

The Aboriginal Housing Authority

Objectives of the AHA

The Aboriginal Housing Authority (AHA) was established as a State Government Statutory Authority on 22nd October 1998 to manage and provide culturally and environmentally appropriate affordable public housing, accommodation and services for Aboriginal people in South Australia. It is governed by the Housing and Urban (Administrative Arrangements) Act 1995.¹

A total of 1,790 rental properties and 33 vacant allotments, (formerly managed by the Aboriginal Housing Unit of the SA Housing Trust) were transferred to the AHA on 5th February 2000. 38 staff and associated services and functions of the Aboriginal Housing Unit were transferred to the AHA on the same date.²

The principal role of the AHA is to improve housing outcomes for Aboriginal people in South Australia through a range of housing tenures. Key objectives include:

- ◆ Maximising the level of funding available for housing projects and increasing the supply of Aboriginal housing in areas of highest unmet need.
- ◆ Reducing overcrowding in Aboriginal households.
- ◆ Improving levels of health through the provision of housing which meets high building and quality standards and is appropriate to Aboriginal cultural needs.
- ◆ Increasing training and employment opportunities for Aboriginal people.
- ◆ Developing needs-based assessment processes.
- ◆ Promoting Aboriginal access to all housing tenures, including homeownership and community housing options.
- ◆ Contributing to economic development and empowerment for Aboriginal communities through increased resources, self management and enhanced skills development.³

In addition to the Rental Program, the AHA administers the *Indigenous Community Housing Program*, the *Aboriginal Home Ownership Pilot Program*, the *Private Rental Assistance Program*, and the SA components of the *National Aboriginal Health Strategy* and the *Fixing Houses for Better Health Initiative*.⁴

SNAPSHOT 1

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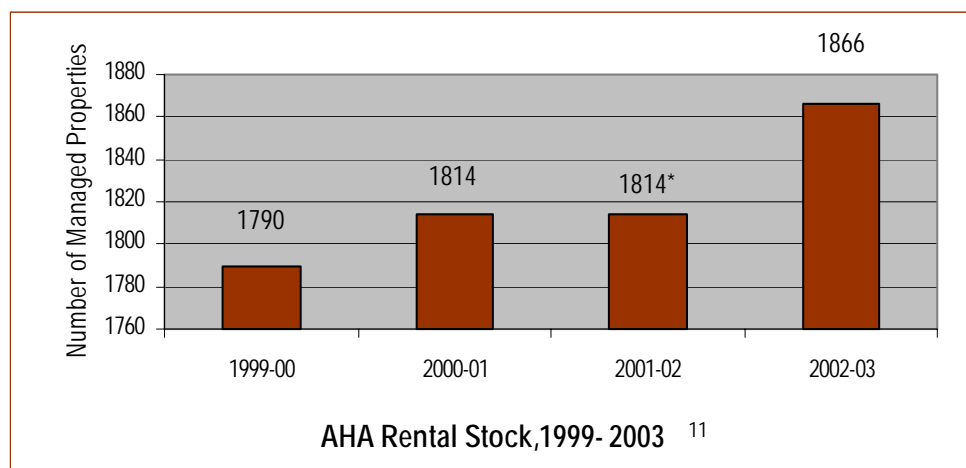
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Aboriginal Housing Authority

Number of People Living In AHA Properties

- ◆ As of June 30th 2003, the Aboriginal Housing Authority had a rental stock of 1,866 dwellings, comprising 91.7% detached houses, 6.2% attached houses, 0.5% flats, 1.6% cottage flats, and 0.1% boarding houses.⁵
- ◆ 54 of these properties were unlettable due to redevelopments, major upgrades, approved for sale, etc.⁶
- ◆ It is estimated that the remaining 1,812 dwellings (excluding boarding houses) provide accommodation to 4,764 persons.⁷
- ◆ 50 of the dwellings have one bedroom, 277 two-bedrooms, 1368 three-bedrooms, 154 four-bedrooms and 17 five- bedrooms. ⁸
- ◆ 61.5% of the rental stock is located in Metropolitan Adelaide and 38.5% is in Country SA.⁹
- ◆ There are also 942 dwellings managed by 46 Indigenous Community Housing Organisations in Rural and Remote regions of South Australia.¹⁰

Growth In AHA Rental Stock



* Note: The 2001-02 AHA Annual Report states a stock of 1,798 dwellings but this refers to tenable properties only. Revised figure provided by AHA.

- ◆ 1,790 dwellings were transferred from the SA Housing Trust (SAHT) to the AHA in February 2000.¹²
- ◆ From February 2000 to June 2003 a further 111 dwellings were transferred from the SAHT to the AHA, (31 of these were transferred during 2002-03). ¹³
- ◆ Other changes in rental housing stock from February 2000 to June 2003 were due to the purchase of 77 established dwellings, construction of 26 new dwellings, and the sale or demolition of other AHA dwellings. ¹⁴

Dwellings Purchased and Constructed during 2002-03:

- ◆ 17 dwellings were purchased at a cost of \$2.4 million; (average cost of \$141,200 per dwelling).
- ◆ 17 dwellings were built by the AHA: 5 two-bedroom units (av. cost: \$106,700), 4 three-bedroom houses (av. cost: \$129,900), 5 four-bedroom houses (av. cost: \$142,600), and 3 five-bedroom houses (av. costs: \$242,300).¹⁵

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Eligibility Requirements for AHA Rental Program

To be eligible to apply for a service with the Aboriginal Housing Authority, a person/household:

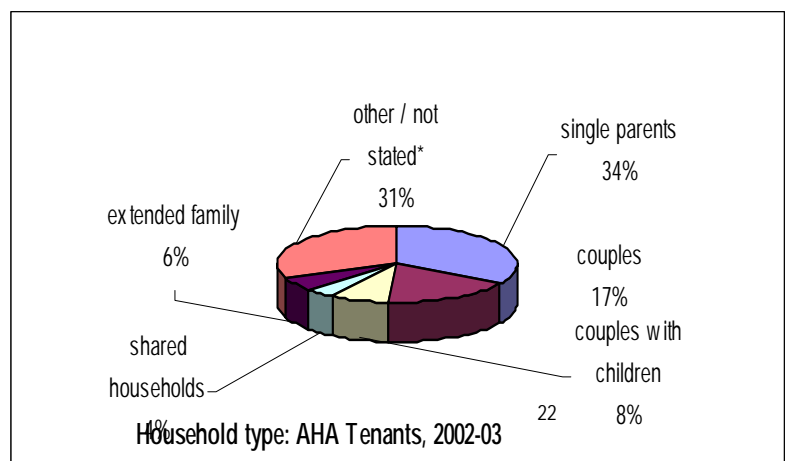
- ◆ Must be a resident of South Australia.
- ◆ Must be in receipt of an independent income (regular wage, salary or Centrelink payment etc.)
- ◆ Must not hold ownership in residential property.
- ◆ Must meet Income and Asset Limits and / or a Needs Test.
- ◆ Income Limits (as of June 2004) were \$585 gross income per week (\$30,413 p.a.) for a single person up to \$1,215 gross income per week (\$63,166 p.a.) for a couple with 4 or more dependents.
- ◆ Asset Limits (as of June 2004) were \$257,500 for a single person households up to \$320,500 for couple households. (Note: both the income and asset limits are updated regularly).
- ◆ Demonstrate proof of Aboriginality. ¹⁶

In 2000 there were significant changes to eligibility and wait list management policies for public housing, including a requirement to target public housing to those applicants most in need. As a result four categories of applicants were introduced:

- ◆ Category 1: Applicants with utmost housing need. Housing issues of extreme difficulty and seriousness.
- ◆ Category 2: Applicants who are not in urgent need, but for whom all other housing options are not suitable as long term options.
- ◆ Category 3: Applicants who pass an income and asset test but who do not meet the needs criteria for Category 1 or Category 2.
- ◆ Category 4: Applicants who pass the basic eligibility tests but do not pass the income and assets tests, have no urgent housing need and can be registered for low demand areas. ¹⁷

Characteristics of AHA Tenants

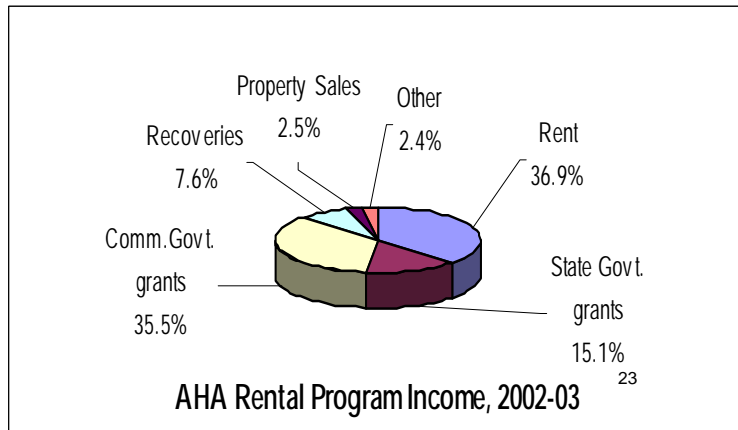
- ◆ There were 1,685 households on the AHA waiting list as at June 30th 2003, with the majority (78%) being in Category 3. 13% were in Category 1 and 6 % in Category 2.¹⁸
- ◆ 343 new allocations were made during 2002-03.¹⁹
- ◆ The average weekly income of AHA households during 2002-03 was \$322 per week, which represents 36% of Average State Weekly Earnings. ²⁰
- ◆ 76% of tenants received a rental rebate during 2002-03.²¹



* Note: Tenants paying full rent are not required to state household type.

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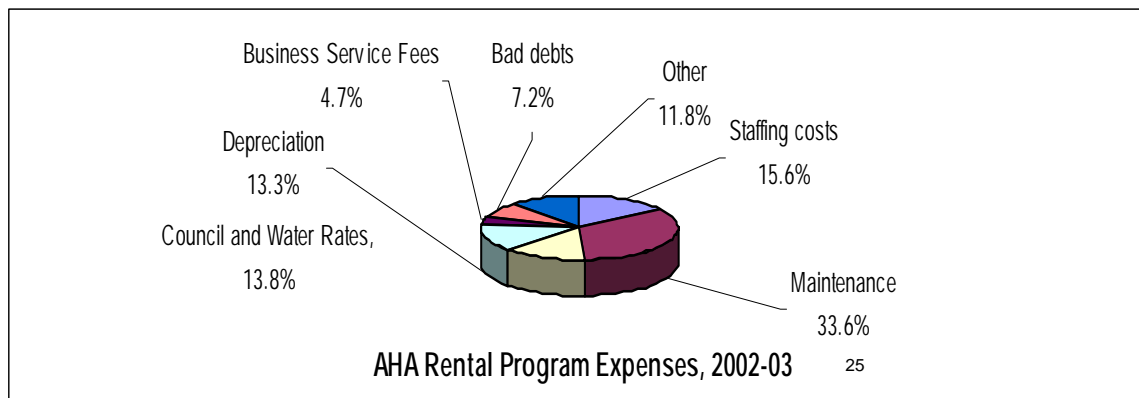
AHA Rental Program Income 2002-03



AHA Rental Program Income for 2002-03 was \$20.62 million:

- ◆ Commonwealth Government grants: \$7.3 m.
- ◆ State Government grants: \$3.1m.
- ◆ Rent: \$7.61 m.
- ◆ Recoveries: \$1.57 m. (maintenance, bad debts, water charges, other)
- ◆ Property Sales: \$0.52 m.
- ◆ Other: \$ 0.48 m. ²⁴

AHA Rental Program Expenses 2002-03



Expenses for the AHA Rental Program during 2002-03 were \$27.76 million:

- ◆ Staffing costs: \$2.31 m., equivalent to \$1,237 per dwelling per year for Rental Program. (As of June 30th 2003, the AHA employed 76 full-time equivalent staff for both the Rental Program and the Indigenous Community Housing Program.)
- ◆ Maintenance: \$4.91 m.
- ◆ Council and Water Rates: \$2.04 m.
- ◆ Depreciation: \$1.98 m.
- ◆ Business Service Fees: \$0.70 m. (Fees charged by other units within the Department of Human Services (DHS) for services to the AHA).
- ◆ Bad and Doubtful Debts: \$1.07 m.
- ◆ Other: Total of \$ 3.12 m; includes: Office Rentals: \$0.21 m; Insurance \$94,000; all other: \$2.82 m.
- ◆ Note: the AHA does not have a debt to the Commonwealth Government.²⁶

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AHA Rental Properties and Tenancies

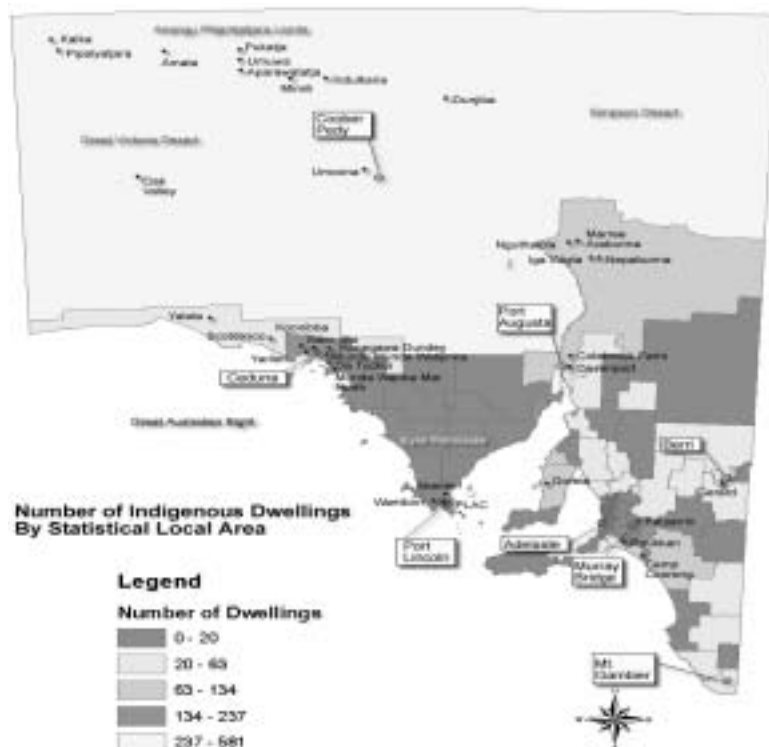
Evictions and Probationary Tenancies

- ◆ In 2002-03 the Residential Tenancies Tribunal issued 10 eviction orders (due to debt) against AHA tenants.
- ◆ During 2002-03 the AHA managed 409 probationary tenancies. Of these 23% (94) were changed to an ongoing tenancy, 76% (310) had their probationary tenancy extended, and 1% (5) did not have their tenancy renewed and were required to leave.
- ◆ 145 houses (7.8% of total stock) were vacant as of June 2003: 89 were available vacant houses; 2 were under assessment for maintenance/upgrades; 54 were untenable (works in progress).
- ◆ In 2002-03 the turnaround time between tenancies was an average of 42 days. (This is in part due to the policy that all tenant related activity is suspended for at least four weeks when a tenant dies).²⁷

Properties Sold

- ◆ 26 dwellings were sold during 2002-03: 17 were sold to AHA tenants, and 9 were sold on the open market.²⁸
- ◆ The sale proceeds were \$2.44 million (an average of \$93,800 per dwelling).
- ◆ The profit or revenue realised by the sale of the 26 dwellings (i.e. the sale proceeds minus the net book value of asset and any costs associated with the sale of the dwellings) was \$0.52 million, or an average of \$20,100 per dwelling.²⁹

The Indigenous Community Housing Program



(Statistics from ABS 2001)³⁰

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics
Date Created: 14th March, 2003
Map by Naimon Taha and Corey Taylor

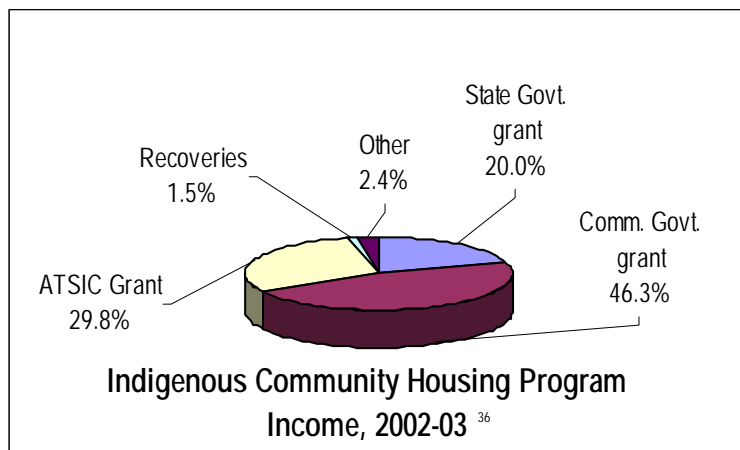
- ◆ The AHA administers the *Indigenous Community Housing Program* (ICHP) which provides funding support and construction management to 46 Indigenous Community Housing Organisations (ICHOs) across South Australia. These ICHOs managed 942 dwellings as of June 2003.³¹
- ◆ Although the name is similar, ICHOs are not associated with the South Australian Community Housing Authority (SACHA) and operate in a different manner to other Community Housing Organisations.

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Indigenous Community Housing Program (ICHP)

- ◆ Each Indigenous Community Housing Organisation that seeks funding is required to submit a detailed application for assessment and consideration by the AHA Board of Management.
- ◆ Funding, which is allocated on an equity basis, is provided through the ICHP for new housing, housing upgrades, insurance, community administration assistance, and repairs and maintenance subsidies.
- ◆ Once built, properties are owned and managed by the respective communities.
- ◆ The AHA allocates a certain amount (\$878 per dwelling in 2000-01) towards repairs and maintenance funding for the properties.
- ◆ There is an expectation by the AHA that communities will collect rent for their housing.³² Rent is collected on a regular basis in 28 of the communities.³³
- ◆ 10 new houses were built during 2002-03 at an average cost of \$177,000.³⁴
- ◆ 69 houses were upgraded during 2002-03 at an average cost of \$48,800.³⁵

ICHP Income and Expenses



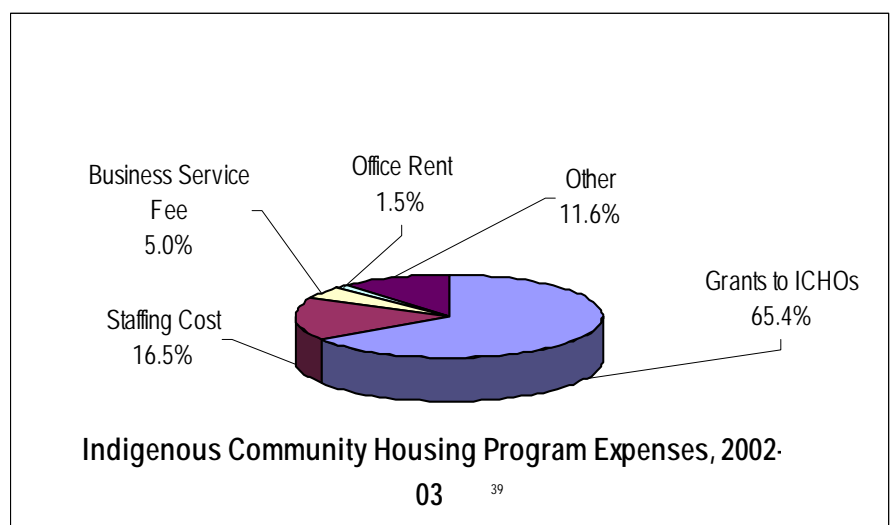
ICHP Income for 2002-03 was \$11.46 million:

- ◆ Commonwealth Government grant (CSHA): \$5.3 m.
- ◆ State Government grant (CSHA): \$2.3 m.
- ◆ ATSI* grant: \$3.41 m.
- ◆ Recoveries: \$0.17 m.
- ◆ Other: \$0.28 m.³⁷

(* Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission)

ICHP Expenses for 2002-03 was \$12.94 million:

- ◆ Grants to ICHOs: \$8.46 m.
- ◆ Staffing costs: \$2.14 m. (equivalent to \$2,270 per dwelling).
- ◆ Business Service Fee: \$ 0.65 m.
- ◆ Office Rent: \$0.20 m.
- ◆ Other: \$1.50 m.³⁸



Aboriginal Housing Authority

Shelter SA Position Statement 1 Aboriginal Housing Authority

- 1.1 Shelter SA supports an urgent increase in the provision of safe and healthy living conditions for Aboriginal people in South Australia, through the Aboriginal Housing Authority.
- 1.2 Shelter SA believes that the provision of housing should be responsive to the needs of Aboriginal people, including cultural expectations about taking in members of the extended family.
- 1.3 Shelter SA urges the Commonwealth government to increase funding commitments to the Aboriginal Housing Authority for increased supply of housing stock.
- 1.4 Shelter SA urges the State government to provide more than the amount of funding required to match Commonwealth funds in the Commonwealth State Housing Agreement (CSHA).
- 1.5 Shelter SA supports improved access to home ownership for Aboriginal people through programs developed by the Aboriginal Housing Authority, HomeStart Finance and the Aboriginal and Torrens Strait Islander Commission.
- 1.6 Shelter SA supports the Aboriginal Housing Authority in efforts to assist tenants who are at risk of eviction, in sustaining tenancies.
- 1.7 Shelter SA supports Aboriginal Housing Authority houses dispersed through local communities in urban, rural and regional areas.
- 1.8 Shelter SA supports the location of Aboriginal Housing Authority houses in areas close to employment opportunities, public transport, shops, health and education services.
- 1.9 Shelter SA supports broad eligibility for Aboriginal Housing Authority housing to promote a social mix of tenants.
- 1.10 Shelter SA supports Aboriginal Housing Authority rents set at a maximum of 25% of household income, up to full Aboriginal Housing Authority rents.
- 1.11 Shelter SA supports Aboriginal Housing Authority homes being designed to meet basic housing and energy efficiency criteria.



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References and Further Information

Aboriginal Housing Authority (AHA) Policies and Procedures, fact sheets and brochures.
Available at any AHA office. Telephone: 82354333.

Housing Advice and Support South Australia (HASSA). Telephone: 8305 9459 or 1800 060 462.

*Housing creates (w) health and wellbeing.** (SACOSS and Shelter SA, 2001).

*Productivity Commission Report on Government Services 2003.**
Available at: www.pc.gov.au/gsp/reports/rogs/2004/index.html

Public Housing Appeals Unit. Telephone: 8207 0080 or 1800 676 350.

*Shelter SA's Submission for the State Housing Plan.** (Shelter SA, June 2003).
Available at: www.sheltersa.asn.au

*Shelter SA's submission to the Review of the Residential Tenancies Act.**
Available at: www.sheltersa.asn.au

*South Australian Aboriginal Housing Authority Annual Report 2002-2003.**

*State Housing Plan, Issues and Options Paper.** (DHS, March 2003).
Available at: www.health.sa.gov.au/statehousingplan/DesktopDefault.aspx?tabid=25

*The Peoples' Voices: Housing in the Private Sector and its pitfall if you are Aboriginal.**
(Presentation at the National Housing Conference, November 2003).
Available as video format, or transcript from: www.sheltersa.asn.au

(* denotes that this reference is available in the Shelter SA library).



Footnotes

1. AHA Annual Report 2000-01, inside cover and p.3
2. AHA Annual Report 1999-2000, p.4
3. AHA Annual Report 2000-2001, p.3
4. AHA Annual Report 2002-03, 14
5. Ibid, p.2 & Information provided by AHA
6. Ibid, p.2
7. Information provided by AHA
8. Information provided by AHA
9. AHA Annual Report 2002-03, p.18
10. Ibid, p.19
11. AHA Annual Reports: 1999-00 p. 5, 2000-01 p.7, 2001-02 p.15, 2002-03 p. 2
12. AHA Annual Report 1999-2000, p.4
13. AHA Annual Reports: 1999-00 p. 5, 2000-01 p.7, 2001-02 p.15, 2002-03 p. 2
14. Ibid
15. AHA Annual Report 2002-03, p.2 & information provided by AHA
16. Information provided by AHA
17. AHA Annual Report 2002-03, p.16
18. Ibid, p.14
19. Ibid, p.17
20. Information provided by AHA
21. Information provided by AHA
22. Information provided by AHA
23. AHA Annual Report 2002-03, p. 41-43 and information provided by the AHA
24. Ibid, p.41-43, and information provided by the AHA
25. Ibid, p.41-43
26. Ibid, p.41-43
27. Information provided by AHA
28. AHA Annual Report 2002-03, p.2
29. Ibid, p.43
30. Information provided by AHA, (source: ABS)
31. AHA Annual Report 2002-03, p.2,14
32. AHA Annual Report 2000-01, p.16
33. Information provided by AHA
34. Information provided by AHA
35. Information provided by AHA & AHA Annual Report 2002-03, p.2
36. AHA Annual Report 2002-03, p. 41-43
37. Ibid, p.41-43, and information provided by the AHA
38. Ibid, p.41-43
39. Ibid, p.41-43