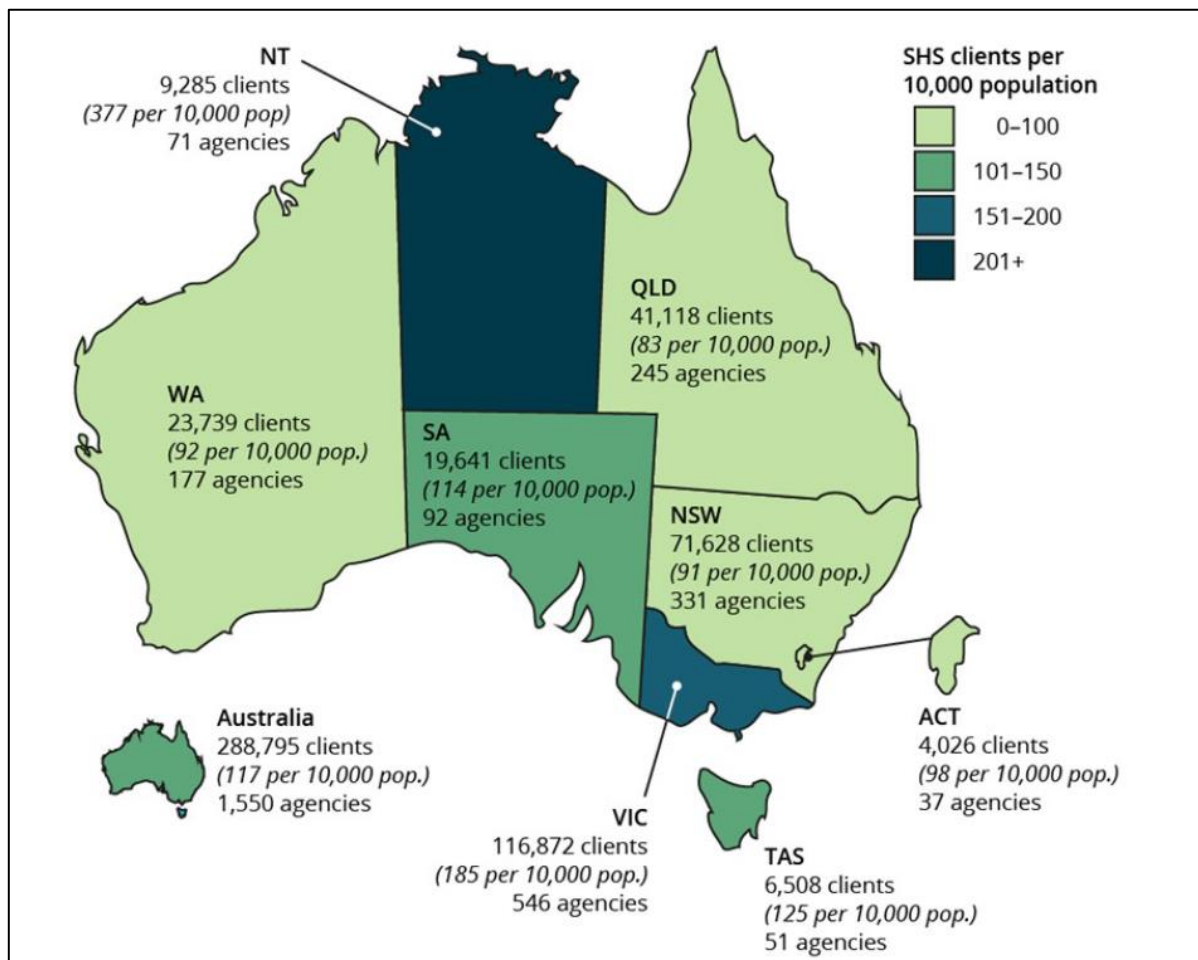




Specialist Homelessness Services Annual Report 2017-18: Research Summary

National Data:



Specialist homelessness agencies and clients by jurisdiction 2017-18 (Source: SHS Annual Report)

[The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare released its seventh annual report from the Specialist Homelessness Services Collection](#), detailing the characteristics of clients of Specialist Homelessness Services, the services requested, outcomes achieved, and unmet requests for services during 2017-18. While the report mainly focusses on National data, it also provides us with valuable information about the state of homelessness in South Australia.

The Federal Government announced in the 2017-18 Budget that under the new National Housing and Homelessness Agreement (NHHA), funding for homelessness services will be ongoing and indexed for the first time to provide certainty to front line services assisting Australians who are experiencing, or

at risk of, homelessness. The stated objective of the NHHA is to contribute to improving access to safe, affordable and sustainable housing across the housing spectrum, including addressing and preventing homelessness, and to support social and economic participation.

In 2017-18:

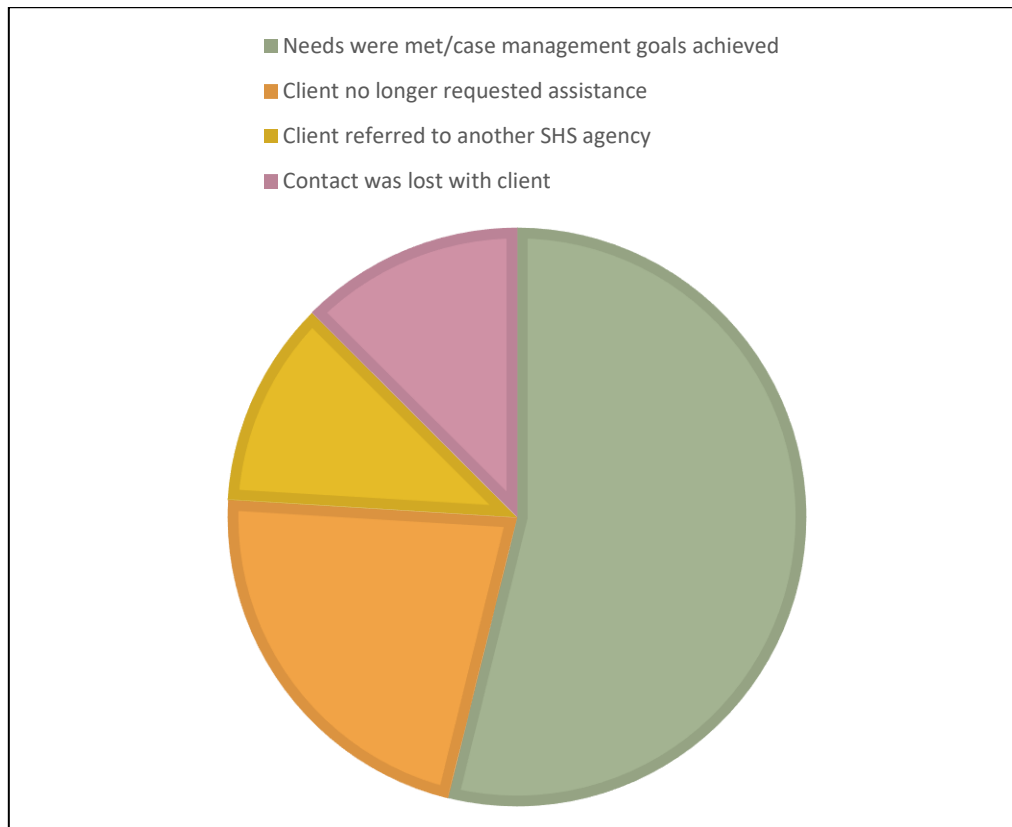
- › Almost 288,800 clients sought assistance from Specialist Homelessness Services in Australia.
- › Most clients seeking assistance were housed (predominantly in the private rental market) and at risk of homelessness.
- › 41% of clients at risk of homelessness had experienced domestic and family violence.

Major themes and characteristics in clients accessing Specialist Homelessness Services in 2017-18 include:

- › Most clients were female (61%).
- › Nearly 3 in 10 clients were under the age of 18.
- › 1 in 6 clients were children under the age of 10.
- › Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples continued to be over-represented in the services, at 25% of the total number of clients.

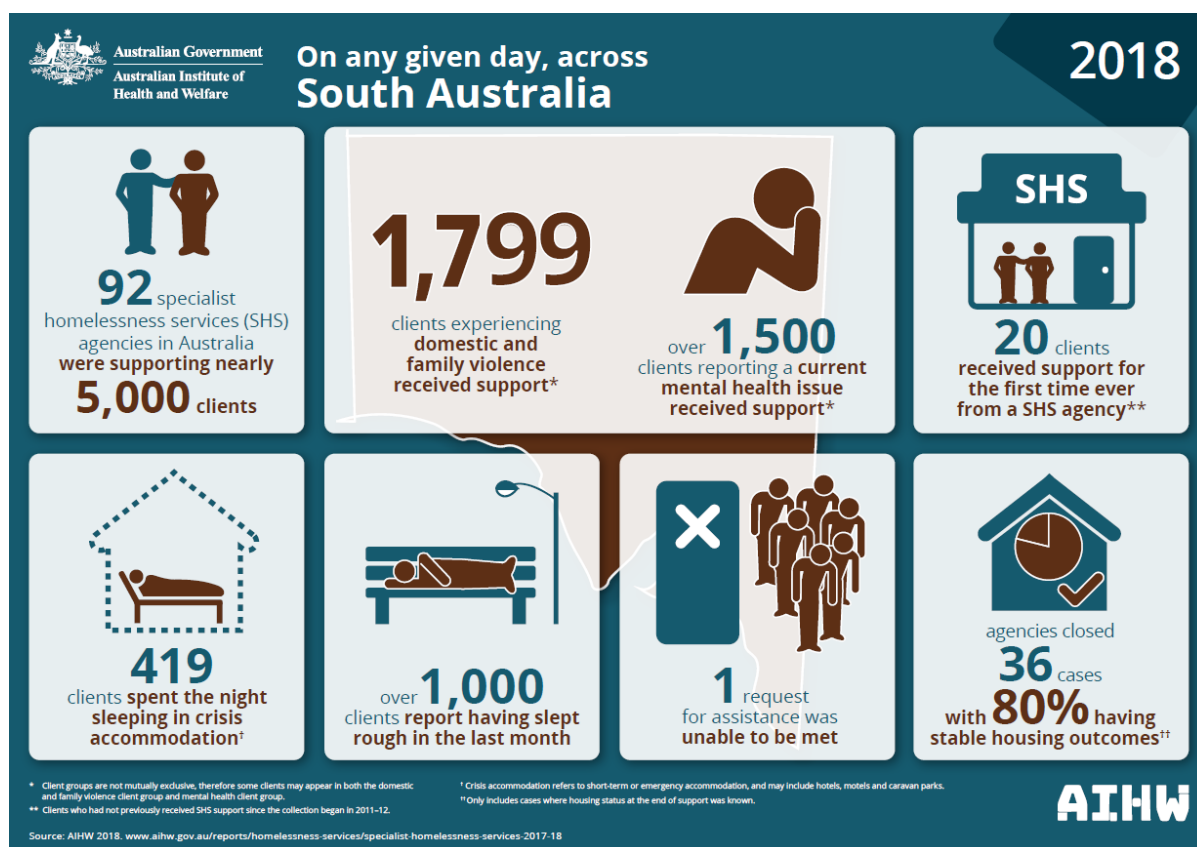
Data from Specialist Homelessness Services in 2013-14 was compared with data from the 2017-18 report, and researchers found that:

- › Clients were supported for longer periods of time in 2017-18.
- › More females than males presented to agencies as experiencing homelessness in 2017-18.
- › Clients aged 65 and over are a growing cohort seeking assistance.



Reasons for Specialist Homelessness Service clients' support period ending 2017-18

State Data and Shelter SA Response:



The following infographic was made by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare using the most recent Specialist Homelessness Services data

Shelter SA was pleased to note that on any given day, 80% of clients with closed cases had achieved stable housing outcomes; sustainable, safe and affordable housing is crucial, and helps prevent future instances of homelessness. However, more must be done for the other 2 out of 10 South Australians that do not achieve a housing goal from these agencies.

For South Australia, the main referral system to Specialist Homelessness Services is through the Homelessness Gateway hotline. Last year, Shelter SA noticed an increasing number of calls from people experiencing or at risk of homelessness. Shelter SA staff keep records of all crisis accommodation inquiries to our office, and in the month of June 2018, 82% of callers had not contacted the Gateway and were unsure of the appropriate steps to take to get help. It is crucial that South Australians at risk of or experiencing homelessness are aware of Specialist Homelessness Services and the avenues to receive assistance. A large majority of our callers who had heard of the number, commented on the lack of response they received when contacting the hotline, or that they had received no assistance as there were no vacancies in crisis accommodation. While Shelter SA is aware that the Gateway is stretched to its capacity in terms of funding and staff, Government must adequately fund this service to response to the high numbers of South Australians needing assistance.