
2001-02	348	96	43,133	88	86.5

Source: AIHW NDCA SAAP Reports 1997-2002.

Table 2 below shows agency participation according to primary target group. Generally, the number of agencies participating according to primary target group has increased over the five-year period. The exception within this trend is the number of participating agencies targeting young people, which declined from 139 to 133 over the analysis period.

Table 2. Number of agencies participating in SAAP client collection by primary target group, 1997-2002.

Primary target group	Number of agencies participating				
	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02
Young people	139	133	129	130	133
Single men only	13	11	17	12	13
Single women only	16	15	17	16	20
Families	24	27	25	28	34
Women escaping domestic violence	50	53	52	51	59
Cross target/multiple/general	80	82	71	73	89
Total Agencies	322	321	311	310	348
Total number of forms	39,630	42,477	39,948	40,281	43,133

Source: AIHW NDCA SAAP Reports 1997-2002.

2.2. Trends in Recurrent Funding

Recurrent funding of Victorian SAAP services remained relatively constant from 1997-98 to 1999-00 as shown in table 3. During 2000-01, recurrent funding increased markedly from around 46 million to 52 million. The 2001-02 funding period saw a further increase by 10 million to 62 million, in which an additional 46 agencies were funded. In 2001-02 the mean funding per agency increased to \$167,000 from \$133,248 in 1997-98.

Table 3. Recurrent expenditure, Victorian SAAP agencies, 1997-2002

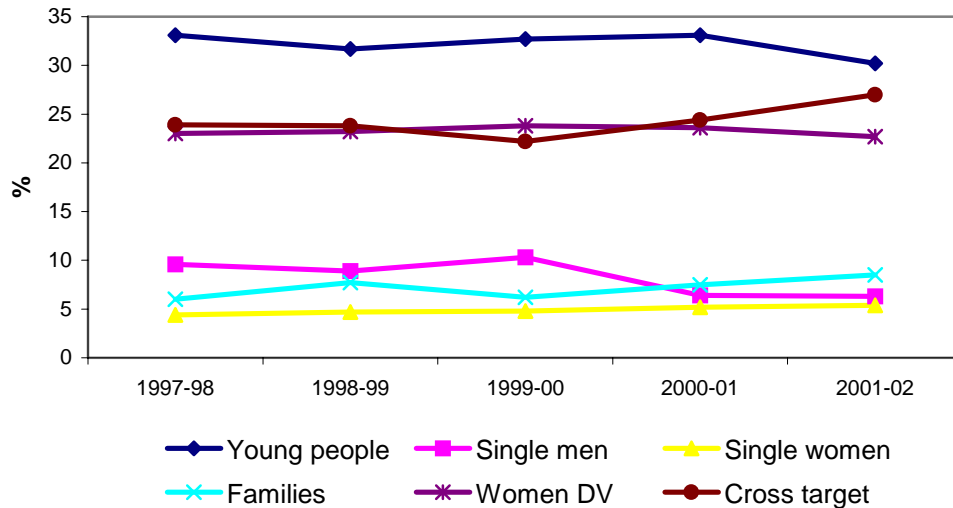
Year	Number Agencies Vic	Recurrent allocation (\$)	Mean funding (\$)
1997-98	347	46,237,068	133,248
1998-99	333	46,991,009	141,114
1999-00	327	46,730,000	142,900
2000-01	330	52,964,000	160,500
2001-02	376	62,843,000	167,100

Source: AIHW NDCA SAAP Reports 1997-2002.

Whilst table 3 above shows that there has been an overall increase in recurrent expenditure on SAAP in Victoria over the past five years, figure 1 reveals that there have been some changes in the distribution of funding according to primary target groups over the five year period. As shown there has been a general increase in the proportion of funding directed towards cross-target services from 23.9 percent to 27 percent over the five-year period. Expenditure on family specific services has increased from 6 percent to 8.5 percent. There has also been a one percent increase from 4.4 to 5.4 percent of total recurrent SAAP expenditure for single women services.

Concurrently, funding for single men services as a proportion of overall expenditure has decreased from 9.6 to 6.3 percent. Funding for youth specific services as a proportion of overall expenditure has decreased from 33.1 percent to 30.2 percent. Spending on women domestic violence services has remained relatively constant at around 23 percent of total expenditure over the five-year period.

Figure 1. SAAP agencies, recurrent allocation by primary target group, 1997- 2002, %



Source: AIHW NDCA SAAP Reports 1997-2002.

2.3. Regional Overview of Agencies and Support Periods

Regional funding distribution recorded in the SAAP reports was examined for the past three years and is illustrated in table 4 (note this was not recorded for the previous two years). Over the three-year period the number of funded agencies has increased in all regions except for the Hume region. The number of statewide agencies has decreased from 14 in 1999-00 to eight in 2001-02. The Southern and Western Regions had the highest increase in the number of metropolitan agencies over the three-year period, with an additional 14 agencies in each region. The Loddon Mallee region recorded the largest increase in the number of funded agencies within regional Victoria from 23 to 31. The Southern Region has the highest number of agencies and highest proportion of recurrent funding. Over the past three years, the Western region experienced the largest growth as a percentage of total funding, whilst funding of state-based services as a proportion of total expenditure declined.

Table 5. Illustrates support periods according to Department of Human Services (DHS) region for 1997-02. CURF data collapses non-metropolitan regions into 'other' in order to avoid the identification of individual support periods. An examination of regional support

periods from 1997-02 reveals a higher number of support periods recorded in metropolitan areas and this appears to have increased over time. Whilst the number of support periods increased both in Metropolitan and non-metro areas, there appears to be greater increases within Metropolitan areas as a proportion of total support periods. As illustrated in table 5, the proportion of support periods within non-metropolitan Melbourne ranged from 41.3 percent in 1997-98 to 36.5 percent in 2001-02. This trend appears to match the increase in the number of funded agencies in metropolitan areas.

Table 4. Number of funded agencies and percentage of recurrent funding by Department of Human Services Region, 1999- 2002

DHS Region	1999-2000		2000-01		2001-02	
	Agencies	Recurrent allocation (%)	Agencies	Recurrent allocation (%)	Agencies	Recurrent allocation (%)
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Eastern Metro	39	13.3	40	14.8	42	13.3
Northern Metro	56	18.0	57	16.7	62	17.0
Southern Metro	56	19.1	57	19.8	70	20.8
Western Metro	38	10.8	43	15.1	52	14.8
Barwon South Western	22	5.6	23	5.5	26	5.8
Gippsland	27	5.6	27	5.5	28	6.1
Grampians	27	4.3	27	4.3	32	4.4
Hume	25	4.9	25	4.3	25	4.9
Loddon Mallee	23	5.6	23	5.7	31	5.6
State-wide	14	12.7	8	8.2	8	7.4
Total %	327	100	330	100	376	100
Total recurrent allocation		46,730,000		52,964,000		62,843,000

Source: AIHW NDCA SAAP Reports 1999-2002. Regional agency data was not available in SAAP reports for 1997-98 and 1998-99

Table 5. Regional comparison, unweighted female support periods, 1997- 2002

	1997-98		1998-99		1999-00		2000-01		2001-02	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Eastern Metro	2,834	15	4,176	17.4	3,974	16.3	4,373	18.7	4,871	19.1
Northern Metro	1,883	10	2,827	11.8	2,788	11.5	2,231	9.5	2,463	9.7
Southern Metro	3,781	20	3,830	15.9	4,017	16.5	4,027	17.2	4,981	19.6
Western Metropolitan	2,594	13.7	3,535	14.7	3,492	14.4	3,477	14.9	3,867	15.2
Other	7,815	41.3	9,633	40.1	10,049	41.3	9,286	39.7	9,293	36.5
Total	18,907	100	24,001	100	24,320	100	23,394	100	25,475	100

Source: SAAP Administrative Data Collection for Victoria, 1997-2002

1. Figures are unweighted and have *not* been adjusted for client non-consent and agency non-participation
2. Regional Administrative Data do not have weights applied.
3. Regional data has been grouped as other for non metro areas in the CURFS to ensure that data are non identifiable. Other DHS regions include Barwon South Western, Gippsland, Grampians, Hume, and Loddon Mallee and Statewide.
4. Numbers unknown 1998-99 – 30 cases.

3. Analysis of Service Patterns and Trends

The longitudinal analysis of agency participation and recurrent funding has illustrated a number of administrative changes occurring over the analysis period recorded in the SAAP reports. Further matching of other administrative data sources within the Office of Housing would provide some clarification of the observed changes, however is beyond the scope of the current analysis. Whilst it is obvious that these changes will have some bearing on service trends and patterns emerging, the extent of this influence cannot be determined without further investigation. For instance is the changing distribution of funding across primary target groups a reflection of increased demand for services in these areas or for other reasons?

The following section presents data for the current period 2001-02 and longitudinal trend data on the demographics and service utilisation patterns for Victorian women. The analysis was guided by the following questions:

What are the service utilisation patterns of women experiencing homelessness in Victoria?

What is the proportion of women experiencing homelessness accessing the SAAP system who are not escaping domestic violence?

Has the nature of service demand of single women experiencing homelessness changed over five- year period?

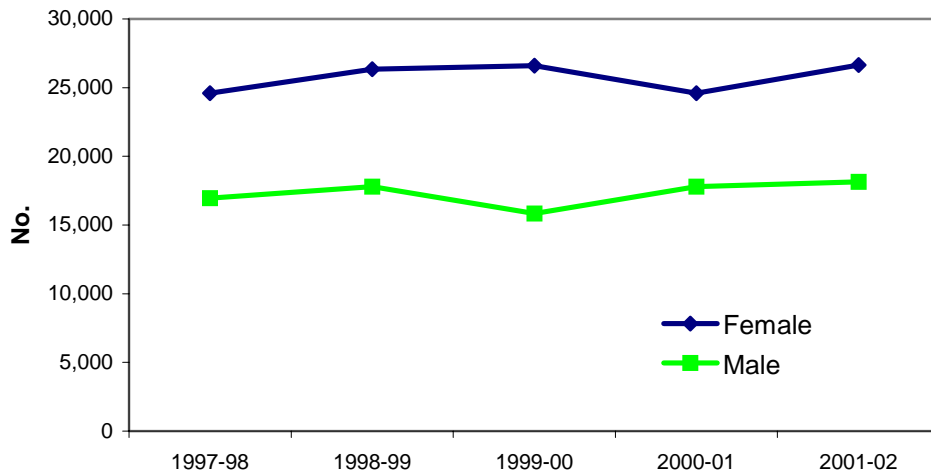
Whilst the need to flee the home from domestic violence remains a major reason for seeking SAAP assistance amongst women, the current analysis seeks to gain broader understanding of the of the nature of service use for women across all primary target groups.

3.1. Data Overview

During 1997-1998 a total number of 24,600 support periods (weighted)¹ were recorded for women using Victorian SAAP services. This figure had increased to 26,650 recorded female support periods (weighted) by 2001-02. This trend, along with a comparison of male support periods over the five-year period is shown in figure 2.

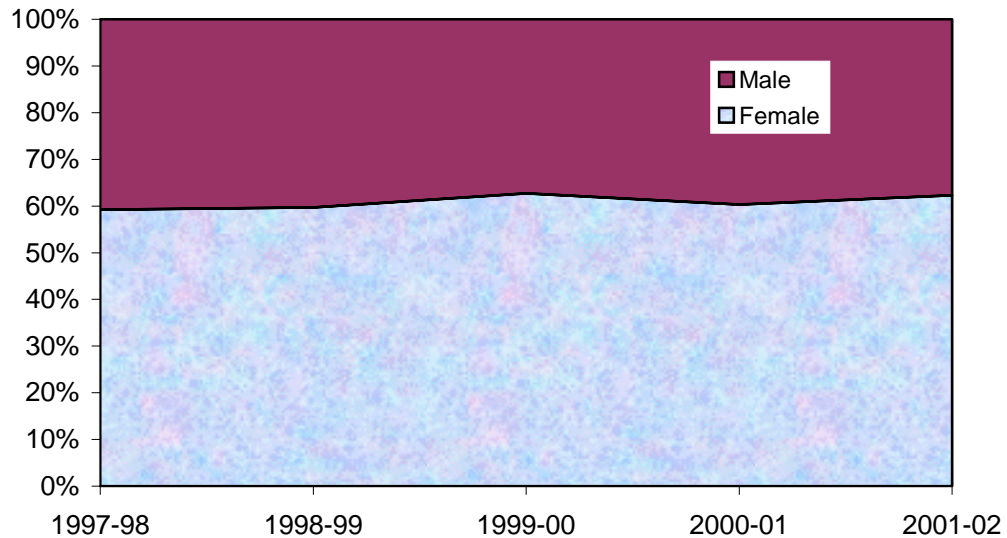
¹ Gender was a consented item up to 1999-00. Data have been weighted to adjust for agency non-participation and client non-consent from 1997-00. From 2000-01 onwards data have been weighted to adjust for agency non-participation only. Total figures of weighted data are rounded to the nearest 50.

Figure 2. Total number of weighted support periods, male and female, 1997- 2002



Source: NDCA CURFS SAAP Data for Victoria, 1997-2002

Figure 3. Weighted male and female clients, 1997- 2002, %



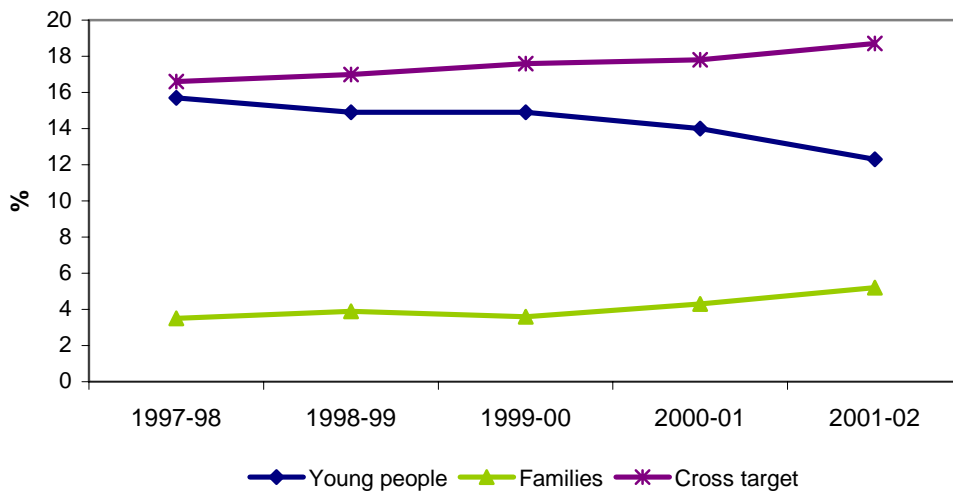
Source: NDCA CURFS SAAP Data for Victoria, 1997-2002

Figure 3 illustrates the gender breakdown for clients seeking support over the analysis period. As shown the proportion of females to males have remained relatively constant at around 60 percent or a ratio of 1.5:1. It may be viewed that the higher proportion of females to males reflects specific target group for domestic violence, however use of domestic violence specific services alone accounts for approximately a third of all support periods. The remaining support periods are linked to family, generalist and to a smaller extent, single women only services.

3.2. Primary Target Groups

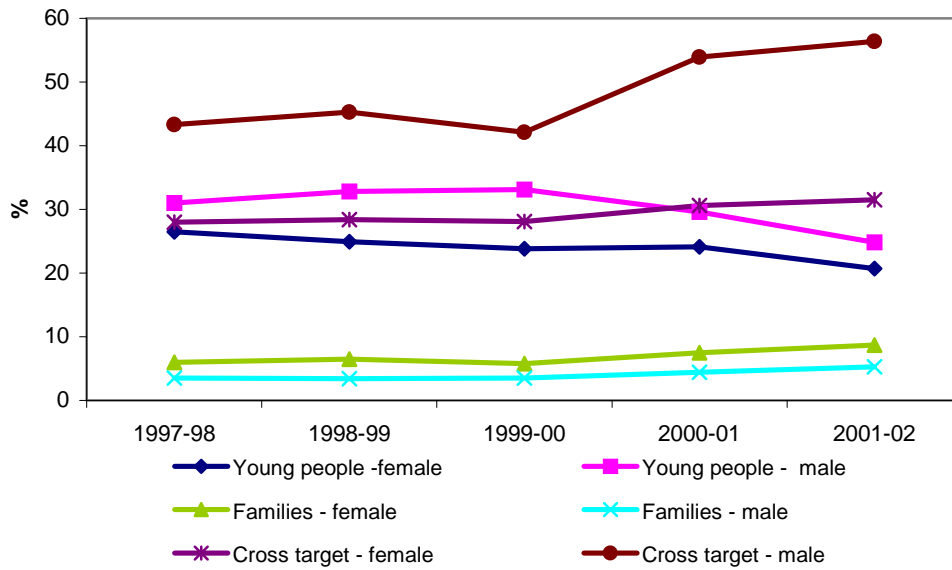
An analysis of support periods reveals that female specific services including single women and domestic violence have remained at around 4 to 5 percent and 23 percent respectively during the five-year period. Figure 4 shows a longitudinal overview of the proportion of female support periods according to non-gender specific primary target groups of young people, families, and cross-target services. As can be seen from figure 4, there has been a steady increase in the proportion of women (as a percentage of all support periods for women) accessing non-gender specific cross target and family services, and a decline in the proportion accessing youth specific SAAP services. The proportion of women accessing non-gender family and cross-target services has increased from 3.5 to 5.2 percent and 16.6 to 18.7 percent respectively. At the same time, the proportion of female support periods within youth specific services has decreased from 15.7 percent to 12.3 percent.

Figure 4. Total proportion of weighted female support periods according to non-gendered primary target groups, 1997- 2002 %



Source: NDCa CURFS SAAP Data for Victoria, 1997-2002

Figure 5. Weighted male and female support periods by non-gender specific primary target group by gender, 1997- 2002, %



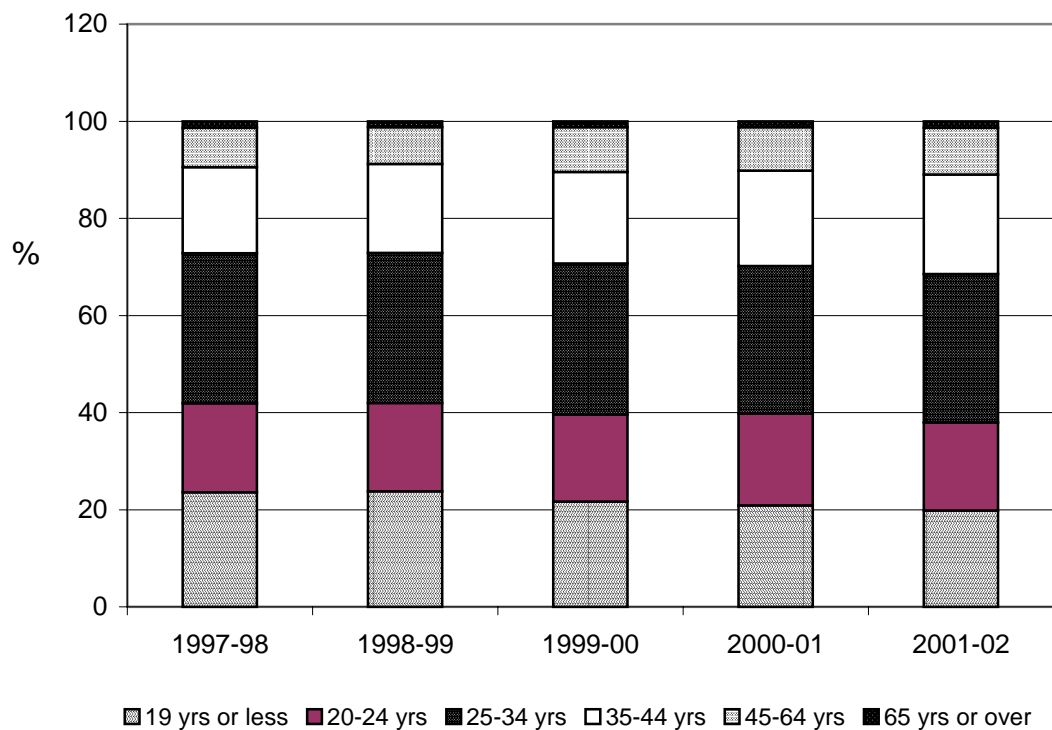
Source: NDCA CURFS SAAP Data for Victoria, 1997-2002

Figure 5. Illustrates that the most notable trend within primary target groups over the five-year period appears to be a shift in the proportion of support periods emerging from cross-target services for both males and females with a concurrent decline in youth support periods. Specifically, the proportion of males using cross target services has increased from 43.3 to 56.4 percent over the five-year period. Similarly, the proportion of female support periods within cross target services has increased from 28 to 31.5%. This trend appears consistent with the increase in the proportion of expenditure directed towards cross-target services.

3.3. Age Profile

The following analysis for age is based on clients not support periods. Examining age profile over the five-year period reveals some changes in age distribution across different age categories. As illustrated in figure 6, during 1997-2002 the proportion of young females aged 19 years or less has steadily declined from 23.6 to 19.9 percent of clients. All other age groups have increased over time. Specifically, the proportion of women aged between 35-44 years has increased by 2.8 percent from 17.7 to 20.5 percent and women aged between 45-64 years have increased by 1.5 from 8.2 to 9.7. The mean or average age of female clients has also increased from 28.9 years to 30.2 years over the past five years, suggesting that the age profile of females accessing support may be becoming older.

Figure 6. Weighted female clients by age, 1997- 2002 %



Source: NDCA CURFS SAAP Data for Victoria, 1997-2002

Table 6. Weighted female clients by age, 1997- 2002

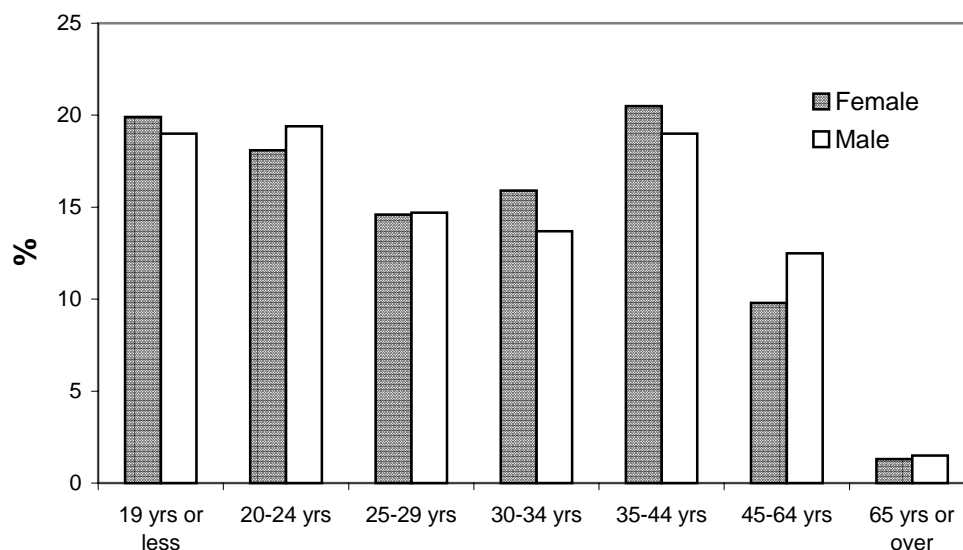
	1997-98		1998-99		1999-00		2000-01		2001-02	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
19 yrs or less	3950	23.6	4200	23.8	3900	21.7	3450	20.9	3600	19.9
20-24 years	3050	18.3	3200	18.2	3200	17.9	3150	18.9	3250	18.1
25-34 yrs	5150	30.9	5450	30.9	5550	31.1	5050	30.4	5500	30.5
35-44 yrs	2950	17.7	3250	18.3	3350	18.8	3250	19.6	3700	20.5
45-64 yrs	1400	8.2	1350	7.6	1650	9.3	1500	9.1	1800	9.8
65 yrs or over	200	1.2	200	1.2	200	1.2	200	1.2	250	1.3
Total	16,700	100	17,650	100	17,850	100	16,600	100	18,100	100

Source: NDCA CURFS SAAP Data for Victoria, 1997-2002

1. SAAP client figures have been weighted to adjust for agency non-participation and client non-consent
2. Weighted figures round to the nearest 50.
3. Number excluded due to errors and omissions not included as is not separated according to gender

The current age profile of females and males for 2001-02 is illustrated in figure 7. The age distribution of males and females is generally similar across all age groups. The main difference in age is evident in the 30-44 years age group, with a slightly higher proportion of females (36.4%) compared to males (32.7%).

Figure 7. Weighted female clients age by gender, 2001-02 %



Source: NDCA CURFS SAAP Data for Victoria, 2001-02

3.4. Cultural and Linguistic Diversity

The cultural diversity of female clients has generally remained consistent over the analysis period at around 4-5 percent for Indigenous clients and 20 percent for culturally and linguistically diverse clients. Non-indigenous Australians represent around 75 percent of clients. It should be noted however that cultural identity is often under recorded, particularly for Indigenous persons and therefore should be interpreted with caution. Table 7 presents the cultural identity of clients according to Department of Human Service regions for 2001-02 period. During this period, female Indigenous clients represented 5.5 percent of all SAAP clients. Compared to the general Victorian population, Indigenous persons are 10 times more likely to utilise SAAP services². A higher number of Indigenous female clients were recorded in non-metropolitan and statewide areas. Within Metropolitan areas, the Northern region (10%) recorded the highest proportion of female indigenous clients followed by the Southern region (3.7%).

The CURF data divide clients from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds into English proficiency (EP) group 1 and other EP groups (see below for definition). Other EP groups, which includes countries where English is not the main language represent 16.6 percent of clients. There were a higher proportion of other EP clients recorded in Metropolitan compared to Non-Metropolitan/State-wide services. Amongst Metropolitan regions, the Western region (29.3%) recorded the highest proportion of female clients from other EP groups closely followed by the Eastern region (28.3%).

Table 7. Cultural identity of female clients unweighted by region, 2001-02

	Eastern Metro	Northern Metro	Southern Metro	Western Metro	Other	Total Number	Total %
	%	%	%	%	%	N	%
Indigenous	1.7	10	3.7	2.0	8.2	828	5.5
Non-indigenous Australian	65.7	67.5	72.5	64.2	84.5	11,266	74.5
English proficiency (EP) group 1	4.3	2.5	4.6	4.4	2.4	5,22	3.5
Other EP groups	28.2	20.0	19.1	29.5	5.0	2,509	16.6
Total %	100	100	100	100	100		100
Total Number	2,648	1,339	2,784	2,237	6,117	15,125	

Source: NDCA CURFS SAAP Data for Victoria, 2001-02

1. Regional data has been grouped as other for non-metro areas in the CURFS to ensure that data are non identifiable. Other DHS regions include Barwon South Western, Gippsland, Grampians, Hume, and Loddon Mallee and State-wide.
2. Figures are unweighted and have *not* been adjusted for client non-consent and agency non-participation
3. Regional Administrative Data do not have weights applied.
4. English proficiency group 1 countries include Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, South Africa, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America
5. English proficiency group 2-4 countries, excluding Australia, are those that are not included in English proficiency group 1.
6. Number excluded due to errors and omissions: 592
7. Clients may have support periods in more than one region

² According to 2001 ABS Census data, Indigenous persons account for 0.5% of the total Victorian population.

3.5. Persons Requesting Assistance

Table 8 illustrates the family type of women seeking assistance from 1997-2002. Women presenting alone (45.6%) were the main household group presenting to SAAP services during 2001-02. A further 43.3 percent were single women with accompanying children. This pattern has generally remained consistent over the five-year period. Figure 8 illustrates the main differences in presenting family type according to gender. As shown, the majority of male support periods present alone (81.7%) whereas female support periods are roughly split between women presenting alone and those with accompanying children. There is some variance amongst presenting family type according to age. For the current period 2001-02, females aged less than 25 years (60.5%) were more likely to present alone, whilst females aged between 25-44 years were more likely to present with accompanying children (65.1%).

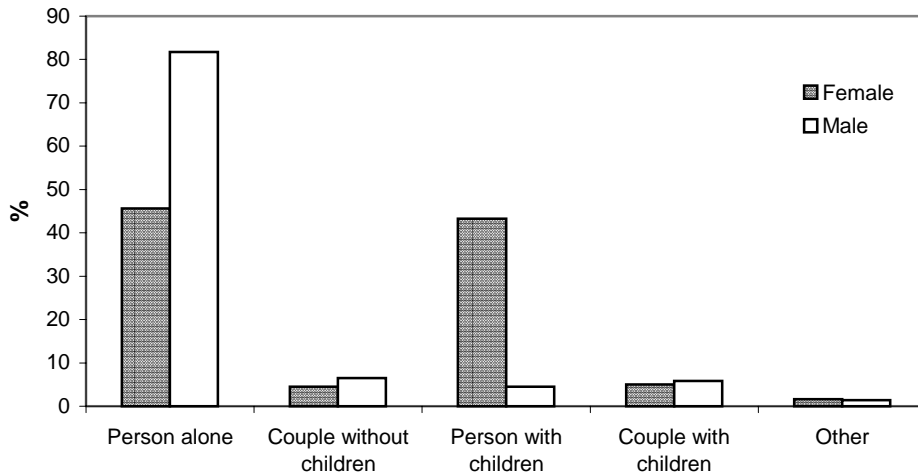
Table 8. Persons requesting assistance by female weighted support periods, 1997- 2002%

	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02
Person alone or with unrelated person(s)	44.9	46.4	45.9	46.7	45.6
Couple without children	4	5.3	4.6	4.7	4.5
Person with child(ren)	44	41.9	43.0	42.2	43.3
Couple with child(ren)	5.3	4.7	4.7	4.9	5.0
Other	1.8	1.6	1.8	1.4	1.6
Total %	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>
Total Number	24,350	26,000	26,050	24,100	26,000

Source: NDCA CURFS SAAP Data for Victoria, 1997-2002

1. Gender was a consented item up to 1999-00. Data have been weighted to adjust for agency non-participation and client non-consent from 1997-00. From 2000-01 onwards data have been weighted to adjust for agency non-participation only.
2. Missing values weighted 1997-98 (250); 1998-99 (350); 1999-00 (600); 2000-01 (500); 2001-02 (650)
3. Weighted figures round to the nearest 50.

Figure 8. Persons requesting assistance weighted support periods by gender, 2001-02%



Source: NDCA CURFS SAAP Data for Victoria, 2001-02

3.6. Labour Force Status and Source of Income

The labour force status of women presenting during 2001-02 is presented in figure 9. As shown, the majority of both female and male support periods are not in any paid employment. Amongst female support periods, the majority (67.4%) were not in the labour force, which is reflected in table 9 showing main source income.

Figure 9. Labour force status by gender, weighted support periods, 2001-02 %



Source: NDCA CURFS SAAP Data for Victoria, 2001-02

Table 9 presents the main source of income according to primary target group. The main source of income for female support periods during 2001-02 was parenting payment (38%) followed by Newstart/Youth Allowance (27.5%). A further 10.8 percent of females were receiving a disability support pension at the time of support. As shown in the table, the main source of income varies across primary target groups. Just over half (53.1%) of females accessing services for young people were receiving either Newstart/Youth Allowance and considered 'in the labour market'.

Whilst the main sources of income for single women were Newstart/Youth Allowance (31.4%) and Parenting Payment (31.1%), single women services (22.1%) had the highest proportion of support periods receiving a disability support pension. A similar pattern is evident for women using cross target services, with 16.8 percent receiving a disability support pension, 29.5 percent receiving Newstart/Youth Allowance and 38.7 percent receiving parenting payment. This indicates a potentially higher level of support needs for females accessing both single women services and cross target services.

Within in family specific services approximately a third of support periods (64.8%) were receiving Parenting Payment. Women accessing domestic violence services were more likely to be in paid employment compared to other target groups (12.7%), however their main source of income was also Parenting Payment (45.2%).

Table 9. Main source of income at commencement of support by primary target group, female weighted support periods, 2001-02%

Source of Income	Young People	Single women only	Families	Women escaping domestic violence	Cross-target/Multiple/general	Total	
						N	%
No income Registered/awaiting benefit	17.9	5.9	3.5	8.6	4.8	2,100	8.8
Newstart Allowance/Youth allowance	53.1	31.4	15	12.5	29.5	6,500	27.5
Austudy/Abstudy	0.5	0.4	0.1	0.5	0.5	100	0.5
Disability Support Pension	4.6	22.1	8.4	7.4	16.8	2,500	10.8
Age Pension	0.1	1.5	1.1	1.5	2.3	350	1.4
Parenting Payment	16.4	31.1	64.8	45.2	38.7	9,000	38
Sickness Allowance	0.6	1.5	0.4	1.0	1.0	200	0.9
Any other type of allowance or benefit	1.1	2.4	2.9	4.8	3.0	750	3.1
Wages/salary/own business	4.7	1.8	2.6	12.7	2.3	1,500	6.3
Other	0.9	1.9	9.1	5.7	1.0	600	2.6
Total %	100	100	100	100	100		
Total Number	5,000	1,500	2,150	7,950	7,000	23,600	100

Source: NDCA CURFS SAAP Data for Victoria, 2001-02

1. SAAP figures have been weighted to adjust for agency non-participation and client non-consent
2. Number excluded due to errors and omissions (weighted) 3054 cases

3.7. Type of Housing Before and After Support

Tables 10 and 11 illustrate types of housing before and after support according to primary target groups and gender for the 2001-02 period. The tables have been categorised according to Chamberlain and Mackenzie's (1998) primary, secondary, and tertiary homeless and marginally housed definition. Those considered to be living in independent housing have security of tenure and include those paying rent in the private rental market or in public or community housing, or purchaser/owner of their own home. Individuals residing in an institutional setting prior to accommodation have not been included in the definition of homelessness. Nor have female support periods that were living rent-free in a house or flat as many of those falling in this category, particularly young people, may be living with their parents.

As shown in table 10, females (38.2%) were more likely to be living in independent housing compared to males (16.6%) at the time of service access. However, amongst those living in independent housing, females were more likely to be renting a public housing dwelling (9.3%) or purchasing or living in their own home (7.4%). Domestic

violence services (14.3%) and single women services (10.6%) had a higher proportion of women exiting from public housing dwellings compared to other target groups. Around two-thirds of women accessing domestic violence services (61.2%) were living in independent housing at the time. Excluding young people, approximately 30 percent of other target groups including single women, cross-target and families were living in independent housing.

A smaller proportion of females (4.2%) compared to males (15.8%) were considered to be experiencing primary homelessness immediately before service access. Women accessing cross-target services (7.3%) were more likely to be experiencing primary homelessness at service contact compared to other target groups.

Looking at the proportion of support periods experiencing secondary homelessness at the time of service contact reveals a similar pattern for females (18.2%) and males (19.5%). Around a quarter of support periods within young people and single women services were experiencing secondary homelessness at the time of service contact. A further 20 percent of families and 17 percent of women escaping domestic violence were experiencing secondary homelessness.

Combining primary, secondary and tertiary homelessness suggests that around a 1/5 of women were experiencing homelessness for a period of time before entering support. Including those who were marginally housed, living in an institution, or living rent free in this figure indicates that well over half of women live in precarious housing and accommodation situations, which lack security of tenure before accessing SAAP support.

Whilst not collected for all support periods, data on housing and accommodation following support demonstrates the shift through different stages of homelessness and housing categories. This is also illustrated in figures 10 and 11. As can be seen following support, less than one percent of females remained in a primary homelessness situation. Half of female support periods (49.9%) recorded following support moved onto independent housing compared to 30 percent of male support periods. Amongst those returning to independent housing, 18.8 percent moved into public housing and just under a quarter (23%) moved into the private rental market.

The proportion of female support periods moving into public housing varied across primary target groups. Following support, 28.8 percent of families and 27.6 percent of single women moved into public housing potentially indicating higher support needs amongst these groups. Compared to males (11.6%), female support periods (18.8%) were more likely to move into public housing following support.

Table 10. Type of housing accommodation before support by primary target group, female weighted support periods, 2001-02.

Accommodation Type Before Support	Young People	Single women only	Families	Women escaping domestic violence	Cross-target/multiple/general	Total Female	Total Male		
	%	%	%	%	%	N	%	N	%
Primary Homeless									
Living in a car/tent/park/street/Squat	5.1	4.9	3.7	1.0	7.3	1000	4.2	2400	15.8
Secondary Homelessness									
SAAP crisis/short-term accommodation	11.7	11.0	8.8	10.6	6.9	2300	9.6	1650	10.8
SAAP medium/long-term accommodation	3.8	3.5	3.3	2.2	2.6	700	2.8	400	2.6
Other SAAP accommodation	4.3	4.5	2.3	2.2	2.2	650	2.8	600	3.9
Non-SAAP emergency accommodation	1.1	1.2	2.8	0.9	1.6	300	1.3	200	1.2
Other non-SAAP housing accommodation	2.0	2.2	2.7	1.2	1.4	400	1.7	150	1.0
Tertiary Homeless									
Rooming house/hostel/hotel	2.9	5.3	2.1	1.3	5.3	750	3.2	2000	13.0
Marginally Housed									
Renting a caravan	2.4	2.2	6.8	2.3	5.1	850	3.5	550	3.7
Boarding in a private home	21.2	15.5	21.0	7.7	20.0	3800	15.9	1850	12.0
Independent Housing									
Renting independently in the private rental market	10.4	15.8	22.2	27.6	20.3	4900	20.5	1550	10.3
Renting a public housing dwelling	3.0	10.6	7.7	14.3	8.2	2200	9.3	700	4.7
Renting community housing	0.7	1.4	0.7	0.9	1.3	250	1.0	150	0.9
Purchasing or living in own home	1.2	2.3	1.9	18.4	2.2	1750	7.4	100	0.7
Other									
Institutional setting	2.0	6.6	1.4	0.6	1.9	400	1.7	800	5.3
Living rent-free in house or flat	28.3	13.1	12.6	8.8	13.5	3600	14.9	2200	14.3
Total %	100	100	100	100	100		100		100
Total Number						23,850		15,300	

Source: NDCA CURFS SAAP Data for Victoria, 2001-02

1. SAAP figures have been weighted to adjust for agency non-participation and client non-consent
2. Number excluded due to errors and omissions (weighted) cases before support 5,762

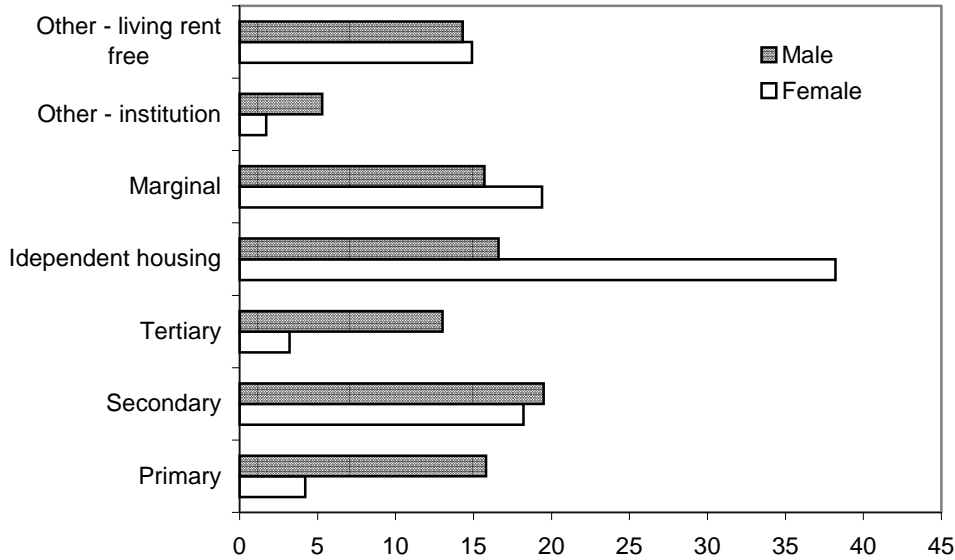
Table 11. Closed support periods, type of housing accommodation after support by primary target group, female weighted support periods, 2001-02.

Accommodation Type After Support	Young People	Single women only	Families	Women escaping domestic violence	Cross-target/multiple/general	Total Female		Total Male	
	%	%	%	%	%	N	%	N	%
Primary Homelessness									
Living in a car/tent/park/street/squat	0.8	2.0	1.0	0.1	1.3	100	0.8	250	3.1
Secondary Homelessness									
SAAP crisis/short-term accommodation	5.4	6.9	3.6	12.2	4.0	1150	7.4	400	5.3
SAAP medium/long-term accommodation	7.4	9.4	5.8	5.8	3.6	900	5.7	450	5.6
Other SAAP accommodation	3.3	2.8	1.8	2.7	4.5	500	3.2	500	6.1
Non-SAAP emergency accommodation	0.8	1.1	1.8	0.6	1.2	150	1.0	100	1.0
Other non-SAAP housing accommodation	2.9	3.1	2.3	2.0	1.6	350	2.2	150	2.1
Tertiary Homelessness									
Rooming house/hostel/hotel	2.0	4.8	2.2	1.2	5.3	450	2.8	1000	12.5
Marginally Housed									
Renting a caravan	2.3	1.6	4.7	1.4	5.4	450	3.0	500	6.3
Boarding in a private home	16.3	8.9	12.2	9.2	15.6	1950	12.6	1000	12.5
Independent Housing									
Renting independently in the private rental market	20.5	16.7	25.5	23.4	24.8	3550	23.0	1250	15.9
Renting a public housing dwelling	11.4	27.6	28.8	17.7	19.5	2900	18.8	900	11.6
Renting community housing	1.7	1.8	1.9	1.3	1.8	250	1.6	150	1.9
Purchasing or living in own home	1.9	2.0	1.4	14.8	1.7	1000	6.5	50	0.7
Other									
Living rent-free in house or flat	21.1	7.7	6.5	6.8	7.6	1500	9.8	850	10.6
Institutional setting	2.4	3.6	.7	0.8	2.2	250	1.7	350	4.6
Total %	100	100	100	100	100		100		100
Total Number						15,450		7,900	

Source: NDCA CURFS SAAP Data for Victoria, 2001-02

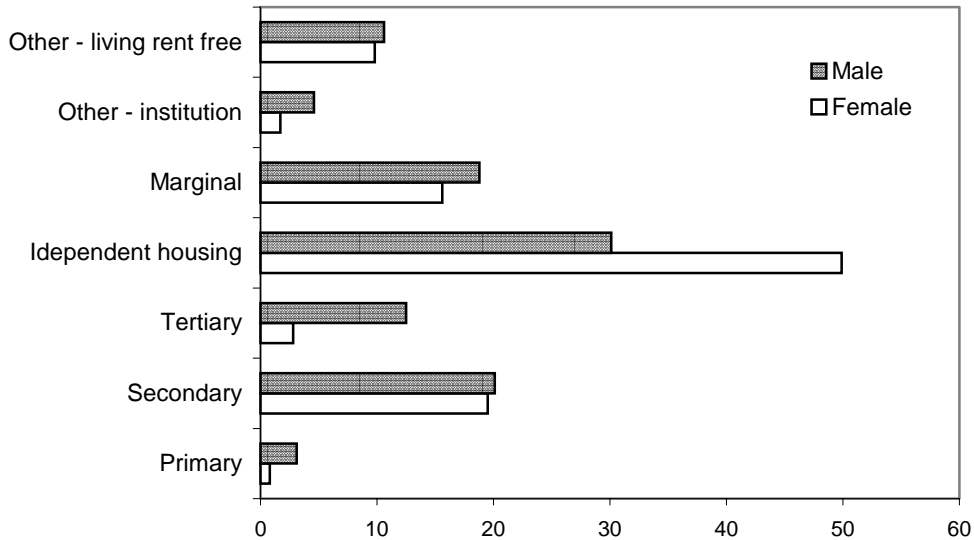
1. SAAP figures have been weighted to adjust for agency non-participation and client non-consent
2. Number excluded due to errors and omissions (weighted) cases after support 17,292
3. Number excluded - high volume 4,526

Figure 10. Housing and accommodation *before* support according homelessness and housing categories, weighted support periods females and males, 2001-02%



Source: NDCA CURFS SAAP Data for Victoria, 2001-02

Figure 11. Housing and accommodation *after* support according homelessness and housing categories, weighted support periods females and males, 2001-02%



Source: NDCA CURFS SAAP Data for Victoria, 2001-02

Table 12. Type of housing/accommodation *before* and *after* support for selected cases with both before and after responses, female weighted support periods, 2001-02.

Accommodation Type	Before Support		After Support	
	N	%	N	%
<i>Primary homeless</i>				
Living in a car/tent/park/street/squat	550	3.6	100	0.8
<i>Secondary homeless</i>				
Non-SAAP emergency accommodation	200	1.2	150	1.0
Other non-SAAP housing accommodation	250	1.5	350	2.2
SAAP crisis/short-term accommodation	1200	7.9	1100	7.3
SAAP medium/long-term accommodation	350	2.5	850	5.7
Other SAAP accommodation	350	2.4	500	3.2
<i>Independent</i>				
Renting independently in the private rental market	3350	22.3	3450	23
Renting a public housing dwelling	1550	10.2	2850	18.8
Renting community housing	150	1.0	250	1.6
Purchasing or living in own home	1300	8.5	1000	6.5
<i>Tertiary</i>				
Rooming house/ hostel/hotel	400	2.6	400	2.8
<i>Marginal housed</i>				
Renting a caravan	550	3.6	450	3.0
Boarding in a private home	2450	16.4	1900	12.7
<i>Other</i>				
Institutional setting	250	1.7	250	1.7
Living rent-free in house or flat	2200	14.5	1450	9.8
Total	15,100	100	15,050	1.7

Source: NDCA CURFS SAAP Data for Victoria, 2001-02

1. SAAP figures have been weighted to adjust for agency non-participation and client non-consent
2. High volume responses excluded before and after support

3.8. Living Situation Before Support

Table 13 illustrates the living situation of women immediately prior to accessing support according to primary target group and gender. Just over a quarter of female support periods (28.3%) were living with their spouse/partner or with children. Women escaping domestic violence (46.3%) were more likely to be living with their spouse immediately prior to seeking support. Females accessing youth specific services were more likely to be living with friends temporarily (18.8%), with other unrelated persons (16.2%), or with one parent (16.3%) immediately prior to seeking support. Women accessing single women services were more likely to be living alone (23.2%) or with other unrelated persons (17.5%). Amongst families presenting for support, 30.2 percent were living alone, whilst a further 26.3 percent were living with their spouse/partner. Women accessing cross target services were more likely to be living with a spouse or partner (23.5%) or alone with children (19.2%).

Table 13. Living situation before support by primary target group, weighted female support periods, 2001-02

Living situation before support	Young People	Single women only	Families	Women escaping domestic violence	Cross-target/ Multiple/ general	Total Female		Total Male	
	%	%	%	%	%	N	%	N	%
With both parents	8.6	2.6	3.4	1.5	3.4	850	3.8	500	3.8
With one parent	16.3	4.6	4.1	2.7	5.1	1450	6.5	900	6.9
With relative(s) – temporary/ long term	10.8	10.0	12.1	6.1	12.7	2250	9.9	1000	8.0
With spouse/partner with or without children	11.7	15.6	26.3	46.3	23.5	6400	28.3	1800	14.1
Alone with child(ren)	5.8	14.7	30.2	24.5	19.2	4300	18.9	350	2.8
Alone	9.3	23.2	6.6	8.1	14.4	2500	11.3	4300	34.2
With friend(s) – temporary/long-term	18.8	9.0	13.6	4.4	14.1	2600	11.4	1750	13.8
With other unrelated persons	16.2	17.5	3.0	4.8	6.6	1900	8.4	1900	15.1
Other	2.5	2.8	0.8	1.6	1.0	350	1.6	150	1.3
Total %	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>		<i>100</i>		<i>100</i>
Total Number	4,650	1,550	2,250	7,500	6,650	22,600		12,700	

Source: NDCA CURFS SAAP Data for Victoria, 2001-02

1. SAAP figures have been weighted to adjust for agency non-participation and client non-consent
2. Number excluded due to errors and omissions (weighted) 2,657
3. Numbers excluded - high volume form 1,582

3.9. Reasons for Seeking Assistance

Reasons for seeking assistance have been analysed for the current 2001-02 period due to inconsistent amounts of missing data over the collection period making trend comparisons difficult. Table 14 presents the main reasons for seeking assistance for both females and males. It should be noted that tables present the main recorded reasons for seeking assistance as identified by the client, and particular issues such as current and past sexual abuse, problematic drug and alcohol use may be under disclosed/identified as reasons for seeking assistance due to the sensitiveness of these issues.

Amongst female support periods, domestic violence (33.4%) was the most commonly identified reasons for seeking assistance. This is followed by evictions/previous accommodation ended/asked to leave (14.2%) and relationship and family breakdown (10.7%). Tables 15 and 16 illustrate however that the reasons for seeking assistance vary according to primary target group and age.

Table 14. Main reasons for seeking assistance, weighted support periods, 2001-02

Main Reasons for seeking assistance	Female		Male		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Recently left institution	200	.8	500	3.4	700	1.8
Time out from family situation/ other situation	900	3.6	600	4.0	1500	3.8
Relationship/ family breakdown	2600	10.7	1800	12.5	4400	11.4
Interpersonal conflicts	550	2.2	450	2.9	1000	2.5
Physical/emotional/sexual abuse	900	3.7	150	1.2	1050	2.8
Domestic Violence	8100	33.4	150	1.0	8250	21.3
Financial difficulty	1400	5.7	1450	9.9	2850	7.3
Evictions/ Previous accommodation ended/asked to leave	3450	14.2	2600	18.1	6050	15.7
Drug/alcohol/substance abuse	400	1.6	900	6.1	1300	3.3
Recent arrival to area with no means of support	650	2.6	750	5.3	1400	3.6
Itinerant (moving from place to place)	600	2.4	750	5.1	1350	3.4
Usual accommodation unavailable	2150	8.9	2100	14.3	4250	10.9
Other	2450	10.1	2350	16.0	4800	12.3
Total	24,350	100	14,550	100	38,900	100

Source: NDCA CURFS SAAP Data for Victoria, 2001-02

1. SAAP figures have been weighted to adjust for agency non-participation and client non-consent
2. Number excluded due to errors and omissions (weighted) 1675
3. Numbers excluded - high volume form 4526

The main reasons for seeking support identified across primary target groups are presented in table 15. These have been selected according to the most commonly reported factors. For young females the main presenting reasons for seeking assistance were relationship and family breakdown, followed by evictions (15.8%) and unavailability of usual accommodation (14.1%). For single women support periods, reasons were more spread across a range of factors, however the most frequently reported reasons were domestic violence (18.7%), evictions (15.3%) and unavailability of usual accommodation (12%). Over a quarter of families seeking assistance (28.2%) did so as a result of evictions, followed by unavailability of usual accommodation (13.8%) and financial difficulty (11%).

The overwhelming majority of women accessing domestic violence services (89.1%) did so as a result of domestic violence. The highest proportion of women who disclosed physical/emotional/sexual assault (4.5%) as reason for seeking assistance accessed domestic violence services.

An analysis of the services used according to identification of 'domestic violence' as the main reason for seeking assistance reveals that 73.7 percent received support from domestic violence specific services. A further 10.9 percent identifying domestic violence as their main reason for seeking assistance received support from a cross-target service, 5.7 percent accessed youth specific, 4.9 percent single women, and 4.6 percent family services. This suggests that approximately a quarter of females with domestic violence needs access other SAAP services.

Table 15. Selection of most commonly identified reasons for seeking assistance by primary target group female weighted support periods, 2001-02%

<i>Reason for seeking assistance</i>	Primary Target group				
	Young people	Single women	Families	Women escaping domestic violence	Cross-target/multiple/
Domestic Violence	3.8	18.7	7.7	89.1	7.5
Relationship and Family breakdown	24.3	9	9.7	1.2	12.2
Time out from family situation	7.6	2.4	4.3	0.3	4.4
Evictions/previous accommodation ended	15.8	15.3	28.2	0.8	22.3
Usual accommodation unavailable	14.1	12	13.8	0.4	11.9
Financial difficulty	5.2	7.2	11	0.5	9.6
Physical/emotional sexual abuse	4.4	4.2	2.8	4.5	2.5
Interpersonal conflict	4.6	2.3	1.7	0.4	2.6
Drug/Alcohol/Substance Abuse	2.0	4.4	1.1	0.1	2.4
Recently left institution/gambling	0.8	3.1	0.9	0.1	0.9

Source: NDCA CURFS SAAP Data for Victoria, 2001-02

1. SAAP figures have been weighted to adjust for agency non-participation and client non-consent.
2. Reasons for seeking assistance is not included on the high volume form, which may affect the distribution total percentages.

The most frequently reported reasons for seeking assistance according to different age groups is summarised in the table below. For young people up to the age of 19 years, the main reason for seeking assistance was relationship and family breakdown (25.6%). For all other age groups domestic violence is the main reason for seeking assistance, however the extent varies across these groups. For young adults aged up to 20-24 years domestic violence as the main reason accounted for under a quarter (21.9%) of support periods. For women aged between 25-29 years domestic violence as a reason for seeking assistance increases to over a third (38.8%) of support periods. Women aged between 30-64 years, domestic violence is reported as the main reason for around 45-50 percent of women. For women 65 years and over, domestic violence as a reason for seeking assistance accounts for 39.5 percent of support periods.

Table 16. Selection of most commonly identified reasons for seeking assistance by age, female weighted support periods, 2001-02%

	19 yrs or less	20-24 years	25-29 years	30-34 yrs	35-44 yrs	45-64 yrs	65 yrs or over
Domestic Violence	7.8	21.9	38.8	46.3	49.1	45.2	39.5
Relationship and Family breakdown	25.6	11.6	7	5.3	5.0	6	7.4
Time out from family situation	8.8	3.6	2.1	1.7	1.6	2.8	3.7
Evictions/previous accommodation ended	15	16.8	15.3	13.2	12.5	10.6	13.3
Usual accommodation unavailable	12	11.3	8	7.5	6	6.4	8.1
Financial difficulty	3.9	6.5	5.9	5.3	6	7.6	5.7
Physical/emotional sexual abuse	4.2	3.7	2.8	3.3	3.6	4.4	3.7
Interpersonal conflict	4.2	2.7	1.2	1.6	1.6	1.3	2.2

Source: NDCA CURFS SAAP Data for Victoria, 2001-02

1. SAAP figures have been weighted to adjust for agency non-participation and client non-consent.
2. Reasons for seeking assistance is not included on the high volume form, which may affect the distribution of total percentages.

3.10. Duration of Support

Table 17 provides a comparison of duration of support for females and males over the five year analysis period. Generally, duration of support for females has remained consistent during 1997-2002. Compared with males, females were less likely to receive 'same day' support. The largest proportion of female support periods receive 'same day' support. Approximately a quarter of female support periods occur on the same day and this has remained consistent over the five year period. A further 1/5 of support periods were for a duration of >8-26 weeks. There was a slight increase in the proportion of support periods receiving support for longer than one year from 2.7 in 1997-98 to 3.8 in 2001-02. Examining the mean length of support reveals an increase from 60 days in 1997-98 to 63 days in 2001-02, although this has fluctuated throughout the five-year period.

Table 17. Duration of support weighted support periods, 1997- 2002%

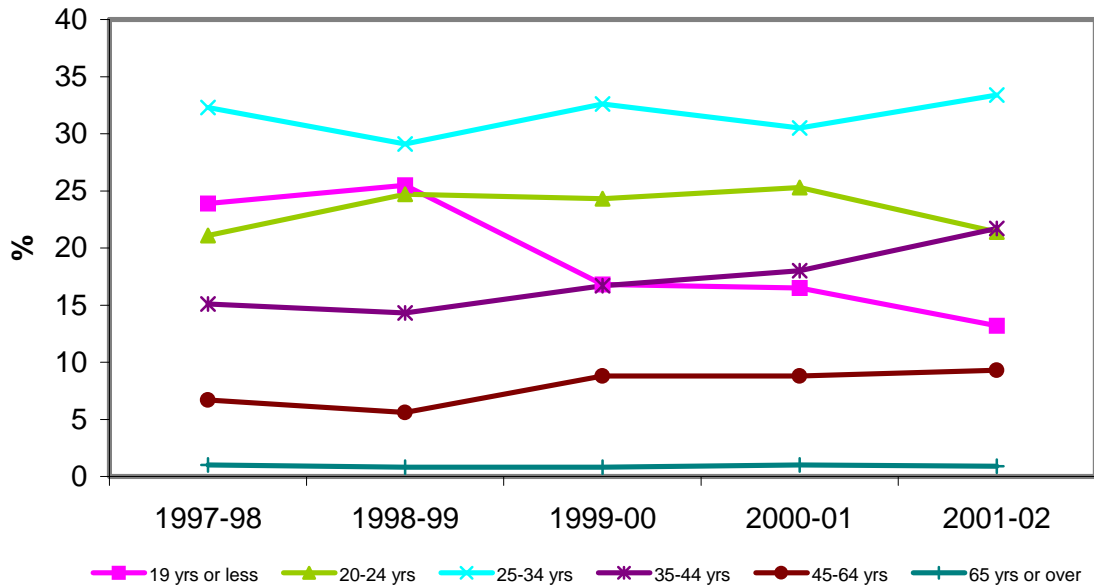
	1997-98		1998-99		1999-00		2000-01		2001-02	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
Same day	26	32.7	25.8	35	25.5	37.2	27.0	47.7	25.2	43.6
1-7 days	16.3	16.7	17	15.4	17.2	12.9	17.3	9.6	15.3	9.5
>1-4 weeks	15.7	18.2	14.8	16.8	15.2	15.9	13.5	12.4	14.4	12.9
>4-8 weeks	13.6	11.5	13.5	10.6	12.6	11.2	12.6	9.8	14.2	11.4
>8-26 weeks	19.9	14.9	20.8	15.9	19.8	14.9	19.9	13.7	21.1	15.3
>26-52 weeks	5.9	3.6	5.4	4.0	6.4	4.9	6.2	4.1	6.1	4.4
More than one year	2.7	2.4	2.7	2.3	3.3	3.0	3.6	2.7	3.8	2.9
Total %	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Total Number	21,250	14,950	22,500	15,700	22,925	14,145	21,450	16,100	22,700	16,350

Source: NDCA CURFS SAAP Data for Victoria, 1997-2002

1. Gender was a consented item up to 1999-00. Data have been weighted to adjust for agency non-participation and client non-consent from 1997-00. From 2000-01 onwards data have been weighted to adjust for agency non-participation only.
2. Weighted figures round to the nearest 50.
3. Number excluded due to errors and omissions (weighted) 1997-98 cases 5575 ; 1998-99 cases 6188 ; 1999-2000 cases 5629; 2000-01 cases 5,836, 2001-02 cases 6,172.

Duration of support can be both an indicator of improved service engagement and also an indicator of higher support needs and difficulty exiting into an independent living situation. Three different periods of support have been selected and analysed over a five year period to identify changing patterns of engagement for different age groups of women. The first period represents same day supports and is shown in figure 12. As indicated, young adult women aged up to 24 years (combining 19 years or less and 20-24 years) represent the highest proportion of same day contacts. However, as can be seen, the proportion of same day contacts recorded for young women aged less than 19 years has been declining since 1998-99. Concurrently, same day contacts for women aged 35-44 years and 45-64 years has increased steadily since 1998-99. Same day support periods for women aged between 25-34 years have fluctuated around 31 percent over the analysis period.

Figure 12. Female weighted support periods, same day support by age, 1997-2002%

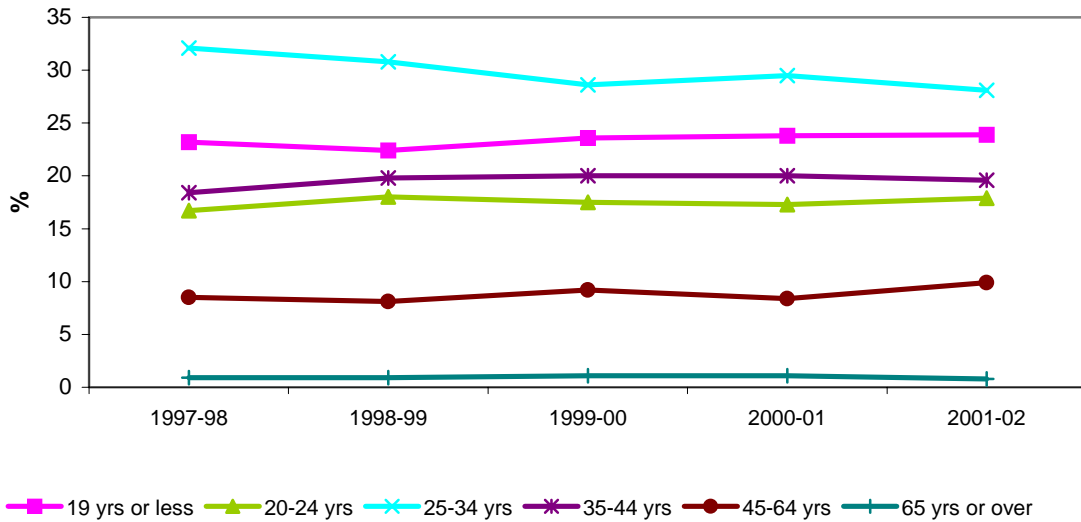


Source: NDCA CURFS SAAP Data for Victoria, 1997-2002

Figure 13 illustrates trends in duration of support for periods between >4-8 weeks. Generally, duration of support according to age has remained relatively consistent over the analysis period. The most noticeable difference can be observed amongst women aged between 25-34 years, with the proportion women receiving support for this period of time declining from 32.1 to 28.1 percent. The proportion of support periods for longer than six months and up to one year is illustrated in figure 14. Again young women aged up to 24 years represent the largest group within this duration of support; however the proportion has declined from 49.5 to 38.4 percent over the five-year period. Most of this change can again be observed amongst young women aged less than nineteen years. The proportion of women aged between 35-44 years receiving support for >26-52 weeks has increased from 14.7 to 22.8 percent.

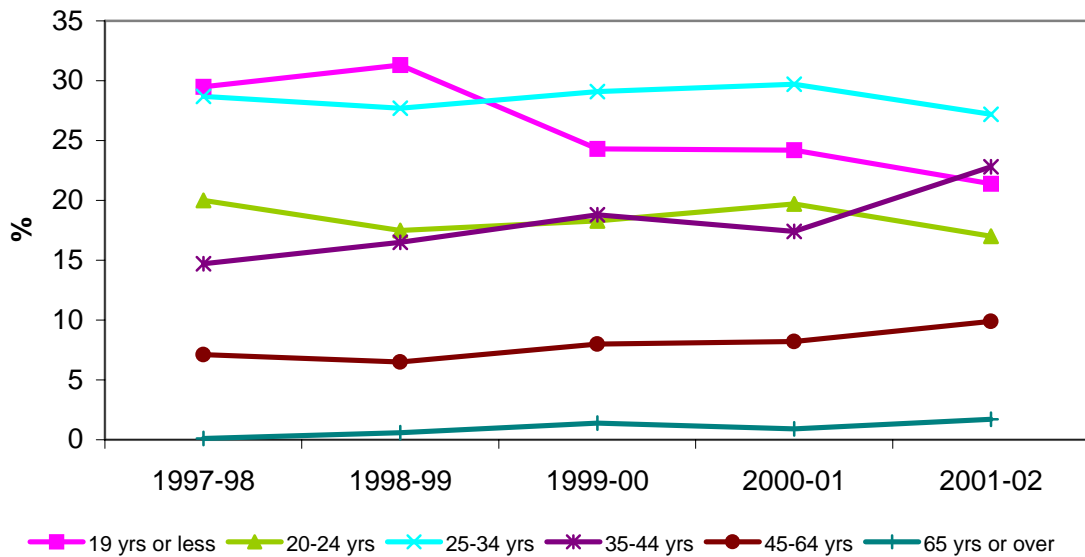
Changes in the length of duration of support, particularly amongst older women aged between 35-44 years raises a number of questions about whether this trend is associated with increasing unresolved support needs for this group of women. It is unlikely that all observed changes are due to changes in agency participation rates alone and suggests the need for further analysis.

Figure 13. Female weighted support periods, >4-8 weeks support by age, 1997-2002



Source: NDCA CURFS SAAP Data for Victoria, 1997-2002

Figure 14. Female weighted support periods, >26-52 weeks support by age, 1997-2002



Source: NDCA CURFS SAAP Data for Victoria, 1997-2002

4. Analysis of Support Needs

The following section provides a discussion of the services needed for women accessing SAAP services during 2001-02. The focus of the analysis was to explore the way in which high support needs (based on the criteria below) were associated with the need for multiple service responses. This analysis is based on existing SAAP data and it is recognised that there are a number of initiatives in place to identify ways of enumerating clients with complex or multiple support needs. Specifically, a recent project commissioned by FACS and undertaken by Thomson Goodall piloted an assessment and measurement tool for complex needs within SAAP services nationally. The task of analysing the proportion of women with complex needs from current SAAP data is limited by the available categories provided within the collection and the inherent assumptions underpinning the combination of factors constituting complexity of need. Therefore the current analysis does not seek to enumerate the total number of “complex clients” rather it seeks to understand the way in which different service needs appear to interact through an exploratory analysis of the data.

The following question was explored through the data analysis:

How do needs amongst women presenting to SAAP services interact? Which needs are likely to require multiple responses and how do they compare with all support periods?

4.1. Classification of Needs

The analysis of needs is based on question 22 on the current SAAP form. Bisset, Campbell, & Goodall (2000) examined this question in an analysis of 1996/97 SAAP data in order to enumerate the proportion of SAAP clients who could be defined as having complex needs. A typology of need was developed, which operationalised needs appearing in question 22 according to a measurable definition of complex needs. Whilst the typology was derived from an extensive review of the literature, there are a number of limitations in applying this same typology when examining service needs for women. In particular, the typology did not recognise the critical gender distinctions in multiple and high support needs.

For the current analysis, the list of service needs identified in question 22 of the SAAP form were categorised into high support needs 1, high support needs 2, and general support needs, appearing in table 18. This was undertaken in order to identify and further examine needs requiring a high level of ongoing support.

The work undertaken by Bisset, Campbell, & Goodall (2000) was used as basis for further refining a gender specific needs typology derived from question 22 on the SAAP form. Needs selected into the three groupings were identified by appraising whether the need is usually provided for within the SAAP setting and forms a core part of SAAP work, and also the impact on the individuals' capacity to live independently. Due to the scope of the project, the following analysis mainly concentrates on those within the high

support needs 1 group. The assumptions underpinning these groupings are based on both service practice and the emergent data, however still ultimately remain a subjective assessment and may vary according to individuals presenting, particularly with respect to the need for domestic violence and medical services. The assumptions underpinning these needs are also contextual within the SAAP system.

Table 18. Categorisation of needs from question 22 appearing on the SAAP client form.

<p><i>High support needs 1</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incest/sexual assault counselling • Psychological services • Psychiatric services • Drug & alcohol support • Physical disability services • Intellectual disability services • Assist with immigration issues • Pregnancy support • Assist with problem gambling <p><i>High support needs 2</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Living skills/personal development • Domestic violence counselling • Culturally appropriate services • Assistance with legal issues • Financial Counselling • Family relationship counselling • Interpreter services • Health medical services 	<p><i>General Support Needs</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment training • Financial Assistance • Other counselling • Meals • Laundry facilities • Recreation • Transport • Advice/ information • Brokerage services • Retrieval/storage/removal • Advocacy of behalf of client • Family planning support • Assist to obtain/maintain benefit/pension/other govt allowance • Assist to obtain/maintain short term accommodation • Assist to obtain/ maintain independent housing • SAAP/CAP accommodation • Support other
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4.2. Summary of Services Needed and Provided

The following section presents the first stage in the analysis of support needs for women accessing SAAP services. Table 19 provides a comparison of the support needed, provided and referred for all females support periods and for those receiving accommodation. Service types are presented according to 'high support needs 1 and 2', and 'general support needs' categories as defined in the previous section. Presentation of the data according to the three needs categories reveals that 'general support needs' and 'high support needs 2' are more frequently recorded, compared to 'high support needs 1'. 'General support' and 'high needs 2' are also more likely to be addressed within the SAAP service setting.

Amongst females receiving support during 2001-02, 32 percent were provided with either onsite or offsite accommodation. As depicted in the table, females provided with accommodation support generally had higher support needs compared to total female support periods. Examining 'high support needs 1 and 2', the main support needs for all support periods was domestic violence (33%), followed by family relationship counselling (20.6%), assistance with legal issues (20.4%) and health and medical issues (16.6%). Amongst females receiving accommodation, the main high support needs 1 and 2 were for domestic violence counselling (37.5%), health and medical services (33.3%), family relationship counselling (27.4%), and living skills (22.7%). The need for drug and alcohol support was also higher amongst accommodated female support periods at 12.5 percent compared to 7.5 percent for all female support periods. Females receiving accommodation also had a slightly higher proportion requiring incest and sexual assault counselling (7.8%), psychological (6.4%) and psychiatric services (5.4%).

Examining the general support needs category also revealed higher needs across all factors for females receiving accommodation; differences were particularly evident for day-to-day living needs including meals, laundry facilities, recreation, transport, and storage. A further noticeable difference amongst those receiving accommodation and all support periods was the need for assistance in obtaining or maintaining a benefit or pension, with 26.4 percent receiving accommodation compared to 15 percent of all support periods requiring this support.

Comparing services needed with those provided reveals that the general support category most closely matches identified needs, indicating that these are the main service responses provided within the SAAP setting. The main service provided within this category was advice/information, followed by advocacy and other counselling. Obviously, the main general support provided to those within the accommodated sample was accommodation. Amongst high support needs categories 1 and 2, the provision of domestic violence and assistance with living skills for both accommodated and all female support periods closely matched identified needs also indicating that that this service need is predominately addressed within the SAAP setting.

The most commonly identified needs requiring external referrals amongst all female support periods included health and medical services (31%), drug and alcohol services (15%), assistance with legal issues (15.6%), and family and relationship counselling (13.4%). Amongst females receiving accommodation, the main needs requiring external referrals included health and medical issues (31.7%), assistance with legal issues (16.7%), family relationship counselling (14.8%), financial counselling (12.1%), and drug and alcohol support (11.4%). Service needs for incest and sexual assault, psychological and psychiatric support were also more likely to be referred externally than provided within the SAAP setting.

Table 19. Comparison of services needed, provided and referred for all female weighted support periods and female support periods receiving accommodation, 2001-02 %

	Total number	All Support Periods				Accommodated Support Periods			
		Needed	Provided	Referred	Not provided or referred	Needed	Provided	Referred	Not provided or referred
High support needs 1									
Incest/sexual assault counselling	4.8	2.7	6.1	5.9	7.8	4.3	7.7	12.3	
Psychological services	4.6	1.3	7.7	5.1	6.4	2.1	7.9	10.6	
Psychiatric services	3.5	1.3	8.3	4.5	5.4	2.3	6.0	9.1	
Drug & alcohol support	7.5	4.4	15.6	10.5	12.5	8.4	11.4	16.6	
Physical disability services	.6	0.3	1.0	2.8	0.7	0.4	0.9	8.0	
Intellectual disability services	.6	0.2	1.2	2.7	0.8	0.4	1.1	8.0	
Assist with immigration issues	1.8	1.4	2.0	2.7	3.2	2.6	2.1	8.0	
Pregnancy support	4.3	3.1	3.9	4.5	7.6	6.0	5.1	9.7	
Assist with problem gambling	.6	0.3	1.1	0.3	0.8	0.5	0.7	8.0	
High support needs 2									
Living skills/personal development	12.9	11.0	4.4	9.3	22.7	20.7	4.5	14.3	
Domestic violence counselling	33.0	29.1	10.8	9.3	37.5	32.3	14.8	14.0	
Culturally appropriate services	7.8	6.4	4.5	3.4	10.9	8.6	5.5	8.6	
Assistance with legal issues	20.4	15.6	15.6	6.1	24.4	18.4	16.7	10.9	
Financial Counselling	13.4	9.2	11.3	7.1	18.4	13.0	12.1	10.9	
Family relationship counselling	20.6	15.9	13.4	10.5	27.4	21.4	14.8	16.9	
Interpreter services	3.2	2.5	2.5	2.7	5.5	4.5	3.0	7.4	
Health medical services	16.6	9.6	31.0	5.8	33.3	20.7	31.7	10.3	
General Support Needs									
Employment training	7.4	3.7	14.4	9.5	12.6	6.8	11.7	18.6	
Financial Assistance	40.1	33.7	21.7	8.9	54.0	48.8	22.4	7.1	
Other counselling	54.6	53.3	11.7	7.6	65.5	63.0	12.1	7.4	
Meals	18.5	17.8	3.9	2.1	42.5	42.4	4.3	2.9	
Laundry facilities	13.7	13.7	0.8	1.5	37.8	38.7	1.3	2.0	
Recreation	11.6	11.4	3.2	3.9	29.7	29.4	3.2	8.3	
Transport	28.0	27.9	1.9	3.3	54.3	54.7	2.5	3.7	
Advice/ information	72.3	73.9	8.6	1.3	75.7	75.9	9.8	2.3	
Brokerage services	4.7	4.4	1.8	2.7	6.9	6.1	2.2	6.6	
Retrieval/removal/removal	13.4	11.7	3.9	5.1	28.2	25.6	4.8	8.3	
Advocacy of behalf of client	51.8	52.1	7.2	3.5	60.7	60.3	8.5	4.3	
Family planning support	1.8	1.2	2.3	3.4	2.9	2.2	2.6	9.1	
Assist to obtain/maintain benefit/pension/other govt allowance	15.0	11.6	12.8	5.5	26.4	21.9	13.7	10.3	
Assist to obtain/maintain short term accommodation	31.4	20.9	15.2	16.6	34.3	28.7	15.4	8.6	
Assist to obtain/ maintain independent housing	44.8	32.1	25.1	26.3	51.1	38.1	24.2	24.9	
SAAP/CAP accommodation	43.4	32	25.0	37.9	100	100	30.5	11.4	
Support other	9.9	9.3	1.8	1.5	0.9	8.0	2.1	2.0	
Total	25,400	24,750	5,800	1,562	8,011	8,011	4,580	365	

Source: NDCA Selected SAAP Variables for Victoria, 2001-02

1. Data have been weighted to adjust for agency non-participation

4.3. Exploration of High and Multiple Support Needs

Based on the categorisation of needs into three groupings, the following section provides an overview of the multiple support needs for a selected sub sample of females requiring support for needs appearing in the 'high support needs 1' category. Table 20 depicts a selected cross tabulation of high support needs 1 with all needs identified on the SAAP form for question 22. Selection of high support needs was undertaken to determine the extent to which these particular support needs were also linked with other support needs appearing in 22 in order to identify particular associations appearing within the data. As the data are dichotomous i.e. a yes or no response, the type of statistical analysis that can be applied is limited. Hierarchical cluster analysis was explored however did not reveal meaningful results, which would assist in understanding the way in which needs interact.

The total number of 'high support needs 1' is based on the needs being identified during service contact. There may be a number of factors that may contribute to an undercounting of these needs within the SAAP service setting and therefore total numbers may only be indicative of the nature of issues presenting. Some of the factors influencing this may be under-disclosure of needs at the time of service contact, particularly for sensitive issues such as sexual assault. Duration of support or contact with the service may be brief and a thorough assessment may not be fully completed.

As with all weighted SAAP data, total numbers of female support periods with 'high support needs 1' have been rounded to the nearest 50. The need for drug and alcohol support (1900), sexual assault (1250), psychological services (1200), pregnancy support (1100), and psychiatric services (900) were the most frequently recorded issues within 'high support needs 1' group. The needs for gambling support, physical disability and intellectual disability services were recorded for 150 support periods.

There are a number of observations that can be made from table 20. Amongst those with a need for drug and alcohol support, 65 percent required assistance with SAAP/CAP accommodation, followed by family relationship counselling (49.4%), living skills (37%), financial counselling (33.7%), and incest and sexual assault counselling (17.7%). Female support periods requiring drug and alcohol support also required the highest proportion of pregnancy support (10%).

Whilst the proportion of those requiring drug and alcohol support who also required psychological (14.4%) or psychiatric services (14.2%) was higher than the total proportion of all female support periods, the data suggests that those with a need for psychiatric or psychological support were more likely to have a co-occurring need for drug and alcohol support. Specifically, amongst those support periods with a need for psychiatric support, 30 percent also required a need for drug and alcohol support compared to 7.5 percent recorded for all support periods. Female support periods requiring the need for psychiatric services were also more likely to score higher on the need for incest and sexual assault support (22%), greatly higher than the proportion of all support periods.

Amongst those with a need for psychological services, 23.3 percent also required drug and alcohol support. Just over a third of female support periods (65%) requiring a need for psychological services also required a need for domestic violence counselling. The

need for assistance with legal issues was identified for over half (52.8%) of those also requiring psychological services. Amongst those requiring psychological services, 37.8 percent required assistance to obtain/maintain benefit/pension compared to 15 percent of support periods. A further 18 percent of support periods requiring psychological services also required culturally appropriate support compared to 7.8 percent of all female support periods.

Amongst female support periods that had a need for incest/sexual assault counselling, 27.2 percent also required drug and alcohol support. A further 60 percent of those requiring sexual assault support also required domestic violence counselling, and family relationship counselling (51.1%), and assistance with legal issues (44.4%).

Female support periods requiring pregnancy support were more likely to require assistance with independent housing (71.2%), financial assistance (67.1%), and SAAP/CAP accommodation (67.5%). A further 18 percent of those requiring assistance for pregnancy support also required drug and alcohol support.

The need for financial counselling (62.2%) and family relationship counselling (53.8%) were highest amongst those requiring gambling support. The need for gambling support was also associated with a higher need for drug and alcohol support (30.1%) and incest and sexual assault counselling (19.2%).

Supports periods for both those requiring support for physical and intellectual disability were also more likely to require assistance with obtaining or maintaining a benefit or pension amongst 32.2 percent and 40.8 percent of support periods respectively. Those with a physical and intellectual disability were also more likely to require advocacy compared to all support periods with 86.7 percent and 86.2 percent respectively. The need for medical services was considerably higher amongst all 'high support 1' groups accounting for approximately half of those also requiring health and medical services compared to 16.6 percent of general support periods. However, female support periods with a physical disability were most likely to also require health and medical services, with just less than three quarters (71.3%) recording this support need.

Female support periods requiring support for an intellectual disability were also more likely to have a need for both psychological (23.7%) and psychiatric (22.4%) services. The need for living skills/personal development was identified as a need for half (50%) of those requiring support for intellectual disability.

Co-occurring High Support Needs

Current definitions of 'complex needs' typically take into account the presence of multiple high support needs that make it difficult to negotiate the various service responses required to assist clients. It is misleading to provide an overall total number of the proportion of clients who may be defined as having complex needs, as there are innumerable combinations of high support needs.

In further exploring the way in which high support needs interact, the data summary table in appendix 2 has tested some of the combinations of high support needs 1 that were more frequently occurring to identify patterns of high multiple needs. For example those who required psychological, domestic violence, and drug and alcohol support concurrently, also scored highly on the need for incest/sexual assault counselling (44%), psychiatric services (37%), living skills (52.5%), assistance with legal issues (72.7%),

family relationship counselling (70%), and health and medical services (81.1%). This contrasts sharply with the corresponding total percentage for needs identified within all female support periods. A further example is females requiring psychiatric and sexual assault services concurrently, who also scored highly on the need for psychological services (46.8%), drug and alcohol support (47.8%), living skills/personal development (46.2%), domestic violence counselling (59.1%), assistance with legal issues (50%) and family relationship counselling (62.4%) and health and medical services (70.4%).

What emerges from such an analysis is that presence of two or more of high support needs 1, or combinations of high support needs 1 and 2, are likely to result in a high need for multiple services appearing in question 22. Those selected with two or more of high support needs 1 and 2 greatly deviate from the total percentage score of the services needed for all support periods, with the need for multiple responses identified down the list increasing dramatically.

Table Key drug & alcohol – d&a pregnancy – preg psychological – psych psychiatric – p-iatric	sexual assault living skills – l-skills gambling - gamblin domestic violence – dv	physical disability – physical disab intellectual disability – intell disab cultural – cultural legal issues – legal
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Table 20. Services needed female cross tabulation weighted support periods, 2001-02

	D& A	Preg	Psych	P-iatric	Sexual assault	Gamblin	Physical Disab	Intell Disab	Total % of all support period needs
<i>Total number</i>	1,900	1100	1200	900	1250	150	150	150	25,384
High support needs 1									
Incest/sexual assault counselling	% 17.7	10.2	21.3	22.0	100.0	19.2	14.0	19.1	4.8
Psychological services	% 14.4	6.5	100	29.2	20.4	20.5	14.0	23.7	4.6
Psychiatric services	% 14.2	3.6	21.9	100.0	15.8	12.8	17.5	22.4	3.5
Drug & alcohol support	% 100.0	18.1	23.2	30.7	27.2	30.1	17.5	10.5	7.5
Physical disability services	% 1.4	.5	1.8	3.0	1.7	3.2	100.0	8.6	.6
Intellectual disability services	% .9	1.3	3.2	4.0	2.5	1.3	9.1	100.0	.6
Assist with immigration issues	% .6	3.5	4.3	1.7	3.2	1.3	3.5	1.3	1.8
Pregnancy support	% 10.5	100	6.1	4.5	9.2	7.7	3.5	9.2	4.3
Assist with problem gambling	% 2.6	1.1	2.8	2.4	2.5	100.0	3.5	1.3	.6
High support needs 2									
Living skills/personal development	% 37.0	30.6	31.3	34.6	34.2	32.0	30.1	50.0	12.9
Domestic violence counselling	% 40.4	36.2	65.5	37.9	60.0	39.7	32.2	42.1	33.0
Culturally appropriate services	% 5.3	10.9	18.5	6.6	11.0	12.2	11.2	6.6	7.8
Assistance with legal issues	% 38.7	29.7	52.8	34.1	44.4	39.1	32.9	38.2	20.4
Financial Counselling	% 33.7	28.9	9.1	30.9	32.0	62.2	32.9	38.2	13.4
Family relationship counselling	% 49.4	46.4	46.0	43.7	51.1	53.8	44.1	43.4	20.6
Interpreter services	% .6	3.2	7.6	3.4	4.7	7.0	7.7	2.6	3.2
Health medical services	% 50.2	51.7	47.7	54.2	45.3	44.9	71.3	52.0	16.6
General Support Needs									
Employment training	% 20.8	12.8	19.6	18.7	19.9	17.9	16.8	15.8	7.4
Financial Assistance	% 65.7	67.1	59.1	60.0	59.0	73.0	60.1	64.5	40.1
Other counselling	% 81.4	75.7	91.1	85.0	85.3	83.3	81.8	83.6	54.6
Meals	% 34.9	28.9	29.6	34.6	33.2	23.7	29.4	34.9	18.5
Laundry facilities	% 25.9	20.3	22.7	26.1	25.9	16.7	21.7	25.0	13.7
Recreation	% 30.1	25.4	28.9	30.4	30.5	26.9	25.9	28.9	11.6
Transport	% 56.4	56.8	49.6	57.1	54.4	44.2	57.3	55.3	28.0
Advice/ information	% 84.5	83.5	89.0	80.4	82.7	84.0	89.5	84.2	72.3
Brokerage services	% 11.1	8.7	9.7	9.7	9.2	12.8	16.8	10.5	4.7
Retrieval/removal/removal	% 36.6	32.3	35.6	32.9	33.0	28.2	33.6	32.9	13.4
Advocacy of behalf of client	% 74.4	72.4	81.3	74.5	71.2	76.3	86.7	86.2	51.8
Family planning support	% 6.4	18.9	5.2	4.4	7.1	7.0	3.5	7.2	1.8
Assist to obtain/maintain benefit/pension/other govt allowance	% 26.0	29.8	37.8	26.6	27.8	25.6	32.2	40.8	15.0
Assist to obtain/maintain short term accommodation	% 45.3	41.5	43.7	44.7	43.2	40.4	37.1	51.3	31.4
Assist to obtain/ maintain independent housing	% 63.3	71.2	61.9	60.0	60.3	70.5	74.8	69.1	44.8
SAAP/CAP accommodation needed	% 65.0	67.5	59.8	61.7	62.7	53.9	51.7	55.3	43.4
Support needed other	% 10.1	7.7	6.6	9.3	6.0	5.1	4.9	6.6	9.9

Source: NDCA Selected SAAP Variables for Victoria, 2001-02. Data selected out of needs variables – does not include missing values. Data have been weighted to adjust for agency non-participation

Table 21 provides a cross tabulation of high support needs 1 with a number of indicators including housing status prior to support, region, age, duration of support, and ethnicity. The table also includes those who were identified as requiring both drug and alcohol and psychiatric services.

Housing status prior to support

As illustrated there is some variance in the housing status amongst females in high needs group 1 prior to accessing SAAP support. Female support periods requiring drug and alcohol services (8.8%) were more likely to be experiencing primary homelessness at the time of service contact, whilst those requiring intellectual disability services (0.9%) were least likely to be experiencing primary homelessness. The highest proportion of female support periods (31.7%) experiencing secondary homelessness at the time of service contact, were those requiring both drug and alcohol and psychiatric services combined (dual diagnosis) indicating that they are more likely to have had some engagement with support services prior to their current contact. This group were also more likely to be residing within an institutional setting (9.5%) immediately prior to service access, compared to 1.7 percent of all female support periods.

Those with both D&A and psychiatric (23.3%) service requirements, drug and alcohol (23.1) alone and females requiring pregnancy support (24.3%) were less likely to be residing in independent housing at the time of service contact compared to all female support periods (38.2%). Just under half of females requiring psychological services (44.1%) and disability services (42.3%) were residing in independent housing prior to service contact. Support periods requiring intellectual disability (7.1%) and gambling support (7.7%) were more highly represented amongst the tertiary homeless population compared to other groups. A quarter of female support periods requiring pregnancy support (25.7%) were marginally housed, either living in a caravan or boarding in a private home.

Department of Human Service Region

The table also suggests some variation across regions amongst high support needs group 1 support periods. It should be noted that this observation might be influenced by the type and number of services across different regions. As shown by the table, the highest proportion of female support periods requiring drug and alcohol support (34.1%), and drug and alcohol and psychiatric services combined (34%) were within the Southern Metropolitan Region. The Southern region also had a higher proportion of support periods for females requiring support for a physical disability (31.5%), followed by the Eastern region (29.4%). Amongst females requiring pregnancy support, 40 percent were within non-metropolitan regions or "other". A high proportion of support periods requiring psychiatric (32%), sexual assault (35.8%), and intellectual disability (39.5%), were within non-metropolitan regions.

Age profile

Examining the age profile across various support needs reveals some differences in age distribution. In particular, approximately two thirds (63%) of support periods requiring pregnancy support were aged less than 25 years old, with a third of those (33.3%) were aged less than 19 years. A higher proportion of support periods requiring drug and alcohol (41.7%), drug and alcohol and psychiatric services combined (40.3%), sexual assault (35.8%), psychiatric (33.7%) and intellectual disability services (32.8%) were aged less than 24 years. There were also a high proportion of female support periods requiring drug and alcohol (34.9%), sexual assault (34.4%), gambling (35%), and drug and alcohol and psychiatric combined (33.9%) aged between 25 to 34 years. However, those requiring physical disability support tended to be concentrated amongst older age groups, with the largest proportion for physical disability (29.9%) aged between 45 to 64 years. Female support periods requiring gambling support also had an older age profile with 50 percent aged between 35 to 64 years.

Duration of support

The duration of support was generally longer for those within high support needs group 1, compared to all female support periods. Amongst all female support periods, 31 percent received support over the course of the same day or one day (24 hour period). Whereas the highest recorded proportion receiving same or one day support amongst high needs was 12.8 percent for those requiring psychiatric services and lowest for those with a physical disability (4.8%). Similar to all female support periods, a low proportion received support for 2 to 7 days. With the exception of those requiring intellectual disability services, female support periods within high support group 1 were most likely to be supported for over eight weeks and less than six months. There were a higher proportion of high support needs 1 receiving support for longer than six months compared to all female support periods. In particular, those with psychiatric and drug and alcohol service requirements combined (15.6%) had the highest proportion receiving support for longer than one year.

Cultural identity

The cultural identity of those within high support needs group 1 also varied according to the distribution identified for all female support periods. Generally, there were a higher proportion of non-indigenous Australians amongst high support needs group 1. Amongst female support periods requiring drug and alcohol services, there was a slightly higher proportion of Indigenous females (6.3%) compared to proportion of Indigenous support periods across all females (5.3%). Compared to the distribution of all female support periods, there were a higher proportion of 'other EP groups' amongst those requiring psychological services (23.3%) and physical disability services (18.8%).

Table 21. Weighted support periods for females within high support needs group 1 by selected demographic and service indicators, 2001-02 %.

	D& A	Preg	Psych	P-iatric	Sexual assault	Gamb	Physical Disab	Intell Disab	D&A / P-iatric	Total % of all clients & support periods
Housing status prior to support (full weight)										
Primary Homeless	8.8	5.6	2.8	4.6	4.3	2.9	4.6	0.9	4.0	4.2
Secondary Homelessness	25.1	19.4	21.5	23.9	24.2	18.5	21.9	21.9	31.7	18.2
Tertiary Homeless	5.3	3.8	2.8	5.1	3.5	7.7	4.5	7.1	7.1	3.2
Marginally Housed	17.6	25.7	13.8	16.5	16.3	18.8	13.6	16.2	15.3	19.4
Independent Housing	23.1	24.3	44.1	30.7	37.5	38.7	42.3	34.9	23.3	38.2
Other - Institutional setting	6.5	1.3	2.3	7.3	2.0	6.4	5.5	2.3	9.5	1.7
Other – Living rent-free in house or flat	13.6	19.8	12.4	12.0	12.1	7.1	7.5	16.4	9	14.9
DHS Region (no weight)										
Eastern Metro	14.7	12.4	26.1	18.6	18.1	23.1	29.4	26.3	18.5	19.1
Northern Metro	10.1	12.8	7.9	7.7	12.3	13.5	9.8	5.9	7.7	9.7
Southern Metro	34.1	19.6	20.4	29.5	25.5	25.6	31.5	17.1	34.0	19.6
Western Metro	12.2	15.0	18.7	12.2	8.3	11.5	9.8	11.2	13.1	15.2
Other	28.9	40.2	27.0	32.0	35.8	26.3	19.6	39.5	26.6	36.5
Age (full weight)										
19 yrs or less	17.8	33.3	13	16.8	18.5	4.2	10.3	16.9	17	19.2
20 to 24 yrs	23.9	29.7	13.6	16.9	17.3	9.8	10.0	15.9	23.3	18.7
25 to 34yrs	34.9	29.1	34	28.4	34.4	35	18.6	26.3	33.9	31.2
35 to 44 yrs	17.2	7.3	26.6	24.8	20.9	25.7	25.0	26.6	20.3	20.6
45 to 64 yrs	5.9	0.4	11.6	12.5	8.3	24.7	29.9	11.3	5.5	9.2
65 yrs or more	0.4	0	1.2	0.5	0.5	0.7	6.3	3.0	0	1.2
Duration of support (non part weight)										
Same day -1 day	9	9.4	8.7	12.8	8.8	9.7	4.8	8.6	5.9	31.2
2-7 days	8	7.2	7.6	10.2	8.4	4.8	8.7	9.4	9.3	9.3
>1-4 weeks	18.9	16.1	13.1	14.3	15.9	12.1	9.6	12.8	12.2	14.4
>4 – 8 weeks	15.5	13.5	17.2	15.6	17.1	21.0	18.3	24.8	15.1	14.2
>8 –26 weeks	28.4	29.8	28.3	27.8	28.4	25.0	34.6	21.4	31.7	21.1
>26-52 weeks	10.7	12.4	12.9	9.6	10.8	15.3	14.4	12.0	10.2	6.1
More than one year	9.6	11.4	12.0	9.8	10.6	12.1	9.6	11.1	15.6	3.8
Ethnicity (full weight)										
Indigenous Australian	6.8	4.8	1.7	4.0	4.6	3.5	0.8	1.5	5.2	5.3
Non-indigenous Australian	86.1	79.3	70.6	82.5	79.0	74.5	73.4	84.5	85.3	75.1
English proficiency 1	3.5	3.8	4.3	3.3	4.2	8.3	7.1	2.9	4.4	3.5
Other EP Groups	3.6	12.0	23.3	10.2	12.2	13.7	18.8	11.1	5.1	16.1

Source: NDCA Selected SAAP Variables for Victoria, 2001-02. Data selected out of needs variables – does not include missing values.

1. Full weight – data have been weighted to adjust for agency non-participation and client non-consent.
2. Non-participation weight – data have been weighted to adjust for agency non-participation.
3. No weight - Regional Administrative Data do not have weights applied.
4. Regional data has been grouped as other for non-metro areas in the CURFS to ensure that data are non identifiable. Other DHS regions include Barwon South Western, Gippsland, Grampians, Hume, and Loddon Mallee and Statewide.
5. English proficiency group 1 countries include Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, South Africa, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America.
6. English proficiency group 2-4 countries, excluding Australia, are those that are not included in English proficiency group 1.

5. Discussion of Findings

Women account for approximately two thirds of SAAP clients, and are highly represented across all target groups within SAAP. An analysis of service trends and patterns over the past five years provide an indication of the impact of homelessness for women entering the SAAP service system. A number of patterns have emerged from the current analyses that have implications for the further development of appropriate responses for women experiencing homelessness now and into the future.

Over the past five years the data have revealed an increase in the proportion of women as a percentage of all support periods accessing non-gender specific cross-target and family services, indicating an ongoing demand for these services amongst women. The age profile of women accessing SAAP support also appears to be becoming older.

These trends appear to correspond with the changing distribution of funding across primary target groups. Most funding increases have been directed towards cross-target and family services. There has been a decline in the proportion of funding directed towards youth specific services, appearing to correspond with a decrease in the proportion of young women aged 19 years or less. The distribution of funding to women specific services within SAAP has increased by one percent from four to five percent, and the proportion of expenditure within domestic violence services has remained consistent at around 23 percent over the five-year period.

Whilst changes in the distribution of funding may account for the observed changes, it is unclear whether the provision of funding has been linked to changing service demand and the characteristic needs of those presenting. **The current analysis raises a number of questions of whether the changing distribution of funding across primary target groups is a reflection of increased demand for services in these areas** or for other reasons. For instance, are older women needing to access SAAP services and is this change a result of growing homelessness amongst these groups? Are women increasingly accessing cross-target services as a means of escaping violence or abuse because they are unable to access gender specific services due to shortages in available places? If the proportion of males accessing cross-target services increases, what impact does this have for female clients utilising generalist services?

A closer examination of what is occurring in practice and understanding the changing nature of service provision within SAAP may assist in answering some of these questions. The current analysis does show however, that women are major users of generalist or cross-target services as well as gender specific services.

Although increases in recurrent funding within SAAP has enhanced the capacity of the homelessness service system to respond to demand and growing complexity, it is critical that service delivery is reflective of the specific needs of women seeking support. Specific funding directed toward domestic violence services within SAAP clearly remains a critical component to responding to homelessness amongst women. The apparent increase in the proportion of female support periods within cross-target services is likely to have implications for women accessing these services, most notably within onsite residential accommodation services.

The Commonwealth Advisory Committee on Homelessness report that

.....while single women are increasingly at risk of homelessness, only 46 of the 1126 SAAP agencies focus exclusively on their needs and less than 4 per cent of the annual SAAP budget is spent on services for single women (Commonwealth Advisory Committee on Homelessness, 2000: 61).

Whilst domestic violence remains a major precursor to women's homelessness, the data from the current analysis suggests that women access SAAP for a number of reasons that extend beyond the need for domestic violence support. Analysis of services needed indicates that there are potentially innumerable combinations of high support needs. The housing circumstances prior to seeking support indicate that well over half of women live in precarious housing and accommodation situations, which lack security of tenure before accessing SAAP support. An examination of high support needs indicates that service responses within SAAP need to be sufficiently resourced to respond to complexity of needs. This is not a new finding and has been an area of much research interest and discussion within the sector.

What does the current analysis tell us about the way in which high needs interact? Firstly, from the data it appears that some needs are more likely to appear in combination than others. This suggests that **particular needs are likely to have a multiplying effect or chronicity that requires intensive support in order to resolve the clients' housing situation.** Within the high support needs 1 category, the need for drug and alcohol, psychological, psychiatric, and sexual assault services in particular, appear to be strongly linked with the need for multiple service responses. The above needs are also associated with a higher need for domestic violence counselling, living skills, assistance with legal issues, family counselling, financial counselling and health and medical services amongst women.

Intellectual disability and gambling also appear to be related to the need for multiple responses, however are reported less frequently as support needs within SAAP. **The need for service responses that particularly focus on addressing the concurrent needs of sexual assault, drug and alcohol, psychiatric and psychological needs will be particularly important in providing appropriate complex service need responses for women within SAAP.** The data also illustrated that a high proportion of women present to SAAP services with the need for pregnancy support. The need for tailored responses that provide appropriate and ongoing support for women who are pregnant will also be a critical component of a gender specific response. This is especially so for pregnant women who also have drug and alcohol support needs.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. Selected Clusters of High Needs 1 and 2.

Table key	
A = psychological/ domestic violence/ drug and alcohol	F = drug and alcohol/ living skills/ psychiatric
B = drug and alcohol/ living skills/ psychological	G = psychiatric/ domestic violence/ drug and alcohol
C = Psychological / drug and alcohol/ sexual assault	H = Psychiatric/ drug and alcohol/ sexual assault
D = Cultural/ drug and alcohol/ psychological	I = Cultural/ drug and alcohol/ psychiatric
E = Psychological & Sexual Assault	J = Drug and Alcohol and Psychiatric
	K = Psychiatric & Sexual Assault
	L = Intellectual Disability/Living skills

Table 1. Selection of co-occurring high support needs by all support needs, weighted females support periods, 2001-02 %

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	Total % of all support female periods	
<i>Total number support periods according to combinations appearing in table key</i>	150	150	100	00*	250	150	100	100	00*	250	200	100	25,400	
High support needs 1														
Incest/sexual assault counselling	%	44.0	41.8	100.0	15.8	100	37.0	47.0	100.0	55.6	34.4	100	25.0	4.8
Psychological services	%	100.0	100.0	100.0	100	100	45.7	46.1	55.1	44.4	39.0	46.8	30.3	4.6
Psychiatric services	%	37.0	47.0	56.3	21.1	36.1	100.0	100.0	100	100	100	100	27.6	3.5
Drug & alcohol support	%	100.0	100.0	100.0	100	36.1	100.0	100.0	100.0	100	100	47.8	15.8	7.5
Physical disability services	%	3.5	3.0	4.6	0	2.5	3.6	3.5	5.6	0	3.1	5.4	6.6	0.6
Intellectual disability services	%	4.9	5.2	5.7	0	4.6	6.5	7.0	5.6	0	4.2	5.9	100	0.6
Pregnancy support	%	14.7	12.0	16.1	31.6	10	9.4	8.7	9.0	0	6.9	8.6	10.5	4.3
Assist with problem gambling	%	5.6	3.7	5.7	0	5.0	5.1	3.5	0	0	4.2	1.6	1.3	0.6
Assist with immigration issues	%	.7	.7	3.4	0	5.4	1.4	0	3.4	11.1	1.2	2.7	0	1.8
High Support Needs 2														

		A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	Total % of all support female periods
<i>Total number support periods according to combinations appearing in table key</i>		150	150	100	00*	250	150	100	100	00*	250	200	100	25,400
Living skills/personal development	%	52.5	100.0	64.4	57.9	48.1	100.0	56.5	57.3	66.7	53.3	46.2	100	12.9
Interpreter services	%	1.4	.7	0	10.5	7.1	1.4	1.7	0	11.1	1.2	1.1	3.9	3.2
Domestic violence counselling	%	100.0	56.0	72.4	52.6	73.9	47.1	100.0	60.7	66.7	44.4	59.1	42.1	33.0
Culturally appropriate services	%	7.0	8.2	3.4	100	14.9	4.3	5.2	5.6	100	3.5	5.4	9.2	7.8
Assistance with legal issues	%	72.7	58.2	64.3	52.6	59.7	55.1	65.2	58.4	33.3	48.3	50.0	42.1	20.4
Financial Counselling	%	49.6	55.9	49.4	57.9	42.3	51.4	49.6	51.7	66.7	41.3	46.8	53.9	13.4
Family relationship counselling	%	70.0	76.9	82.8	78.9	63.5	71.0	68.7	68.5	66.7	60.6	62.4	52.6	20.6
Health medical services	%	81.1	78.4	79.3	68.4	63.5	78.3	73.0	77.5	77.8	66.8	70.4	69.7	16.6
General Support Needs														
Employment training	%	32.8	39.5	34.5	31.6	27.4	37.0	32.2	36.0	22.2	29.3	29.6	18.4	7.4
Financial Assistance	%	81.1	82.1	77.0	52.6	71.8	78.3	75.7	75.3	77.8	71.8	70.4	67.1	40.1
Other counselling	%	97.2	95.5	97.7	100	95.9	92.0	93.9	92.1	100	89.2	91.9	89.5	54.6
Meals	%	46.9	43.4	42.6	52.6	38.6	47.1	41.7	37.1	66.7	39	38.2	40.8	18.5
Laundry facilities	%	32.2	27.7	26.5	47.4	28.2	31.2	27.0	23.6	66.7	27.8	25.8	25.0	13.7
Recreation	%	44.1	44.8	51.7	47.4	42.7	51.4	36.5	44.9	33.3	37.8	40.9	42.1	11.6
Transport	%	64.3	67.1	67.8	47.4	66.0	81.2	71.3	75.3	77.8	67.6	69.4	65.8	28.0
Advice/ information	%	93.7	96.3	93.1	89.5	92.5	94.2	90.4	93.3	100	91.1	87.1	81.6	72.3
Brokerage services	%	19.6	18.6	21.8	15.8	14.5	21.7	20.0	21.3	33.3	17	16.1	14.5	4.7
Retrieval/removal/removal	%	52.5	53.0	55.2	36.8	45.2	54.3	46.1	51.7	44.4	43.6	43.5	42.1	13.4
Advocacy of behalf of client	%	87.4	93.3	87.4	89.5	84.2	92.0	83.5	92.1	100	83.8	83.3	88.2	51.8
Family planning support	%	12.6	12.0	15.0	21	10	9.4	6.1	9.0	0	6.2	10.8	13.2	1.8
Assist to obtain/maintain benefit/pension/other govt allowance	%	48.3	45.5	43.7	57.9	41.9	39.1	36.5	34.8	11.1	32.4	32.8	47.4	15.0
Assist to obtain/maintain short term accommodation	%	51.7	57.4	55.2	78.9	50.6	53.6	53.0	50.6	55.6	52.9	50.5	55.3	31.4
Assist to obtain/ maintain independent housing	%	74.8	76.9	77.0	84.2	68.9	71.7	68.7	73.0	77.8	67.2	72	77.6	44.8
SAAP/CAP accommodation needed	%	78.3	77.6	82.7	89.5	73	76.8	72.2	71.9	100	71.0	72	67.1	43.4
Support needed other	%	4.9	11.2	6.9	10.5	3.7	12.3	7.8	10.1	0	12.7	7.5	6.6	9.9

*Data weighted to adjust for agency non-participation. Total numbers for co-occurring issues of cultural/drug and alcohol/psychological and cultural/drug/psychiatric were below 20. As data are weighted, figures are rounded to the nearest 50