

Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP)

Program Guidelines



**NSW Department of
Community Services**

Introduction

The SAAP Program Guidelines have been developed to provide an overview of SAAP as it is implemented in NSW.

The guidelines ensure that the purpose and parameters of the funding program are clearly articulated, enabling DoCS and the service provider, as well as service users and the community to be clear about what is being funded and why.

The DoCS Corporate Plan 2004/05 – 2008/09 presents a Results Logic Diagram that maps out the range of outcomes required to achieve the overarching corporate goal that children, families and communities are safer, healthier and more resilient. SAAP plays a major role in achieving that outcome, providing services to those people who are homeless in our community or are at risk of becoming homeless.

These guidelines link the results expected from DoCS funding programs and the funding processes. They outline the results for the SAAP Program, the activities that are expected to lead to these results and the performance measures that need to be incorporated into agreements with service providers.

The current hierarchy of documentation within the SAAP program is:

1. DoCS Corporate Plan
Provides the Results for the community that DoCS is seeking through the program
2. SAAP Program Guidelines
Outlines the objectives, activities and performance measures for the program
3. SAAP Service Specifications
Provides the individual specifications and outcomes for services funded in the program
4. Performance Monitoring Framework
Provides the performance monitoring processes to ensure that service are achieved.

These Program Guidelines will be updated in line with any major update or revision of the above key documents.

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1 Program Description and Clients

SAAP is a Commonwealth-State Program providing support to people in the community who are homeless or at risk of imminent homelessness.

The SAAP Act 1994 (Section 4) defines a person as homeless if they have inadequate access to safe and secure housing. That is, if the only housing to which a person has access to:

- damages or is likely to damage the person's health or
- threatens the person's safety or
- marginalises the person through failing to provide access to adequate personal amenities or the economic and social supports that a home normally affords or
- places the person in circumstances which threaten or adversely affect the adequacy, safety, security and affordability of that housing.

A person is also taken to be homeless if the person is living in accommodation provided or arranged by SAAP.

The overall goal of SAAP is to provide transitional supported accommodation and related support services to assist people who are homeless to achieve the maximum possible degree of self-reliance and independence. Within this goal the aims are:

- to resolve crisis
- to re-establish family links, and
- to re-establish a capacity to live independently of SAAP.

Homelessness may be caused by multiple, interacting factors, and similarly it can have multiple effects on people's lives. It can affect people at any stage of life. Some people are chronically homeless while others experience homelessness in a cyclical, episodic manner or as a single occurrence. Homelessness can affect families, singles, young people, and women and children affected by domestic violence.

Services therefore provide a range of assistance from early intervention and support strategies that prevent homelessness, through crisis and emergency support and accommodation, to transitional and post crisis support. All services are provided using a common case management approach which works with the individual to develop options to resolve crisis and move from support to independence.

Services also provide targeted programs for identified client groups, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and CALD clients. All services are to provide access to support services for disadvantaged and identified client groups.

SAAP in NSW is currently delivered by approximately 400 services managed primarily by non-government organisations. Almost 40% of SAAP resources are dedicated to young people under 25 years of age and almost 30% to services for women and children affected by domestic violence. Remaining resources target single men, single women and families with approximately 13% dedicated to services that have multiple target groups.

More than 25% of resources are dedicated to rural and remote services and over 15% to services in NSW regional areas. Remaining resources (almost 60%) are dedicated to services in the Sydney Metropolitan area, although over 15% of these resources are dedicated to services that support clients across the whole of NSW.

2 Legislative Framework

The Commonwealth Supported Accommodation Assistance Act 1994 is the legislative framework for the provision of services under SAAP.

The principles in the Act recognise:

- the rights of homeless people or people at risk of homelessness as being the same as the rights of all Australian citizens
- the rights of homeless people to their equitable share of the community's resources and stresses the importance of provision of appropriate support to meet the needs of clients under SAAP
- the need to redress social injustice and its consequences on individuals
- that responses to homeless people or people at risk of homelessness should be provided in a manner that respects their dignity, enhances their self esteem, is sensitive to their social and economic circumstances and respects their cultural background and beliefs

SAAP is administered through two Commonwealth-State Agreements – the Multilateral Agreement on a national level and Bilateral Agreements between the Commonwealth and individual states.

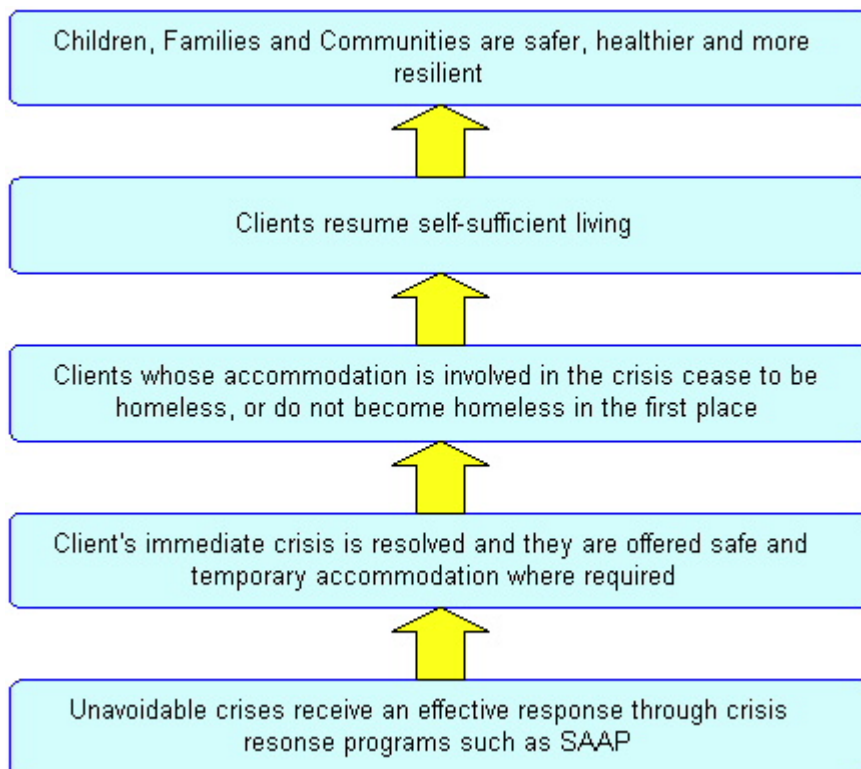
DoCS is in its fifth Commonwealth State Agreement, known as SAAP V, which is current from October 2005 until June 2010. Funding is jointly provided by the Commonwealth and the State – by the Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FACSI) and DoCS respectively.

3 Program Result and Service Group Objectives

The DoCS corporate plan for 2004-2008 provides the intended results for provision of services in SAAP:

People who access SAAP services cease to be homeless, or do not become homeless in the first place

DoCS Results Logic Diagram places program results within a goal hierarchy:



A comprehensive goal hierarchy for SAAP is featured in the National SAAP Results Logic Diagram, at **Attachment 1**.

The objectives for SAAP from the DoCS Corporate plan 2004-2008 are:

- ensure that the State's new five-year SAAP agreement with the Commonwealth reflects the needs of NSW clients, particularly increased access for Indigenous people.
- make the service system more flexible, to streamline costs and better serve clients.
- improve the situation of young SAAP clients.

To assist people gain independence from the SAAP system, the current SAAP V agreement outlines priorities for service planning and support to the service group:

- increase involvement in early intervention and prevention strategies
- provide better assistance to people who have a number of support needs
- provide ongoing assistance to ensure stability of clients post crisis
- reduce the current level of high cost crisis accommodation services and reconfigure these services into flexible support models that address the national strategic directions
- improve client assessment processes so that clients are linked to the most cost efficient service that meets their presenting need
- improve service responses for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

4 Performance Measures

The headline measures for SAAP are:

Client Group: People who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

Result: Clients live independently of SAAP

Performance in SAAP will be measured using Process Measures (table A) and Service Results (table B).

Table A outlines a range of Project Service Measures & Performance Indicators (PI) that services will be monitored against annually. There are currently two output and six outcome measures recorded. Data from Client Forms and NDCA reports will be used to report against these measures.

These current measures are process outcomes rather than client outcomes - they will be replaced gradually by client outcomes measures (table B) as the capacity to accurately report "results" is developed.

TABLE A

Process Measures (consistent with State and National figures)

<p>A. Number of support periods active each day (refer to A+B+C+D in Section 8) Rationale: Measures amount of service delivery compared to agreed daily service level</p>
<p>B. Number of accommodation periods active each day (B+C) (refer to B+C in Section 8) Rationale: Ensures use of high cost accommodation capacity is utilised effectively.</p>
<p>C. Average length of support period Rationale: It is desirable that in most cases this measure increase from the current average of 5 days to within a 4 to 12 weeks band, particularly in cases where client's relationship with caseworker is the first step in reconnection. It is recognised there are some cases which will always be short-term (e.g. women avoiding domestic violence and returning home when 'all clear'), but in most cases data analysis indicates longer periods of support result in better outcomes (see Research & Information Agenda, below). Support periods beyond 12 weeks are starting to indicate blockages in non SAAP exit systems (eg housing, mental health, etc)</p>
<p>D. % of clients who gave consent for full data collection Rationale: Most of the Result measures can only be collected in cases where clients provide "informed consent" to allow full collection of data in the NDCA Client Form. The measure should include all clients who tick the "Consent Obtained" box, even if they withhold answers from one or two questions that may be sensitive for them.</p>
<p>E. a) % of clients who agree to a case plan by the end of the support period (Q15 SAAP core data set) b) % of clients from (a) who attain most or all of their goals (Q16 SAAP core data set) Rationale: Measures how well clients are engaged to enter into and persist with support aimed at long-term change to their circumstances. This process is within the full control of the organisation</p>
<p>F. % of clients for whom needs were identified, under the headings within Q 17 (SAAP core data set), for whom: a) SAAP provided the service itself b) SAAP arranged a referral c) client declined to pursue support. Rationale: Measures the degree to which responsibility for service provision (and thus contribution to client outcomes) rests with SAAP rather than referred services. Unmet need is the difference between need identified and needs provided or arranged. It appears that at this point (c) can only be fully measured by manual collation of the section of the Service Specifications that asks agencies to report anomalies.</p>
<p>G. % of accompanying child clients for whom needs were identified under the headings in Q23 (SAAP core data set), for whom: a) SAAP provided the service itself b) SAAP arranged a referral c) client (or parent) declined to pursue support. Rationale: Same measurement as F, but for children accompanying parent or carers. Data collection issues around (c) are the same as for F(c).</p>

TABLE B**Service Results – Development of Client Outcome Service Measures****Future client outcome measures will be gradually implemented from the following suite of indicators**

- 1. Percentage of clients who exit to independent living (particularly public or community housing) and do not return to a SAAP service within 12 months.**
Rationale: Measures the core Result, i.e. success of SAAP in helping clients to live independently long-term. It is a de facto measure of the availability of support services, including stable accommodation, since if they fail or are unavailable, clients may have to return to SAAP. It is noted that clients with complex needs may need to use SAAP services more regularly.
- 2. Percentage of clients who return to SAAP within 12 months;**
 - a) citing sexual, physical or emotional abuse or domestic violence.**
 - b) citing one of the above as the primary reason for return.**Rationale: Measure the safety of the situation into which clients have exited.
- 3. Percentage of (accompanying) child clients who enter or return to SAAP as the result of mandatory reporting legislation.**
Rationale: Children who enter in this way have been judged as unsafe by the mandatory reporter.
- 4. Percentage of people who entered SAAP from an improvised dwelling or an institution who exited to a House/Dwelling.**
Rationale: Measures that exiting clients have long-term, independent accommodation - does not measure that the dwelling is safe or appropriate).
- 6. Percentage of clients identified as requiring family/relationship support who receive that support.**
Rationale: A measure of success in reconnecting clients with family.
- 7. Percentage of clients who:**
 - a) entered on no income and exited on a reliable income (Government payments or Other Income)**
 - b) entered on no income or government payments and exited on wages/salary/own business**
 - c) entered as unemployed (looking for work) and exited employed**
 - d) entered with no income and no student status and exited with student status.**Rationale: Measures the result "*people have increased financial security*" but recognises that for some clients, such as unaccompanied young people or clients with a young family, employment may not be the optimum solution to their long-term financial security.
- 8. Percentage of returning clients who cited *financial issues* as a reason for return.**
Rationale: Measures the success of SAAP (and its support system) in averting future financial crises. It is recognised that sometimes these will be beyond SAAP's control.

NOTE: Data for reporting some measures cannot be captured from the current SAAP minimum data set and their implementation will depend on other data sources such as data linkage projects or additional data reporting.

5 Service Activities To Be Funded

SAAP does not specifically fund an organisation to provide a single service. Service Providers will provide a range of services that support the needs of their clients. Under Section 17 of the National Data Collection Agency (NDCA) core data set, data on services provided in SAAP is collected within the following categories :

Housing/accommodation

- SAAP/CAP accommodation
- assistance to obtain/maintain short-term accommodation
- assistance to obtain/maintain medium-term accommodation
- assistance to obtain/maintain independent housing

Financial/employment

- assistance to obtain/maintain government allowance
- employment and training assistance
- financial assistance/material aid
- financial counselling and support

General support/advocacy

- living skills/personal development
- assistance with legal issues/court support
- advice/information
- retrieval/storage/removal of personal belongings
- advocacy/liaison on behalf of client

Personal support

- incest/sexual assault support
- domestic/family violence support
- family/relationship support
- emotional support
- assistance with problem gambling

Specialist services

- psychological services
- specialist counselling services
- psychiatric services
- pregnancy support
- family planning support
- drug/alcohol support or intervention
- physical disability services
- intellectual disability services
- culturally specific services
- interpreter services
- assistance with immigration services
- health/medical services

Basic support

- recreation
- meals
- laundry/shower facilities
- transport

SAAP service providers offer assistance which addresses the specific needs of individuals using integrated delivery consisting of the following key service components:

- assessment and referral
- case management
- brokerage
- supported accommodation
- early intervention
- outreach
- mediation
- counselling
- advocacy.

1. **Assessment, Referral and Case Management**

Service providers will deliver assessment and referral services consistent with the Case Management Resource Kit for SAAP Services and National Practice Principles for SAAP Case Management.

SAAP service providers are required to support clients to access all required services from a range of government and non government agencies.

Eight key components are identified in the SAAP case management process:

- entry/screening
- assessment
- planning
- direct service
- coordination
- monitoring and review
- case closure/ exit planning and follow-up
- evaluation.

A case management approach is appropriate for all work with ALL clients in SAAP, however, the extent and method of implementation will vary depending upon the service

type and client need (i.e. one-off service provision may require a limited case management application).

Case management within SAAP Services is a collaborative, client-focused approach. It coordinates direct client service, based on need assessment and support planning, with access to a range of other appropriate support services.

2. **Brokerage**

Where possible, service providers are encouraged to utilise some program funding within a case management framework as client brokerage for the purpose of developing individually tailored and innovative support. Brokerage is for assistance that is purchased for a limited period of time and is not ongoing. The amount of brokerage funds required by each client will depend on need.

Key elements include:

- material aid
- specialist services where they are not otherwise available in a timely fashion
- other essential services.

3. **Supported Accommodation**

As part of the SAAP V reform, service providers are expected to broaden the current options for providing crisis, transitional and long term accommodation and housing for homeless people.

It is a core aim of SAAP V to gradually reduce the current level of high cost, intensive support, crisis accommodation services. Whilst supported accommodation will always be a key strategy of SAAP service provision, it can be delivered through a range of flexible approaches such as:

- within accommodation managed by a SAAP agency or housing provider

- flexible lease arrangements
- utilising brokerage to secure the required service
- accessing the range of temporary and long term accommodation responses provided by the Department of Housing and other public and private housing providers.

The focus of crisis accommodation is to respond to the client's immediate need for safety and secure shelter. Services are aimed at supporting transition to less intensive support options as a priority.

4. **Outreach**

A key strategic priority of SAAP V is increasing involvement in early intervention and post crisis strategies. Outreach services are seen as an integration of early intervention and post crisis approaches to service provision. Outreach services are delivered by SAAP support workers at a place where the client is currently living. This includes clients and their family living independently in either their own premises or in premises provided by the agency. It also includes court support.

6 Evidence Base and Data Collection

The Act states that each SAAP agreement 'must contain provisions directed towards ensuring that the program performance of SAAP is evaluated at regular levels (that) ... must not be longer than five years'¹ ensuring the evaluation process continues.

The current program is largely based on the findings from a national evaluation of the SAAP IV program conducted in 2003-04.

¹ Support Accommodation Assistance Act 1994, No.162, 1994 – SECT 14 Evaluation.

The evaluation examined SAAP IV activities and outcomes against the elements of:

- program effectiveness
- program accountability
- program efficiency
- future directions.

The SAAP IV evaluation informed the direction of SAAP V supporting the inclusion of the new strategic priorities of:

- early intervention (for people at imminent risk of homelessness)
- post-crisis transition (support for clients exiting SAAP provided Accommodation services)
- better linkages to support services (for instance in areas such as health, education and employment services).

National Data Collection

The SAAP National Data Collection (NDC) is managed by the National Data Collection Agency (situated within the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare) under the direction of Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments. The NDCA collects data from SAAP agencies on client profiles and needs as well as details about the support services the agencies provide. This data set reports on Service results (outputs/outcomes) and informs the national program evaluations and the respective annual National and State/Territory reports, along with other service planning and program administration processes.

Services complete and forward information on each client that uses the service and participates in planned, periodic, one-off data surveys.

7 Partnership Framework

As this is a joint Commonwealth-State program, the partnership framework is dependent on collaboration and communication between the Commonwealth Department of Family and Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FACSIA) and the State Department of Community Services (DoCS).

The roles of FACSIA and DoCS as outlined in Multi-lateral and Bi-lateral Agreements are:

FACSIA

- provide Commonwealth's part of the funding
- identify Commonwealth's policy and strategic priorities, in consultation with key stakeholders, and ensure these are consistent with national objectives
- promote linkages between SAAP and related Commonwealth support services such as employment and income support
- co-ordinate national reporting and contact - manage the Multilateral and Bilateral Agreements
- monitor performance and financial management at the national level
- manage and administer Commonwealth funding for Innovation and Investment.

DoCS:

- provide NSW's part of the funding
- identify the State's policy and strategic priorities, in consultation with key stakeholders
- manage the program in New South Wales and administer service provision including selection of service providers and contract management
- report on performance and financial management and ensure providers comply with the National Data Collection
- promote linkages between SAAP and other relevant services (especially Health and Housing) and establish networks of support among providers
- participate and contribute to the National Research program

- implement case management and ensure that client rights are upheld by services
- training.

The SAAP **Partnership Framework** in NSW is primarily linked to three initiatives. They are the NSW *Partnership Against Homelessness* (PAH), the *Crisis Accommodation Program* (CAP) and the *Joint Guarantee of Service* (JGOS).

NSW Partnership Against Homelessness (PAH)

The Partnership Against Homelessness (the Partnership) has been established by the NSW Government to provide a cross-government response to homelessness. The Partnership is a network of New South Wales government agencies working together to improve existing service system responses to homelessness. The aims of the Partnership are to:

- help homeless people access services
- co-ordinate support services and prevention approaches
- improve access by homeless people to temporary or crisis accommodation
- facilitate the move to long-term accommodation.

The Partnership provides the coordinating mechanism through which to share and manage the efforts of both NSW Government and community sectors to achieve these aims. The Partnership recognises that homeless people often have complex and diverse needs and has prioritised the following groups who are at high risk of homelessness:

- Aboriginal people
- rough sleepers
- older people
- younger people, including young people leaving care
- offenders and ex-prisoners
- victims of violence
- repeat (or at risk of repeat) homeless people.

The Partnership is an action-focused network that develops joint initiatives and plans to address priority issues across NSW government and the community sector

SAAP is linked to PAH through the following processes:

- DoCS' representation on PAH
- SAAP Peak bodies are represented on the PAH/SAAP Peaks sub committee (along with NSW Department of Housing, NSW Health and DoCS)
- SAAP Peaks are represented by invitation in various working groups.

Examples of strategies coordinated through PAH are:

- Inner City Street Outreach Support Service (a partnership with City of Sydney)
- Joint Guarantee of Services for persons with a mental illness. (see below)



Crisis Accommodation Program (CAP)

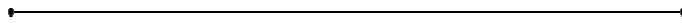
The Crisis Accommodation Program (CAP), managed through the Office of Community Housing, provides funding for purchasing, leasing or replacing dwellings which are used to provide short or medium term assistance to people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

Dwellings are allocated to eligible incorporated non-government agencies. These include community housing providers and agencies funded through the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) and other programs.

Four objectives have been identified for the 2005/06-2006/07 funding round consistent with the Commonwealth State Housing Agreement (CSHA) and the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP):

- increase crisis and transitional accommodation for Aboriginal people, including those with special needs

- develop projects for homeless people with complex needs which address gaps in service availability
- increase the availability of accommodation linked to support which allows clients to progress from crisis accommodation into transitional and exit housing with the aim of establishing unsupported tenancies
- improve the condition and amenity of existing CAP properties through reconfiguration or replacement.



Joint Guarantee of Service

The Joint Guarantee of Service (JGOS) is an initiative to coordinate support services for people with mental health issues who are accessing housing and homelessness services.

As SAAP services provide support for homeless people, this initiative will provide a framework for negotiating local agreements with other agencies to provide improved access to mental health support services.

The JGOS has been developed to:

- better assist and enhance the well-being of existing social housing tenants whose tenancy may otherwise be at risk
- assist social housing applicants with mental health problems and disorders who may be homeless or at risk of homelessness to successfully establish a tenancy.

The signatories to the JGOS are:

- NSW Health (including the NSW Department of Health and the NSW Area Health Services)
- Aboriginal Health And Medical Research Council of NSW

- NSW Department of Community Services, on the behalf of the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP)
- NSW Department of Housing (including public housing and the Office of Community Housing)
- NSW Aboriginal Housing Office.

Individual non-government Aboriginal health and Aboriginal and community housing providers, SAAP service providers and other non-government organisations become party to the JGOS by signing Local Memorandum of Understanding with local representatives of the participating agencies.

Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) V Program Logic

Preamble

The SAAP V Program Logic forms part of the broader SAAP V Accountability Framework. It is a tool that identifies a chain of reasoning and links program inputs², processes³, outputs⁴ and outcomes⁵. The Program Logic map is a graphic representation of the way SAAP V operates, in that it shows the presumed effects of activities and resources.

The Program Logic can be useful for a number of purposes, including informing Program design, planning, risk assessment, performance monitoring and evaluation.

It should be noted that the SAAP V Program Logic hierarchy describes the primary linkages between program interventions and client outcomes only. It is acknowledged that a multitude of secondary interconnections within SAAP exist and that achievement of many of the identified outcomes in the Program Logic will be influenced by factors outside the control of SAAP.

Furthermore, it is accepted that there are many interactions between SAAP and other service systems within the broader environment, and that the influence of external factors on the SAAP system will be greatest at the higher outcome levels.

Inherent within the SAAP V Program Logic is the acceptance of the Principles and Strategic Priorities underpinning SAAP V. These include SAAP's key role in the resolution of crisis and the provision of a safety net for homeless people, those at risk of homelessness, and people affected by domestic violence as defined by the Supported Accommodation Assistance Act 1994.

² Input – the resources used to produce program outputs.

³ Processes – the advice and support services that SAAP provides.

⁴ Outputs – the products or services, which are produced and delivered by SAAP to achieve the outcomes.

⁵ Outcomes – all impacts or consequences of SAAP.

