

Senate Community Affairs Committee
ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO
Budget Estimates 2011-2012, 30/31 May 2011

Question: E11-107

OUTCOME 0: Whole of Portfolio

Topic: HOMELESS SERVICES

Written Question on Notice

Senator Boyce asked:

In evidence before the Community Affairs Committee Budget Estimates session of May 30, a Mr Kalisch of the Department in answering questions regarding uniform and consistent data collection talked about the application from July 1 of a 'data validator' that apply to and I quote "all of the homeless services that provide us with data".

What percentage of homeless services, provide data? *[Please provide figures state by state.]*

Answer:

The latest publicly available data on homelessness service agencies is from the 2009–10 Supported Accommodation Assistance Program National Data Collection. In 2009–10, 92 per cent (or 1,434) of all funded agencies (1,559) were required to participate in data collection (Table 1).

Not all funded agencies are required to participate in data collection. States and territories determine the requirement to collect data. For example, some agencies are soup kitchens and could not be reasonably expected to collect data. Of the 1,434 agencies that were required to participate in data collection, 93 per cent (or 1,338) required to supply data actually provided data to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) (Table 2).

About 86 per cent (1,338 of 1,559) of funded homelessness service agencies provided data in 2009–10.

The AIHW does not have information on unfunded homelessness service agencies but understands that they are likely to be few in number.

The new Specialist Homelessness Services (SHS) collection commenced on 1 July 2011 and will use improved data validation arrangements including Validata™, a tool developed by the AIHW to help improve the timeliness of data provision. The SHS collection agencies submit data to an AIHW webportal. This data is passed through the Validata™ which applies a range of data checks and edits and presents a report back to agencies for any corrections required. This automated process is more efficient than the past manual process, resulting in significant gains in the timeliness in processing data.

Table 1: Supported Accommodation Assistance Program National Data Collection: agency participation rates, participating and non-participating agencies, by state and territory, 2009–10

State/territory	Participating agencies (number)	Non-participating agencies (number)	Total funded agencies (number)	Agency participation rate (per cent)
NSW	353	7	360	98.1
Victoria	502	58	560	89.6
Queensland	224	21	245	91.4
WA	143	6	149	96.0
SA	102	14	116	87.9
Tasmania	35	1	36	97.2
ACT	32	10	42	76.2
NT	43	8	51	84.3
Australia	1,434	125	1,559	92.0

Notes

1. Inclusion or exclusion of agencies from the SAAP NDC is determined by the state and territory governments responsible for administering the government response to homelessness.
2. Not all funded agencies are required to participate in data collection. Agencies required to participate in data collection are termed 'participating agencies'. Agencies not required to participate in data collection are termed 'non-participating' agencies.
3. In 2009–10, 5 participating agencies in NSW; 6 in Victoria; 3 in Qld; 2 in SA; and 1 in NT were notified to AIHW as being unable to provide data for the entire reporting year. These participating agencies are excluded from the count of participating agencies in this table and included in the count of non-participating agencies.

Source: Supported Accommodation Assistance Program National Data Collection: Administrative Data Collection.

Table 2: Supported Accommodation Assistance Program National Data Collection: agency participation rates, participating agencies which provided data, by state and territory, 2009–10

State/territory	Participating agencies ^(a) (number)	Participating agencies that provided data (number)	Agency participation rate (per cent)
NSW	353	333	94.3
Victoria	502	462	92.0
Queensland	224	215	96.0
WA	143	123	86.0
SA	102	99	97.1
Tasmania	35	35	100.0
ACT	32	31	96.9
NT	43	40	93.0
Australia	1,434	1,338	93.3

- (a) 'Participating agencies' refers to the number of agencies that should have been participating in the reference period. Not all funded agencies are required to participate in data collection (see Table 1). Consequently, some funded agencies are not included in this table.

Notes

1. Table based on records returned from participating agencies during the reference period.
2. Inclusion or exclusion of agencies from the SAAP NDC is determined by the state and territory governments responsible for administering the government response to homelessness.
3. Caution should be used when comparing data across years because of changes in policy and service delivery arrangements.

Source: Supported Accommodation Assistance Program National Data Collection: Administrative Data Collection.