NSW Homelessness Action Plan Evaluation

Evaluation of the Riverina Murray HAP project (5.6a)

Final report

Housing NSW

March 2013

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Acknowledgments

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Abbreviations and acronyms

CALD	Culturally and Linguistically Diverse
CTTT	Consumer, Trader & Tenancy Tribunal
GHSH	Going Home Staying Home reform
HAP	Homelessness Action Plan 2009–2014
HREC	Human Research Ethics Committee
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
NSW	New South Wales
RDA	Regional Development Australia
RHC	Regional Homelessness Committees
RMHAP	Riverina Murray Homelessness Action Plan project
SAAP	Supported Accommodation Assistance Program
SHS	Specialist Homelessness Services
UNSW	University of New South Wales

Executive summary

This report provides the findings from the evaluation of the Rural Interagency Homelessness Project in Riverina Murray (Riverina Murray HAP project).

Homelessness Action Plan evaluation

In 2009, the NSW Government released the NSW Homelessness Action Plan 2009–2014 (the HAP), which sets the direction for state-wide reform of the homelessness service system to achieve better outcomes for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. As part of the overarching evaluation strategy for the HAP, Housing NSW commissioned ARTD to evaluate four long term housing and support projects delivered under the HAP: the Rural Interagency Homelessness Project in Riverina Murray and New England, the North Coast Accommodation Project and South East NSW Community Connections.

The Riverina Murray HAP project is one of the two Rural Interagency projects that deliver two components: early intervention for people at risk of homelessness and housing intensive support packages for people who are homeless. The delivery of this project is coordinated by Regional Development Australia (RDA) Murray, but the responsibility of case managing clients is shared across a broad range of organisations, in line with the initial policy focus of supporting service system change. A key feature of the project is the local coordination groups where participating organisations meet every month to discuss client applications and agree on every client case management plan.

We used a mixed-method approach for the evaluation: drawing on existing data sources (project self-evaluation reports, HAP portal monitoring data and the research literature) and collecting new data through an online stakeholder survey (51 respondents) and in-depth interviews with project stakeholders (23) and clients (7). We were able to implement our methods largely as planned and to triangulate the findings across the range of data sources. We are confident that the data provides the evidence for a sound assessment.

Key findings

The project is exceeding its targets

The project has exceeded the targeted number of clients supported during each financial year of operation. By the end of June 2012, a total of 203 clients had been assisted, 13 per cent more than the planned 180 clients. The project also met its planned target for 40 per cent Aboriginal clients. The project took on most clients in areas with the highest incidence of homelessness.

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There appear to be benefits for clients

Stakeholders were very positive about the housing and wider benefits of the project for clients, with 93 per cent of respondents to the online survey agreeing or mostly agreeing that clients are better able to sustain a tenancy and 95 per cent stating that client wellbeing has improved as result of participation. According to follow-up data collected by RDA Murray for all clients assisted until the end of June 2012, 80 per cent have maintained their tenancy. The data collected did not include information about the time clients participated in the program, which would give a better indication of the sustainability of client outcomes.

The clients we interviewed were positive about their experience with the project and reported a range of benefits, the main being their housing. Overall the project was also perceived as being instrumental in bringing them 'back on track'.

The project has achieved more for clients than if participating organisations had been working alone. Identified success factors include

- collaborative model for working together, particularly through the coordination group meetings
- flexible client-centred approach
- effective coordination role by RDA Murray
- organisational commitment and leadership.

The project has had a very positive impact on the service system

The number and diversity of organisations involved in the project is a clear indication of broad sector involvement in the project, beyond its 'natural catchment', with only 35 per cent of clients assisted by specialist homelessness services.

Stakeholders reported that the project has had a very positive impact on the service system, including increased knowledge of what other local service organisations offer, increased coordination and increased levels of trust between local providers.

Another key impact of the project was the incidental education provided to services, in particular around legal matters, but also on other issues such as mental health. Project stakeholders also believed that having Aboriginal representatives participating in each local coordination group meeting helped to raise the cultural awareness of organisations when working with Aboriginal clients.

The project appears to deliver value for money

Brokerage for clients made up the major share of project costs to the end of June 2012 (64%). The average client cost in 2011/12 (a typical year) was $4,505, which compares very well with the initial budgeted cost of $8,068 (this figure is calculated for housing intensive support and early intervention together because data could not be disaggregated). The average client cost significantly decreased over time, reflecting increased efficiency between 2010/11 and 2011/12. Finally, the average client cost for

the Riverina Murray HAP project compares well with other similar homelessness projects that include both housing and support service components.

Key successes and challenges

Overall the Riverina Murray HAP project has been very successful in assisting a high number of clients, in particular Aboriginal clients, that stakeholders feel would otherwise not have been supported. This is particularly true with the early intervention component that provides a new form of service, in line with the shift from crisis intervention to prevention promoted by the Going Home Staying Home (GHSH) reform. Local coordination groups have been another key success of the project, not only by contributing to better client outcomes, but also by supporting improved service system through integrated case management. This type of platform offers a practical example of a good practice for the 'no wrong door' and collaborative approach promoted by the Streamlined Access building block of the GHSH reform.

While being an overall success, the Riverina Murray HAP project offers a few areas for improvement that should be considered to refine the design of what was initially a pilot project.

1.   Introduction

1.1   Overview of the NSW Homelessness Action Plan (HAP)

In 2009, the NSW Government released the NSW Homelessness Action Plan 2009–2014 (the HAP), which sets the direction for state-wide reform of the homelessness service system to achieve better outcomes for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. The HAP aims to realign existing efforts and to increase the focus on prevention and long-term accommodation and support.

The HAP also aims to change:

- the way that homelessness and its impact on the community is understood
- the way services are designed and delivered to people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless
- ways of working across government, with the non-government sector and with the broader community to improve responses to homelessness.

Under the HAP, there are three headline homelessness reduction targets:

- a reduction of 7% in the overall level of homelessness in NSW
- a reduction of 25% in the number of people sleeping rough in NSW
- a reduction of one-third in the number of Indigenous people who are homeless.

The HAP includes 100 NSW Government funded local, regional and state-wide projects to assist in achieving the homelessness reduction targets. As of June 2012, 55 of the projects were funded through the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness (the NPAH). The remaining projects include other programs or services that contribute to addressing homelessness.

The projects are aligned to one of the following three strategic directions:

- *preventing homelessness* to ensure that people never become homeless
- *responding effectively to homelessness* to ensure that people who are homeless receive effective responses so that they do not become entrenched in the system
- *breaking the cycle* to ensure that people who have been homeless do not become homeless again.

Regional Homelessness Committees (RHCs) were established to support the development and implementation of ten Regional Homelessness Action Plans (2010 to 2014), which identify effective ways of working locally to respond to homelessness and provide the focus for many of the HAP projects.

The HAP evaluation strategy

Housing NSW, in consultation with government agencies and the non-government sector, developed an overall evaluation strategy for the HAP. The strategy outlines how each of the 100 projects will be evaluated in a consistent manner, and how critical information from individual evaluations can be aggregated to make state-wide assessments about the impact of the HAP on reducing and preventing homelessness and the potential of different interventions to achieve sustainable reductions in homelessness. The HAP evaluation will also provide evidence of effective responses and lessons learnt that should be considered in the future response to homelessness in NSW.

The strategy involves three inter-related components.

- *Self-evaluations*: to gather performance information about each of the HAP projects across key areas in a consistent way and to collect the views of practitioners about the effectiveness of their projects.
- *Extended evaluations:* to analyse and draw conclusions about the effectiveness of 15 selected projects and the service approaches to addressing homelessness that those projects represent.
- *Meta-Analysis*: to synthesise the aggregated findings from the self-evaluations and extended evaluations as well as other evaluations available on HAP activities.

As a key data source for evaluation, monitoring data (collected quarterly from HAP projects through the online data portal) can be considered a fourth element of the strategy (see Figure 1).

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Figure 1.   HAP evaluation strategy

Relevant internal and external research, longitudinal studies, modelling and information

NSW Homelessness Action Plan projects

Portal data reports

Completed by all 100 projects quarterly

Self evaluations

Conducted by all 100 projects

Extended evaluations

Contracted out for selected projects

Overarching meta-analysis

Synthetise the aggregated findings from both the self-evaluation and extended evaluation by specific themes

Housing NSW has contracted external consultancies to conduct extended evaluations, covering the following service areas:

- youth foyers
- support for people at risk of eviction
- support for people exiting institutions
- support for women and children experiencing domestic violence
- **long term housing and support.**

1.2   Overview of service model and projects included in this evaluation

ARTD is responsible for the extended evaluation of the long term housing and support service area. This covers four projects selected for individual evaluation: the Rural Interagency Homelessness project for people with complex needs in Riverina and New England, the North Coast Accommodation Project and South East NSW Community Connections.

The HAP long term supported housing projects are linked to the exemplar model 'supportive housing' from AHURI's 2009 review of the literature, which informed the HAP. While each of the four projects under this evaluation delivers supportive housing, they do not represent a single 'model' of service delivery. The projects use of mix of

housing types (social and community housing and private rental options), some work across prevention and intervention, and some refer using a 'Housing First' approach.

Chapter 3 describes the specific model for the Rural Interagency Homelessness project for people with complex needs in Riverina Murray, also known as the Riverina Murray Homelessness Action Plan project (RMHAP), which this report covers.

1.3   Key contextual factors from the literature

The evidence from the literature shows the need to provide both long term housing *and* support to permanently move people away from homelessness. But it is difficult to identify any definitive supportive housing 'model' that is known to be effective and that would provide an appropriate comparator for the diverse long term housing and support projects covered by this evaluation.

It is possible, though, to articulate the components of long term housing and support with broad principles for their effective delivery. Our findings about the principles for the effective delivery of long term housing and support are consistent with AHURI's 2009 literature synthesis. An effective approach to supportive housing will provide:

- **housing** that is accessible in a timely way, appropriate to the person's needs, affordable, of secure tenure and non-contingent on treatment
- **case management** that is persistent, reliable, intimate and respectful and delivers comprehensive practical support of individually determined length
- **linkages** to other services/ supports that the client needs.

To be effective, a long term housing and support model will require some level of **service integration or joint working**. There are different models for joint working that entail different levels of connectedness between services (from ad hoc interaction to collaboration to joint teams). Identifying which is most appropriate for a particular project will depend on the operating context and intended aims. But, as for the other components of long term housing and support, it is possible to outline broad principles of what works. Joint working works best where partners recognise and accept the need for partnership, develop clarity and realism of purpose, ensure commitment and ownership, develop and maintain trust, create clear and robust partnership arrangements, and monitor, measure and learn.

Housing First—which provides rapid access to stable, permanent housing not dependent on a client's commitment to treatment rather than using a continuum approach to housing—is the long term housing and support model with most considerable coverage in the literature. The term has also become somewhat ubiquitous in practice, though not all services that call themselves Housing First have been completely faithful to the original model. While there is strong evidence for use of the model with its original target group (homeless people with a mental illness in New York), some questions remain about appropriate adaptations of the model for other population groups and locations and about the evidence base for these adapted versions.

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The literature identifies a range of **challenges** to delivering supportive housing in the ways that have been shown to work.

- **Housing**: The lack of affordable housing options is a key barrier to achieving positive outcomes (Hatvani, 2012). The location of affordable housing, where it is available, can also affect access to jobs, travel time and transport choices (AHURI, 2010). Concentration of social disadvantage in particular areas is also a concern (Vinson in Pawson et al, 2012).
- **Case management**: Lack of capacity to support clients in the medium to longer term is a challenge (Baulderstone and Button, 2012).
- **Linkages**: Lack of service system capacity, particularly within mental health services creates difficulties.
- **Integration** is complex and requires time and effort (Deloitte, 2011). Programmatic, organisational, funding and sectoral 'silos' can all be barriers (Flatau et al, 2011).

Consistent with the AHURI findings from 2009, the findings from our literature scan are that different interventions will be appropriate for different clients. This reflects a need for flexibility within the broad supportive housing model to meet the needs of particular target groups and individuals.

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2.   Evaluation scope and methods

2.1   Ethics process

ARTD submitted the evaluation project to the Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) at the University of New South Wales for ethics approval on 7 August 2012 and received final approval on 13 September 2012 prior to data collection and analysis. Our processes were in line with ethics requirements.

- **Client processes**
  - Services distributed an information package (including a participant information brochure emphasising the voluntary nature of participation, the consent form and a reply-paid envelope) to all clients assisted (past and current) in site visit locations in September 2012. We contacted only clients who returned consent forms for interviews. This process prevented any selection bias or sense of obligation that would come from having case workers identify clients for interview.
  - We used only de-identified client data at the aggregate project level; we did not access any individual client files.
- **Stakeholder processes**
  - The lead government agency and the contracted NGO in each location identified stakeholders for interview. We only contacted those who agreed to participate.
  - The contract manager in the lead government agency (also an RHC member) distributed the online survey to all stakeholders that had any involvement in the Coordination Group meetings (past and present), so we did not have access to email addresses of third parties.

All existing and newly collected data was maintained securely and confidentiality protected.

2.2   Summary of evaluation approach

2.2.1   Evaluation questions

The initial request for tender for the extended evaluation of the long term housing and support service area identified seven key evaluation questions, which we have regrouped into four main evaluation areas (see Table 1).

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Table 1.   **Key evaluation questions**

Evaluation area	Key evaluation questions
Overall HAP targets	▪ Impact of the project/ approach on reducing homelessness (using proxy indicators) ▪ Potential of the project/ approach to achieve sustainable reductions in homelessness into the future
Service system	▪ Impact of the project/ approach on service system change and improvement ▪ Extent to which the project had any influence on service integration and how this was achieved
Client outcomes	▪ Impact of the project/ approach on client outcomes (both intended and unintended) ▪ Critical success factors and barriers for the project/approach, taking into account local contextual issues
Cost-effectiveness	▪ Cost effectiveness of the project/ approach, including reduction or avoidance of costs incurred across NSW Government agencies or other organisations

Based on initial consultations with Housing NSW, RHCs and lead government agencies, ARTD developed a detailed evaluation framework matching data sources to questions across the main focus areas (see Appendix 1):

▪ **project delivery**: context, governance, model, client reach and referral pathways, housing provision, support service provision
▪ **service system outcomes**: overall system change, relationships within the housing sector, relationships with support service organisations
▪ **client outcomes**: client reach, client groups, Aboriginal clients, housing outcomes and non-housing outcomes
▪ **impact on overall HAP targets**: observed reduction in homelessness, impact of benefits
▪ **cost-effectiveness** for each project and across projects.

This framework reflects stakeholder expectations that the evaluation:

▪ includes a strong focus on service system changes
▪ takes account of local contextual issues, particularly housing availability
▪ recognises co-occurring consultations on the reform of Specialist Homelessness Services (SHS), intended to make the system less crisis driven and more focused on prevention.

The framework guided the design of evaluation methods and instruments.

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2.2.2   Overview of methods and analysis

We used mixed-methods (both quantitative and qualitative) and drew on existing data and collected new data. Some data sources were comprehensive and others were in-depth covering a selected sample of stakeholders and/or clients. The main methods were:

- literature scan
- analysis of existing clients reporting data
- online survey of all project stakeholders
- in-depth interviews with project stakeholders and clients in Wagga Wagga and Griffith[1]
- cost analysis.

Table 2 below provides an overview of all methods and how they were implemented for the evaluation of the Riverina Murray Homelessness Action Plan project.

A separate evaluation was contracted for the Legal Aid component. The present evaluation used key findings identified in the Legal Aid evaluation report to inform the assessment of aspects related to this specific component.

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[1] Sites were selected in consultation with members of the Regional Homelessness Committee and these two sites were chosen because they represent very different contexts.

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Table 2.   Evaluation methods

Method/ source	Study population/ focus	Sample	Timing	Comments
Literature scan	Research literature	N/A	Aug–Sept 2012	This was not a systematic review but a scan or brief evidence assessment. The assessment was limited to research published in the period since 2009 and to papers sourced from the AHURI database and the Australian Homelessness Clearinghouse, as well as articles provided by Housing NSW and identified through snowballing references in bibliographies.
Project documentation review	Project documentation	N/A	Aug–Sept 2012	We reviewed the key project documents to gain an in-depth understanding of the project and inform the evaluation design. See Appendix 2 for the full list of documents reviewed.
HAP data portal	Clients	All clients assisted to end June 2012	Oct 2012	All contracted organisations report quarterly on key performance indicators through the HAP data portal, so the portal provides a source of data collected consistently across projects. Data items include number of clients assisted, average duration of support, number of clients housed in the year to date, number of clients maintaining stable housing, number of clients achieving non-housing outcomes and deliverables and milestones achieved in the reporting period.
Client reporting data from the contracted NGO	Clients	All clients assisted to end June 2012	Oct–Nov 2012	RDA Murray provided additional client data they collect, so ARTD could undertake complementary quantitative analysis, including by location and referral agencies.
Online survey	Project stakeholders	n=66 (51 responded)	Oct–Nov 2012	A representative from the lead government agency (also an RHC member), emailed all stakeholders (in lead agencies, partner government agencies, non-government organisations and other organisations) involved in the project a link to the online survey. All current and past members of coordination groups in each site were included (n=66). The representative from the lead government agency distributed three reminders via email, and the survey achieved a very good

Method/ source	Study population/ focus	Sample	Timing	Comments
				response rate of 77%. Specialist Homelessness Services made the largest category of respondents with 27 per cent of respondents, followed by support service providers (24%). 39 per cent of respondents were involved in the project in relation to a few clients (less than 5) and 39 per cent in more than 5 clients. Full results of the online survey are provided in Appendix 6. We analysed the closed questions in Excel through cross-tabs and analysed the 3 open-ended questions for key themes.
Stakeholder interviews	Project stakeholders	Sample not representative n=23	Oct–Nov 2012	We interviewed 23 stakeholders from a broad range of organisations, including: ▪ government agencies ▪ the contracted NGO ▪ housing providers ▪ specialist homelessness services ▪ mainstream services ▪ Aboriginal organisations. See the full list of interviews in Appendix 3. We conducted interviews either face-to-face during site visits in Wagga Wagga and Griffith or over the phone; some interviews were conducted in small groups when appropriate. Interviews were semi-structured using an interview guide structured around key evaluation areas (see Appendix 4). Interviews lasted from 30 minutes to one hour, depending on the interviewee's involvement in the project. We analysed the data using a coding framework to identify broad and particular themes.
Client interviews	Clients	Sample not representative n=7	Oct–Nov 2012	We interviewed all clients from Wagga Wagga and Griffith who returned a consent form. Two clients were Aboriginal. We arranged face-to-face or phone interviews according the interviewee's preference. Interviews used an adapted discovery spine, which puts clients at the centre when talking about their journey through the system (see interview guide in Appendix 5).

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Method/ source	Study population/ focus	Sample	Timing	Comments
				Each interviewee received a $30 gift voucher to acknowledge their time. We analysed the data using a coding framework to identify broad and particular themes.
Cost analysis	Costs	N/A	Nov 2012	We collected actual costs data from the contracted NGO, RDA Murray, in the form of audited financial audit reports for the three financial years covered by the project. Additional information on the breakdown of brokerage costs was provided by RDA Murray based on expenses incurred for each client application. We analysed the project costs using a cost structure as defined in a cost template designed by Housing NSW.

2.3   Limitations

The evaluation methods were implemented as planned and we were able to triangulate the findings across the data sources. This gives us confidence that the data provide the evidence for a sound assessment of the project. There were, however, some limitations to individual methods due to the availability of existing data and the tight timeframes, and these should be kept in mind when considering the findings of this report.

Comprehensiveness of the data

To ensure we could identify successes and challenges in the full range of project operating sites, our survey was sent to all project stakeholders in all sites, and included options to comment. It was not possible to visit all operating sites, so, in consultation with RHC representatives, we purposively selected sites to get a broad coverage of issues faced across each project site. While there may be other contextual considerations in some sites that were not identified by the evaluation, we are confident that our two-pronged approach enabled us to identify the main learnings from the project for future homelessness services.

Client outcomes

The assessment of client outcomes relied mainly on the data collected through the HAP data portal. This reporting tool allowed for consistent reporting of client data across all HAP projects. But it has been progressively refined to clearly distinguish between new and ongoing clients (carried over from the previous reporting period) to avoid double counting.

The HAP data portal allows for the collection of data on outputs and services provided to clients, but not for disaggregation of clients in terms of project component—early intervention and housing intensive support. This reporting system does not allow for the collection of indicators of medium-term impact, for example, whether clients were sustaining their tenancies 6 months after having exited the project. Medium and long-term indicators are difficult to collect in a consistent manner, especially from high-needs clients who are often difficult to track down. However, in the case of RMHAP, the service provider, RDA Murray, followed up all clients that had been with the project to end June 2012 through their case managing agencies and housing providers to update their outcome status to this date. This provided a valuable source of information about client outcomes.

Cost-effectiveness analysis

Housing NSW developed a template for the cost analysis for all of the extended evaluations to unpack the costing of their particular service models. But, because these financial reporting requirements were not specified in the initial service specifications

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for HAP projects, we had to rely on the actual costs data contracted NGOs could provide from their internal accounting systems.

For RMHAP, we attempted to match financial data provided by RDA Murray to the Housing NSW cost template. Although it was not possible to reach the level of detail outlined in the Housing NSW template, we were able to distinguish between key types of costs: staff costs, operating costs and brokerage costs. Because the financial statements did not provide any breakdown of brokerage costs, we discussed with RDA Murray the possibility of further breakdown with respect to brokerage costs incurred. Based on the analysis of expenses for each individual client case plan, RDA Murray was able to provide us with separate data on the breakdown of brokerage costs between goods and services. Total amount of brokerage costs did not match those from the financial statements because this additional data was based on approved applications as opposed to paid invoices. However, we were able to calculate percentage of brokerage spent on goods and on services as per approved applications and to apply it to actual total brokerage amounts reported in the financial statements. By doing so we obtained separate amounts for brokerage goods and brokerage services feeding into the Housing NSW cost template.

The cost analysis included in this evaluation is not intended to feed into a cost-benefit analysis. This type of analysis would have required systematic collection of before and after data on clients (e.g. use of acute services) as well as the identification of an appropriate control group.

The cost-effectiveness analysis was limited by the lack of comprehensive client outcomes data, thus we focused on the analysis of project costs and the cost structure, especially the cost per client and the breakdown of costs, with a focus on brokerage costs. Qualitative data collected from interviews helped us to understand the contribution of the different cost items, for example, brokerage, to achieving specific client outcomes (in terms of housing and wellbeing).

3.   Project description

3.1   Service origins and description

The Rural Interagency Homelessness Project for people with complex needs is delivered in two regions: Albury/ Wagga and New England. This report covers the project delivered in Albury/ Wagga, the Riverina Murray geographic area; the project delivered in New England is covered in a separate report.

3.1.1   Project development and contract

The Riverina Murray HAP is an initiative of the Regional Homelessness Action Plan 2010 – 2014 for the Riverina/Murray region. Community Services is the lead government agency for the project. In the initial stages, representatives from Community Services and Housing NSW and Legal Aid, the other government agencies with key roles in the project, set out preliminary guidelines and templates for the project and drafted the request for tender for an organisation to coordinate the project.

In March 2010, Community Services selected RDA Murray as the preferred tenderer. The organisation then hired a project coordinator who commenced in July 2010. The project was initially funded until the end of December 2012 but, in mid-2012, it was extended until June 2013.

3.1.2   Project focus

The Riverina Murray HAP project was intended to draw, at a local level, a range of NSW government agencies and non-government organisations that target people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness to facilitate their move to long-term accommodation with support. The project was to provide both early intervention for people at risk of homelessness and housing and case management support for people who are homeless.

This project plan linked the focus of the research to the importance of early intervention to prevent people becoming entrenched in homelessness. It also recognised the effectiveness of multidisciplinary case management teams and immediate access to permanent supportive housing (rather than a traditional step-up or transitional approach) in resolving homelessness.

3.1.3   Operating context

The operating locations defined for the Riverina Murray HAP project in the service specification are the following Local Government Areas (LGAs) within the Riverina Murray network of the Community Services Western region: Albury, Balranald, Berrigan, Carrathool, Conargo, Coolamon, Cootamundra, Corowa, Deniliquin, Greater

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Hume, Griffith, Gundagai, Hay, Jerilderie, Junee, Leeton, Lockhart, Murrumbidgee, Murray Narrandera, Temora, Tumbarumba, Tumut, Urana, Wagga and Wakool.

Homelessness in Riverina Murray prior to the project

The last available data on homelessness prior to the project's establishment shows there were 606 homeless people in the Riverina Murray region on census night in 2006. People staying temporarily with other households made up the highest proportion of the homeless population (37%). Compared with the pattern for NSW as a whole, people staying temporarily with other households and people in improvised dwellings, tents or sleeping out made up a higher proportion of Riverina Murray's homeless population, while people staying in boarding houses and living in 'severely' crowded dwellings made up a lower proportion (see Table 3 below).

Table 3.　　The homeless population in Riverina Murray compared with NSW in 2006

Homeless operational group	Riverina Murray homeless*		NSW homeless	
	n	%	n	%
Persons who are in improvised dwellings, tents or sleeping out	74	12%	1,601	7%
Persons in supported accommodation for the homeless	123	20%	3,831	17%
Persons staying temporarily with other households	225	37%	4,748	21%
Persons staying in boarding houses	86	14%	5,966	27%
Persons in other temporary lodging	7	1%	146	1%
Persons living in 'severely' crowded dwellings	90	15%	5,908	27%
All homeless persons	605	100%	22,200	100%
Persons living in other crowded dwellings	275	48%	14,765	72%
Persons in other improvised dwellings	108	19%	1,829	9%
Persons who are marginally housed in caravan parks	188	33%	3,930	19%
All persons in other marginal housing	562	100%	20,524	100%

Note from ABS: cells in this table have been randomly adjusted to avoid the release of confidential data. As a result cells may not add to the totals. Categories are mutually exclusive; therefore persons will only appear in one category. For example, persons who are in the category 'improvised dwellings, tents or sleeping out' who are in 'living in severely crowded dwellings' will not also appear in 'persons living in severely crowded dwellings'.

* Murrumbidgee and Murray ABS subdivisions

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3.2   Aims and objectives

3.2.1   Strategic objectives

Within the NSW Homelessness Action Plan 2009–2014, the Rural Interagency Homelessness Project for clients with complex needs in Riverina Murray and New England sits under priority 5, 'Deliver integrated service responses', the specific aims of which are to:

- establish consistent cross-agency assessment and case management practices
- develop regional homelessness action plans and local plans in priority locations
- build the capacity of the overall service system and workforce to deliver integrated responses
- share relevant data across the overall service system.

The initial policy focus for the project was clearly on supporting service system change. The project guidelines RDA Murray developed in coordination with key partner agencies described the project as ultimately aiming to 'contribute to the reform agenda by better integrating the homelessness and mainstream service system'.

The project sits under the second priority area 'people with complex needs' in the Riverina-Murray Regional Homelessness Action Plan 2010–2014.

3.2.2   Project aims

The initial project plan outlined five objectives for the project, which fall into two categories.

- *Client outcome objectives*

  1. Identify 50 people per annum who are at risk of homelessness and broker a range of early intervention supports to help them resolve their crises and address underlying issues.
  2. Prevent 30 homeless people (10 single adults with complex needs and 20 families) from sleeping rough through provision of social housing and a package of intensive supports.
  3. Increase access to legal services for those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness to prevent legal issues from compounding.

- *Service system objectives*

  4. Increase collaborative service delivery across government agencies in responding to homelessness.
  5. Identify and resolve impediments to the effective provision of support services and make recommendations to reform the existing service system in the longer term.

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3.3　Target group

The service specification outlined two target groups for the project.

▪ **For early intervention**: single adults, families or young people aged 16–25 years, who are not currently in supported accommodation, who are at risk of homelessness and who may be disengaged or at risk of disengaging from family, school/ education, training or employment. This target group is also identified as "people with established tenancies at risk".
▪ **For housing intensive support**: single adults or families experiencing primary homelessness, who may be repeat users of crisis accommodation services or who are at risk of chronic homelessness or who are rough sleepers (at the time of referral).

Both the early intervention and intensive support target groups include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as a specific focus as they are over-represented among the homeless population.

3.4　Eligibility criteria, referral and assessment processes

Eligibility criteria

The project guidelines define specific eligibility criteria for each component.

▪ *Housing Intensive Support packages*: for single adults and families with accompanying children experiencing primary homelessness who are or may be
  – repeat users of crisis accommodation services or
  – at risk of chronic homelessness or
  – rough sleepers (at the time of referral) and
  – experiencing complex issues including but not limited to alcohol and other drugs, mental health including self harm, intellectual/ cognitive disability and challenging behaviour.
▪ *Early intervention*: for single adults, families or young people (aged 16 to 25):
  – not currently in supported accommodation and
  – whose established tenancies are at risk of termination and
  – who may be disengaged or at risk of disengaging from family, school/ education, training or employment.

These eligibility criteria were discussed and clarified with all project stakeholders during the first phase of the project.

Referral and assessment process

Clients can be referred to the project by any organisation in Riverina Murray that identifies eligible people by completing a project application form with the client's consent. Initial referrals come mainly from organisations that participated in the coordination groups, but any local organisation that identifies eligible people can refer

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new clients, e.g. real estate agents. The form collects information about the client's history of accommodation, current situation (mental illness/ disability, substance use/ abuse, intellectual/ cognitive disability, physical disability, chronic/ acute health issues), risk factors, and needs identified for support services and housing support (for the housing intensive support component). As part of the application, the organisation applying for the client also puts forward a case management plan, which identifies the services and case management hours required and provides an estimated cost to be funded.

Organisations refer to RDA Murray, who forward the application to the coordination group members for consideration. The applying agency attends the meeting to present the application and applications are decided on through a vote of coordination group members; if a majority vote yes, the application is approved. Once an application is accepted by the local coordination group, the referring agency is informed (see Figure 2).

Figure 2.   RMHAP client application assessment process
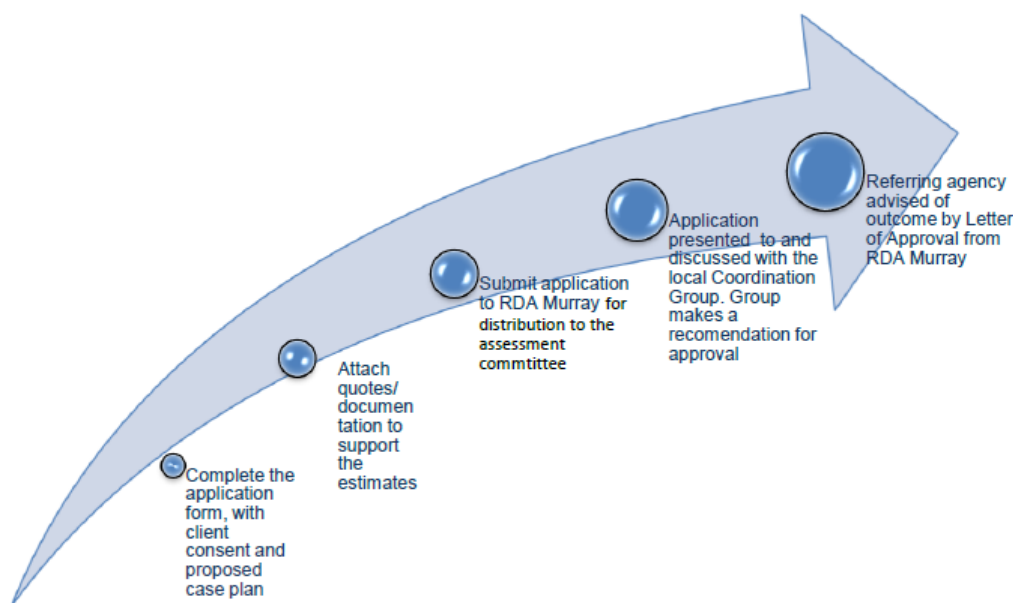
Source: RDA Murray HAP guidelines

3.5   Service model

The model uses the contracted NGO, RDA Murray, to maintain the brokerage budget and to coordinate partner agencies to work together to plan and provide wraparound support to meet individual client needs. The brokerage was used to deliver the project's two main components:

- Housing Intensive Support packages (target of 30 per annum)
- Early Intervention Brokerage packages (target of 50 per annum)

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RDA Murray managed the development of the coordinated case plans through local project coordination groups that bring together a range of local housing and support agencies (see 3.5.2 for more).

In addition to the brokerage, the project in Riverina had a legal services component, which was provided directly by Legal Aid and was intended to support clients of both package types.

The project plan indicated the project would provide enhanced capacity for outreach to clients in smaller towns and settlements, traditionally a challenge for regional service systems to support.

3.5.1   Services offered

Contracted NGO

The service specification lists the following activities to be provided by RDA Murray for both project components:

- information and advice to clients
- referral to other services
- assessment and case planning
- client focused case work (for the 30 homeless clients per annum this includes support to access and maintain a Housing NSW tenancy)
- linkages to training and employment
- transition to independent living for the housing intensive support component
- service system development.

RDA does not provide direct support to clients, but coordinates the brokerage funding that partner agencies and organisations can access to case manage clients or provide supports outlined in agreed case plans.

Housing

The project plan identified the following pathways to housing for the two client groups:

- 30 tenancies provided by Housing NSW each year, including 10 for clients with complex needs
- partnership between specialist homelessness support services and Housing NSW Temporary Accommodation Program to provide, where necessary, up to 4 weeks supported accommodation and intensive support
- partnerships with the private housing sector (real estate agents and private landlords) to increase pathways into private accommodation.

For the Housing Intensive Support component, Housing NSW was initially expected to provide all tenancies for clients. However, other avenues have been used in the actual

delivery of the program, in particular through Community Housing providers, including Nation Building Economy Stimulus Plan properties.

Support

The project provided brokered support through a cross-agency, cross-sector partnership model. Local coordination groups developed and approved holistic and individually tailored case plans to meet each client's/ family's needs. Each client/ family was designated a case manager who coordinated the multi-disciplinary case management for a period of up to 12 months to support the client and their access to the services they need. The process included regular case management meetings with all support services involved and provision of regular progress reports and case plan reviews to the coordination group.

Legal services

The legal services component was delivered by Legal Aid through a specialist homeless outreach solicitor working with project partners. According to the evaluation of the Legal Aid component, legal support was provided in three main forms: direct legal assistance to clients, secondary consultations at coordination group meetings and outside of the meetings to case workers about project clients, and Community Legal education sessions to non-legal staff.

3.5.2   Coordination structures

While the initial setting only had one central coordination group, the project coordinator established four local coordination groups (Wagga, Griffith, Albury and Deniliquin). Consistent with good practice principles, this approach aimed to engage local stakeholders, obtain local knowledge, enhance local partnerships and reduce travel for participants.

These local groups were led by the project coordinator from RDA Murray and brought together a range of local services, including government agencies, housing providers, specialist homelessness services (SHS) and other NGOs working with homeless clients. Each group met once a month, though the Deniliquin coordination group met less frequently because they had a lower number of referrals.

The role of each coordination group included making a recommendation to RDA Murray about approving, amending or rejecting a client application and case plan. RDA Murray then made the final decision based on this recommendation and according to the project guidelines (see section 3.4). All case support plans were subject to regular review by the coordination group, at which point the designated case manager may have asked for further brokerage support or sought input from the group about other assistance needed.

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3.5.3 Partnerships

The project plan outlined partner government agencies and the expectation for the project to work with specialist homelessness services and Housing NSW Temporary Accommodation Program, real estate agents and private landlords and other relevant local agencies.

Table 4.   Partner agency roles

Partner agency	Role
Community Services	Lead government agency to administer and provide funding to the contracted agency.
Housing NSW	To provide 30 social housing tenancies (ten for complex needs clients) per annum under the NSW Housing and Human Services Accord Framework.
Community Housing providers	To contribute to the project housing component
NSW Health	Where possible, NSW Health will provide timely access to assessment and treatment services within existing resources. Treatment services will be provided to clients of the project who meet clinical service eligibility criteria, subject to clinical triage and service availability.
Ageing, Disability and Home Care	Where possible, Ageing, Disability and Home Care will provide timely access to support services within existing resources.
Legal Aid	Provide specialist homeless outreach legal clinics in targeted locations in the region through a specialist homelessness outreach solicitor.
Aboriginal Affairs	Policy expertise and advice on project direction.
Specialist homelessness services and Housing NSW Temporary Accommodation Program	Up to 4 weeks supported accommodation and intensive support where necessary
Real estate agents and private landlords	To increase pathways into private accommodation.
Other local NGOs and government agencies	To participate in local coordination groups and provide case management and/or other support identified in case plans to clients.

Source: Project plan Rural Interagency Homelessness Project

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3.5.4   Brokerage

The project provides brokerage funding to local agencies to purchase goods or deliver services to clients in accordance with collaborative and coordinated case plans, which are determined by the coordination groups. According to the self-evaluation report, goods and services provided by local agencies include:

- specialist services
- case management from agencies not funded for homelessness support or other agencies at capacity
- basic household goods, e.g. whitegoods, furniture
- special circumstance debt relief, bond, utilities, etc
- training and tools (e.g. computers)
- recreational and social integration costs e.g. parenting groups
- health e.g. rehabilitation.

The project guidelines specify some eligibility criteria that limit the use of brokerage funding, including:

- brokerage will be used to purchase financial assistance/ material aid and/or specialised support services not readily available to the client and the referring/ lead agency, as identified in the client's case management/ care plan
- brokerage will not be used to purchase resources that are readily available to the service and through other existing avenues
- case management brokerage must be used by the applying agency and cannot be subcontracted to another agency
- brokerage funds are provided to the referring/ lead agency, which is responsible for purchasing any resources, or distributing the brokerage funds to other support agencies as identified in the case management plan
- clients are not to be given money directly
- brokerage must not cover alcohol or cigarettes.

3.6   Management and governance arrangements

Community Services, as the lead government agency for the project, has responsibility for managing the contract with RDA Murray, the contracted NGO. RDA Murray reports to Community Services on the project and Community Services reports to the Regional Homelessness Committee (RHC).

The project had a pathway for escalation of systemic barriers to service delivery to the identified officer within Community Services to develop strategies to overcome these barriers at the regional level. A Homelessness Operation Group (HOG), covering all HAP projects in the region, was also established to meet before RHC meetings to discuss what operational issues needed to be taken to the RHC.

3.7   Resources

3.7.1   Staffing

As of the June 2012 self-evaluation report, the project had 1.5 full-time equivalent (FTE) staff—1.4 FTE managers (the coordinator and supervisor) and 0.1 FTE for administration.

3.7.2   Budget allocation

The project is funded through Commonwealth funding under the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness (the NPAH). It was allocated a budget of $712,000 per annum over three years based on the following average costing for package components:

- intensive case management support for single adults with complex needs at $37,230 per person
- semi-independent case management support for families at $10,220 per family
- early intervention with an average of four months support at $1,374 per person

Table 5 below presents the actual project income to end of June 2012. In 2009/10 the project was in operation for four months as it started in March 2010.

Table 5.   Actual project income per year

	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	Total
NSW Community Services	$340,000	$697,000	$713,449	$1,750,449
Interest received	$3,395	$9,376	$2,870	$15,641
Total income	$343,395	$706,376	$716,319	$1,766,090

Source: RDA audited financial statements for 2009/10, 2010/11 and 2011/12

An additional $200,000 per annum for legal services provided as part of the project was allocated directly to Legal Aid.

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4. Client outcomes

4.1 Clients assisted

4.1.1 Number of clients assisted

The Riverina Murray HAP project (RMHAP) assisted a total of 203 unique clients to the end of June 2012.[2] According to the initial project plan and service specification, the project was to support 80 clients per annum—30 of these with housing—over three years. In the last quarter of 2009/10, when RMHAP was being established, the project assisted 28 clients, exceeding the target of 20 for the quarter. The project took on slightly fewer new clients than the annual target in 2010/11. In 2011/12, when the project was well-established, it exceeded the annual target as well as working with 98 clients carried over from the previous year (see Table 6).

Table 6.   **Number of clients assisted from March 2010 to June 2012**

	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	Total
Annual target	20	80	80	180
New clients	28	77	98	203
Clients continuing from previous year		6	64	-

Source: HAP data portal

4.1.2 Location of clients assisted

While the majority of clients (85%) were from the regional towns Albury, Wagga, and Griffith, clients were drawn from a large numbers of locations (see Figure 3). This distribution is in line with the 2006 homelessness statistics in the Riverina-Murray region where the largest numbers of homeless people were recorded in Albury and Wagga.

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[2] Data collected through the HAP data portal is for each client entering the project. One client may come with a partner or some children, but service providers did not report on the composition of households. The data collected is at household level, but the report uses the term 'client' with a broader understanding for ease of reading as it is the terminology used in all policy and project documents.

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Figure 3.   Clients assisted by location (March 2010–June 2012)

Legend:
- Albury
- Wagga
- Griffith
- Deniliquin
- Tumut
- Goolgowi
- Leeton
- Cootamundra
- Brungle
- Yenda
- Narrandera
- Corowa
- Mathoura
- Barham
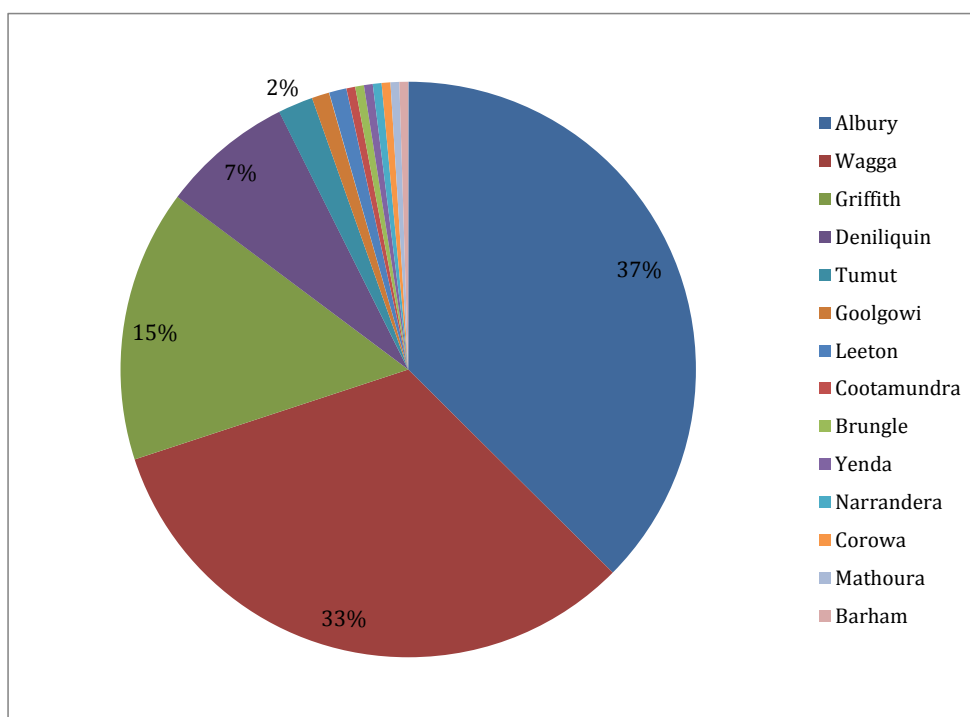
Source: RDA Murray client data, November 2012

4.1.3 Demographics of clients assisted

Within the overall target groups of high-needs homeless clients and clients at risk of homelessness, Aboriginal clients were the only demographic group to be targeted.

The project aimed to have 40 per cent Aboriginal clients, which the lead government agency and RDA Murray considered ambitious, given that only 8.9 per cent of the homeless in the Riverina Murray were Aboriginal as of the 2006 'Counting the Homeless Report'. But as shown in table 7, the project reached this target—with the proportion of Aboriginal clients growing from only 18 per cent in the last quarter of 2009/10 to 40% in 2011/12 once the project was established.

Females made up 59% of all clients in 2011/12 and young people aged 16-24 years almost one-quarter (24%).

Table 7.   Demographics of clients assisted (March 2010–June 2012)

	2009/10 n=28	2010/11 n=83	2011/12 n=162
Male	39%	45%	41%
Female	61%	55%	59%
Total	100%	100%	100%

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	2009/10 n=28	2010/11 n=83	2011/12 n=162
16–24 years	25%	25%	24%
25–64 years	71%	72%	75%
>65 years	4%	2%	1%
Total	100%	100%	100%
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	18%	43%	40%
Other Australian born people	82%	53%	58%
People born overseas, English speaking	0%	4%	2%
People born overseas, non-English speaking	0%	0%	0%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Source: HAP data portal

Note: number of clients assisted per year includes new clients as well as clients continuing from the previous year.

4.1.4   Client status prior to assistance

The project assisted clients in a range of living situations reflecting its dual target of both the homeless and at risk populations. Over the two years of operation almost a half (46%) of the clients assisted were people at risk of homelessness (see Table 8). The proportion of clients in this category increased in the last financial year when the housing intensive support component was wound up so that all clients of this component could complete their 12-month support period before project funding ceases.

Just over a third of the clients assisted were people living in short term or emergency accommodation due to a lack of other options and almost one fifth (19%) were sleeping rough.

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Table 8.   Client status prior to assistance (March 2010–June 2012)

	2009/10 n=28	2010/11 n=83	2011/12 n=162
Sleeping rough	7%	13%	19%
Short term or emergency accommodation due to lack of other options	36%	63%	35%
At risk of homelessness	36%	24%	46%
Other	21%	0%	1%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Source: HAP data portal

Notes: number of clients assisted per year include new clients as well as continuing clients from previous year; the category 'Short term or emergency accommodation due to lack of other options' includes temporary accommodation provided by Housing NSW and friends/ family.

The clients we interviewed, including Aboriginal people, struggled with many issues before entering the project: significant financial difficulties, severe health issues, mental illness, unemployment and being single parents. Two were homeless, living in a park or a car, and two others were at risk of homelessness. One client who received early intervention described having progressively edged toward homelessness:

> *I tried to struggle with everything by myself and finally the only thing I could cut back was the rent.*

A few stakeholders mentioned recurring issues like hoarding among early intervention clients.

4.1.5   Referral and assessment process

RMHAP used a broad approach to seeking referrals, relying not only on specialist homelessness services but on other types of organisations, especially NGOs (see section 5.1). All of the clients we interviewed entered the project through their support worker.

The self-evaluation report referred to some initial difficulties in obtaining early intervention referrals, with service providers indicating that tenancies were too often deemed unsalvageable by the time assistance was sought. In response, RDA Murray implemented a specific strategy to increase the early notification of tenancies at risk through Centrelink, Tenancy Advocacy Services and real estate agents. While no referrals were received from community housing providers and a limited number from Housing NSW, the strategy proved effective, as the number of new early intervention clients tripled from 2010/11 to 2011/12.

The only challenge a few stakeholders mentioned in relation to the referral process was a lack of referrals from real estate agents who could play a key role in identifying early

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intervention clients. As one interviewee put it, relationships with real estate agents have to be 'nurtured'. Several stakeholders noted that organising morning teas with real estate agents worked well as it helped them to establish good relationships.[3]

Satisfaction with processes

Stakeholders surveyed were generally satisfied with the referral and assessment process. The majority of respondents to the online survey considered the client referral process effective (65% agreed and 31% mostly agreed) and the assessment process effective (49% agreed and 45% mostly agreed).

Filling a gap in available supports

The majority of respondents to the online survey saw the project as an opportunity to support clients not covered by other existing initiatives (69% agreed and 21% mostly agreed) and work with clients they would not normally be able to reach (64% agreed and 23% mostly agreed). Most stakeholders interviewed described project clients as mostly having similar demographic characteristics to their usual clients, although often providing a service to clients with complex issues that would not have been reached before. Early intervention clients were the main difference with their non-RMHAP clients, with the project being perceived by stakeholders as filling a gap in support for these clients.

Clients not accepted into the project

Towards the end of June 2012, the project declined by 19 referrals and 22 applications were withdrawn; most of these occurred in 2010/11 when the project coordinator came on board and referring agencies were getting used to the project's eligibility criteria and guidelines.

When referrals are not accepted into the project, members of the coordination group suggest other avenues they can use to access appropriate programs or support services.

4.2 Services delivered

4.2.1 Entering the program

The Riverina Murray HAP project did not have a waiting list. But according to the self-evaluation report housing intensive support clients could wait up to three months to access social housing through Housing NSW.

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[3] The evaluator approached real estate agents for interview as part of the fieldwork, but did not manage to organise any during the two-day site visits. One real estate agent answered the online survey.

4.2.2   Types of services provided

Aside from access to housing (for the housing intensive support clients) or support to maintain housing (for early intervention clients), the project gave clients access to a case manager and a very broad range of services, with services tailored to each individual client as part of the case plan. Figure 4 shows the variety of services provided to clients in 2011/12. Financial counselling was the most common, with 47 per cent of clients in 2011/12 receiving this service. Notably the project linked a substantial number of clients to health, mental health, education and training, legal and drug and alcohol services.

Figure 4.   Non-housing services provided to 2011/12 clients
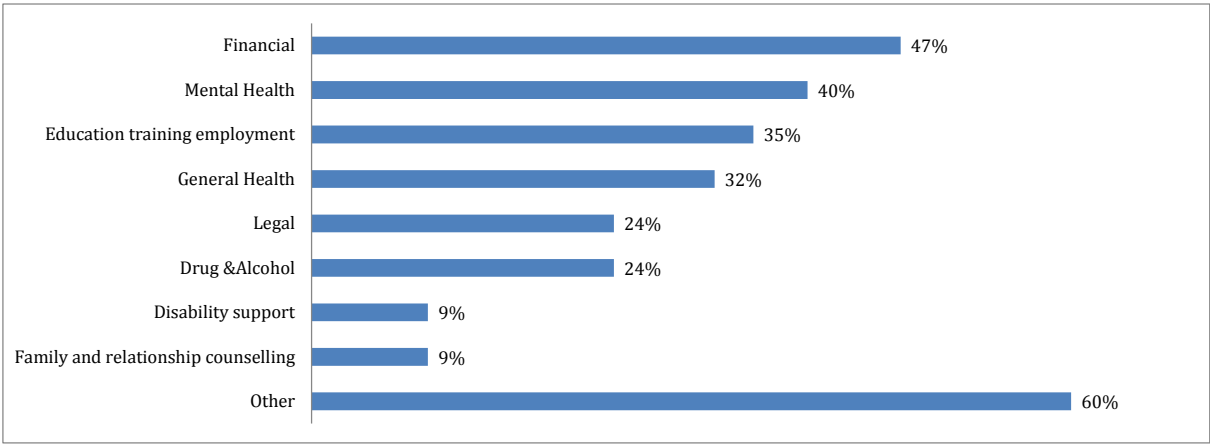
Source: HAP data portal (n=162). Other includes Domestic Violence counselling, transport, attending other appointments with the client, social and emotional wellbeing support, social interactions and group work, tenancy support and financial advocacy.

Note: these services were recorded at the time of application and do not always reflect services actually received. According to the project coordinator, a number of clients received mental health services without having been recorded as such in the initial application.

Clients interviewed received some assistance with furniture and other goods to establish their tenancy as well as homecare, health specialists, financial counselling, job support or classes like dietician classes or gardening advice that helped them to re-engage within the community.

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Legal services

The evaluation of the legal component (Matrix On Board, 2013) indicates that legal services have been used by case workers as

> *a "tool" to engage more generally in the program: sometimes the solicitor can achieve successful outcomes for clients quite quickly (for example through reducing debts), which builds the client's trust in the whole program.*

The Legal Aid solicitor in charge of this component has provided legal assistance directly to RMHAP clients in the form of legal advice (452 instances provided to end June 2012), minor assistance (455 instances) and casework service (32 cases), in particular through clinics established in the same town as the coordination groups. The most common legal matters clients received support with were debt, fines, consumer goods and consumer credit. The solicitor also provided advice to a large number of people affected by the floods in 2011 and 2012. A number of clients also received indirect legal advice through secondary consultations the solicitor provided to non-legal workers working with project clients. The solicitor estimated that she provided legal information, advice or referrals in relation to approximately 75 per cent of all applications received by the coordination groups.

4.2.3   Length of support

There is no systematic data to indicate how long clients were supported, but it was intended that clients be supported for 12 months.

4.2.4   Appropriateness of services provided

The vast majority of respondents to the online survey considered the project to have been particularly effective in linking clients to the support they need (75% agreed and 21% mostly agreed). Most also indicated the project had provided clients with access to a broader range of support services than other projects in this area (48% agreed and 48% mostly agreed). Several stakeholders we spoke with also felt that the project was beneficial in supporting clients with alternative types of services they would not otherwise have received.

Most stakeholders did not see the lack of services available locally as a critical barrier (13% disagreed and 60% mostly disagreed) to linking clients to the support they need.

Brokerage

Stakeholders surveyed generally considered the project as having provided easy access to brokerage support (68% agreed, 26% mostly agreed). Most were very pleased about the impact of brokerage funding on support services provided to clients: most respondents to the online survey see it as a major factor in clients receiving appropriate support (64% agreed and 29% mostly agreed).

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4.3   Housing outcomes

4.3.1   Types of housing support provided

The project offered two types of assistance: housing intensive support for people who were homeless and early intervention for people at risk of homelessness. In the first year of operation, most project clients received the housing intensive support component. As of March 2012, the project stopped taking on housing intensive support clients so all clients of this component could complete their support period before the project's planned end date of December 2012. Because the continuation of the project to June 2013 was not announced until later, the housing intensive support packages were not reinstated for an additional 6 months. As a consequence, most clients in the 2011/12 financial year were early intervention clients.

Figure 5.   Number of new clients assisted by component (March 2010–June 2012)
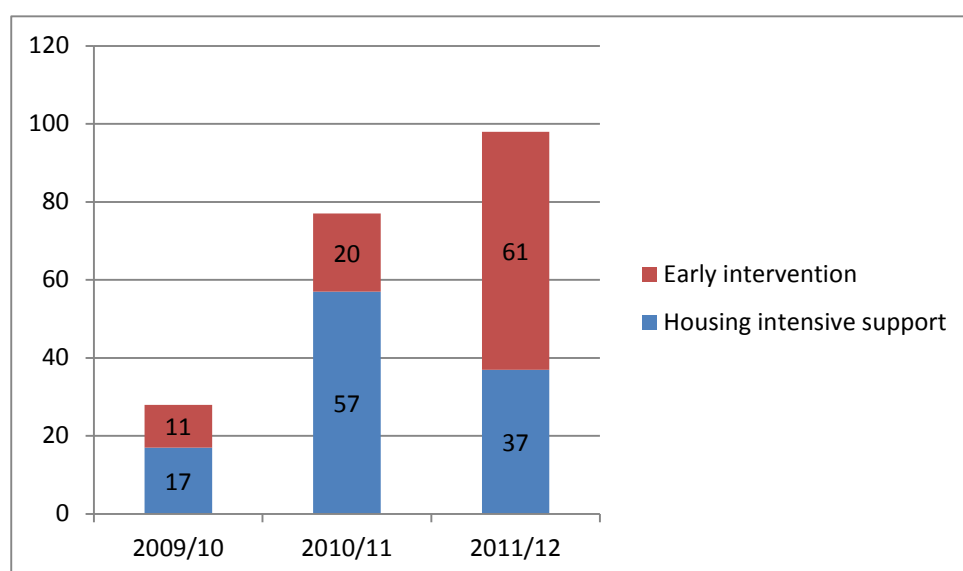
Source: RDA Murray, November 2012

Housing intensive support

The housing intensive support relied mainly on social housing, either through Housing NSW or community housing providers (see Figure 6 below). According to several stakeholders, the project was fortunate to access the housing stock built under the Nation Building Economy Stimulus Plan (NBESP), which became available at the start of the project. These were single and two-bedroom units built in Albury and Wagga, managed by Argyle and Homes Out West. To the end of June 2012, 27 of the 111 housing intensive support packages delivered included housing under the NBESP.

Private rental was the third most common housing option but was provided to only 12% of homeless clients. Clients that 'did not take up housing' are clients that were accepted into the project, but left prior to being housed. According to the project coordinator, this mainly occurred while waiting for housing to become available or for clients that were living in a transition phase.

Figure 6.   Distribution of housing intensive support clients by types of housing (March 2010 to June 2012)
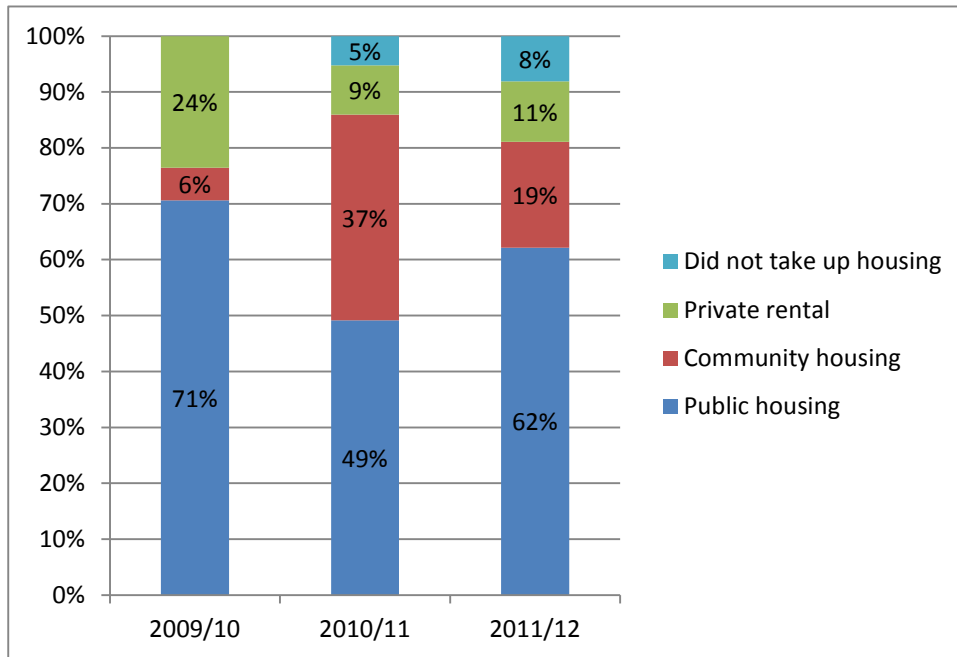
Source: RDA Murray, November 2012

Early intervention

The majority of clients that entered the early intervention component were already housed in the private rental market (63% of all early intervention clients to end of June 2012).

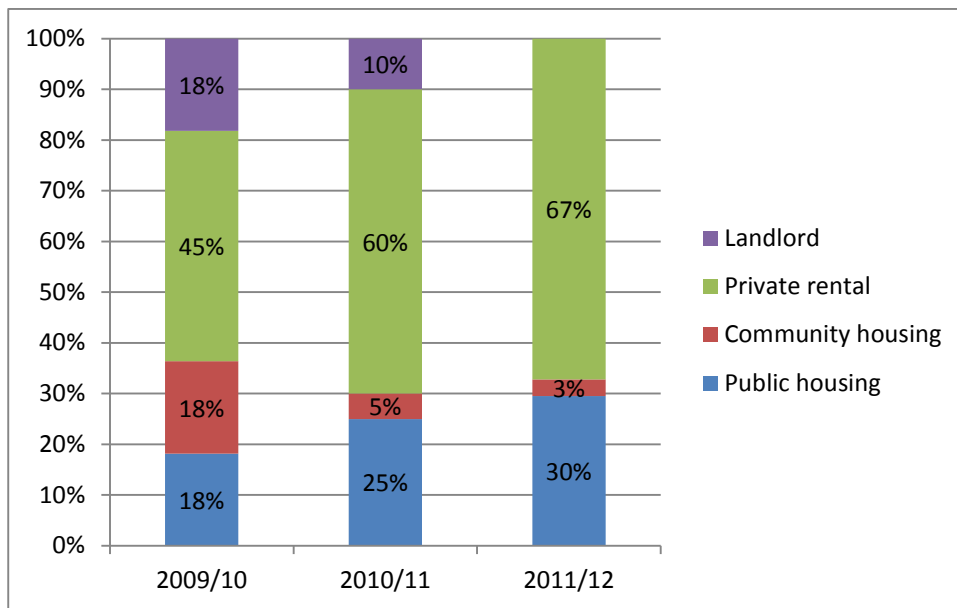**Figure 7.   Distribution of early intervention clients by types of housing (March 2010 to June 2012)**

Source: RDA Murray, November 2012

4.3.2   Critical factors to accessing and maintaining a tenancy

Almost all stakeholders surveyed agreed the project helped clients to obtain or maintain accommodation appropriate to their needs (73% agreed and 27% mostly agreed) and helped clients into stable long term accommodation (75% agreed and 23% mostly agreed). Slightly fewer, although still a majority, saw the project as having identified new and innovative ways to secure housing for clients (56% agreed and 29% mostly agreed).

While there are some issues with accessing housing in the region, not all stakeholders see the shortage in local affordable housing as a critical barrier to the project. Just over half described the limited availability of affordable housing locally as having reduced the project's ability to assist clients into accommodation (22% agreed and 33% mostly agreed).

Stakeholders identified a range of key success factors in negotiating client access to long term accommodation options:

- Housing NSW's influence and products, like 'Rent Start' or 'Rent-it-Keep-it' that help clients build a rental history. According to the self-evaluation report it is expected that this may have increased applications to TILA (Transition to Independent Living Allowance), Housing NSW Rent Arrears Assistance and other schemes.

- timely access to accommodation for high needs clients

- intensive case management to engage clients sufficiently to maintain their tenancy.

The main challenges mentioned related to Housing NSW policies that had to progressively align with HAP objectives—e.g. considering clients with limited tenancy history—while still meeting key tenancy requirements (see chapter 5 about the impact of the project on the service system).

Most clients interviewed identified the housing as the most helpful thing in the project, 'getting a roof secured over [their] head'. Some of them appreciated the location most or the fact that they could have their pets with them. One stakeholder interviewed referred to the recent evaluation of the Housing and Accommodation Support Initiative (HASI), which found that outcomes are greater when clients are involved in choosing the location of their housing.
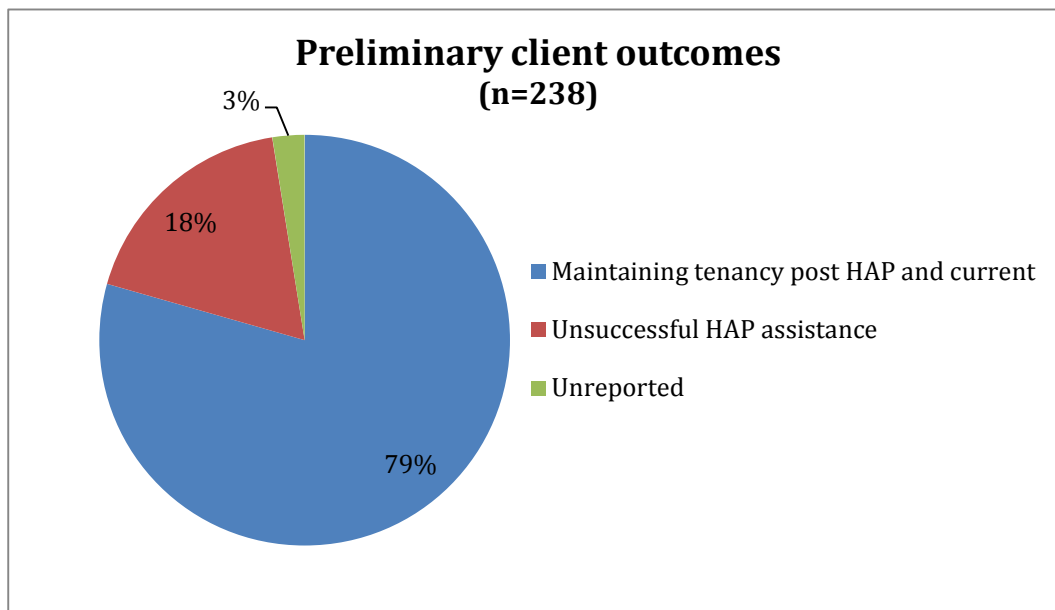
4.3.3   Medium to long-term housing outcomes

The majority of respondents to the online survey believe that clients are better able to sustain a tenancy as a result of the project (66% agreed and 27% mostly agreed). Some housing providers interviewed confirmed that RMHAP clients were sustaining their tenancy after exiting the project and other stakeholders mentioned anecdotal evidence of successful outcomes for early intervention clients. All clients interviewed were also sustaining their tenancy. However, stakeholders also referred to difficulties measuring client outcomes, particularly chasing up clients that may have moved for good reasons.

Preliminary client outcomes indicators

In July and August 2012, RDA Murray conducted a valuable exercise to assess medium to long term outcomes of the project. The coordinator asked each case managing agency to follow-up with all clients assisted since the beginning of the project to identify whether they were sustaining their tenancy and, if not, the reason why. Another request to housing providers allowed the coordinator to cross-check this data to ensure a higher level of reliability.

Results from this exercise are quite striking, with almost 80% of clients in the project to the end of June 2012 sustaining their tenancy. Among those who disengaged ('unsuccessful HAP assistance'), almost half (21 out of 44) were identified as disengaging from case management. Other reasons tenancies were not sustained were that the client 'did not take package' (9), issues such as mental health and alcohol and other drug use (8) and relationship breakdowns (6).

Figure 8.　　**RMHAP medium to long term client outcomes**

Preliminary client outcomes
(n=238)

3%

18%

79%

- ■ Maintaining tenancy post HAP and current
- ■ Unsuccessful HAP assistance
- ■ Unreported

Source: RDA Murray HOG Report, November 2012

It was not possible to disaggregate this data by exit date from the project. This would have allowed the extent to which outcomes were sustained over time to be determined, which would be useful in future analysis. However, this preliminary data indicates a high success rate for the project for at least the duration of the project.

Following this exercise, Housing NSW has added a specific tag to HAP clients with a view to track outcomes over time. This is an indirect, positive outcome from the project in improving Housing NSW capacity to monitor client outcomes.

4.4 Non-housing outcomes

Most respondents to the online survey indicated clients' well-being has improved as a result of the project (61% agreed and 34% mostly agreed).

When looking at how things are now, most of the clients interviewed said the project helped them get 'back on track' by 'keeping them on top of things' or even 'lift[ing] them up'. Two clients said the project 'saved their life'. One interviewee was very specific in describing the impact of the project on her life:

> *The help that I got was instrumental in getting the right head set to plan for the future. Then I was able to become fairly proactive.*

Most clients didn't identify anything least helpful in the project. Three of the seven clients interviewed said that they would still need some help after their time with the project ended, for example, for transport, medical help or financial support.

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4.4.1   Critical factors to supporting clients

Overall, stakeholders interviewed identified a broad range of key factors to support successful client outcomes:

▪ client willingness to engage with the case manager
▪ self-determining and empowering approach that involves clients in defining achievable goals
▪ integrated and holistic approach that tackles the range of issues encountered by high needs clients
▪ individualised approach with case management plans tailored to needs
▪ ongoing support coordinated by a support officer throughout the whole journey.

Stakeholders identified budget counselling and legal services as particularly helpful for clients. A financial counsellor involved in the project suggested that a key difference in the extent to which clients engaged in financial counselling related to how they had initially been referred to the service.

> *It is totally different if the client comes to financial counselling because they have been told by other service compared to when they are coming by themselves. When they are referred to financial counselling, they take it for granted and assume that you will chase them. Some of the clients assisted didn't seem very interested. They were probably frightened that they would be told 'here is what your budget should look like'. How the message comes across is very important.*

A few stakeholders indicated through the online survey and/or interviews that legal services made a significant contribution to successful client outcomes.

Clients we spoke to referred to the relationship with their case manager as the most visible aspect of the project. One client highlighted the importance of building trust to feel comfortable to share personal stories, reflecting the evidence from the literature of the importance of rapport-building between client and case manager.

4.5   Other intended or unintended outcomes for clients

Two clients interviewed identified some difficulties settling into housing. One client was struggling with high electricity bills and another said that her children needed time to adjust to having a house as they were used to living in the park. Both examples are illustrations of the important shift clients go through and that these require time and adequate support.

Another consequence of the project is that, according to Housing NSW staff, the retention rate within Housing NSW tenancies has increased. While this could be seen as a successful outcome for the project, it has also reinforced the shortfall of available places in affordable housing in some areas. In those areas, the turnover in existing housing stock, including evictions, is sometimes seen as the only way for those on

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waiting lists to access housing. In such areas, the project may have unintentionally contributed to reducing the number of housing places available.

4.6   Impact of the project on homelessness

4.6.1   Impact of the project on reducing/addressing homelessness

At the state level, between 2006 and 2011, the homeless population in New South Wales increased by 27 per cent from 22,220 to 28,180 people. The rate is now 40.8 homeless people per 10,000 of the population. New South Wales rank, though, remained stable—sixth among Australia's states and territories.

In the same time the homelessness population in Riverina Murray decreased by 3 per cent which compares well with the increase at State level. People staying temporarily with other households are still the largest group with only a 2 per increase (see section 3.1.3 and Table 3 about the situation in 2006 prior to the project commencement). Substantial changes can be observed among other homeless groups in Riverina Murray (see Table 3):

- a 50 per cent decrease in the number of persons who are in improvised dwellings, tents or sleeping out, also described as 'rough sleepers' (+19% in NSW)
- a 57 per cent decrease in the number of persons staying in boarding houses (+9% in NSW)
- a 28 increase in the number of persons living in 'severely' crowded dwellings (+63% in NSW).

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Table 9. **The homeless population in Riverina Murray in 2011 as compared to 2006**

Homeless operational group	n	2006-2011 variation	
		Riverina Murray homeless	NSW homeless
Persons who are in improvised dwellings, tents or sleeping out	37	-50%	+19%
Persons in supported accommodation for the homeless	140	+14%	+28%
Persons staying temporarily with other households	230	+2%	+4%
Persons staying in boarding houses	37	-57%	+9%
Persons in other temporary lodging	7	=	+49%
Persons living in 'severely' crowded dwellings	115	+28%	+63%
All homeless persons	588	-3%	+27%
Persons living in other crowded dwellings	327	+19%	+50%
Persons in other improvised dwellings	86	-20%	-46%
Persons who are marginally housed in caravan parks	191	+2%	-4%
All persons in other marginal housing	604	+6%	+31%

Note from ABS: cells in this table have been randomly adjusted to avoid the release of confidential data. Categories are mutually exclusive; therefore persons will only appear in one category. For example, persons who are in the category 'improvised dwellings, tents or sleeping out' who are in 'living in severely crowded dwellings' will not also appear in 'persons living in severely crowded dwellings'.

Attributing any change directly to the RMHAP project is not possible given the wide range of reforms that have been taking place at the state and Commonwealth level on the one hand, and the changes in the private market on the other. It is possible however to say that the project may have *contributed* to some of these changes considering the number of homeless people and people at risk of homelessness the program assisted. However the 2011 ABS data has been collected on census night 9 August 2011 while the project had been fully operational only for one year. Until July 2011 RMHAP had assisted 105 clients, including 74 under the housing intensive support component targeting clients experiencing primary homelessness. This may have contributed to the decrease in the number of persons who are in improvised dwellings, tents or sleeping out. However, a more robust contribution analysis of the impact of the project on homelessness would require looking at the homelessness data at a later point in time so

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that the project would have time to fully produce its effects on the homelessness population.

Anecdotal evidence and the successful medium to long-term outcomes described in section 4.3.3 indicate that the project has the potential to have an impact on homelessness in the Riverina-Murray region and most respondents to the online survey (73% agreed and 20% mostly agreed) believe that the project has the potential to achieve sustainable reductions in homelessness into the future.

Another way to look at the potential impact of the project on homelessness is to examine eviction data over time. An expected positive impact of the project would be a decrease in eviction for non-payment of rent. According to the data on applications lodged to Consumer, Trader & Tenancy Tribunal (CTTT) for termination notice on the grounds of non-payment of rent, the number of applications for social housing increased by 11 per cent between 2009/10 and 2011/12 in Riverina Murray while it increased by 14 per cent across New South Wales (see Table 10). But the region does not compare well with the state figures for the tenancy division (private rental) with an 18 per cent increase in applications compared to 1 per cent decrease across New South Wales. More detailed analysis over a longer period of time would be needed to assess the contribution of the project to these data. Again, there could be a contribution of the project in those changes; however it would require a more robust analysis (e.g. identifying other potential contributing factors) over a longer period of time to be able to observe the full impact of the project.

Table 10. **Applications lodged to Consumer, Trader & Tenancy Tribunal for termination notice on the grounds of non-payment of rent, Tenancy and social housing divisions**

Hearing venue	2009/10		2010/11		2011/12		Variation 2009/10 – 2011/12	
	Tenancy division	Social division	Tenancy division	Social division	Tenancy division	Social division	Tenancy division	Social division
Albury	163	113	181	75	149	136	-9%	+20%
Cootamundra	2	5	2	8	1	6	-50%	+20%
Deniliquin	6	1	12	2	12	14	+100%	+1300%
Griffith	27	44	56	23	87	66	+222%	+50%
Leeton	33	26	30	21	23	30	-30%	+15%
Wagga Wagga	90	169	92	110	107	146	+19%	-14%
Total region	321	358	373	239	379	398	+18%	+11%
Total NSW	13,758	7,238	13,695	6,178	13,586	8,284	-1%	+14%

Notes: Applications for termination of tenancy for non-payment of rent: under s.87 of the Residential Tenancies Act 2010 [includes applications seeking a finding under s.89(5)]; or under s.57 of the (former) Residential Tenancies Act 1987. The Residential Tenancies Act 2010 commenced operation on 31 January 2011. Prior to this date, applications for termination of tenancy for non-payment of rent were made under s.57 of the former RTA. The CTTT has always made efforts to separately quantify applications for termination for non-payment of rent from applications for termination for other breaches of the agreement, so that data for 2009-2010, 2010-2011 and 2011-2012 is reasonably comparable.

4.6.2 Considerations for specific client groups

As well as reaching Aboriginal clients, the project had a broader aim to address a key problem in rural service delivery by providing regional service systems with enhanced capacity for outreach to clients in smaller towns and isolated settlements.

Regional clients

Some stakeholders from remote areas described some difficulties accessing certain outreach services, including psychiatric assistance, although brokerage offered some more flexibility in accessing these services.

Aboriginal clients

Several stakeholders noted that the project has been particularly successful with Aboriginal clients, reflecting the data shown earlier in section 4.1.3.

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In the self-evaluation report RDA Murray described some initial difficulties with the definition of primary homelessness because it was not necessarily appropriate for Aboriginal communities.

> *It was stated by an Aboriginal identified government worker that in the Aboriginal culture homeless people do not sleep rough. She stated that Aboriginal people would not usually deny their community members a place to sleep and therefore, those who may fit the primary homeless criteria were actually fitting the secondary homelessness criteria (not in the HAP Project).*

As a consequence, the project decided to apply the eligibility criteria with more flexibility for Aboriginal people by considering more closely their homelessness history, for example, long term couch surfing and failed tenancies.

Several stakeholders reported that it has been very beneficial to have Aboriginal representatives attending the local coordination group meetings. Aboriginal members provided an Aboriginal perspective to many case plans and increased cultural awareness of participating organisations. One SHS service provider stated at a meeting

> *I have been in the homeless sector for more than 10 years and this is the first time I have sat down at the table with someone from an Aboriginal organisation.*

This has probably contributed to the success of the project in reaching Aboriginal clients that represented 40 per cent of clients assisted in 2011/12.

Other client groups

Most stakeholders did not identify any particular difference in the level of success across client groups. One said, 'it comes down to the individual in the end'. Another, though, mentioned that the project has been less successful with hoarders, clients with mental illness and clients from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD). The data shows that only two per cent of clients were born overseas, and these were all English speaking (see Table 7).

As stated in the August report to the Homelessness Operation Group (HOG) prepared by RDA Murray, the Griffith coordination group identified a gap in referrals for CALD clients and took action to promote the project to the CALD community. If those actions prove to be effective, the project should see an increase in clients born overseas and in non-English speaking people in particular.

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5. Service system and delivery outcomes

5.1 Key impact on the service system

5.1.1 What is working well and what are the gaps and areas for improvement in the Riverina-Murray region

According to service system mapping conducted in July 2012 by Robyn Kennedy Consultants, formal partnerships between SHS and other services supported by a broad range of networking and coordination mechanisms, like RMHAP coordination groups had a positive impact on the suite of services offered to clients. Cross-referral networks within the homelessness service system were also identified as something working well, involving government agencies and non-government organisations and relying on standard referral forms. Key issues identified were the capacity of services and the availability of affordable housing. The report also pointed out the lack of available support services in rural and remote communities and transport issues. Suggestions for future actions were made around these issues. Interestingly some recommendations resonate particularly well with RMHAP, in particular:

- the need for increased sharing of resources and better networking in some areas as it was noted that service providers were not always aware of the services provided by other organisations

- the need for a greater focus on prevention and early intervention to stop people entering homelessness, including supporting tenancies at risk.

5.1.2 Agency participation in the project

The Riverina Murray HAP project offered a clear opportunity to tackle the challenges identified in 5.1.1 by putting a strong focus on the service system change as a mechanism for facilitating the intended shift in practice from crisis intervention to long-term supportive housing and early intervention/prevention.
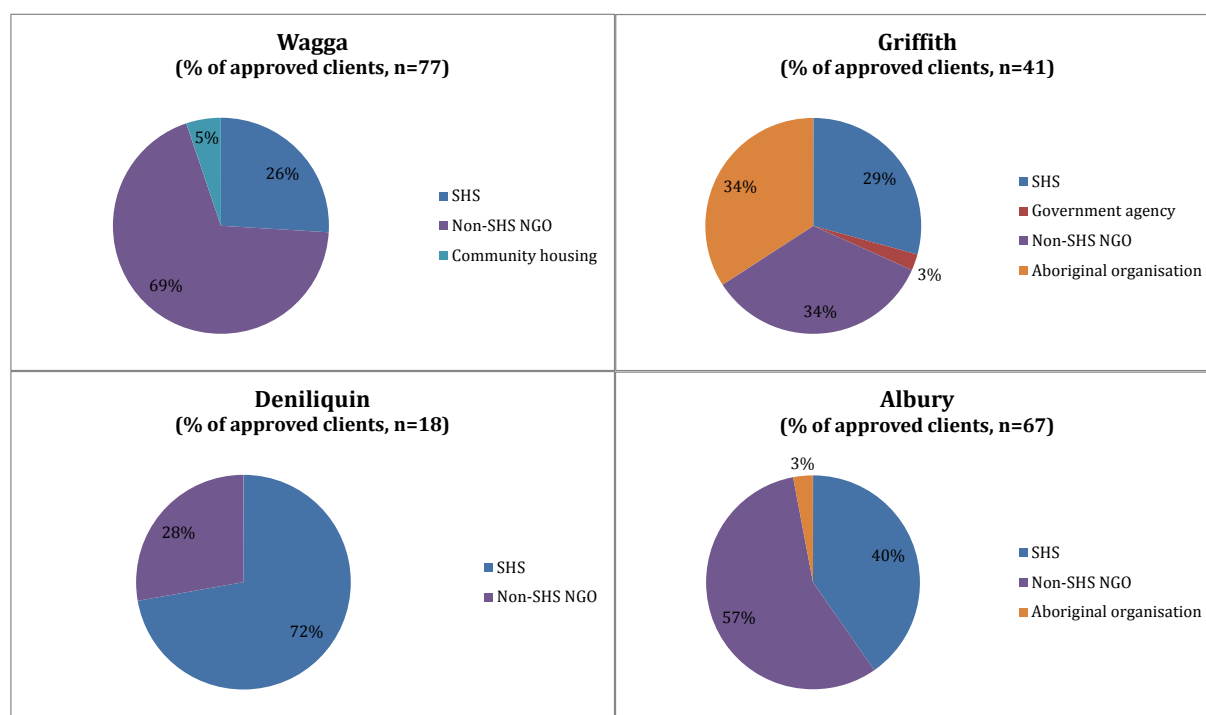
A first key indicator of success in terms of impact on the service system is the number of organisations involved in the project. Since the beginning of the project 32 different organisations have been involved in case managing clients,[4] only 9 of which are specialist homelessness services (SHS). This shows that the project reached a broader spectrum of agencies than its "natural catchment" and was successful in opening up the service system to new organisations. In terms of proportion of clients assisted, SHS are still playing a key role and case managed 35 per cent of clients assisted to end of June 2012. Table 11 below provides further details about the distribution of clients assisted

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[4] According to the RDA Murray coordinator prior to March 2012 referring agencies were also leading agencies. Since March 2012 and the refocus to early intervention, the referral process provided a more formal, simplified framework, also making possible to capture referring agencies.

among case managing agencies in each of the four coordination group meeting locations. Apart from Deniliquin, all locations had a diversity of organisations involved in case management, non-SHS NGOs including organisations like Centacare, Intereach and Mission Australia. According to the self-evaluation report, the most difficult area to service was Deniliquin, the smallest of the four population centres and where local stakeholders did not participate in the project to the same extent as in other areas.

Table 11.   Distribution of approved clients by type of case managing agency and location

Wagga
(% of approved clients, n=77)
5%
26%
69%
- SHS
- Non-SHS NGO
- Community housing

Griffith
(% of approved clients, n=41)
29%
34%
34%
3%
- SHS
- Government agency
- Non-SHS NGO
- Aboriginal organisation

Deniliquin
(% of approved clients, n=18)
28%
72%
- SHS
- Non-SHS NGO

Albury
(% of approved clients, n=67)
3%
40%
57%
- SHS
- Non-SHS NGO
- Aboriginal organisation

Source: RDA Murray client data, November 2012

Type of involvement

Not all organisations involved in the project were in charge of case managing clients. Other types of involvement included participating in coordination group meetings and contributing to the client assessment process, making referrals, providing housing solutions and delivering support services to clients. Figure 9 below gives an indication of the different roles played by organisations involved in the project. Among respondents to the online survey, 82 per cent were at least participating in coordination group meetings, 65 per cent were making referrals and 57 per cent were case managing clients.

Figure 9.   Various types of involvement in the project
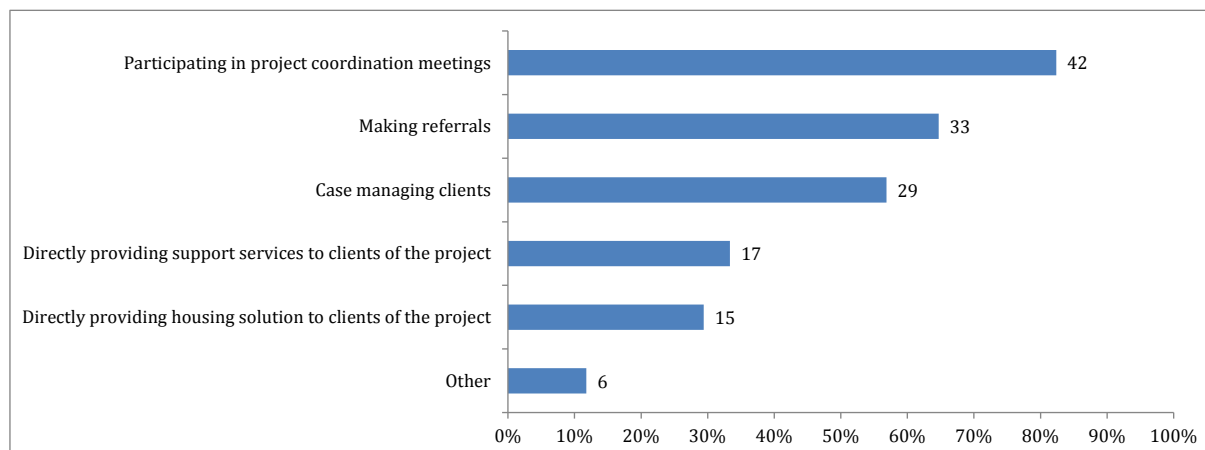
Source: Stakeholder online survey, Question 5 'In what ways have you been involved in the Riverina Murray Homelessness Action Plan project?', n=51

One of the stakeholders interviewed said that *"it was important to show to other agencies that our organisation is on board"*, showing that the service system also achieved increased participation through some form of informal peer pressure among organisations to participate.

5.1.3   Impact of the project on interactions between organisations

According to respondents to the online survey, most interactions with support service providers and housing organisations were related to clients (63% and 57% respectively). Most interactions with the lead government agency, Community Services and the coordinating NGO, RDA Murray, were related to project coordination (56% for both organisations).

Thirty-four per cent of respondents never interacted or interacted just once with real estate agents or landlords. This indicates an area for further action in the future, where the project should look at developing relationships and involvement of real estate agents.

Most stakeholders interviewed agreed that the project achieved an improved service system. Key impacts included:

- Increased knowledge of the services provided by organisations in the area, and of government policies, in particular Housing NSW policies and products

- Increased staff knowledge about related issues through training and briefings held during coordination group meetings, including on legal matters and mental health. Stakeholders also reported beneficial impact of having Aboriginal representatives attending local coordination group meetings in terms of cultural awareness.

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Several stakeholders also mentioned the project had helped to increase mutual respect among local agencies and organisations. As one interviewee frankly stated

> *It breaks down barriers and we learn through the project that Housing staff aren't all baddies. This has taken away the big bad wolf syndrome.*

A more systematic measure of the service system change achieved by the project also shows improved relationships between organisations involved. Respondents to the online survey were asked to rate three indicators on a four point scale relating to before and after the project: the level of knowledge about services provided by other organisations, level of coordination and the degree of trust in the relationships with other local organisations.

Results show the project had a positive impact on all three indicators. The average rating increased from 2.6 to 3.3 for coordination and trusting relationship and from 2.6 to 3.4 for knowledge about other organisations' services (see Table 12).

Looking at differences in individual responses, the rating increased more than one for sixty-one per cent of respondents for knowledge about other organisations' services, 27 per cent for coordination and 52 per cent for trusting relationships.

Table 12.   Impact of the project on the relationships with other housing and service organisations

| Type of impact | n | Mean score (1=None, 2=Limited, 3=Good, 4=Extensive) | | Standard deviation |
		Before	After	
Knowledge of what other local service organisations can provide for my clients	46	2.6	3.4	0.76
Coordination with other local service organisations to support clients	46	2.6	3.3	0.79
Trusting relationships with other local service organisations	46	2.6	3.3	0.87

Source: Stakeholder online survey, Question 12 'Please rate the following aspects of relationships with other housing and service organisations before and after your involvement in the Riverina Murray Homelessness Action Plan project.'

One government agency interviewee gave a practical example reflecting the impact the project had on the service system:

> *The way agencies came together on the homelessness week: some agencies were able to speak together and raise issues at a community level.*

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Even one of the clients interviewed noted spontaneously that everyone was working together. From a client perspective a more integrated service system offers clear advantages in terms of streamlined referrals to other services and a no-wrong-door approach.

5.2   Staffing issues

5.2.1   What impact did staffing issues have on the project?

Staffing issues reported were mainly in regional areas, within smaller organisations that did not have the minimum level of resources required to take responsibility for clients referred in their location. All organisations welcomed the financial support provided by the brokerage funding for case management hours (see section 6.3). Some agencies have been able to extend case workers' hours or recruit new staff for the sole purpose of case management of RMHAP clients. However, this funding model is client-based and does not allow for stable forward planning in terms of human resources management. This instability has a strong impact on the internal organisation of services involved in the project and should be taken into consideration in the design of the next generation of the project (see section 8.2).

5.2.2   What skills were needed by staff?

All organisations in charge of case management had staff with pre-existing case management skills while some training about case management was provided to participating organisations through the project but a small number of stakeholders who spoke about the training felt it did not cover HAP specific processes particularly well.

Stakeholders felt they gained more through the incidental training and other interactions during coordination group meetings. Mental health issues were covered in particular detail in Wagga Wagga, where a representative of Community Mental Health is a member of the coordination group. This briefed other members on the need for re-assessment, the fact that clients can refuse to get treatment or and increase awareness that public mental health resources are limited compared to the level of mental health issues in the community. Members reported this to be helpful.

5.2.3   What training was required?

Stakeholders did not mention any specific training needs although more formalised training about integrated case management could be offered, in particular to organisations new to case managing clients. This can be in the form of peer-review within the coordination groups which is already the case. But it shouldn't be limited to existing members: external organisations interested in joining the project should also be provided with adequate support.

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6. Cost analysis

6.1 Total project budget and expenditure

The Riverina Murray HAP project was allocated a budget of $712,000 per year over three years and an additional $200,000 per year for legal services paid directly to Legal Aid. Available expenditure data covers the project's operation from commencement in March 2010 to the end of June 2012. Thus, when considering the figures for each financial year it is important to note that the 2009/10 data cover only four months and because the project was only just being established in this period, the costs do not reflect business as-usual. Annual figures for 2011/12, once the project was embedded, best represent business as usual, and more detailed analysis of cost data for this year is given.

6.1.1 Income and expenditure to the end of June 2012

The actual expenditure reported by RDA Murray in their audited financial statements is in line with the allocated budget for 2010/11 and 2011/12— $696,885 and $729,755, respectively (see Figure 10 below).

The total project expenditure to the end of June 2012 was $1,766,065, just $25 under the total project income RDA Murray reported for the period ($1,766,090), 99% of which came from Community Services' funding and the remainder from interest received. The balance between income and expenditure was positive in the first two financial years of operation (that is the last quarter of 2009/10 and the full 2010/11 financial year), creating a surplus, which was carried over to and then spent in 2011/12.

**Figure 10.**   **Income and expenditure March 2010 to June 2012**
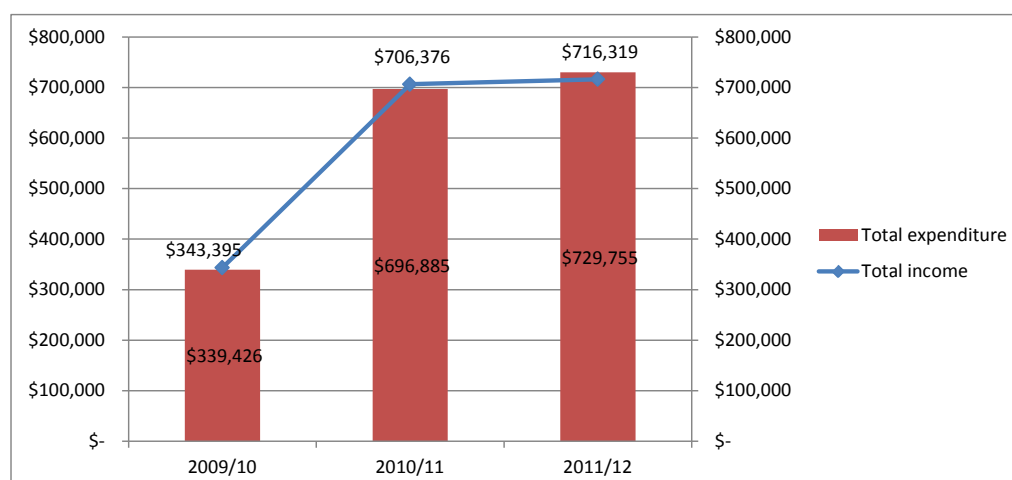
Source: RDA audited financial statements for 2009/10, 2010/11, 2011/12.

Note: the 2009/2010 data draws only on the last quarter of the financial year (March-June 2010)

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6.1.2   Distribution of expenses 2009–2012

Across the three financial years of operation to date to the end of June 2012, brokerage—for goods and services—represented the majority (64%) of project costs (see Figure 11 below). Over the three financial years, brokerage made up a fairly consistent proportion of total project costs: 62 per cent in the last quarter of 2009/10, 66 per cent in 2010/11, and 63 per cent in 2011/12. Staff costs were the other major category of expenditure, and these were also fairly stable as a proportion of total costs across the three financial years. Operating costs made up a slightly higher proportion of total costs in the first financial year when there were initial establishment costs.

Figure 11.   Distribution of expenses March 2010 to June 2012
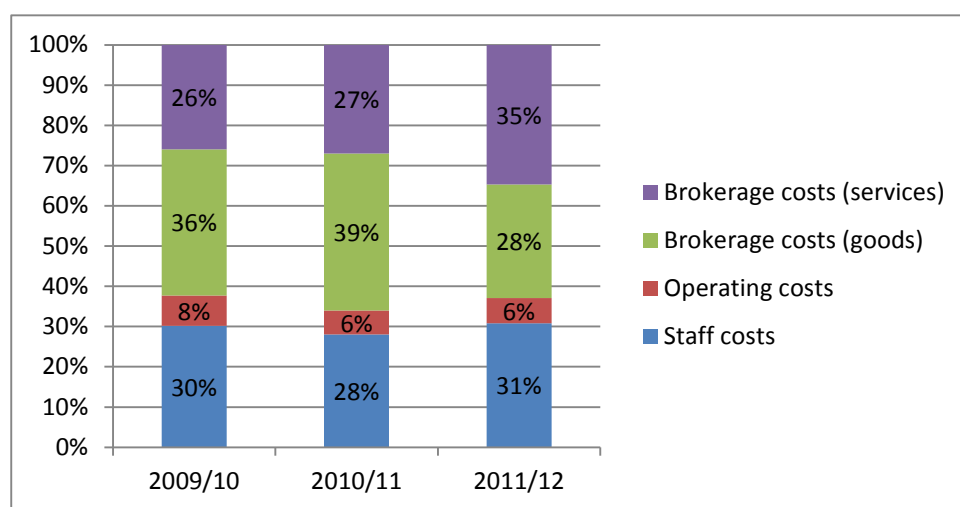
Source: RDA audited financial statements for 2009/10, 2010/11, 2011/12

Staff costs

Staff costs were the second major category of expenditure, but they represented under a third of all costs.

Direct work with clients was the main staff cost; it accounted for almost half of all staff costs ($95,580 in 2010/11 and $110,614 in 2011/12). Coordination group costs (which comprise costs for local coordination group meetings, the program director, and additional expenses, such as incidental travel, meeting rooms or catering) represented about one-fifth (21%) of staff costs to the end of June 2012 ($50,923 in 2010/11 and $51,061 in 2011/12), as did the cost of external consultants or professional services (18%), which rose slightly between 2009/10 and 2011/12.

Staff-related on-costs (which include superannuation and leave), represented about eight per cent of total staff costs across the three financial years.

In the first year of operation, establishment costs (such as setting up premises, purchasing equipment, fixtures and fittings, and other administration and support) represented a quarter of total staff costs ($25,000).

Operating costs

Operating costs represented only a small proportion of total costs: eight per cent during the last quarter of 2009/10 ($25,531) and six per cent in each of the subsequent financial years ($41,226 in 2010/11 and $45,744 in 2011/12).

Overall, host organisation management fees and administration costs (including rent, IT, purchasing computers, office supplies and other telecommunication) represented 53 per cent of operating costs, while travel costs represented 43 per cent of operating costs to the end of June 2012. In the last quarter of 2009/10, staff training and development represented19 per cent of operating costs; these costs were incurred only during the establishment year.

Brokerage costs

At 64 per cent of total costs to the end of June 201, brokerage costs were the largest category of expenditure (total of $1,131,006). In the initial stages of operation, a higher proportion of brokerage dollars were used to purchase goods—such as whitegoods, furniture and other household goods, but also covering clients' private rental arrears, overdue utility bills or fees for training courses. There has been a progressive shift in the balance between expenditure on goods and expenditure on services, and in 2011/12 more brokerage dollars were spent on services—mainly case management hours paid to lead agencies as per client case plans— than goods.

6.2   Issues with expenditure

RDA Murray had a surplus of $3,970 in 2009/10 and of $9,491 in 2010/11 (see Figure 10) that has been reinvested in 2011/12 to cover additional expenses. Between 2010/11 and 2011/12 income increased by 1 per cent while expenses had a 5 per cent increase with a 34 per cent increase in costs for brokered services (case management and support services).

To the end of June 2012, total project expenses ($1,766,065) represent 83 per cent of the initial budget with an additional year of operation left. Assuming the same amount of expenses for 2012/13 than previous year the overall project would exceed the initial budget ($2,136,000) by 17 per cent at the end of June 2013, but with four more months of operations than the initial plan. This is reasonable for a pilot project with such ambitious objectives. From RDA Murray perspective the project required some additional resources, especially during the establishment phase, that were not covered by the funding.

6.2.1 Average client cost to the end of June 2012

Over the operating period to the end of June 2012, the project assisted 203 clients at an average client cost of $8,700.

6.2.2 Average client cost for 2011/12 (a typical year)

Because of the progressive implementation of the project, we considered the financial year 2011/12 a typical year of operation, which could be used to look more closely at the structure of costs (see Appendix 7 for details using the cost template provided by Housing NSW).

We calculated the average client cost, including 98 new clients in 2011/12 and 64 clients carried over from the previous financial year (i.e. those still receiving services) as $4,505.

Reflecting the overall breakdown of project costs, goods and services brokered account for the highest proportion of client costs.

Table 13. Average client cost in 2011/12

	Total costs	Average cost per client (n=162)	%
Staff costs	$ 224,715	$ 1,387	31%
Operating costs	$ 45,744	$ 282	6%
Brokerage costs (goods)	$ 206,323	$ 1,273	28%
Brokerage costs (services)	$ 252,972	$ 1,561	35%
Total costs	$ 729,755	$ 4,505	100%

Source: RDA audited financial statements, 2011/12

6.2.3 Cost benchmarking

We used three methods to explore whether the project represents good value for money.

1. We looked at the evolution of the average client cost across the three financial years.
2. We compared the average client cost for 2011/12 with the budgeted client cost as per the initial project plan.
3. We compared the average client cost for 2011/12 with relevant external benchmarks identified in the research literature.

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Average client cost over time

The project became more efficient as it moved from the establishment period to the second and third year of operation. During initial months of operation, the average client cost was higher ($12,122) than in subsequent financial years, mainly because the cost in this period includes establishment and other initial costs.

Between 2010/11 and 2011/12, there was a 95 per cent increase in the number of clients assisted (from 83 in 2010/11 to 162 in 2011/12), and only a 5 per cent increase in total costs (from $696,885 in 2010/11 to $729,755 in 2011/12). This equates with a 46 per cent reduction in average cost per client, from $8,396 in 2010/11 to $4,505 in 2011/12 (see Figure 12), indicating increased efficiency.

Figure 12.   Number of clients assisted and average client cost March 2010 to June 2012
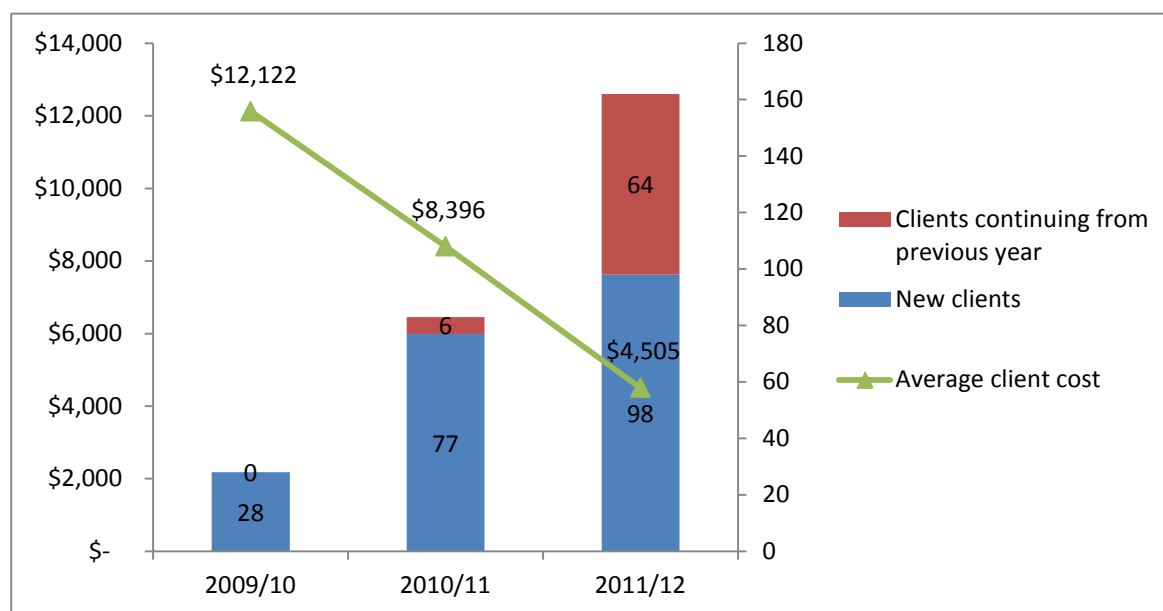
Sources: Clients: HAP data portal; Costs: RDA audited financial statements for 2009/10, 2010/11, 2011/12

Average client cost compared to the budgeted client cost

The project was funded to provide 30 housing intensive support and 50 early intervention packages. In 2011/12, the project exceeded this target, delivering 37 housing intensive support packages and 61 early intervention packages.

The initial target of 30 intensive support packages included 10 intensive case management support packages, budgeted at $37,230, and 20 semi-independent case management support packages, budgeted at $10,220. The early intervention packages were budgeted at $1,374.

The actual cost data provided could not be used to calculate the average client cost for each component—housing and intensive support or early intervention, so we calculated

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the budgeted client cost across all three packages—$8,068— to enable a comparison. The average cost per client was above the budgeted client cost in the initial months of operation ($12,122), slightly above the budgeted cost in 2010/11 ($8,396), but well below the budgeted cost in 2011/12 ($4,505), which can be considered a more typical year of operation.

Comparison with available external benchmarks

While it is difficult to identify relevant and appropriate external benchmarks against which to compare costs, it is an important step to put project costs into perspective. In the research literature we identified a 2008 AHURI study on the cost-effectiveness of homeless programs in Western Australia, which might be considered an appropriate benchmark, as it is from the Australian context and quite recent compared to other available studies.

This research looked at the cost-effectiveness of six programs

- SAAP (previous Specialist Homelessness Services)
- Four Western Australia Homelessness Prevention Programs
    - The Community Transitional Accommodation and Support Service (TASS) and the Re-entry Link program, designed to assist prisoners re-enter into the community on release
    - The Supported Housing Assistance Program (SHAP) and Private Rental Support and Advocacy Program (PRSAP), designed to assist public and private tenants maintain their tenancies.

While slightly different, the Western Australian Homelessness Prevention Programs can be considered comparable to the Riverina Murray HAP project, the TASS being more like the housing intensive support component and the SHAP and PRSAP more like the early intervention component. A summary of the average client cost in these programs, adjusted for inflation to 2012 AUD, as compared to the average client cost in the Riverina Murray HAP project is provided in the Table 14.

Table 14.   Average client cost for comparable homelessness programs

	SAAP	TASS	Re-entry link – no accommodation	Re-entry link – with accommodation	SHAP	PRSAP	RMHAP
Average client cost	$ 4,190	$ 12,991	$ 1,654	$ 5,673	$ 3,474	$ 2,575	$ 4,505

Source: Flatau et al. (2008)

The average client cost for the Riverina Murray HAP project compares well with other homelessness programs that include a housing component like TASS and Re-entry link – with accommodation. SHAP, PRSAP and the Re-entry program without accommodation

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have lower costs, more in line with the budgeted cost for the early intervention component of the Riverina Murray HAP project.

6.2.4 Contextual issues affecting value for money

Costs reported do not reflect all inputs invested in the project

Eighty-four per cent of respondents to the online survey do not consider (35% disagreed and 49% mostly disagreed) that they spend too much time on coordination activities as part of their involvement in the project. In line with that, most stakeholders interviewed consider that the time spent on administrative tasks e.g. referral and assessment processes, and in the coordination group meetings is worthwhile. The project appears to have found the right balance and stakeholders also appreciate having templates to support the referral and case plan process.

Several organisations pointed out that they were investing a significant amount of in-kind resources in the project that should be acknowledged. NGOs in charge of case managing clients are not only taking charge of all basic resources like car, desk and mobile phones but also staff on-costs that are required for case workers positions involved in the project.

Overall 84 per cent of respondents (62% agreed and 22% mostly agreed) consider that resources required for this project are justified by the benefits. Stakeholders from government agencies agreed that their organisations were saving money in the end as RMHAP clients were also clients that were costing their agency a lot before the project.

The project is bringing additional benefits for clients and communities

According to 86 per cent of respondents to the online survey (44% agreed and 32% mostly agreed), clients have reduced their use of acute services (e.g. hospital and emergency services) as a result of the project. When costed, such impacts represent whole-of-government savings or cost offsets to the provision of homelessness programs (Flatau et al., 2008).

A precise assessment of the cost offsets would require a rigorous cost-benefit analysis with a pre- and post-collection of administrative data for the use of services by the clients. This type of analysis is even more complicated by the fact that it also requires the identification of a control group (similar clients that do not take the program), which is very difficult for such high needs clients. The approach generally followed in the literature is to compare changes in use of services with the general population. The main limitation with this approach is that changes for high needs clients are much more likely to be higher than the general population, thus leading to an overestimation of savings. Further robust cost-benefit research is required in this area.

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6.3   How effective was the use of brokerage funding

Ninety-four per cent of respondents to the online survey claimed that the project has provided easy access to brokerage funding (68% agreed and 29% mostly agreed). According to stakeholders feedback on support provision (see section 4.2) the access to brokerage funding significantly contributed to provide clients with needed support services. What was mostly appreciated was the flexibility of it, in particular the opportunity to come back to the coordination group to ask for additional brokerage funding if needed.

Most organisations had positive feedback vis-à-vis the use of brokerage money for case management that was identified as a key incentive to take on case management, also for organisations that were new to the homelessness area. This was also true for specialist homelessness services as put by one of the interviewed stakeholders:

> *Without the money we wouldn't have been able to be involved. Our organisation wouldn't apply for the case management funding if we could support it within existing resources*

Stakeholders saw it also as a positive aspect that it was client-based and made them more accountable (some case managing agencies had to reimburse the brokerage funding because the client was disengaged).

However, several organisations pointed out that the amount of money paid for case management hours did not fully cover the costs incurred. According to some stakeholders a lot of unfunded hours were spent in the initial stage to identify client needs, establish a rapport and put together the client application, which can be a significant investment of resources, in particular for small organisations in regional areas. Even bigger organisations claimed that the amount paid for case management—40 dollars an hour—was not sufficient to cover all costs especially with such high needs clients where it may require several attempts to follow-up and keep them engaged.

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7.   Assessment of the effectiveness of the model

This chapter summarises the key factors to achieving successful outcomes, the challenges encountered and those that remain. In particular, it raises questions about the sustainability of the approach beyond the current funding period.

The vast majority of stakeholders interviewed or surveyed (84% agreed and 12% mostly agreed) wish to see the project continued beyond its planned termination date in June 2013. Ninety six per cent of respondents to the online survey consider the project has the potential to be replicated in other areas of the state. However, only 18 per cent of respondents indicated that their organisation had secured some resources for the project beyond June 2013. This means that the service is unlikely to continue without funding, unless organisations are able to commit additional resources in the meantime.

7.1   Success factors for the service delivery model

7.1.1   Collaborative model for working together

Working in partnership and the collaborative approach of the project was identified as the main learning by most stakeholders through the open-ended question of the online survey or in-depth interviews. This approach allowed for better coordination of housing and support services, in the end contributing to positive client outcomes. According to interviews and the online survey, stakeholders do not necessarily think that the project has changed the way they deliver their services. However, 93 per cent of respondents consider that working together in this project generates better outcomes for clients than if each organisation worked with the clients separately (84% agreed and 9% mostly agreed).

Stakeholders particularly appreciated the coordination group meetings where all organisations represented discuss case plans and contribute to identify the best solutions to multiple issues. This collective process results in new ideas by helping stakeholders "think outside the square". Stakeholders clearly shared and gained knowledge through this process.

Another benefit from such an approach is to share the responsibility for the client success, and again contribute ultimately to achieving better outcomes for the client. Several stakeholders mentioned that this process increased accountability of services through some form of indirect peer pressure.

7.1.2   The flexible client-centred approach

Another key success factor mentioned by stakeholders is the flexible and client-centred approach. While this is not totally new, it has proven to be particularly effective with the

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Riverina Murray HAP project. A key aspect that contributed to the success of this approach was the use of brokerage funding that was firstly available in sufficient amount, and secondly offered some flexibility in its usage e.g. with the possibility to come back to the coordination group and put in new requests for expenses or vary the original amount.

The project also applied principles from integrated case management to have a holistic approach addressing multiple difficulties faced by RMHAP clients. For each client the project tailored a case management plan based on the specific issues faced by each individual client. This approach is particularly appropriate for high needs clients such as homeless clients or clients at risk of homelessness. Reported outcomes achieved for clients of this project confirmed this finding. Legal and financial supports have been identified as playing a key role in achieving successful outcomes for clients.

The flexible approach has been particularly successful with Aboriginal clients allowing some flexibility to the initial guidelines to have a more culturally appropriate approach to eligibility criteria.

7.1.3   The overall coordination

A number of stakeholders interviewed identified the overall coordination provided by RDA Murray as particularly effective in bringing services together. The coordinator in particular was seen by several stakeholders as a key driver for the project. RDA Murray's approach was to have decision-making and outcomes-driven meetings with a timely turnaround of minutes. This seems to have generally been the case. The only complaint mentioned by a few stakeholders was that client applications were sometimes forwarded to coordination group members too late for members to be able to review it properly before each meeting. However, this was generally due to referring services sending the application template late.

Generally, services also greatly appreciated the added value provided by Legal Aid in providing legal advice to a high proportion of client cases.

7.1.4   Leadership commitment and effective governance

Several stakeholders also identified the commitment of the top management level of their organisation as key to the success of the project. While there was sometimes a perception that this level of commitment did not always flow through all levels of some organisations, in particular at the middle management level, overall stakeholders agreed that the leaders of their organisation were committed to the project. Seventy-four per cent of respondents to the online survey considered their leadership to be 'strongly' or 'quite strongly' committed to the project.

The overall governance of the project appeared to be effective, allowing for joint escalation and resolution of any systemic issues by Community Services and Housing NSW. Ninety-seven per cent of respondents believe that the governance structure of the

project was successful in supporting the implementation of the project. One of the stakeholders interviewed mentioned that it was particularly helpful to have members of the Regional Homelessness Committee also participating in some coordination group meetings, thus being able to identify any systemic issues.

7.2 Challenges for the service delivery model

7.2.1 Initial challenges faced in the establishment phase

In its initial phase the Riverina Murray project went through several changes or adaptations as a consequence of some teething issues. According to stakeholders from Community Services and RDA Murray the project was up and running after six months of operation.

The first task the coordinating NGO conducted during this establishment phase was to raise awareness among specialist homelessness services, support services and housing providers about the project and overcome what was perceived as some initial resistance. The RDA Murray coordinator presented the project to services in each town where a coordination group has been established and had further individual consultations with services on an as-needed basis to explain further the project. In the self-evaluation report, RDA Murray described some Specialist Homelessness Services as appearing to feel somewhat threatened by the 'service reform'. To overcome this and any risk of miscommunication, RDA Murray coordinator used a transparent communication strategy, highlighting successful SHS/ HAP examples and building relationships with all key services willing to contribute.

Secondly this initial phase offered the opportunity to clarify some of the project's key guidelines. Three main topics were discussed and clarified during this phase.

- The service provider and lead agency considered as necessary at the beginning of the project to clearly distinguish between usual SHS clients and HAP clients where the objective was to drive the shift from crisis intervention to either long term supportive housing or early intervention/ prevention. Government agencies also wanted to avoid any risk of "double dipping" in government funding. As a result it was determined that clients had either a SHS or a HAP status, with no possibility to move from one to the other. Although they refer to this initial lack of clarity, stakeholders seem to now have a fairly good understanding of these requirements.

- Confidentiality processes were also questioned by some organisations that felt the open process in coordination group meetings posed a risk for the confidentiality of client information. In response the project sought advice from the Community Services Legal Department, who provided feedback on all processes, documentation and forms, including the client consent form. The documents were updated in line with this feedback but one agency chose not to participate due to this issue and some stakeholders interviewed still identify room for improvement in this regard. Suggested changes are presented in section 8.2.

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- Finally, because the early intervention component was new to all organisations, some clarification was needed around the eligibility criteria, in particular that the client's situation had to comprise an "established" tenancy at risk. According to the self-evaluation report, the clarification of the guidelines resulted in numerically reduced but more appropriately targeted applications for the early intervention component.

7.2.2 Challenges to the sustainability of the project

When asked about remaining challenges stakeholders mainly mentioned internal limitations, either because of limited resources, staff turnover leading to staff needing to be re-educated about the project, or internal policy requirements that can limit the contribution of government agencies, in particular Housing NSW.

Respondents to the online survey mentioned the following main challenges for the project, by order of frequency (see Table 15).

- The lack of resources of participating organisations and internal staff capacity were most commonly prioritised. The funding model in particular has been identified as an area for improvement (see section 8.2).

- Some stakeholders thought that project processes could still be improved and streamlined to respond more quickly to client needs.

- Another issue that was raised on occasion was in relation to the level of evidence required lack of evidence to support client claims. A few stakeholders felt that more evidence should be gathered to ensure the project client needs are well substantiated and the project fully accountable. However additional requirements should be considered with care as it could also undermine the flexibility and responsiveness that stakeholders valued about the project. From the evidence available, it seems the balance is being met through the current arrangements.

- Finally, some stakeholders mentioned geographic distances as a key challenge for the project; these were either stakeholders involved at regional level that had to travel across the whole region or stakeholders from smaller towns that had to drive a few hours to attend the coordination group meetings. In the latter case stakeholders suggested to promote the use of teleconference or electronic communication means.

Table 15.　　Main challenges for the project (stakeholder online survey, n=42)

- Lack of resources/ staff capacity
- Time to approve/ allocate money
- Administrative processes
- Lack of client supporting evidence
- Extended geographic scope
- Insufficient amount of case management brokerage funding
- Limited time for assistance
- Resistance from service providers

Source: Stakeholder online survey, Question 20 'From your perspective, what have been the main challenges for this project?'

Other challenges identified throughout the report should be considered as area for improvement to inform the future of the project (see section 8.2), in particular increasing referrals for CALD clients and improving relationships with real estate agents.

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8. Conclusion

8.1 Summary of key lessons learnt

The willingness stakeholders show to see the project continued reflects the fact that the Riverina Murray HAP project is seen as a success by the majority of stakeholders involved, including those that expressed some concerns or were even somewhat resistance at the beginning of the project. The main reason mentioned by stakeholders for supporting the continuation of the project is that the project has been able to produce positive outcomes for clients.

The main learnings identified by respondents to the online survey are presented in Table 16 below by order of priority. Again the significant contribution of working together to the success of the project is acknowledged by many stakeholders.

One of the respondents put it nicely

> *What I have brought from the project for my own personal development would be the invaluable benefits that can come from organisations working together and how important it is in this industry to develop your networks.*

Table 16. Main learnings that can be applied to other long term housing and support initiatives (stakeholder online survey, n=39)

- Working in partnership, coordination
- Integrated intensive case management
- Early intervention component
- Legal knowledge
- Flexibility
- Brokerage
- Outcomes focused meetings
- Meeting with housing providers

Source: Stakeholder online survey, Question 21 'What do you think are the main learnings from this project that can be applied to other long term housing and support initiatives?'

Looking back at the broad principles for an effective approach to supportive housing identified in the literature (see section 1.3), key learnings from the RMHAP project are

- **Housing:** RMHAP has been able to provide clients access to appropriate housing solutions. Preliminary client outcomes indicate that almost 80 per cent of clients in the project to the end of June 2012 sustained their tenancy, confirming the success of the housing component. A lack of affordable housing is still a key barrier although accessing housing through the Nation Building Economy Stimulus Plan has made a key contribution to the project, making it possible to provide Housing Intensive clients with access to long-term housing.

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- **Case management:** RMHAP has assisted clients through individualised case management plans developed collectively with all participating services to best meet the client's needs. The project has effectively delivered an integrated case management approach through this model of joint working.
- **Linkages:** bringing all key services around the table at coordination group meetings to discuss solutions to client needs appears to have led to more innovative responses. Participating services reported improved knowledge of and coordination with other local service organisations and more trusting relationships.

8.2 Areas for improvement for the future of the project

The following table presents a summary of all areas for improvement identified by the evaluation based on feedback provided by stakeholders, triangulated with other sources and translated into suggested actions.

Table 17.   Suggested areas for improvement to inform the design of the next generation of the project

Area	Suggestions
Program design	1. Clarify with all organisations involved the status of HAP clients as compared to the SHS client status 2. Ensure the alignment of policy settings with the project objectives across key government agencies involved in the project, e.g. Housing NSW, Community Services, NSW Health
Client referral	3. Consult with all organisations involved in the coordination groups to agree on an application process with a view to find the right balance between flexibility on the one hand and allow for the time needed to go through the client history on the other 4. Increase referrals for CALD clients by engaging with CALD community organisations
Assessment process/ coordination groups	5. Keep the nuclear composition of the coordination group meeting to decide on applications with a view to ensure consistency and transparency of decisions, while allowing a broad range of organisations to be involved in referrals and support provision 6. Inform the client about the composition of the coordination group (permanent members) 7. Promote the use of teleconference from time to time to reduce the travel time for organisations located in remote areas
Housing provision	8. Increase the promotion of the project among real estate agents
Support services provision	9. Have other support services represented in coordination group meetings, e.g. AOD 10. Develop and deliver training about integrated case management to all case workers new to this area and that are willing to contribute to the project
Funding	11. Consult with all organisations involved in the coordination groups to develop a funding model that would ensure the sustainability of the project

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| **Brokerage** | 12. Establish systematic processes to identify the best value for money when using brokerage for goods, e.g. second hand, bulk-purchasing |
| | 13. When appropriate, negotiate a reimbursement plan with the client following |

Suggestions 4 and 5 are related to the confidentiality protocol. All participants have to sign declaration of confidentiality. However the issue raised by some stakeholders was that the composition of committee may change over time, if for instance a client is referred by an organisation that is not a permanent member. In this case the referring organisation attends the whole coordination group meeting, not only for the referred client but for all clients discussed and as the opportunity to vote on all applications. A suggestion made by stakeholders was to keep the same nuclear composition of the coordination group for confidentiality reasons, but also to ensure consistency in the decisions made. Organisations involved only in some applications need only to attend the meeting when the specific case is discussed.

Suggestion 10 aims to deal with funding issues by stakeholders. Several possible options were identified by stakeholders:

- Pay a minimum amount of case management hours for each client assisted, even if they end up disengaging, to reflect the time spent anyway to engage and build a rapport with a client
- Identify a panel of preferred providers to provide case management services that would receive business-in-principle funding overall and client-based funding for each client assisted.
- Have a designated HAP worker directly funded within each case managing organisations

All these options should be discussed at policy level and with participating organisations to identify the best option to ensure the sustainability of the project.

8.3   Implications for the future response to homelessness for the client group/s in this project

This project targeted clients with a multitude of characteristics in two main service target groups: people at risk of homelessness, and those with more complex support needs and/ or who were experiencing primary homelessness.

Unlike the other projects subject to extended evaluations did not have a specific target demographic group within the homeless or at risk populations for which we can draw key learnings.

The project appears to have achieved positive outcomes for most clients by using a multidisciplinary case management approach tailored to individual client needs. This result suggests further evidence for the efficacy of a multidisciplinary case management approach with homeless clients with complex needs.

As in the research, the clients of these projects had a range of other compounding issues contributing to their homelessness or risk of homeless—including mental health issues, drug and alcohol issues, or financial issues. This requires a coordinated approach and the ability to connect clients with the supports they need through direct provision and brokerage or negotiated agreements. This can be a challenge in an already over-stretched support system.

For the early intervention clients, re-focusing effort on early intervention may take some time and guidance to shift a system traditionally focused on crisis support.

In terms of addressing issues in rural service delivery, the project contributed to finding alternate solutions, in particular through the use of brokerage funding. However, it cannot totally overcome structural limitations in the availability of services in remote areas.

8.4   Implications for the homelessness system in this region

This project has enhanced coordination within the region, but relationships and integrated working, while established, does not seem to be firmly enough entrenched to be sustained if an appropriate mechanism to coordinate support is not continued. If the project is not extended and coordination maintained, there is a strong risk identified by several stakeholders that the coordinating arrangements established, in particular through the coordination groups, will fall apart.

8.5   Future research that could strengthen the evidence in this area

On the available evidence, it is difficult to assess either whether the project sustained housing and supported broader client outcomes or had an impact on homelessness. It can be difficult to collect data on housing status and client well-being post support periods, particularly where support was short-term, but this should be attempted to provide better evidence for the model. This could be done through ongoing data collection and more robust monitoring systems should play a key role in this.

To judge whether the project is the most efficient model for achieving the intended outcomes, there is a need for better costs data and cost reporting requirements to be outlined from the start. If cost-benefit analysis (CBA) is to be attempted, there is a need for some standardised outcomes measures and to collect data on costs avoided, for example by collecting data on emerging service use pre and post involvement in the project.

Appendix 1.   Evaluation framework

Scope	Evaluation questions	Factors	Data sources
Project delivery			
Context	▪ To what extent do local contextual issues influence the implementation of the project?	▪ Distances ▪ Availability of transport ▪ Availability of housing stock influenced by external factors (e.g. tourism, mining) ▪ Capacity of local services	▪ Site visits: interviews with local project staff
Governance	▪ How long did it take to establish the project? ▪ To what extent do the governance arrangements support the successful implementation of the project?	▪ Regional Homelessness Committee (RHC) ▪ Local coordination groups ▪ Reporting avenues ▪ Communication & information processes (formal and informal)	▪ Online survey of project staff ▪ Site visits: interviews with local project staff
Service delivery model	▪ How does the overall service delivery model influence the implementation of the project across the region? ▪ How does the model compare to other long-term housing models? ▪ What arrangements were in place for service delivery; how effective were they and why?	▪ Organisation of the lead NGO(s) to cover the region ▪ Brokered service model ▪ Type of staff involved from the lead NGO(s) ▪ Other resources mobilised that contribute to the successful delivery of the project (e.g. NGO's pre-existing systems, tools or resources) ▪ Service partnerships/ changes established as part of the model	▪ Site visits: interviews with local project staff
Client reach and referral pathways	▪ What are the referral pathways; how effective have they been, and why? ▪ Did the project reach its intended group? What are the key characteristics of clients? How do these compare or contrast to clients in other housing and support programs, including clients in specialist housing services?	▪ Local service capacity and demand ▪ Socio-economic and market factors	▪ Referral data ▪ Online survey of project staff ▪ Site visits: interviews with local project staff

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Scope	Evaluation questions	Factors	Data sources
Housing provision	▪ Was the project able to house/ maintain clients in appropriate long-term stable accommodation? ▪ What were the key success factors and barriers to effective housing provision?	▪ Availability of housing stock ▪ Use of subsidy schemes in tenant support packages	▪ Online survey to project staff ▪ Site visits: interviews with local project staff
Support service provision	▪ How were service needs assessed and what role did the client play? ▪ What services were delivered most through the project? How important was the provision of legal services in delivering project outcomes? ▪ What assessment and case management processes are in place for delivering support services? ▪ What were the key success factors and barriers to effective support provision?	▪ Tools and processes used to identify and assess level of need Involvement of clients in case planning and decision-making ▪ Wraparound approach ▪ Access to local services ▪ Administration of brokerage	▪ Online survey of project staff ▪ Site visits: interviews with local project staff
Effectiveness: service system outcomes			
Overall system change	▪ What are the impacts of the project/approach on service system change and improvement? ▪ To what extent has the project contributed to improved coordination between housing and other human services providers? ▪ What were the key success factors and barriers to successful delivery? ▪ What are the key success factors/ barriers to successful collaboration/ partnerships?	▪ Pre-existing service networks and structures ▪ Motivation, incentives and barriers to joint working	▪ Online survey of project staff ▪ Site visits: interviews with local project staff

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Scope	Evaluation questions	Factors	Data sources
Relationships within the housing sector	▪ Has the project contributed to improved coordination between housing services (specialist homelessness, social housing, and private market)?	▪ Innovative strategies to extend the range of housing solutions ▪ Involvement of real estate agents and private landlords	▪ HAP data portal: type of housing ▪ Online survey of project staff ▪ Site visits: interviews with local project staff
Relationships with support service organisations	▪ Has the project contributed to improved coordination between housing services and support services?	▪ Innovative strategies to extend the range of support services offered ▪ Demand and capacity for specialist support in local areas ▪ Demand and capacity for case management in local areas	▪ HAP data portal: range of services provided ▪ Online survey of project staff ▪ Site visits: interviews with local project staff
Effectiveness: client outcomes			
Client reach	▪ Has the project reached its target in terms of the number of clients assisted?	▪ Unit used to measure client outputs (households or individual) ▪ Measure for sustained tenancies	▪ HAP data portal
Client groups	▪ To what extent has the project targeted different target groups from other initiatives in the area, especially transitional housing services? ▪ Does the project have different approaches for different target groups?	▪ Filling gaps in coverage (geographic, target groups) ▪ Remaining gaps	▪ HAP data portal ▪ Online survey of project staff ▪ Site visits: interviews with local project staff
Aboriginal clients	▪ How successful has the project been in reaching Aboriginal clients through Aboriginal services? ▪ What changes have been made to systems and processes to address cultural barriers for Aboriginal people in accessing services?	▪ Accessibility issues ▪ Employment of Aboriginal case workers ▪ Connection with Aboriginal communities	▪ HAP data portal ▪ Site visits: interviews with local project staff
Housing outcomes	▪ Has the project delivered appropriate housing solutions for referred clients? ▪ To what extent have these resulted in sustained tenancies for clients?	▪ Homelessness prevented ▪ Sustained tenancies ▪ Develop rental histories	▪ Online survey of project staff ▪ Site visits: interviews with local project staff ▪ Site visits: interviews with

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Scope	Evaluation questions	Factors	Data sources
	▪ How do outcomes from the model compare to outcomes achieved in other long-term housing and support projects?		clients
Non-housing outcomes	▪ What broader (non-housing) outcomes have been achieved for clients?	▪ Restoration of children ▪ Improvements in mental and physical heath ▪ Debt waived, fines paid, mortgage default settled ▪ Remaining gaps in services	▪ Online survey to project staff ▪ Site visits: interviews with local project staff ▪ Site visits: interviews with clients
Impact on overall HAP targets			
Observed reduction in homelessness	▪ What is the impact of the project/approach on reducing homelessness?	▪ Considering all other influencing factors (e.g. economic downturn, increased scrutiny)	▪ ABS census ▪ SHS (SAAP) data
Impact of benefits	▪ What impact has the project had in addressing homelessness over the longer-term?	▪ Sustained tenancies in the longer term	▪ HAP data portal ▪ Site visits: interviews with local project staff
Cost-effectiveness			
Project specific	▪ Was there a significant gap between funding provided through the HAP and the actual cost of service delivery? ▪ Can some of the project costs be reduced or avoided? ▪ What level of funding would be required to continue the project?	▪ Actual costs if available from lead NGO accounting systems ▪ Service provider outcomes data if/ where available from NGO case management systems	▪ Lead NGO costing data ▪ HAP data portal ▪ Lead NGO pre-post client surveys (if any) ▪ Site visits: interviews with local project staff
Across projects	▪ How do client outputs and impacts compare against costs across the various projects and service delivery models?	▪ Comparison may be difficult considering variations in terms of the range and duration of support provided to clients	▪ Lead NGO costing data ▪ HAP data portal ▪ Lead NGO pre-post client surveys (if any) ▪ Site visits: interviews with local project staff

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Appendix 2.   Key documents reviewed

Table 18.   List of documents reviewed

Document	Date
Rural Interagency Project Albury Wagga & New England Project plan	
Service specifications	Mar 2010
Riverina Murray Homelessness Service System Mapping	Aug 2012
Self-evaluation report	Jul 2012
HAP data portal reports	Jan 2010 – Jun 2012
Application forms	
Client support plan template	
HAP consent form	
HAP guidelines	
Process maps	
RDA Murray audited financial statements	FY 2009-10 FY 2010-11 FY 2011-12
RMHAP Client statistics	Nov 2012
Evaluation of the legal component of the Riverina Homelessness Interagency Project & Reaching Home Newcastle	January 2013

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Appendix 3.   List of interviews

Table 19.   Project stakeholder interviews

Location	Organisation	Number of interviewees	Date
Wagga Wagga	Edel Quinn Men's Shelter Wagga	1	22/10/2012
Wagga Wagga	Tumut Regional Family Services	3	22/10/2012
Wagga Wagga	Legal aid	1	22/10/2012
Wagga Wagga	Intereach	1	22/10/2012
Wagga Wagga	Community Mental Health	1	22/10/2012
Wagga Wagga	Wagga Wagga family support services	1	22/10/2012
Wagga Wagga	Regional Development Australia	2	22/10/2012 7/11/2012
Wagga Wagga	Community Services	2	22/10/2012 7/11/2012
Wagga Wagga	Housing NSW	1	6/11/2012
Wagga Wagga	Centacare	1	12/11/2012
Griffith	Aboriginal Medical Organisation	1	23/10/2012
Griffith	Argyle Community Housing	1	23/10/2012
Griffith	Housing NSW	1	23/10/2012
Griffith	Griffith Women's Refuge	1	23/10/2012
Griffith	SRYSS (Youth Refuge)	1	23/10/2012
Griffith	Financial counsellor (Mission Australia)	1	25/10/2012
Albury	Housing NSW	1	9/11/2012
Albury	Albury Supported Accommodation Service	1	9/11/2012
Albury	Sureway Employment Agency	1	12/11/2012
Total	17	23	

Table 20.   List of client interviews per location

Location	Face-to-face/ Phone	Date
1. Wagga Wagga	Phone	19/10/2012
2. Wagga Wagga	Face-to-face	22/10/2012
3. Wagga Wagga	Face-to-face	22/10/2012
4. Wagga Wagga	Face-to-face	22/10/2012
5. Wagga Wagga	Phone	25/10/2012
6. Griffith	Face-to-face	23/10/2012
7. Griffith	Phone	24/10/2012
Total	7	

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Appendix 4.   Stakeholder interview guide

Introduction

My name is [consultant name] from ARTD. Housing NSW has contracted ARTD to evaluate the [name of HAP project] as part of the broader evaluation of long term housing and support projects funded under the Homelessness Action Plan. The purpose of the evaluation is to find out how the project is working, and its impact on the service system and clients.

These interviews, along with the other evaluation data, will inform ARTD's report to Housing NSW. The report will not identify any individuals.

Your participation in the evaluation is voluntary and you can choose to terminate the interview whenever you want to.

[For group interviews] Please respect others' opinions and give everyone a chance to speak. Also, confidentiality is important so please don't discuss what is said in the group with others outside of the group.

Your role in the project

1. **Can you briefly describe your/ your organisation's roles and responsibilities in the HAP project?**
   – Key requirements to fulfil this role
   – Main difficulties
2. How long did it take for the project to start meeting client needs (start-up phase)?

Client referral/ nomination and assessment

3. **How were clients referred to the project?**
4. What, if any issues were there with obtaining appropriate referrals, and how were these issues resolved?
5. **What types of clients does the project deal with?**
   – Homelessness
   – At risk of homelessness
6. How were client needs assessed?
   – How do you rate the level of needs (High/ Medium/ Low)?
7. What happens with clients who are not accepted into the project [e.g. referrals to other services]?
8. **How different are the clients for this project to those you normally work with?**

Housing/ tenancy support provision

9. Did the project support clients to maintain an existing tenancy?
   – Under which circumstances/ conditions?

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      −   What types of support were provided?
10. What housing options did this project make use of?
      −   public housing
      −   community housing
      −   assisted private rental
      −   other subsidies
11. **What have been the success factors in negotiating client access to long term accommodation options?**
      −   Have you had to use temporary or short term accommodation as a bridging mechanism?
12. **What have been the challenges in negotiating client access to long term accommodation options?**
      −   Availability
      −   Timeliness of access
      −   Barriers to establishing private rental tenancies

Support provision

13. How has support been provided in this project?
      −   case management
      −   linking clients to other support services
      −   providing direct support services
14. **How effective were these processes to provide clients with appropriate support meeting their needs?**
15. **Are support processes provided to HAP clients differently to your normal support arrangements?**

Service system change

16. What structures/ processes were in place to support partnership and coordination between services? How effective were these structures/ processes?
17. **Were there any service system issues? How did you address these?**
      −   Have you been able to effectively address issues locally or have you had to escalate issues to Regional Homeless Committees for resolution?
      −   What kind of resolution? Change in the overall service response, one-off adjustment or better coordination?
18. **Has the project supported increased integration between housing and support services? If yes, how?**
19. Has the project supported increased integration **between support services**? If yes, how?
      −   Mainstream services
      −   Specialist Homelessness Services (previously SAAP)
20. **Did the project achieve an improved service system?**
      −   Key success factors
      −   Key barriers
21. **What are the remaining integration and linkage issues for this HAP project?**

Client outcomes

22. **What do you see as the benefits of the project for clients?** What evidence is available to demonstrate/ measure these outcomes?
    – ability to live independently
    – ability to maintain a tenancy
    – increased wellbeing
23. **Have you been more successful for some types of clients than others?** Which one/s? What made it successful?
    – What about Aboriginal clients?
24. **How sustainable are these benefits?**
    – What ongoing support do clients need?
    – Do you have **follow-up mechanisms** after the end of the assistance provided to clients?
25. What aspects of the project have been **key to supporting successful client outcomes**?
26. What have been the **barriers to supporting successful client outcomes?**

Costs and workload

27. How do you assess the balance between coordination/ administrative/ reporting time and the time spent on supporting clients for this project?
28. What, if any, have been the workforce issues for this project?
    – workload
    – occupational health and safety
    – staff retention
    – staff supervision, etc
29. What, if any, have been the funding issues for this project?

Sustainability

30. **Have you changed the way you deliver services for this project?**
    – If yes, do you expect these changes to be sustained beyond the life of the project?
31. **What will happen if the funding ceases at the end of the project?**
    – What are the risks?
    – What would be the implications on your organisation's resources (HR and $)
    – Is your organisation willing to commit to ensure continuation of the project?
32. **Do you think the project should be continued?**
    – Why do you think that?
    – What would be needed?
    – **What would be your organisation's commitment?**
33. To what extent do you think this model can be replicated/ implemented more widely:
    – in the local area
    – in other areas across the State
Explore:
    – *Enablers*
    – *Constraints*

Overall

34. **What innovative approaches have been developed as part of this project?**
    – to access appropriate housing options
    – in terms of support arrangements
35. What do you think are the main learnings from this project that can be applied to other long term housing and support initiatives?
36. **If you could change just one thing in the design of this HAP project, what would it be?**

Thank you for your time and contribution to this evaluation.

Appendix 5.　　Client interview guide

Interview

Hi. It's [name] from ARTD consultants. Thanks for agreeing to be interviewed as part of our evaluation of the [name of HAP project]. Is this still a good time to speak with you?

[If yes, proceed, if no, reschedule].

I want to remind you that information you provide us, along with the information from other clients and project workers we speak to, will be used in the report we write for Housing NSW. But this report will in no way identify you individually.

Before we start I also want to let you know that you can change your mind about talking to me at any time during the interview and stop the interview at any time. If there are questions you don't want to answer, you don't have to answer them.

The interview will take about half an hour. We will be giving you a $30 Coles/ Myer or Woolworths gift voucher as a thank you for your time at the end of the interview.

Before entering the project

1. How were things for you before you became involved in this project?
   — [areas to cover]
   — Health
   — Stress/ anxiety
   — Living situation
   — Employment
   — Connection to community
   — Feelings about the future
2. How did you initially enter the project?
   — Do you remember when it was?
   — How did you feel when you first heard about the [specific name of project]?
   — Initially, did you want to be part of the project? Why/ why not?

When accessing housing and receiving support through the project

3. Did the project help you with staying in the place you were in before the project or did it help you to find new housing?
4. [If support to existing tenancy] What was it like to be able to stay in your place?
   — How did you feel about being able to stay in your place?
   — Who supported you with what you needed when you moved in?
5. [If new housing] What was it like when you first moved into the property?
   — How did you feel about having your own place?
   — Who supported you with what you needed when you moved in?
6. [If new housing] How are you finding your housing?

— Is your house a public or social housing property or private rental?
— Do you like your place? (enough privacy, good condition)
— Do you feel comfortable where you're living? (neighbourhood, safety)
7.   Do you feel like you're receiving the support you need?
— What kind of support services do you receive? (health, financial e.g. budgeting, accessing government services, etc)
— If no, what else do you think you need in order to live in your property?

Impact of the project

8.   Since living in your property and receiving support from [service provider/s name] how have things changed for you?
— [areas to cover]
— Health
— Stress/ anxiety
— Living situation
— Employment situation
— Started/ continuing education
— Connection to community
— Feelings about the future

Feedback on the project

9.   What, if anything, about the project has been **the most** helpful thing for you?
10. What, if anything, about the project has been **the least** helpful thing for you?

Sustainability

11. How do you think things will be for you when/ if your case worker isn't helping you anymore?
— Will you feel able to manage living in your property?
— Is there anything you think you might still need help with?

Thank you

[Hand over the selected voucher to the client and ask her/ him to sign the record sheet]

Appendix 6.   Results from the online stakeholder survey

Table 21.   Response rate to the online survey

Emails sent	70
Emails bounced	4
Population surveyed	**66**
Complete responses	45
Partial responses	6
Disqualified	0
Total responses	**51**
Response rate	**77%**

Involvement with the Riverina Murray HAP project

Table 22.   Q1. What type of organisation do you work for?

Organisation	n	%	Missing
Commonwealth Government agency	0	0%	
NSW Government agency	12	24%	
Local government	0	0%	
Non-government organisation	35	69%	
Private sector company (e.g. real estate agency)	1	2%	
Other, please specify*	3	6%	
Total	51	100%	0

*When specified, 'Other' responses were: 'Job Services Provider',' not for profit', 'Aboriginal Medical Service'

Table 23.   Q3. How would you rate your level of involvement in the Riverina Murray Homelessness Action Plan project?

Level of involvement	n	%	Missing
No awareness, no involvement	0	0%	
Limited awareness, no direct involvement	0	0%	
Limited/ occasional involvement	2	4%	
Involved in the operation of the project in relation to a few clients (less than 5)	20	39%	
Involved in the operation of the project in relation to a number of clients (more than 5)	20	39%	
Involved in the overall coordination of the project	9	18%	
Total	51	100%	0

Table 24.   Q4. What is the main role of your organisation in the Riverina Murray Homelessness Action Plan project?

Organisation's main role	n	%	Missing
Contracting government agency, e.g. Housing NSW, Community Services	4	8%	
Partner government agency, e.g. Legal Aid, NSW Health, ADHC	3	6%	
Coordinating NGO	7	14%	
Specialist Homelessness Service	14	27%	
Support service provider, e.g. mental health, family support, drug and alcohol, etc.	12	24%	
Housing provider	7	14%	
Other, please specify*	4	8%	
Total	51	100%	0

*When specified, 'Other' responses were: 'Job Services Provider', 'case managing clients', 'Caseworker Mental Health Carers', 'Aboriginal Medical Service'.

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Table 25. **Q4a. What type of housing provider is your organisation?**

Housing provider type	n*	%	Missing
Public social housing	5	71%	
Community housing	1	14%	
Real estate agency	1	14%	
Landlord	0	0%	
Other, please specify	0	0%	
Total	7	100%	0

*Question for housing providers only

Table 26. **Q5. In what ways have you been involved in the Riverina Murray Homelessness Action Plan project?**

Ways involved	n	% of cases*
Participating in project coordination meetings	42	82%
Making referrals	33	65%
Case managing clients	29	57%
Directly providing housing solution to clients of the project	15	29%
Directly providing support services to clients of the project	17	33%
Other, please specify**	6	12%

* Per cent of cases is calculated as the frequency of a given response over the number of valid cases (complete responses to the question).

** When specified, 'Other' responses were: 'direct client involvement', 'consultation in relation to mental health issues', 'all of the above', 'provide legal advice in outreach locations and provide community legal education to workers involved in the HAP project', 'Strategic management', 'Various applications for both Social Housing & Early Intervention client, taking up referrals from other agencies involved in HAP, Participation in coordination meetings'.

Table 27. **Q6. How long have you been involved with the Riverina Murray Homelessness Action Plan project?**

Length of involvement	n	%	Missing
Less than six months	3	6%	
Between six months and one year	13	25%	
Between one and two years	18	35%	
More than two years	17	33%	
Total	51	100%	0

Table 28.   **Q7. How committed to this project is the leadership of your organisation?**

Level of commitment	n	%	Missing
Not at all	3	6%	
Somewhat committed	10	20%	
Quite strongly	14	27%	
Strongly	24	47%	
Total	51	100%	0

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Client referral/ nomination and assessment

Table 29.   Q8. Please indicate the level to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.

		Disagree		Mostly disagree		Mostly agree		Agree		DK/ N/A	Missing
	n	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	n
Overall, the client nomination/ referral processes for the Riverina Murray Homelessness Action Plan project are effective	48	0	0%	2	4%	15	31%	31	65%	1	2
Organisations involved in the project agreed on eligibility criteria	45	1	2%	3	7%	12	27%	29	64%	4	2
Overall, the client assessment process for this project is effective	49	1	2%	2	4%	22	45%	24	49%	0	2
Through this project we have worked with clients we would not normally be able to reach	47	3	6%	3	6%	11	23%	30	64%	2	2
This project has supported clients who were not covered by other existing initiatives (e.g. gaps in geographic coverage or target groups)	48	0	0%	5	10%	10	21%	33	69%	1	2

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Housing/ tenancy support provision

Table 30. Q9. Please indicate the level to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.

		Disagree		Mostly disagree		Mostly agree		Agree		DK/ N/A	Missing
	n	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	n
The Riverina Murray Homelessness Action Plan project has assisted clients to obtain or maintain accommodation appropriate to their needs	48	0	0%	0	0%	13	27%	35	73%	0	3
This project has assisted clients into stable long-term accommodation	48	0	0%	1	2%	11	23%	36	75%	0	3
Limited availability of affordable housing locally has reduced the project's ability to assist clients in accommodation	45	7	16%	13	29%	15	33%	10	22%	3	3
This project has found new and innovative ways of securing housing for clients	45	3	7%	4	9%	13	29%	25	56%	3	3

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Support provision

Table 31.   Q10. Please indicate the level to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.

		Disagree		Mostly disagree		Mostly agree		Agree		DK/ N/A	Missing
	n	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	n
The Riverina Murray Homelessness Action Plan project has been particularly effective in linking clients to the support services they need	48	0	0%	2	4%	10	21%	36	75%	0	3
Lack of service availability locally has limited the project's ability to link clients to the supports they need	47	6	13%	28	60%	11	23%	2	4%	1	3
This project provides clients with access to a broader range of support services than other projects in this area	46	0	0%	2	4%	22	48%	22	48%	2	3
The Riverina Murray Homelessness Action Plan project has provided an easy access to brokerage funding	47	0	0%	3	6%	12	26%	32	68%	1	3
Brokerage funding has been a major factor to support clients with appropriate support	45	0	0%	3	7%	13	29%	29	64%	2	4
Clients received improved integrated management through this project than usual	46	1	2%	6	13%	12	26%	27	59%	2	3

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Service system

Table 32. Q11. Thinking about the organisations involved in the Riverina Murray Homelessness Action Plan project, what has been the frequency of your interactions with each one?

	n	Never		Just once		For a few clients (<5)		For a number of clients (>5)		For some project coordination issues		For all project coordination issues		DK/ N/A	Missing
	n	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	n
Lead government agency, e.g. Housing NSW, Community Services	45	0	0%	1	2%	11	24%	8	18%	9	20%	16	36%	1	5
Partner government agency	42	5	12%	2	5%	12	29%	5	12%	10	24%	8	19%	3	6
Lead NGO	40	3	8%	1	3%	9	23%	5	13%	7	18%	15	38%	5	6
Specialist Homelessness Services	43	5	12%	0	0%	9	21%	12	28%	5	12%	12	28%	2	6
Support service providers, e.g. mental health, family support, drug and alcohol, etc.	44	0	0%	2	5%	9	20%	19	43%	4	9%	10	23%	1	6
Housing organisations	44	0	0%	1	2%	14	32%	11	25%	3	7%	15	34%	1	6
Real estate agents/ landlords	42	10	24%	4	10%	11	26%	12	29%	1	2%	4	10%	3	6

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Table 33.   Q12. Please rate the following aspects of relationships with other housing and service organisations before and after your involvement in the Riverina Murray Homelessness Action Plan project.

		1=None		2=Limited		3=Good		4=Extensive		Missing
	n	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n
Pre: Knowledge of what other local service organisations can provide for my clients	46	2	4%	18	39%	22	48%	4	9%	5
Post: Knowledge of what other local service organisations can provide for my clients	46	0	0%	2	4%	24	52%	20	43%	5
Pre: Coordination with other local service organisations to support clients	46	2	4%	21	46%	18	39%	5	11%	5
Post: Coordination with other local service organisations to support clients	46	1	2%	1	2%	29	63%	15	33%	5
Pre: Trusting relationships with other local service organisations	46	3	7%	16	35%	25	54%	2	4%	5
Post: Trusting relationships with other local service organisations	46	1	2%	1	2%	29	63%	15	33%	5

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Table 34.   Q13–15: Please indicate the level to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.

		Disagree		Mostly disagree		Mostly agree		Agree		DK/ N/A	Missing
	n	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	n
Q13. Governance											
The organisations involved in the Riverina Murray Homelessness Action Plan project share the project's goals and values	46	0	0%	1	2%	18	39%	27	59%	0	5
The organisations involved in this project agreed on the project governance structure (e.g. establishment of local coordination groups)	44	1	2%	3	7%	15	34%	25	57%	2	5
The governance structure of this project has been effective in supporting implementation of the project	45	0	0%	1	2%	15	33%	29	64%	1	5
Q14. Communication and information sharing											
There are formal structures/ processes for communication and information sharing between organisations involved in the Riverina Murray Homelessness Action Plan project	45	0	0%	0	0%	15	33%	30	67%	0	6
There are informal processes for communication and information sharing	44	0	0%	4	9%	14	32%	26	59%	2	5
Communication and information sharing is effective	46	1	2%	1	2%	16	35%	28	61%	0	5

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		Disagree		Mostly disagree		Mostly agree		Agree		DK/ N/A	Missing
	n	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	n
Q15. Working together											
The roles, responsibilities and expectations of organisations involved in the Riverina Murray Homelessness Action Plan project are clearly defined and understood by all	46	0	0%	4	9%	16	35%	26	57%	0	5
Responsibilities for implementing this project are shared appropriately	44	0	0%	5	11%	17	39%	22	50%	2	5
Through this project I have worked with organisations I would not have worked with previously	46	3	7%	7	15%	10	22%	26	57%	0	5
Working together has changed the way our organisation delivers services	43	2	5%	11	26%	13	30%	17	40%	3	5
This project has been able to identify and resolve impediments to effective service provision (either at the project level or through the Regional Homelessness Committee)	42	1	2%	4	10%	15	36%	22	52%	4	5
Working together in this project generates better outcomes for clients than if each organisation worked with the clients separately	45	1	2%	2	4%	4	9%	38	84%	1	5
Working together in this project has achieved regional system changes (e.g. in identification, assessment and referral, discharge planning, capacity building, policy development, case coordination)	42	1	2%	9	21%	10	24%	22	52%	4	5

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Client outcomes

Table 35.   Q16. Please indicate the level to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.

		Disagree		Mostly disagree		Mostly agree		Agree		DK/ N/A	Missing
	n	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	n
The Riverina Murray Homelessness Action Plan project has effective measures for assessing outcomes for clients	45	0	0%	4	9%	17	38%	24	53%	1	5
Clients are better able to sustain a tenancy as a result of the project	44	1	2%	2	5%	12	27%	29	66%	2	5
Clients' well-being has improved as a result of the project	44	0	0%	2	5%	15	34%	27	61%	2	5
Clients have reduced use of acute services (e.g. hospital and emergency services) as a result of the project	34	1	3%	7	21%	11	32%	15	44%	12	5

Costs/ workload

Table 36.   Q17. Please indicate the level to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.

	Disagree		Mostly disagree		Mostly agree		Agree		Total	DK/ N/A	Missing
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	n	n
I spend too much time on coordination activities as part of my involvement in Riverina Murray Homelessness Action Plan project	15	35%	21	49%	6	14%	1	2%	43	3	5
Through this project I am able to spend more time in supporting clients than in other projects	3	8%	7	19%	14	38%	13	35%	37	9	5
The resources required for this project are justified by the benefits for clients	2	4%	5	11%	10	22%	28	62%	45	1	5

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Sustainability of the project

Table 37.   Q18. Please indicate the level to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.

		Disagree		Mostly disagree		Mostly agree		Agree		DK/ N/A	Missing
	n	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	n
The Riverina Murray Homelessness Action Plan project has the potential to achieve sustainable reductions in homelessness into the future	44	1	2%	2	5%	9	20%	32	73%	1	6
I would like this project to continue beyond its planned termination date	43	2	5%	0	0%	5	12%	36	84%	2	6
My organisation would not be able to maintain its participation in this project without government funding	35	3	9%	6	17%	4	11%	22	63%	10	6
My organisation has secured some resources for the project beyond its planned termination date	34	16	47%	12	35%	4	12%	2	6%	11	6
We could expand the number of HAP clients we assist in this area with only a small increase in resources	36	6	17%	10	28%	8	22%	12	33%	9	6
This project has the potential to be replicated in other areas of the state	43	1	2%	1	2%	5	12%	36	84%	2	6

Appendix 7. Breakdown of project costs for 2011/12

HAP Project ID: 5a RMHAP		2011/12 $ Value	Percentage
Project income - Inputs			
Income	HAP funding	$ 713,449	100%
Income	Other Government funding		0%
Income	In-kind		0%
Income	Third party donations		0%
Income	Other: interests received	$ 2,870	0%
Total Project income		**$716,319**	**100%**
Expenditure			
Staff costs	Direct Client Services	$110,614	15%
Staff costs	Admin and support		0%
Staff costs	Staff related on-costs	$18,534	3%
Staff costs	External consultants / professional services	$44,506	6%
Staff costs	Other: Co-ordinator group costs	$51,061	7%
Total Staff costs		**$224,715**	**31%**
Operating costs	Meetings, workshop, catering	$-	0%
Operating costs	Staff training and development	$-	0%
Operating costs	Motor vehicle expenses	$-	0%
Operating costs	Other travel	$20,690	3%
Operating costs	Host Organisation Management Fee and Administration costs	$25,054	3%
Operating costs	Other	$-	0%
Total Operating costs		**$-**	**6%**
Brokerage costs	Total Goods	$206,323.41	28%

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HAP Project ID: 5a RMHAP		2011/12 $ Value	Percentage
Brokerage costs	Total Services	$252,972	35%
Brokerage costs	Total Payments	$-	0%
Brokerage costs	Total Other	$-	0%
Total Brokerage costs		**$459,296**	**63%**
Total Expenditure		**$729,755**	**100%**

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