

Senate Community Affairs Committee
ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
FAMILIES, HOUSING, COMMUNITY SERVICES AND
INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO
2010-11 Additional Estimates Hearings

Outcome Number: 5

Question No: 82

Topic: Unmet Need

Hansard Page: Written

Senator Boyce asked:

If the Department does know the level of need in the areas of disabilities or the area of homelessness could you please tell us what it is and exactly how you arrived at the figures provided?

Answer:

Data from reports which inform policy development and assist in understanding the level of need in the area of disability as referenced in response to Question on Notice 81 are available from the Australian Institute of Welfare, the Social Policy and Research Centre and the Department of Families Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs websites:

www.aihw.gov.au

<http://www.sprc.unsw.edu.au/>

http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/sa/disability/pubs/policy/way_forward/Documents/disability.htm

Community and Disability Services Ministers at their conference on 16 December 2010 agreed to use the National Need and Supply Model to generate and publish national reports on disability services and demand for these services, using data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers (once this data is available).

Determining the level of need in the area of homelessness is complex. However, there are data on need and unmet need from the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP), which was the major government response to homelessness until it was subsumed in the National Affordable Housing Agreement in January 2009.

The SAAP data measure expressed need and unmet need from people who access SAAP agencies. During the year 2008-09, SAAP agencies helped a total of 204,900 people with homelessness services. There was a national daily average total of 12,416¹ people who required SAAP accommodation for the night, of whom 12,086 people were accommodated and 330 people were turned away² in 2008-09.

¹ Data were not reported for Victoria in 2008-09 due to data collection issues.

² It should be noted that the SAAP turn away data do not include people whose data were not collected because, for example, their requests for accommodation were not appropriate to the agency, or the agency they approached did not participate in the SAAP demand data collection. Further, the turn-away data relate to two weeks of the year only and it is not known to what extent seasonal and other factors may impact on results.

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In addition, the August 2011 Census conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics will provide an estimate of the homeless population on Census night. Information is available on the Australian Bureau of Statistics and Australian Institute of Health and Welfare websites:

www.abs.gov.au

www.aihw.gov.au.