



NSW Homelessness Action Plan Evaluation

Evaluation of the North Coast Accommodation Project (5.9)

Final report

Housing NSW

March 2013

Acknowledgments

This work was completed with the assistance of Frances Short from Housing NSW.

We would also like to thank the many key informants from North Coast Accommodation Project (NCAP), especially Rennay Miller from New Horizons and Loretta O'Brien from On Track. We thank them for their time and insights and trust that their views are adequately represented in this report. The full list of stakeholders consulted is provided in appendix 3.

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Abbreviations and acronyms

CALD	Culturally and Linguistically Diverse
CTTT	Consumer, Trader & Tenancy Tribunal
FTE	Full-time Equivalent
HAP	Homelessness Action Plan 2009–2014
HREC	Human Research Ethics Committee
NCAP	North Coast Accommodation Project
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
NSW	New South Wales
NH	New Horizons
OT	On Track
RHC	Regional Homelessness Committees
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 North Coast Accommodation 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 and New England, the North Coast Accommodation Project and South East NSW Community Connections.

The North Coast Accommodation Project (NCAP) assists families and individuals who are homeless or at risk of homelessness to secure accommodation in the private rental market on the North Coast by assisting in the establishment and ongoing sustainability of the tenancy for six to twelve months. The project is delivered by two service providers across two geographic areas: New Horizons in the Mid-North Coast and On Track in the Far North Coast.

We used a mixed-methods approach for the evaluation: drawing on existing data sources (project self-evaluation reports, HAP portal data and the research literature) and collecting new data through an online stakeholder survey (n=52) and in-depth interviews with project stakeholders (n=24) and clients (n=9). 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 North Coast Accommodation Project (NCAP) assisted significantly more clients than initially targeted to access or maintain housing, with a strong emphasis on the private rental sector. All clients assisted by the project were homeless or at risk of homelessness at the time of referral into the project. Client needs varied from low to complex with the significant majority in the low to mid range of need.

Stakeholders are positive about the outcomes achieved for clients. In terms of the service system the project appears to have had little impact on relationships between organisations that were already part of the homelessness service system. However NCAP had a significant impact through the relationship successfully established with real estate agents to facilitate clients access to the private rental market. The main challenge

for the project is a long waiting list of clients, reinforcing the need for such a project in the region.

The project has met a need in the region

The North Coast Accommodation Project (NCAP) assisted 1,500 clients over 16 months to the end of June 2012, four times more than the initial target, which indicates a clear and strong need for the project in the region.

The project targeted clients assessed as suitable to transition quickly from homelessness or at risk of homelessness into the private rental market, therefore the majority of clients assisted were assessed at the lower end of the needs spectrum. The project did assist 11 per cent of high need clients—including some people who had been sleeping rough. Those clients required coordination with a broad range of support services. The NCAP service specification identified specific priority subgroups, in particular Aboriginal families, young people and people exiting institutions.

The project has been particularly successful in providing access to private rental for Aboriginal clients, who traditionally experience high levels of discrimination. Aboriginal clients represent one third of clients assisted to the end of June 2012. The employment of Aboriginal case workers significantly contributed to this success by helping to engage the Aboriginal community and breaking down the discrimination Aboriginal people have historically experienced in the private rental market.

NCAP clients were provided with support to access housing, with a strong focus on the private rental market, for instance by helping them to gather all required documents (100 points of identification), giving them advice on how to prepare an application and attend an inspection, how to put together a payment plan in case of financial difficulties etc. For higher needs clients their individual support plan included a broad range of services coordinated by the contracted NGOs through case conferencing.

NCAP has helped a high number of people to access or maintain housing

Stakeholders are very positive about the benefits of the project for clients in terms of both housing and non-housing outcomes. Over 70 per cent of respondents to the online survey agreed or mostly agreed that clients are better able to sustain a tenancy and that client wellbeing has improved as a result of their participation in the project. To the end of June 2012, NCAP had helped 728 clients maintain a tenancy at the end of their six-months support, with 72 per cent of them being housed in private rental.

Homelessness, however, is a long-term and complex issue and it is difficult to provide conclusive evidence on whether the project has supported sustainable outcomes assess its impact on rates of homelessness.

The project has played a major role in bringing a new player—real estate agents—into the homelessness service system

A major achievement of the project has been to engage successfully with real estate agents, actors who have not traditionally played a significant role in the homelessness system. On Track and New Horizons progressively developed trusting relationships using an effective marketing strategy to approach and gain the confidence of real estate agents, for instance through lunches or a regular catch-up. Real estate agents are now not only offering housing options to the project, but are also starting to refer clients, convinced by the reliability of the service provided.

Other organisations from the homelessness service system have been involved in the project, but only through referrals or occasionally in providing some support services for high needs clients. A majority of respondents to the online survey did not see any change in the knowledge of, coordination with or trusting relationships with other local service organisations. This shows some room for improvement in terms of coordination with other organisations from the homelessness system.

However, the main expectation expressed by external organisations is to tackle the waiting list and provide referred clients with timely assistance.

The initial budget over-estimated client costs, which allowed On Track and New Horizons to assist more clients

Total project expenses to the end of June 2012 (\$2,397,666) represent 50 per cent of the total approved budget (\$4,809,316) for three years. Staff costs were the largest component of total costs, followed by operating costs and brokerage costs.

In 2011/2012—considered as a typical year, as the project started only in March 2011—the average client cost was \$1,580, significantly lower than the budgeted client cost provision of \$10,000 for each successful tenancy. The main explanation is that On Track and New Horizons assisted more clients than expected for the same amount of money—this was acknowledge in the initial stage of the project when Housing NSW and service providers agreed on a higher target for client intakes. With a focus on lower needs clients, both organisations were able to deliver services efficiently by assisting a higher number of clients. The average client cost for the project is within the same range as other comparable homelessness programs.

Key successes and challenges

Overall, stakeholders consider the project model to be effective in achieving client outcomes. In particular, they feel the development of relationships with real estate agents and the provision of ongoing support during the six-months of assistance were key success factors to maintaining tenancies. Employment strategies adopted by On Track and New Horizons were also particularly successful in bringing together the right mix of skills, including case management and marketing skills.

The main challenge for the project was the waiting list of clients referred. While the waiting list is an unintended consequence of the project, it will require particular attention during the final six months of the project. Additional areas for improvement were identified in relation to the future of the project, for instance improving project monitoring systems to capture useful client information or adding a component focusing on high needs clients.

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 effort 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 at 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

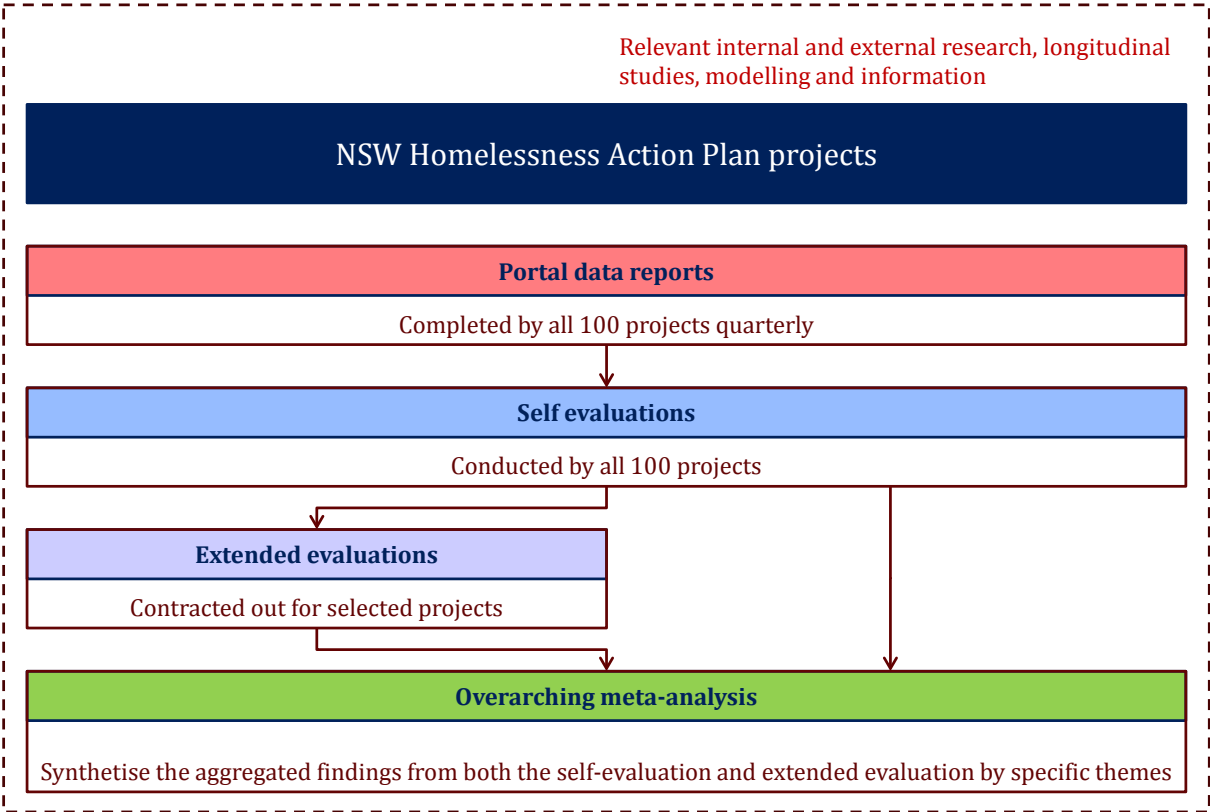
Housing NSW, in consultation with government agencies and the non-government sector, developed an overall evaluation strategy for the HAP. The strategy outlines how each of the 100 projects will be evaluated in a consistent manner, and how critical information from individual evaluations can be aggregated to make statewide 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).

Figure 1. HAP evaluation strategy



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 the Riverina and in 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. But, 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 a 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 North Coast Accommodation Project, 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 on from homelessness. But it is difficult to identify a 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 identify the components that make up long term housing and support and the broad principles for their effective delivery. Our findings about the principles for 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); and 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 base in the literature. The term has also become somewhat ubiquitous in practice, though not all services calling themselves Housing First have been completely faithful to the original model. While there is strong evidence for 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.

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 (Flateau 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 the flexibility within the broad supportive housing model to meet the needs of particular target groups and individuals.

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 interviews.
- 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 that agreed to participate.
- The contract manager in the lead government agency (also an RHC member) distributed the online survey to all stakeholders that had had any involvement in the project, 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).

Table 1. Key evaluation questions

Evaluation area	Key evaluation questions
Overall HAP targets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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, Regional Homelessness Committees 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.

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 Kempsey for the Mid-North Coast and Tweed Heads and Murwillumbah for the Far North Coast¹
- cost analysis.

Table 2 below provides an overview of all methods and how they were implemented for the evaluation of the North Coast Accommodation Project.

¹ Sites were selected in consultation with the contract manager within Housing NSW and the two contracted NGOs. These three sites were chosen because they represent very different contexts.

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	New Horizons and On Track provided additional client data they collected, so ARTD could undertake complementary quantitative analysis, in particular number of clients assisted by location.
Online survey	Project stakeholders	n=145 (52 respondents)	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 (n=145). The representative from the lead government agency distributed three reminders via email, and the survey achieved a relatively low response rate of 36%. Specialist Homelessness Services made the

Method/ source	Study population/ focus	Sample	Timing	Comments
				largest category of respondents with 25 per cent of respondents, followed by housing providers (20%). Forty per cent of respondents were involved in the project in relation to a number of clients (more than 5), 19 per in relation to a few clients (less than 5) and 19 per cent had limited awareness, no direct involvement. 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=24	Oct–Nov 2012	<p>We interviewed 24 stakeholders from a broad range of organisations including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ government agencies ▪ the contracted NGO ▪ housing providers ▪ specialist homelessness services ▪ mainstream services ▪ Aboriginal organisations. <p>See the full list of interviews in Appendix 3. We conducted interviews either face-to-face during site visits in Kempsey, Tweed Heads and Murwillumbah 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.</p>
Client interviews	Clients	Sample not representative n=9	Oct–Nov 2012	<p>We interviewed all clients from Kempsey, Tweed Heads and Murwillumbah who returned a consent form. We arranged face-to-face or phone interviews according to 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). Each interviewee received a \$30 gift voucher to acknowledge their</p>

Method/ source	Study population/ focus	Sample	Timing	Comments
				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 for the two financial years covered by the project from the contracted service providers, New Horizons and On Track, in the form of acquittals for New Horizons and Profit and Loss statements for On Track. Additional financial information on the breakdown of brokerage costs was provided by the two organisations. 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 provides 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 challenges and successes in the full range of project operating sites, our survey was sent to all project stakeholders in all sites, and included options to comment. We received 52 responses, making a 36 per cent response rate compared to the number of initial recipients. Of the 52, 31 (60%) were from staff involved in the operation of the project in relation to clients. Ten respondents (19%) had limited awareness and no direct involvement in the project. One quarter are from specialist homelessness services, 10 (20%) from housing providers, and the remainder (43%) from government agencies (16%), support service providers (14%), coordinating NGOs (4%) or other organisations (20%). While not representative, we believe this provides a reasonable spread of participants to broadly inform our analysis.

It was not possible to visit all operating sites, so, in consultation with Regional Homelessness Committee representatives, we purposively selected sites to get a broad coverage of issues faced across each project site. Whilst 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. It has been progressively refined to more 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.

On Track and New Horizons provided additional client data for all clients referred to the program to the end of June 2012. However, monitoring systems developed by both service providers had some weaknesses in terms of the quality of data entered that showed inconsistencies and did not use normalised categories, for instance for referring agencies or client status. As a consequence, the robustness and range of additional analysis was limited, for instance it was not possible to analyse the types of housing outcomes per location. The initial service specification did not specify any particular requirements in terms of a monitoring system, which is an area for improvement for the future of the project.

Cost-effectiveness analysis

Housing NSW developed a template for the cost analysis for all of the extended evaluations to unpack the costings of their particular service models. But, because these financial reporting requirements were not specified in the initial service specifications for HAP projects, we had to rely on the actual costs data contracted NGOs could provide from their internal accounting systems.

For NCAP, we attempted to match financial data provided by New Horizons and On Track to the Housing NSW 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. In terms of brokerage costs, financial data provided by both service providers had sufficient level of detail to allow for a further breakdown. With the help of each of them and their accounting staff we were able to allocate the cost items from their financial data to the main types of brokerage costs identified by the Housing NSW cost template: goods, services, payments or other brokerage costs.

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 proper client outcomes data so 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 North Coast Accommodation Project (NCAP) project is delivered in two geographic areas: the Mid-North Coast (encompassing the local government areas of Coffs Harbour/ Bellingen/ Nambucca, Kempsey/ Port Macquarie-Hastings and Greater Taree); and the Far North Coast (encompassing the local government areas of Tweed/ Richmond Valley, Ballina/ Byron Bay, Lismore/ Kyogle).

3.1.1 Project development and contract

The North Coast Accommodation Project is an initiative of the Regional Homelessness Action Plan 2010 – 2014 for the North Coast region. Housing NSW is the lead government agency for the project. The project had a start date initially planned for January 2011 and was funded until June 2013. The project actually started in March 2011 and funding has been extended for six months until the end of December 2013.

During the design phase of the project Housing NSW decided to focus on supporting clients to enter the private rental market due to the housing stock situation in the region, rather than to focus on very high needs clients, e.g. long-term homeless people.

An overall request for the tender was issued in early 2011 with the possibility for the tenderer to only apply for some locations. In the initial stage of the project, tenders were requested for two full-time staff members to cover seven geographic areas in the North Coast. An additional half-time position was provided for the Kempsey area in recognition of the housing market, the correctional facility and the Aboriginal population in this area.

In March 2011 Housing NSW designated On Track Community Programs and New Horizons as the preferred tenderers for the Far North Coast and Mid-North Coast areas respectively.

3.1.2 Project focus

The project assists families and individuals who are homeless or at risk of homelessness to secure accommodation on the private rental market on the North Coast by assisting in the establishment and ongoing sustainability of the tenancy for six to twelve months. The project uses various types of housing options and also supports tenants at risk of homelessness to maintain their tenancy, but the main focus is on assisting clients to obtain housing in the private rental market. As a result, a lot of the project's work involves building relationships and working with real estate agents and private landlords.

3.1.3 Operating context

Homelessness in the North Coast prior to the project

The last available data on homelessness prior to the project's establishment shows there were 1,865 homeless people in the North Coast region on census night in 2006. People staying temporarily with other households, or 'couch surfing' made up the highest proportion of the homelessness population (32%), followed by persons who are in improvised dwellings, tents or sleeping out (21%) that are usually categorised under 'primary homelessness', and persons in supported accommodation for homeless people (21%). Compared with the pattern for NSW as a whole, primary homeless people and couch surfers made up a higher proportion of North Coast's homeless population, especially people under primary homelessness or 'sleeping rough' (see table 3 below).

Table 3. 2006 homelessness counts in North Coast per operational group as compared to NSW data

Homeless operational group	North Coast homeless*		NSW homeless	
	n	%	n	%
Persons who are in improvised dwellings, tents or sleeping out	409	21%	1,601	7%
Persons in supported accommodation for the homeless	395	21%	3,831	17%
Persons staying temporarily with other households	592	32%	4,748	21%
Persons staying in boarding houses	175	9%	5,966	27%
Persons in other temporary lodging	27	1%	146	1%
Persons living in 'severely' crowded dwellings	265	14%	5,908	27%
All homeless persons	1,863	100%	22,200	100%
Persons living in other crowded dwellings	699	27%	14,765	72%
Persons in other improvised dwellings	395	15%	1,829	9%
Persons who are marginally housed in caravan parks	1,528	58%	3,930	19%
All persons in other marginal housing	2,622	100%	20,524	100%

Note from ABS: 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'.

* Richmond-Tweed and Mid-North Coast ABS subdivisions.

SAAP data included in the Regional Action Plan, though, shows a much higher proportion of single males compared to the state average. Fifty-four per cent of SAAP clients in the North Coast were single males compared to 42 per cent for NSW as a whole. There was a slightly higher proportion of SAAP clients in the North Coast between 18 and 24 years old (24% compared to 21% in NSW).

The primary reason for seeking assistance in the North Coast was domestic and family violence, at 17 per cent compared to the state average of 15 per cent. The North Coast also had higher rates of 'time out from family' and 'relationship/ family breakdown' than NSW as a whole. Taken together, family-related reasons for seeking assistance accounted for 45 per cent of the main reason for seeking assistance in the North Coast compared to 30 per cent for the whole of New South Wales. The North Coast also had a higher rate of "eviction" with nine per cent as a main reason for seeking SAAP assistance compared to four per cent at the state level.

When the Regional Homelessness Action Plan was being developed, there were 32 SAAP funded projects in the North Coast region of NSW with a fairly even distribution across the region but with a greater number located in Lismore. The majority of SAAP services in Lismore target women with/ without children escaping domestic violence (60%). Almost one third (31%) of the services in the North Coast region are targeted towards families, followed by services supporting women with/ without children escaping domestic violence (28%). The total number of services targeting young people accounted for 38 per cent.

3.2 Aims and objectives

3.2.1 Strategic objectives

Within the NSW Homelessness Action Plan 2009-2014, the North Coast Accommodation Project sits under the priority 5 'Deliver integrated service responses' that aim 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 project sits under the first priority area—Accommodation with support—in the North Coast Regional Homelessness Action Plan 2010–2014.

3.2.2 Project aims

The service specifications outlined ten objectives for the project, which fall into two categories.

- **Client outcomes objectives**

1. Assist homeless individuals and families with accompanying children to obtain a suitable and appropriate housing solution and support that tenancy through the important initial three months
 2. Provide a focus on securing housing for people leaving institutional environments, including children leaving protective services
 3. Provide a focus on securing private sector housing for clients with secondary access to the social housing system as required through the Housing Pathways model
 4. Assist clients where required by providing financial support to help with the establishment costs for tenancies where these cannot be outsourced through other means or services
 5. Use existing best practice models to locate and secure housing for clients and support these tenancies for an initial period.
- **Service system outcomes objectives**
6. Increase collaborative service delivery across government and non-government agencies in responding to homelessness through the support of local housing forums, and acting as the lead co-ordination point for local communities assisting homeless people
 7. Identify and resolve impediments to the effective provision of housing services and make recommendations to reform the existing access system in the longer term
 8. Collaborate with other services (such as SAAP, HASI, ACHA, Reconnect, etc) to ensure duplication is diminished and maximum value for the community is obtained.

3.3 Target group

The service specification outlined two target groups for the project: homeless people and people at risk of homelessness. Each of these groups includes individuals and families with accompanying children. The project prioritises the following subgroups in line with the target of SAAP services previously described:

- Aboriginal families
- People escaping domestic violence
- Youth
- People leaving care
- People exiting institutional environments such as inpatient units, rehabilitation or correctional facilities
- People with disabilities.

3.4 Eligibility criteria, referral and assessment processes

Eligibility criteria

The service specification did not specify any more eligibility criteria than those implied by the definition of target groups. The project staff assessed the eligibility of clients referred to the project by assessing the level of need and identifying whether the client was willing to engage in the project, in particular to enter the private rental market.

According to the NCAP contract manager the project targeted people on statutory or low-incomes and applied Housing criteria to assess their eligibility to the project.

Referral and assessment process

Clients can be referred to the project by any organisation and clients can also self-refer. Referral usually involves calling On Track or New Horizons and giving information about the client over the phone, or sending a referral form, with the client's consent.

Because of the high demand, both service providers have to consider their staff capacity before taking on new clients and they both had a waiting list as at the end of October 2012.

When case workers do an initial assessment with a client they do a face-to-face interview where they gather information about all the client's needs and what other services they are already linked into. NCAP case workers develop an individual support plan with every client. For clients with complex needs the case workers may facilitate a client conference with other services.

3.5 Service model

The model uses two contracted NGOs—On Track and New Horizons—to deliver the project across the whole North Coast, On Track covering the Far North Coast and New Horizons the Mid-North Coast.

Both organisations provide the following components in each area, as specified in the service specification:

- receive referrals from a range of agencies
- provide multi-disciplinary case managed support (up to six months) to enable a client to establish and sustain a tenancy
- develop partnerships with specialist homelessness support services (SHS) and Housing NSW Temporary Accommodation program to provide, where necessary, up to four weeks supported accommodation and intensive support in a registered temporary accommodation provider
- develop partnerships with private housing sector providers to increase pathways into private accommodation, for instance through facilitating at least an annual Real Estate Breakfast in each of the urban centres across the region
- participate in local housing forums or establish where necessary
- access to legal services through tenancy advice or Legal Aid for more complex issues
- deliver tenancy training programs such as 'Rent-It-Keep-It' to agencies and clients.

In addition, the project has a legal services component, which is provided directly by Legal Aid and is intended to support clients across the whole region.

3.5.1 Services offered

Contracted NGO

The service specification lists the following activities to be provided by the two NCAP service providers:

- information and advice to clients
- referral to other services
- assessment and case planning
- linkages with client's family where appropriate
- client focused case work
- linkages to school/ education, training and employment
- access to training and/or day programs
- transition to independent living
- linkages to access services and skills development
- service system development.

Both service providers provide direct case management support, in particular advice and advocacy to apply for private rentals, but also referrals to external organisations to access other support services.

Housing

NCAP assists individuals and families who are homeless or at risk of homelessness to find and sustain appropriate affordable housing with an emphasis on the private rental market. The service seeks to provide assistance to homeless clients to primarily local private sector housing but may also refer for social housing services.

Support services

On Track and New Horizons coordinate the provision of support services identified in the individual support plan to support the tenancy through the important initial three months of the tenancy and up to six months.

In the self-evaluation report, NCAP providers list a range of services they provide directly or through external organisations as part of the case management support:

- financial counselling and budgeting, in particular to reduce debts
- counselling
- links to life skills programs
- presentation techniques
- tenancy training
- negotiation skills advice
- referral to specialist support groups and services, including domestic violence, AOD and mental health support services

- funding provision is made for additional costs of establishing identity documents (Birth Certificates) as well as essential items for establishment of a home where these are unavailable from other sources.

Legal services

As stated in the self-evaluation report, Legal Aid provides four types of services under the legal services component of the project:

- free regular legal outreach clinics, held in locations (such as community centres and soup kitchens) that are familiar to and frequented by people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness
- follow-up minor assistance if required, such as research, letter writing and phone calls
- representation, subject to guidelines (including applicable means and merit tests)
- information/ training to community workers about the service, and about identifying potential legal issues.

The Legal Aid staff advise on various legal matters, including credit or debit card debt, disputes in relation to housing, particularly with Housing NSW, issues with discrimination, social security issues like fines or property seizure orders, and matters before the Mental Health Review Tribunal or Guardianship Tribunal.

3.5.2 Coordination structures

Each service provider coordinates the service delivery across all locations of their area. On Track case workers are assisting clients in Tweed Heads, Grafton, Lismore and Ballina, while New Horizons staff cover Coffs Harbour, Kempsey, Port Macquarie and Taree.

3.5.3 Partnerships

The North Coast Accommodation Project is lead by Housing NSW who contracted out On Track and New Horizons for service delivery. 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. Roles and responsibilities of partner agencies as described in the project plan are presented in Table 4 below.

Table 4. Partner agency roles

Partner agency	Role
Housing NSW	Lead government agency to administer and provide funding to the contracted agency to provide services to assist up to 2,100 homeless people and families per year to establish a home.

Partner agency	Role
	Key referral agency. Support tenancy support plans and provide bridging TA assistance and Rent Start.
NSW Health	Where possible, NSW Health will provide timely access to assessment and treatment services within existing resources for discharge processes.
Office of Fair Trading	Key referral agency.
Ageing, Disability and Home Care	Where possible, ADHC will provide timely access to support services within existing resources.
Legal Aid	Provision of legal services with a view to resolving legal issues that contribute to homelessness or put people at risk of becoming homeless, including areas such as accumulated fines and other debt matters, tenancy issues, domestic violence, and disputes with social security. It also includes the provision of training and ongoing support for all human services workers involved with this project - to assist them to identify legal issues at the earliest opportunity and to make effective referrals for assistance. Legal Aid will provide support to tenant advocates and provide direct assistance for more complex issues.
Department of Aboriginal Affairs & Aboriginal Housing Office	Policy expertise and advice on project direction.

Source: Project plan North Coast Accommodation Project.

In addition to formal partnerships, the project works in partnership with real estate agents and other Government and non-Government support services.

3.5.4 Brokerage

NCAP service providers have access to brokerage funding to provide goods and services to clients. According to the self-evaluation report, brokerage funding is used to purchase basic whitegoods, furniture and groceries, furniture storage and removalists. It is also used for intensive support work for higher needs clients to assist with maintaining their tenancy.

Brokerage has been used for

- contribution to bond and rent
- payment of rent arrears
- purchase of goods, e.g. whitegoods, blankets, basic kitchen items
- removalists
- food and basic groceries
- purchase of other services, in particular more intensive support for higher needs clients.

The self-evaluation report describes the process service providers follow to specify the use of brokerage funding for each client.

1. Develop a budget with the client and identify co-contribution wherever appropriate
2. Ensure the client has the right income entitlements, e.g. Disability Support Pension, Carer
3. Assist client with setting up Centrepay deductions wherever possible for future rent payments
4. Refer client to a financial counsellor if they have large debts
5. Identify whether the client can access a Centrelink loan or a No Interest Loan Scheme loan
6. Identify whether the client is on TICA or other tenant database and assist the client in a repayment plan if needed
7. Assist clients and accompanying family with basic grocery items and petrol vouchers.

3.6 Management and governance arrangements

Housing NSW, as the lead government agency for the project, has responsibility for managing the contract with On Track and New Horizons, the two contracted NGOs. According to the NCAP self-evaluation report, both service providers are attending the Regional Homelessness Committee as NCAP representatives. Combined project reports are prepared quarterly for Housing NSW and the Regional Homelessness Committee.

The two service providers also attend housing interagency meetings in various locations across the region.

3.7 Resources

3.7.1 Staffing

According to the NCAP self-evaluation report, 19.6 full-time equivalent staff are dedicated to the project across the two service provider organisations (see Table 5 below). Three quarters of these staff are case workers, directly assisting clients.

Table 5. NCAP staffing arrangements

	On Track	New Horizons	Total
Managers/ co-ordinators	3.5	1	4.5
Direct service staff/ case workers	7.6	7	14.6
Administrative staff		0.5	0.5
Total	11.1	8.5	19.6

3.7.2 Budget allocation

The project is funded through Commonwealth funding under the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness (the NPAH). It was allocated an initial budget of \$1.594 million over three years, based on a client cost provision of \$10,000 for each successful tenancy. This budget has then been revised by Housing NSW to reflect the higher number of clients targeted as agreed between Housing NSW and service providers at the start-up of the project. The final approved budget amount of \$4.809 million over three years was distributed to On Track for 57 per cent and New Horizons for 43 per cent.

Table 6 below presents the actual project income received by both service providers to the end of June 2012. In 2010/11 the project was in operation only four months as it started in March 2010. New Horizons started to deliver services in the Mid-North Coast from July 2010 after having recruited the project manager, and established the whole structure for the project.

Table 6. Annual project funding

	FY 2010/11	FY 2011/12	Total
On Track	\$167,451	\$1,385,619	\$1,553,070
New Horizons	\$126,323	\$1,045,292	\$1,171,614
Total income	\$293,774	\$2,430,911	\$2,724,684

Source: Approved budget, Housing NSW.

An additional \$100,000 per annum for legal services provided as part of the project was allocated directly to Legal Aid.

4. Client outcomes

4.1 Clients assisted and services delivered

4.1.1 Number of clients assisted

The North Coast Accommodation Project (NCAP) assisted a total of 1,500 unique clients to the end of June 2012. According to the self-evaluation report, the project was to support 275 clients per annum over three years. The project actually started in March 2011 and assisted 81 clients in the last four months of 2010/11, exceeding the target of 50 for this financial year. In 2011/12 the project assisted four times more clients than the annual target, showing that the initial target largely underestimated the population covered by the project (see Table 7).

Table 7. Number of clients assisted from March 2011 to June 2012

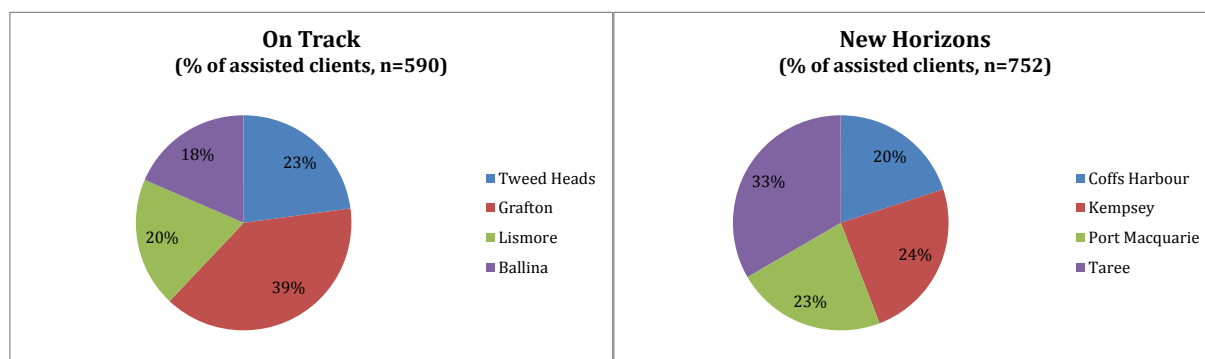
	2010/11*	2011/12	Total
Annual target	50	275	325
New clients	81	1,419	1,500
Clients continuing from previous year	-	-	-

Source: HAP data portal.

* 2010/11 covered only four months as the project only started in March 2011.

4.1.2 Location of clients assisted

On the Far North Coast 39 per cent of clients assisted by On Track are from the Grafton area, followed by Tweed Heads (23%), Lismore (20%) and Ballina (18%). In the Mid-North Coast, the highest proportion of clients New Horizons assisted come from Taree (40%), followed by Port Macquarie (23%), Kempsey (22%) and Coffs Harbour (15%) (see Figure 2). The Taree region covers a large area that includes the Great Lakes where New Horizons has reported a range of housing outcomes in towns such as Foster and Tuncurry. This distribution is in line with the 2006 homelessness statistics in the North Coast region, where the largest numbers of homeless people were recorded in Tweed, Clarence Valley (Grafton) and Ballina.

Figure 2. Clients assisted by location (March 2011–June 2012)

Source: On Track and New Horizons client data, November 2012.

4.1.3 Demographics of clients assisted

The project targets all homeless people or those at risk of homelessness who can be supported to enter the private rental market. As described in section 3.3, the service specification identified some specific subgroups as priorities: Aboriginal families; people escaping domestic violence; youth; people leaving care; people exiting institutional environments such as inpatient units, rehabilitation or correctional facilities; and people with disabilities.

In practice, just over half of the population assisted was male (59%). Fourteen per cent were young people between 16 and 24 years (see Table 8 below). However these statistics include all people assisted within a household and reflect the fact that the project assisted many families with children.

Aboriginal clients made up one third of clients assisted to the end of June 2012, which is in line with the relatively high Aboriginal homelessness population in the North Coast. According to 2006 Census data, 14 per cent of the NSW Aboriginal homeless population are in the North Coast, while the North Coast accounts for 11 per cent of the NSW homeless population overall.

Only two per cent of people assisted were born overseas, and these were English speaking, which is an indication of the low representation of the CALD population among NCAP clients. The self-evaluation report drafted in July 2012 identified a growing number of referrals from refuge settlers in the Coffs Harbour area.

Table 8. Demographics of clients assisted (March 2011–June 2012)

	2010/11 n=137	2011/12 n=3,174	Total n=3,311
Male	55%	54%	54%
Female	45%	46%	46%
Total	100%	100%	100%
<15 years	29%	46%	46%
16–24 years	15%	13%	14%
25–64 years	53%	38%	39%
>65 years	1%	1%	1%
Not known	1%	2%	2%
Total	100%	100%	100%
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	36%	33%	33%
Other Australian born people	60%	65%	65%
People born overseas, English speaking	4%	2%	2%
People born overseas, non-English speaking	0%	0%	0%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Source: HAP data portal.

Note: number of clients used for demographics does not match with the number of clients assisted, because demographics are reported in the HAP data portal at individual level whereas number of clients assisted are at household level.

According to the self-evaluation report, the project has worked with a small but growing number of clients on parole and has also assisted clients under drug rehabilitation.

4.1.4 Client status prior to assistance

The project assisted clients in a range of living situations. Over the whole project life, around a third (32%) of the people assisted through NCAP were at risk of homelessness. Another quarter (24%) were people living in short-term or emergency accommodation due to a lack of other options (see Table 9).

Only 17 per cent of all NCAP clients to the end of June 2012 were identified as ‘sleeping rough’ prior to entering the project. While this group made up one third of NCAP clients in the first quarter the project was in operation the proportion decreased to 16 per cent in 2011/12, reflecting the project focus on lower needs clients who could be assisted into the private market.

Table 9. Client status prior to assistance (March 2011–June 2012)

	2010/11 n=81	2011/12 n=1,419	Total n=1,500
Sleeping rough	32%	16%	17%
Short term or emergency accommodation due to lack of other options	33%	23%	24%
At risk of homelessness	23%	33%	32%
Other	11%	22%	22%
Not known	0%	5%	5%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Source: HAP data portal.

The clients we interviewed—two of them being Aboriginal—struggled with many issues before entering the project, in particular health and family issues. Five of them were homeless, living in a tent, a caravan park or a motel, while two others were staying with family or friends (couch surfing). One of the interviewees described a very difficult situation before entering the project, where the housing situation was the main concern:

Basically I was feeling pretty desperate living in a caravan park, I had no accommodation, I was in a pretty desperate place. I lived by myself. My health is poor because I have diabetes and all the associated health problems. That was worse with the stress with the housing situation and not knowing where I was going to live. I had been in that situation for 18 months. I have family and friends that live nearby, they're supportive but I was very uncertain about where I would be living, that was the main upset for me.

4.1.5 Referral and assessment process

A very broad range of organisations referred clients to the project. While the service providers' monitoring system does not allow us to precisely track the number of organisations involved in referrals to the project (see section 2.3 on data limitations), according to the self-evaluation report the project received referrals from over 50 different services. The main referring agencies were Housing NSW, neighbourhood centres, specialist homelessness services (SHS), Centrelink, job agencies, non-SHS NGOs (e.g. Samaritans, Anglicare). The self-evaluation report identifies that recent changes to the allocation of Temporary Accommodation through Housing NSW resulted in a decrease in referrals from Housing NSW. A number of clients referred themselves to the project, reflecting the effectiveness of the communication made around the project. Service providers also report an increasing number of referrals from real estate agents where tenants are at risk of being evicted.

Interviews with project stakeholders confirmed that referrals came from a very broad range of organisations. Some service providers described referrals as going both ways,

from NCAP to their organisation to access services, and from their organisation to the project to refer new clients.

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 (41% agreed and 37% mostly agreed), and the assessment process effective (32% agreed and 36% mostly agreed). Reasons for respondents being unsatisfied with the referral process are most likely due to the waiting list of referred clients.

Filling a gap in available supports

The majority of respondents to the online survey see the project as an opportunity to support clients not covered by other existing initiatives (44% agreed and 26% mostly agreed). However, 58 per cent of respondents did not think that, through the project, they have worked with clients they would not normally be able to reach (33% disagreed and 25% mostly disagreed). This is in line with the feedback received through interviews, where almost all stakeholders described NCAP clients as similar to their usual clients.

Clients not accepted into the project

According to data provided by New Horizons, one quarter of referred clients referred to the end of June 2012 were accepted into the project. According to this data, two main reasons for referred clients not entering the project were difficulties in either contacting or engaging them. For some clients, a bad tenancy history was a barrier that staff found too difficult to overcome in working with these clients.

On Track staff mentioned three main reasons for referred clients not participating: firstly, the client not engaging with NCAP; secondly, the client not being suitable for NCAP; and thirdly, the service being at capacity with an ongoing waiting list. In the first two cases, NCAP staff let the referrer know that the client could not be taken on as they were unsuitable. In the third case, they explained to the referrer and the client that the service was at capacity and gave them some information and advice to assist the client to find their own housing.

4.2 Services delivered

4.2.1 Entering the program

At the time of the evaluation both service providers had a waiting list of clients—around 75 for On Track and 360 for New Horizons—which created some frustration among stakeholders. One organisation in particular, the Macleay Valley Housing Forum,

expressed some concerns about the risk of not providing timely support to clients referred to NCAP, in particular homeless clients with very urgent needs.

Five interviewed clients were referred to the project through an external organisation, two had been told about the project by relatives or friends and one had previous contact with the project. This level of word-of-mouth is also an indicator of success, showing that the project design matches client needs.

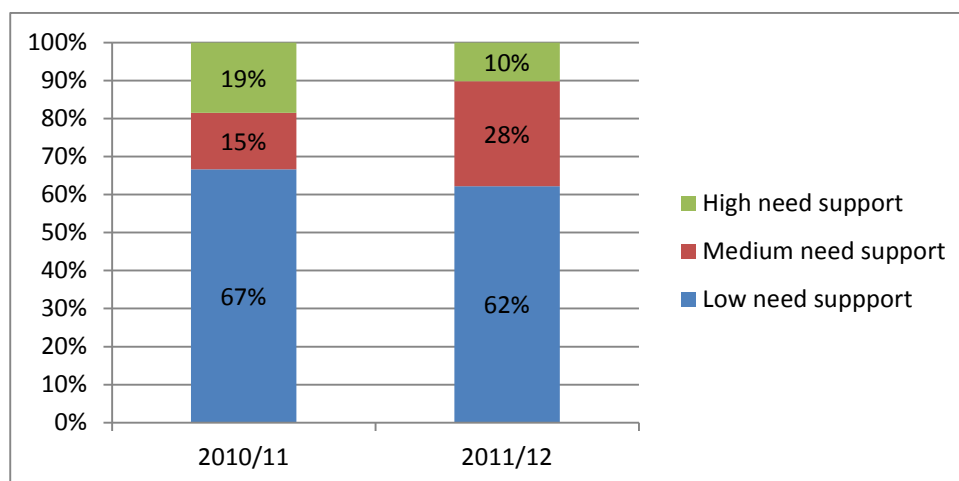
One of the clients interviewed was very positive when he first heard about the project

When I heard about On Track I thought “you beauty”, I wanted to be involved so I turned up to every interview, crossed all my t’s and dotted all my i’s.

4.2.2 Level of need support

NCAP clients receive support according to their need level as defined initially in their individual support plan. Some clients enter the project with a range of complex issues that require a lot of support provided by various organisations, coordinated by the case worker from On Track or New Horizons in charge of the client. Such clients also usually require a higher amount of brokerage funding compared to other clients, leading to a higher client cost for the project. However, high needs clients are a small proportion of NCAP clients. According to the classification of clients as per the HAP data portal, high needs clients made up 11 per cent (150 clients) of all project clients to the end of June 2012, with a decrease from 2010/11 (four months) to 2011/12 (see Figure 3).

Figure 3. Distribution of clients by level of need support



Source: HAP data portal (2010/11, n=81; 2011/12, n=1,410).

4.2.3 Types of services provided

A main focus of this service delivery model as described in the self-evaluation report is equipping clients with skills to access and maintain a tenancy. The first step for clients

entering the project is to access accommodation, most of the time within the private rental market. In this preliminary stage, NCAP workers assist the client with preparing an application: gathering 100 identification points, identifying suitable accommodation options, learning how to present and sometimes accompanying the client to inspections. NCAP staff have also assisted numerous clients with applications for Housing NSW products, e.g. Rentstart (bond loans) Housing Pathways Forms, Start Safely or Temporary Accommodation.

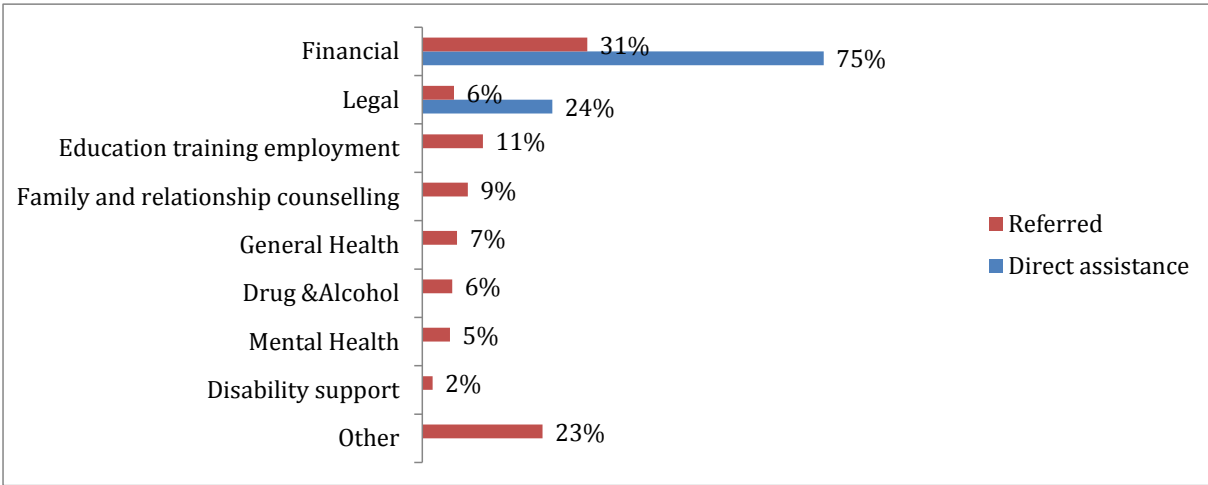
NCAP has also used brokerage funding to subsidise rents, buy furniture and whitegoods, and provide food vouchers to support the set-up phase.

After accessing the tenancy NCAP focuses on teaching clients how to budget and manage their finances. They find out what financial assistance the client would be eligible for from the government and apply for it, or equip them with skills to seek employment.

NCAP providers build on existing regional networks and established relationships with other services to ensure coordination and exchange of information, including client information (with client’s consent) where needed.

According to the self-evaluation report all clients required non-housing assistance. Figure 4 shows the variety of services provided to NCAP clients to the end of June 2012 as part of their individual support plan. Some services were provided directly by On Track or New Horizons, in particular financial services, with other services provided by external organisations. Financial counselling was the most common service provided, with 75 per cent of NCAP clients receiving financial counselling directly from the contracted NGOs and 31 per cent receiving financial advice through referred organisations (some clients may receive two types of support). Legal assistance is also common, in particular through the direct assistance provided by Legal Aid.

Figure 4. Non-housing services provided to NCAP clients (to end of June 2012)

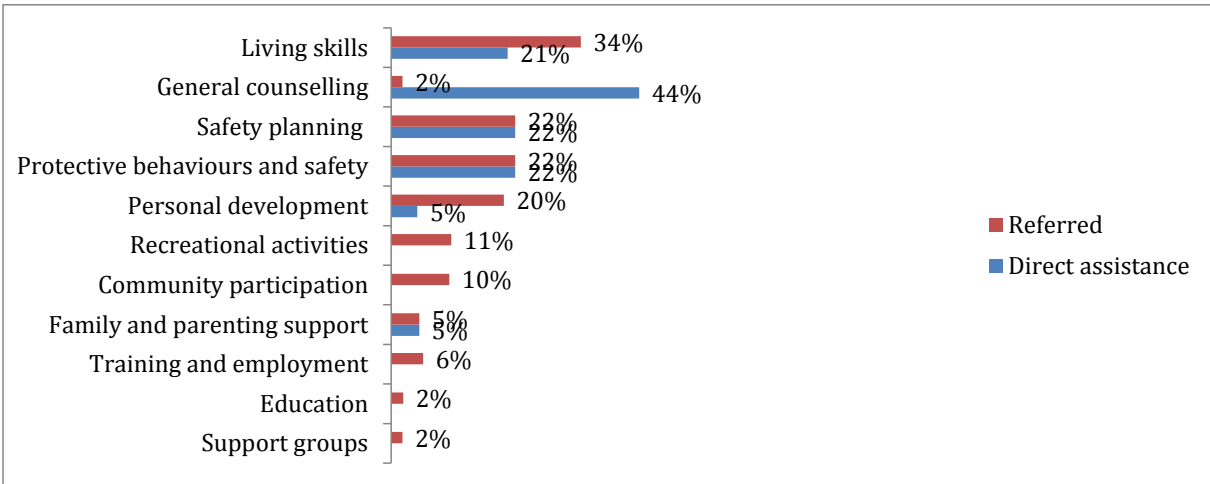


Source: HAP data portal (n=1,500).

While the project has a clear focus on clients accessing housing, in particular in the private rental market, it also provided a broad range of support services helping people to develop the skills needed to maintain a tenancy.

In the self-evaluation report, service providers reported other types of non-housing support provided to clients (see Figure 5 below). The supports most commonly provided to NCAP clients were living skills (20% direct assistance and 33% referred) and general counselling (44% direct assistance and 2% referred). Support with safety planning (22% direct assistance and 22% referred) and protective behaviours and safety (22% direct assistance and 22% referred) were also common, reflecting the high number of families with children who were supported through the project.

Figure 5. Other types of support services provided to NCAP clients (to end of June 2012)



Source: NCAP self-evaluation report (n=1,500),

Clients interviewed received some assistance with furniture and groceries as well as help with housing applications and advice to maintain the tenancy, including budget counselling.

Legal services

Legal Aid provided support to NCAP clients, in particular through the outreach clinics established in soup kitchens and community centres. Legal Aid solicitors identify legal issues that

- could otherwise escalate and contribute to or cause homelessness, including debt, tenancy disputes, employment law issues or fines
- are often preventing them from effectively finding and maintaining housing.

Legal Aid provides three levels of assistance: advice, minor assistance and representation. Minor assistance includes small amounts of follow-up work.

Representation occurs when a grant of legal aid is made for a matter that falls within Legal Aid guidelines (and is also subject to means and merit tests). Legal Aid staff said they help with a broad range of issues: the legal side of credit card debt, disputes with Housing NSW, discrimination issues, social security issues, fines, property seizure orders, matters before the Mental Health Review Tribunal or Guardianship Tribunal. Legal Aid solicitors also refer clients with family law issues to other Legal Aid workers.

Legal support is identified as a key success factor in the self-evaluation report, in particular when issues are identified at an early stage. Outreach clinics play a key role in this regard. Legal Aid reported in the self-evaluation report that clients would not be able to identify their legal issues, make appointments for legal advice, and attend the appointments with follow-up, without the outreach clinics. By choosing locations such as soup kitchens or community centres, legal assistance can be initiated in a non-threatening environment, which is important as a lot of clients are not comfortable with government organisations. It is also identified the importance of maintaining the regularity of clinics, so that visitors to soup kitchens or community centres come to know that Legal Aid will visit on a particular day each week/ fortnight.

4.2.4 Length of support

According to the data reported in the HAP data portal, the average duration of support for the first four months the project was in operation in 2010/11 was three weeks, and in 2011/12, which can be considered as more typical, 18 weeks (4.5 months). This is in line with the maximum six months support provided to clients.

However, a few clients re-entered the project as they need some additional support to sustain their tenancy. New Horizons reported 96 occasions where case workers provided support to clients twice. These clients entered the service and were housed to gain a positive rental history but then re-entered the service six months later to seek a more sustainable accommodation. Some stakeholders suggested more flexibility around the length of support as six months may not be sufficient for some clients.

4.2.5 Appropriateness of services provided

There is only tentative agreement among stakeholders that the project has been particularly effective in linking clients to the support they need (38% agreed and 29% mostly agreed). Around half also said the project had provided clients with access to a broader range of support services than other projects in this area (30% agreed and 25% mostly agreed). Most stakeholders interviewed considered the support processes effective in providing access to support services to meet clients' individual needs.

Brokerage

Stakeholders surveyed generally considered the project as having provided easy access to brokerage support (38% agreed and 33% mostly agreed) and they were very positive

about the impact of brokerage funding on support services provided to clients. Most respondents to the online survey see brokerage funding as a major factor in clients receiving appropriate support (57% agreed and 29% mostly agreed).

NCAP staff said they are quite flexible with brokerage and assessed its use on a case by case basis. Goods and services are purchased according to what is needed to access stable housing and to sustain the housing. There is a strong focus on developing client responsibility and wherever possible working on payment plans that include a contribution by the client.

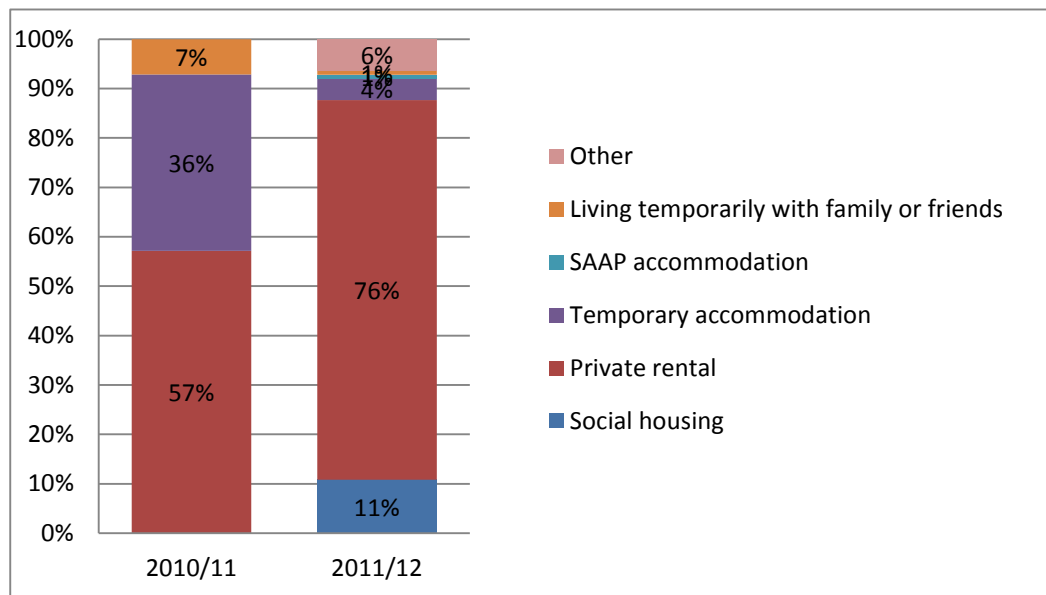
4.3 Housing outcomes

4.3.1 Types of housing support provided

NCAP supports clients to access accommodation, with a strong emphasis on the private rental market. However, some clients were offered other housing options when the private rental market did not offer suitable options for them. Figure 6 below presents the distribution of clients by types of housing that NCAP clients received. In the first four months of operation of the project (2010/11), 57 per cent of clients were supported into private rental. However, 36 per cent of them were supported in temporary accommodation and 7 per cent were still living with friends. This coincides with the establishment phase of the project where On Track (New Horizons started to deliver only in July 2011) received a lot of applications, a lot of them with urgent needs. One third of clients referred to the project in 2010/11 were homeless compared to 16 per cent in 2011/12 (see Table 9) and for some of them, temporary accommodation was the most appropriate solution in the short term.

However, service providers then shifted the focus to accessing private rental housing options in line with the objective of the project. In 2011/12 seventy six per cent of clients were assisted in accessing the private rental market.

One of the key gaps in the existing data collection is that it is not possible to identify how many clients were unsuccessful in accessing or maintaining housing among those who have been assisted. This should be a key focus for future development of the project monitoring systems used by service providers.

Figure 6. Distribution of clients by type of housing found

Source: HAP data portal (2010/11, n=14; 2011/12, n=808).

Some stakeholders mentioned that the project was filling a gap in the sense that not everybody is suited for social housing, community housing or communal housing (e.g. boarding house):

What's good with the project is that not everybody needs to be in social housing. Clients also like being able to choose where they want to live. [NCAP] gives clients the control over where they want to live and aren't told where they have to live, like they do through social housing places.

4.3.2 Critical factors to accessing and maintaining a tenancy

Most stakeholders surveyed agreed that the project helped clients to obtain or maintain accommodation appropriate to their needs (54% agree and 25% mostly agreed), and slightly fewer agreed it has helped clients into stable long-term accommodation (44% agreed and 28% mostly agreed).

Most stakeholders see the shortage in local affordable housing as a critical barrier to the project. More than three quarters describe the limited availability of affordable housing locally as having reduced the project's ability to assist clients into accommodation (43% agreed and 39% mostly agreed).

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

- the trusting relationships established with real estate agents
- the supervision and ongoing support of clients that gives real estate agents the confidence they need to work with such clients

- the willingness of the client to engage in the application process and to provide all the information needed for the application upfront.

Most of the stakeholders interviewed identified the connection established with real estate agents as very successful. This is one of the most critical and innovative aspects of the project. As pointed out by one interviewee

It is very important to connect with the real estate agents and businesses. These people are not connected to welfare organisations initially.

Both service providers found creative ways to engage successfully with real estate agents, e.g. organising real estate lunches, informal presentations to property managers and having regular catch-ups with agents. In the end, a decisive factor for successfully engaging real estate agents is when they have a very good first experience with the project. Real estate agents particularly appreciate the supervision and ongoing support NCAP case workers provide to NCAP clients. They feel they can rely on NCAP case workers to identify any issue early enough and to address it with the client most of the time. Two stakeholders interviewed mentioned a good practice promoted by NCAP case workers among clients: to pay two weeks rent in advance rather than falling behind.

The case worker asks them to pay \$100 in advance. If they pay \$100 extra in advance, when comes Christmas, there are no problem if they can't pay their rent for the month.

For some clients, NCAP staff negotiated a trial three month lease with real estate agents or landlords. The project also utilises some Housing NSW products like Rentstart or Rent It Keep It to overcome the initial barriers for people transitioning into private rental.

Being independent organisations was also a key success factor for On Track and New Horizons to engage with some real estate agents and also some clients as some of them may have a negative attitude towards Housing NSW.

Stakeholders mentioned three main challenges in supporting clients to access housing:

- the lack of affordable housing in the region
- stigma and sometimes racism towards NCAP clients
- the waiting list to enter the project.

Both contracted NGOs acknowledged the waiting list as a key challenge for the project - this is identified as a barrier by other stakeholders as well. For some clients it was also difficult to provide proof of ID to address application requirements, which lengthened the process to access housing.

Challenges related to housing stock are specific to each location. The building of the Pacific Highway has an impact on the housing market in Kempsey, while tourism pushes rental prices up around Coffs Harbour, Port Macquarie and the Forster area. As a consequence Kempsey and Taree (apart from the Forster area) offer more housing options compared to other locations.

Most clients interviewed identified securing accommodation as the most helpful thing in the project. They all accessed private rental. Three clients liked the fact that it was safe, and some others liked the location, although two clients said that it was not the best location.

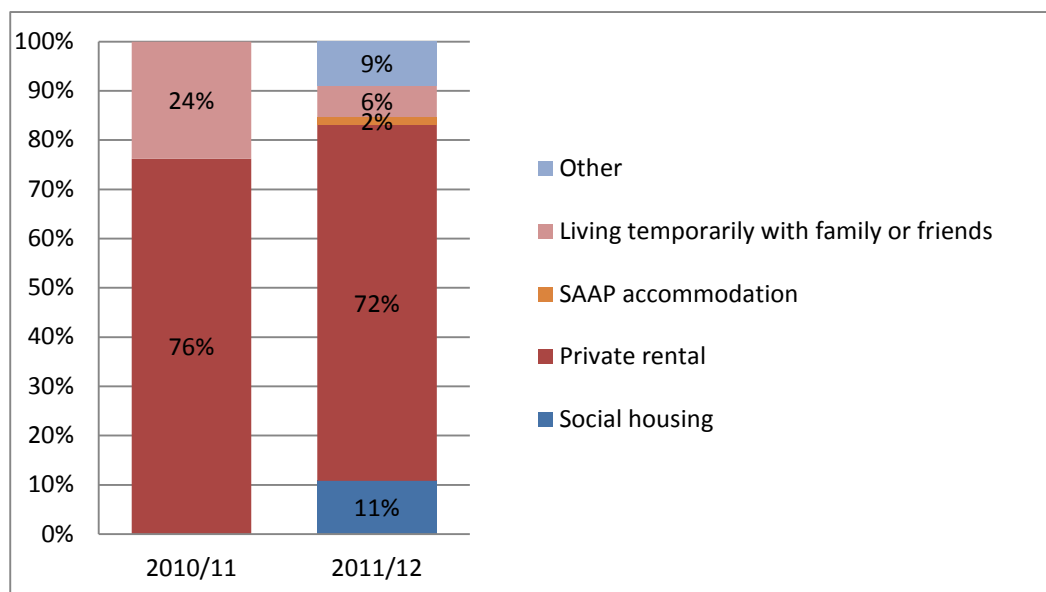
I always wanted to have my own place so it's one headache out of the way and I can focus on the other headaches.

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 (43% agreed and 29% mostly agreed). All clients interviewed were sustaining their tenancy successfully.

At the end of the six-month support period On Track and New Horizons identify whether the client is sustaining her/ his tenancy. The number of clients sustaining tenancies is reported quarterly in the HAP data portal. To the end of June 2012, there were 728 NCAP clients who sustained their tenancy.² The allocation of clients who sustained their tenancy by type of housing shows that the vast majority of them are in private rental (see Figure 7).

Figure 7. Distribution of clients who sustained tenancy by type of housing



Source: HAP data portal (2010/11, n=21; 2011/12, n=707).

NCAP staff interviewed reported that it is difficult to assess to what extent clients are sustaining their tenancy in the longer term, as they usually don't have contact with clients once the support period is over (although they may have casual ongoing contact

² Data about clients not sustaining their tenancy is not reported in the HAP data portal.

with some clients). One stakeholder suggested having quarterly follow-ups with clients for an additional year after the end of the support.

4.4 Non-housing outcomes

Most respondents to the online survey indicated clients' wellbeing has improved as a result of the project (50% agreed and 28% mostly agreed).

When looking at how things are now, most of the clients interviewed are very positive, describing a real improvement in their life. For three of them they feel more relaxed and feel the project has helped to relieve stress.

None identified anything unhelpful in the project and most of them said they were going fine, feeling comfortable and able to cope on their own.

4.4.1 Critical factors to supporting clients

Stakeholders identified a few key factors to support successful client outcomes:

- listening to and understanding clients' individual needs
- having an empowering approach where clients take some responsibility
- maintaining a regular follow-up with clients during the whole period of assistance
- having a team approach with other organisations, in particular for high needs clients.

A lot of respondents to the online survey identified support provided through brokerage as a key benefit of the project. Of other types of assistance provided, support for applications and inspections was also identified as particularly helpful. One stakeholder mentioned the flexibility and availability of NCAP staff as key to the success of the project, in particular to building rapport with clients.

Clients we spoke to particularly liked having someone to turn to and knowing that they had ongoing support through regular catch-ups.

4.5 Other intended or unintended outcomes for clients

Apart from the housing benefits, stakeholders identified other benefits of the project, especially in terms of life skills and an increase in self-esteem:

Some people turned their life around for the better. [NCAP] creates a rental history for them. It also boosts their self-esteem, builds them up slowly and makes them good citizens.

Some clients interviewed also reported a positive impact on their employment situation. One couple reported that they were able to find jobs since they entered the project and one client started studying at TAFE.

4.6 Impact of the project on homelessness

4.6.1 Impact of the project on reducing/addressing homelessness

At the state level, we know that between 2006 and 2011 the homelessness population in New South Wales increased by 27 per cent from 22,219 to 28,190 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 the North Coast increased by 3 per cent which compares well with the increase at State level. People in supported accommodation for the homeless are still the largest group and their number has increased by 11 per cent since 2006 which compares well with a 28 per cent increase in NSW. Other substantial changes have been observed among homeless operational groups (see Table 10):

- a 19 per cent decrease in the number of persons staying temporarily with other households, also described as ‘couch surfing’ (NSW: +4%)
- a 68 per cent increase in the number of persons staying in boarding houses (NSW: +9%).

The North Coast has also experienced a slight decrease (-2%) in the number of persons who are in improvised dwellings, tents or sleeping out—rough sleepers—while their number increase by 19 per cent across the state. The number of persons in other marginal housing also decreased by one quarter while was an increase of 31 per cent in these categories.

Table 10. The homeless population in the North Coast in 2011 as compared to 2006

Homeless operational group	n	2006-2011 variation	
		North Coast* homeless	NSW homeless
Persons who are in improvised dwellings, tents or sleeping out	401	-2%	+19%
Persons in supported accommodation for the homeless	438	+11%	+28%
Persons staying temporarily with other households	481	-19%	+4%
Persons staying in boarding houses	294	+68%	+9%
Persons in other temporary lodging	23	-15%	+49%
Persons living in 'severely' crowded dwellings	281	+6%	+63%
All homeless persons	1,918	+3%	+27%
Persons living in other crowded dwellings	691	-1%	+50%
Persons in other improvised dwellings	145	-63%	-46%
Persons who are marginally housed in caravan parks	1,131	-26%	-4%
All persons in other marginal housing	1,967	-25%	+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'.

* New England and North West ABS statistical area level 4 in 2011 (Northern ABS subdivision in 2006)

Attributing any change directly to NCAP 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 in operation only for four months. Until July 2011 NCAP had assisted 81 clients, including 26 that were sleeping rough prior to entering the project. This is likely to 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 to look at the homelessness data at a later point

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

Most respondents to the online survey agreed that the project has the potential to achieve sustainable reductions in homelessness into the future (57% agreed and 29% mostly agreed).

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 decreased by two per cent between 2010/11 and 2011/12 in the North Coast while it decreased by one per cent across New South Wales (see Table 11). The region compares also well with the state figures for the tenancy division (private rental) with a 24 per cent increase in applications compared to 34 per cent increase across New South Wales. 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 11. 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	2010/11		2011/12		Variation 2010/11 - 2011/12	
	Tenancy division	Social division	Tenancy division	Social division	Tenancy division	Social division
Coffs Harbour	112	45	127	77	+13%	+71%
Grafton	33	27	28	34	-15%	+26%
Kempsey	75	80	62	101	-17%	+26%
Lismore	208	32	194	74	-7%	+131%
Port Macquarie	114	26	114	14	=	-46%
Taree	79	50	83	21	+5%	-58%
Tweed Heads	119	24	116	30	-3%	+25%
Total region	740	284	724	351	-2%	+24%
Total NSW	13,695	6,178	13,586	8,284	-1%	+34%

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

The project has a particular focus on specific client groups (see section 3.3), especially Aboriginal families, young people, people exiting institutional environments and people with disabilities.

Aboriginal clients

Racism was regularly mentioned as a potential barrier to accessing private rental for some clients, in particular Aboriginal clients. According to the self-evaluation report some real estate agents had two different rental lists. One NCAP worker said that real estate agents may have an incorrect negative perception of Aboriginal clients and that it can be sometimes difficult to change. A few stakeholders reported that Aboriginal clients seem to have more difficulty engaging with the project and also in being given accommodation.

However, the project has been quite successful in servicing a high proportion of Aboriginal clients. To the end of June 2012, one third of NCAP clients were Aboriginal. According to both contracted NGOs, having Aboriginal staff was particularly important to building successful relationships with real estate agents and breaking down stigmas. One of the Aboriginal case workers has developed a brochure on being a 'deadly tenant' which is identified as a good practice in the self-evaluation report.

Young people

The number of young people seeking to live independently is not known, although New Horizons reports having achieved 89 housing solutions in the private rental market for young people.

Service providers reported in the self-evaluation report that the majority of this client group are on limited funds (New Start) with no rental history. According to the self-evaluation report, On Track and New Horizons used various strategies to overcome this difficulty:

- work alongside private rental and long-term holiday rental whereby young people can commence a three month lease which assists with establishing rental history
- encourage and refer young people to employment and educational opportunities to assist with enhancing their income
- encourage young people to look at shared accommodation opportunities, such as shared accommodation boards at TAFE.

Other client groups

Contracted NGOs also report an increase in referrals from mental health services and Grafton Correctional Centre.

On Track and New Horizons are willing to establish improved processes prior to a person being released from custody and would like to dedicate more time to high needs clients, e.g. people with disabilities or mental health. However, the limited number of project staff and the current waiting list are a barrier to any change in the way services are delivered to client groups.

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 North Coast 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 (e.g. interagencies, case coordination meetings and homelessness forums), had a positive impact on the suite of services available to clients. Cross-referral networks within the homelessness service system were also identified as working well, involving government agencies and non-government organisations referring both ways, and relying on standard referral forms, guidelines and protocols.

Key issues identified were the capacity of services and the availability of affordable housing, especially with the loss of low-cost housing such as caravan parks in coastal towns. The report also pointed out the lack of crisis and transitional housing in the region for a range of client groups, including single men, young people, families with children and women who were homeless for reasons other than domestic violence.

Suggestions for future actions were made around these issues. Interestingly, some recommendations resonate particularly well with NCAP, in particular

- the need to move to new ways of working with more preventive and outreach models
- a continued focus on programs to support people at risk of homelessness to maintain their tenancy.

5.1.2 Agency participation in the project

According to the initial project plan (see section 3.2.2) NCAP had a series of service system objectives, in particular to increase collaborative service delivery across government and non-government agencies. While the project has been mainly delivered through the two contracted NGOs—On Track and New Horizons—other organisations have been involved, through referrals or the provision of support services as part of individual support plans.

The self-evaluation report indicates that the project received referrals from more than 50 different organisations (see section 4.1.5). The number of organisations involved through the provision of support services is difficult to estimate. However, according to

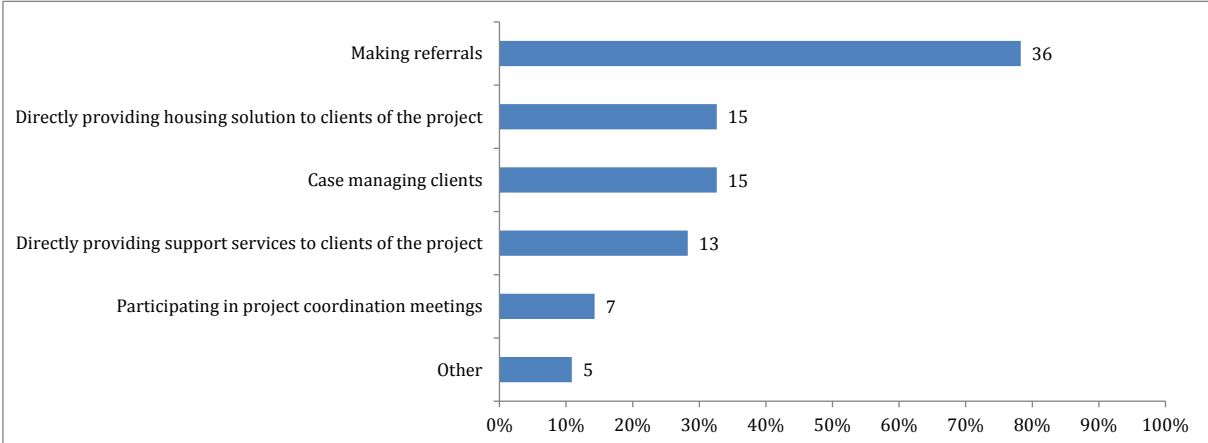
the broad range of services provided to NCAP clients (see section 4.2.3), it is likely that the number of organisations involved in this aspect of the project is also very high.

Real estate agents have been key actors in the project, with some successful outcomes achieved even though they are not used to being involved with this type of client and to work in coordination with such service providers. In contrast, NCAP staff reported some difficulty in engaging with mental health and disability services, mainly due to lack of capacity.

Type of involvement

Figure 8 below gives an indication of the different roles played by organisations involved in the project, according to responses given by respondents to the online survey. Among respondents to the online survey, 78 per cent were making referrals (n=36), 33 per cent were directly providing housing solutions to clients of the project (n=15), 33 per cent were case managing clients (n=15) and 28 per cent were directly providing support services to clients of the project (n=13).

Figure 8. Various types of involvement in the project



Source: Stakeholder online survey, Question 5 'In what ways have you been involved in the North Coast Accommodation Project?', n=46.

5.1.3 Impact of the project on interactions between organisations

A systematic measure of the service system change achieved by the project shows that it didn't really improve relationships between organisations involved in the service system. Respondents to the online survey had to rate three indicators before and after the project: the level of knowledge, the level of coordination and the degree of trust in the relationships with other local organisations. Results show that on average the project had a small positive impact on respondents' knowledge of what other local service organisations can provide for clients, did not impact on respondents' coordination with other services, and had a small negative impact on respondents' trusting relationships with other services.

Looking at differences in individual responses, there is a high proportion of respondents who ranked these factors the same as they had before the partnership—76 per cent for knowledge, 68 per cent for coordination and 72 per cent for trusting relationships. This suggests that some stakeholders didn't think the project made a difference or thought of themselves/ their organisation as already working well with other services.

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	25	3.2	3.3	0.12
Coordination with other local service organisations to support clients	25	3.1	3.1	-0.04
Trusting relationships with other local service organisations	25	3.2	3.1	-0.08

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 North Coast Accommodation Project'.

However, the majority of stakeholders agreed that working together in this project generates better outcomes for clients than if each organisation worked with the clients separately (64% agreed and 23% mostly agreed). That stakeholders can see the value of joint work provides a solid base on which to further strengthen relationships and achieve further levels of integrated working.

The staff of the two contracted NGOs are very positive regarding the impact on the service system. However, the increased coordination between services has been achieved mainly through personal interactions established by On Track and New Horizons that may not be sustained without their involvement.

Some interviewed stakeholders from external organisations had more critical views on the impact of the project on the service system. A couple of stakeholders thought that NCAP workers were quite insular, which was probably due to the workload and the waiting list preventing them from attending interagency meetings as frequently as possible. A few stakeholders interviewed were also still unsure about what services NCAP offered, showing room for improvement in terms of communication. Other stakeholders felt that interagencies were working better, without being able to identify whether it had anything to do with NCAP.

The main positive aspect in terms of the service system, and which is unique to this project, is the connection established with real estate agents, proving to be particularly successful in contributing to positive client outcomes.

One stakeholder from a non-SHS NGO identified an unintended positive outcome of the project on their organisation: the coordination organised through NCAP for a specific client made it possible to share the workload as well as relieve some emotional stress involved by working with high needs clients.

We found it extremely overwhelming. I don't know how we would have been able to get our team working on it. [NCAP] also reduced the emotional load, the burden of wanting to help.

5.2 Staffing issues

5.2.1 What impact did staffing issues have on the project?

The main staffing issue for the project was the limited capacity of both contracted NGOs to handle the high number of clients referred to the project. Despite the relatively high number of case workers involved in the project within On Track (7.6 FTE) and New Horizons (7 FTE), this has not been sufficient to provide timely assessment and assistance to all clients referred to the project. Consequently, both service providers had a waiting list of clients (75 for On Track and 360 for New Horizons as at the end of October 2012), with each case worker having a very high caseload. On Track staff reported that each case worker had on average 30 clients and one of the case workers, who had 65 clients at one stage, had to take some time off as stress leave. On Track and New Horizons made some adjustment to their organisation to improve support to staff in each location. The high caseload also limited the amount of time available for clients with complex needs, in particular with mental health issues. A lot of stakeholders identified this as a key issue for the project.

The only thing is that they've got a long waiting list. You can miss opportunities because of that: clients may lose their willingness to act. That comes down to resourcing. Because of their success.

Limited capacity was not only an issue within On Track and New Horizons, but also in accessing relevant supports e.g. Brighter Futures or disability support services, where the project had difficulty accessing services for NCAP clients.

5.2.2 What skills were needed by staff?

NCAP was a new type of project for On Track and New Horizons at the beginning and they both had to recruit new staff to deliver the services. They developed an employment strategy in line with the objectives of the project. To successfully engage with real estate agents New Horizons recruited people with a mix of community service and a marketing backgrounds. According to the self-evaluation report, by combining the two, it has allowed for staff to have the ability to case manage clients, but also the ability

to market the program effectively to real estate agents. Some of the marketing strategies undertaken by NCAP staff were the organisation of real estate lunches, regular informal catch-ups or a brochure about the project.

Another key aspect of the employment strategy was the recruitment of Aboriginal staff to facilitate referrals from Aboriginal clients and provide culturally appropriate assistance. This was seen as particularly effective in Kempsey, where Aboriginal staff were successful in facilitating access to private rental housing for many Aboriginal clients.

On Track and New Horizons also tried to recruit staff who had existing strong connections with the community and services within the community.

5.2.3 What training was required?

NCAP service providers report in the self-evaluation report that all NCAP staff received training in cultural awareness. Some of them had a diploma of Community Services or Certificate 4 in Non Clinical Mental Health.

Stakeholders did not mention any specific training needs.

6. Cost analysis

6.1 Total project budget and expenditure

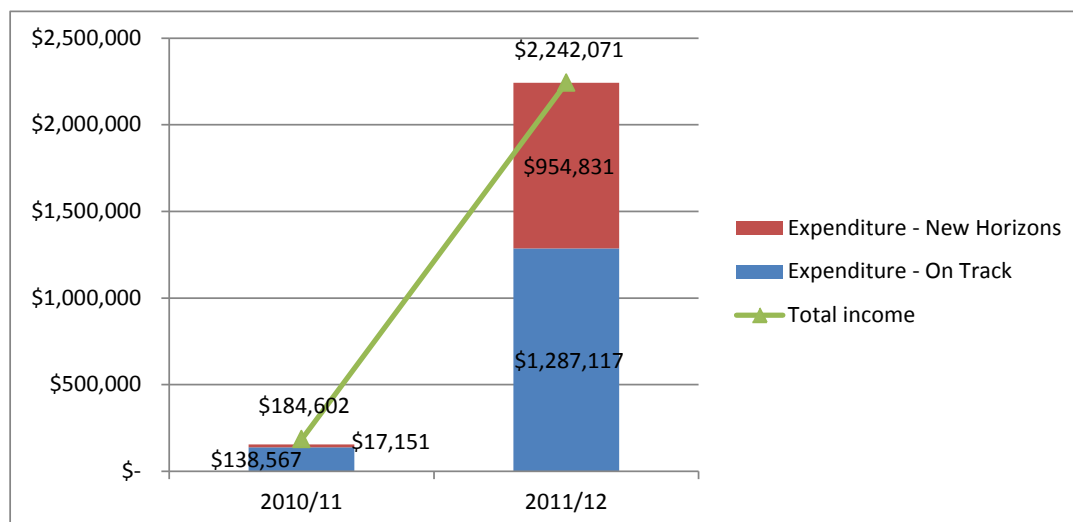
The North Coast Accommodation Project (NCAP) has been allocated a total approved budget of \$4.809m over three years. Available expenditure data covers the project's operation from commencement in March 2011 to the end of June 2012. Thus, when considering the figures for each financial year it is important to note that the 2010/11 data covers 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 income reported by On Track and New Horizons in their acquittals is below the initially approved budget—\$184,602 in 2010/11 and \$2,242,071 in 2011/12—adding up to \$2,426,673 in funding for both organisations to the end of June 2012.

The total project expenditure to the end of June 2012 was \$2,397,666—\$29,007 under the total project income received by On Track and New Horizons, all of which came from NSW Community Services funding. The breakdown of expenses between On Track and New Horizons is provided in figure 9 below. The project surplus for the first financial year was \$28,884 and \$123 for the 2011/12 financial year. Both service providers had their 2010/11 surplus deducted from their payment the following financial year.

Figure 9. Income and expenditure March 2010 to June 2012



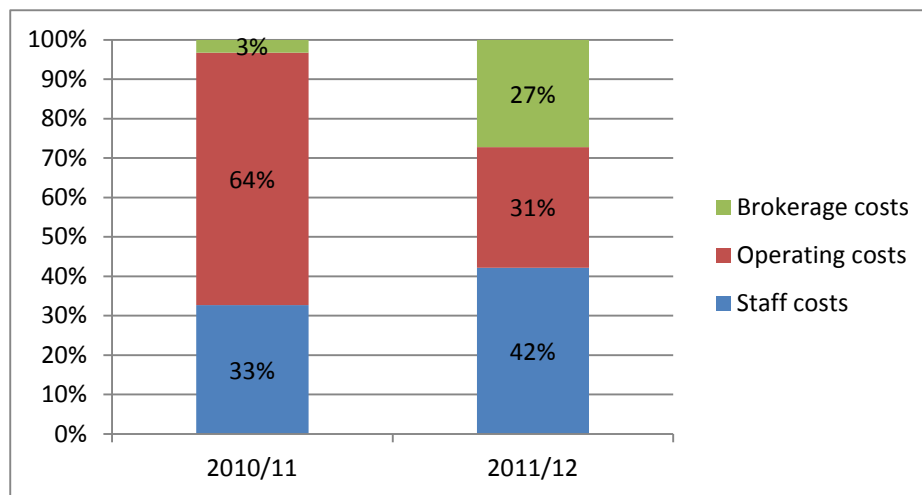
Source: On Track and New Horizons acquittals for 2010/11, 2011/12

Note: the 2010/2011 data draws only on four months (March-June 2010).

6.1.2 Distribution of expenses 2010–2012

Across the two financial years of operation to the end of June 2012, staff costs were the largest component of project costs (42%), followed by operating costs (33%) and brokerage costs (26%). Operating costs made up a high proportion (64%) of NCAP project total costs during March-June 2011, when there were initial establishment costs, but reduced to 31 per cent (\$685,632) of project costs in the 2011/12 financial year. In the 2010/11 financial year staff costs were the second largest category of costs (33%), but became the largest cost in 2011/12, at 42 per cent of total costs. Brokerage costs in 2011/12 made up just over a quarter (27%) of total costs, a considerable increase from only three per cent in 2010/2011. According to this we can assume that On Track assisted its clients mainly with direct assistance in the first four months of operation (New Horizons started to deliver only in July 2011).

Figure 10. Distribution of expenses March 2011 to June 2012



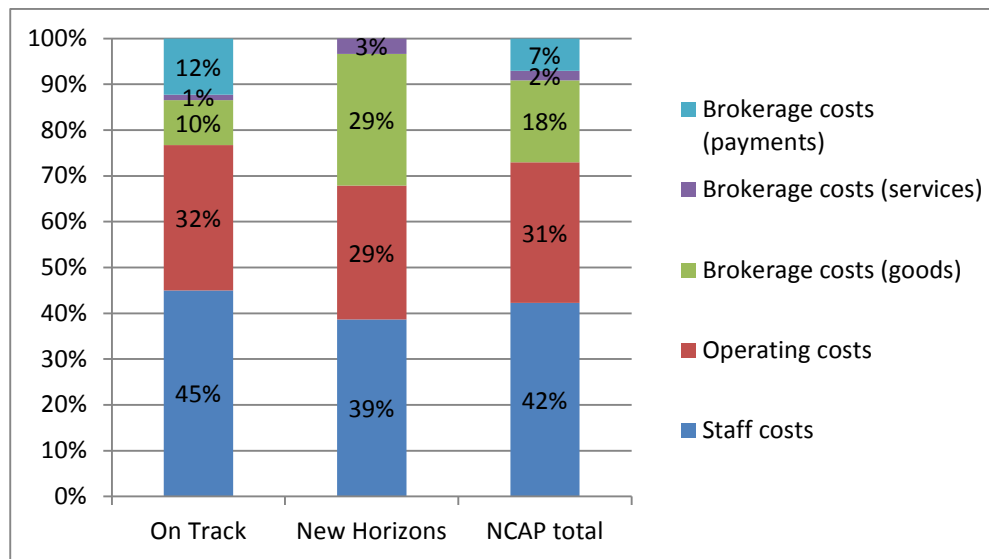
Source: On Track and New Horizons acquittals for 2010/11, 2011/12

6.1.3 Distribution of expenses 2011-2012, On Track and New Horizons

For 2011/12 (that can be considered as a typical year of project operation), the composition of expenses for On Track and New Horizons was in line with the distribution of expenses across the whole NCAP project.

Staff costs represented a slightly higher percentage of total costs for On Track than for New Horizons (45% compared to 39%), but were the largest component of costs for both agencies. Operating costs were the second largest component of total costs for both On Track and New Horizons, and were slightly higher for the former (32%, compared to 29%). Brokerage costs were higher for New Horizons (32% of 2011/12 costs) compared to only 24 per cent for On Track (see Figure 11).

Figure 11. Distribution of expenses July 2011 to June 2012, On Track and New Horizons



Source: On Track and New Horizons acquittals for 2011/12.

Staff costs

Staff costs were the major category of expenditure for NCAP in 2011/12 (42% of total program costs) reported at \$577,000 by On Track and \$368,757 by New Horizons.

Direct work with clients was the main staff cost for both organisations; it accounted for 78 per cent of staff costs incurred by On Track and for 91 per cent of staff costs incurred by New Horizons. The second largest component of staff costs was staff related on-costs, and this component was larger for On Track (20% of staff costs) than for New Horizons (9% of staff costs). On Track also incurred some external consultant costs (1%).

Operating costs

Operating costs represented the second largest component of expenditure for NCAP in 2011/12 (31% of total costs), reported at \$406,753 by On Track and \$278,879 by New Horizons. The composition of operating costs is different for the two service providers. Host organisation management fee and administration costs are the major component of operating costs for On Track (54%), but the second largest component of operating costs (19%) incurred by New Horizons. The major operating cost component for New Horizons is represented by office rent and running costs (49%), which represents only 11 per cent of operating costs within On Track. Other operating costs incurred by On Track and New Horizons are motor vehicle expenses (11% and 8% of operating costs respectively), and communication and stationary costs (10% and 7% of operating costs respectively). On Track reported some costs with film production (10% of operating costs), and less than one per cent of operating costs were accrued through expenses for

meetings, workshops and catering. New Horizons reported nine per cent of their costs as 'other' (mainly for the participation in events like Mental Health Week).

Brokerage costs (goods, services and payments)

The main difference between both service providers in their cost structure is the proportion of expenses spent on brokerage, with New Horizons spending a higher share (32%) than On Track (24%). The breakdown of brokerage costs is also different between the two organisations; New Horizons used the vast majority of brokerage funding (89% of brokerage costs) for goods purchased for client set-up (whitegoods, basic furniture, groceries, rental gaps, removalists), while On Track used brokerage dollars mainly for payments such as private rental arrears, overdue utility bills or fees for training courses (52% of brokerage costs) followed by goods (41%). New Horizons spent about 11 per cent of brokerage costs for services and On Track 5 per cent.

6.2 Issues with expenditure

Total project expenses to the end of June 2012 (\$2,397,666) represent 50 per cent of the total approved budget (\$4,809,316) for three years. Assuming the same amount of expenses for 2012/13 as those incurred in 2011/12, at the end of June 2013 the total project expenses would remain four per cent below the total approved budget. This indicates the project has been run very efficiently as it largely exceeded the initial target (four times) while staying within the framework of the approved budget.

However, considering the waiting list observed for both service providers, additional resources are required to assist all clients referred to the project.

6.3 Client costs for this project

6.3.1 Average client cost to the end of June 2012

Over the operating period to the end of June 2012, the project assisted 1,500 individual clients at an average client cost of \$1,598.

6.3.2 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, based on 1,419 new clients in 2011/12 as \$1,580.

Reflecting the overall breakdown of project costs, staff costs and operation costs account for the highest proportion of client costs, followed by goods, payments and services brokered.

Table 13. Average client cost in 2011/12

	Total costs	Average cost per client (n=1,419)	%
Staff costs	\$ 945,757	\$666	42%
Operating costs	\$ 685,632	\$483	31%
Brokerage costs (goods)	\$ 399,743	\$282	18%
Brokerage costs (services)	\$ 48,028	\$34	2%
Brokerage costs (payments)	\$ 157,349	\$111	7%
Brokerage costs (other)	\$5,438	\$4	0%
Total costs	\$2,241,948	\$1,580	100%

Source: Clients: HAP data portal; Costs: On Track and New Horizons acquittals, 2011/12.

The project has already over-delivered in terms of clients and assuming the same number of clients are assisted in 2012/13 as in 2011/12, the project would have assisted 3.5 times more clients than the initial target (209% above the target) for a similar budget, which indicates that the project has been run very efficiently.

6.3.3 Cost benchmarking

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

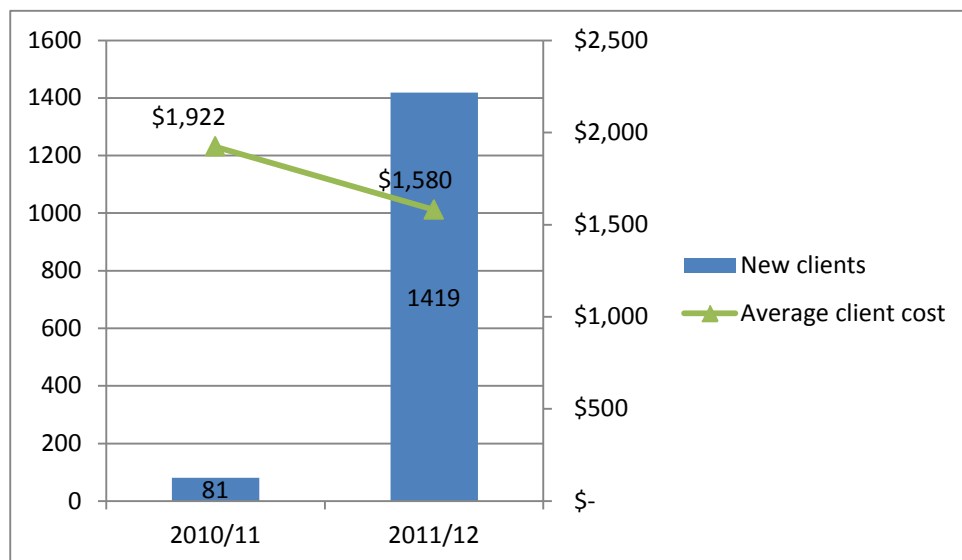
1. We looked at the evolution of the average client cost across the three financial years.
2. We compared the average client cost for 2011/12 with the budgeted client cost as per the initial project plan.
3. We compared the average client cost for 2011/12 with relevant external benchmarks identified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

Average client cost over time

Because the project only started in March 2011 it is difficult to assess whether it has become more or less efficient over time. During the initial months of operation the average client cost was higher (\$1,922) than in the 2011/12 financial year (\$1,580), which can be explained by the establishment phase the project has to go through to set up appropriate resources, systems and processes. Between 2010/11 and 2011/12 the average client cost decreased by 18 per cent, the main decrease being on operating costs

(-61%), reflecting the additional costs required for the establishment phase, while brokerage costs increased by 589% in the same time.

Figure 12. Number of clients assisted and average client cost March 2011 to June 2012



Sources: Clients: HAP data portal; Costs: On Track and New Horizons acquittals, 2011/12.

Average client cost compared to the budgeted client cost

It is indicated in the individual project plan that the initial project budget was based on a client cost provision of \$10,000 for each successful tenancy. The average cost per client in the 2011/12 financial year was well below the budgeted cost in 2011/12 (\$1,580). The initial budget probably over-estimated the average client cost, while service providers were able to deliver the project very efficiently. NCAP workers estimated that each client requires at least one hour for the initial assessment and six to seven hours for case management. Higher needs clients would require much more time-consuming support, in particular to coordinate with other services, e.g. organising case conferences. However, they are a limited proportion of NCAP clients (11% to end of June 2012).

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 homelessness 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 five programs:

- SAAP
- Four Western Australia Homelessness Prevention Programs
 - The Community Transitional Accommodation and Support Service (TASS) and the Re-entry Link program, designed to assist prisoners to re-enter 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.

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 NCAP HAP project is provided in 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	NCAP
Average client cost	\$ 4,190	\$ 12,991	\$ 1,654	\$ 5,673	\$ 3,474	\$ 2,575	\$ 1,580

Source: Flateau et al. (2008)

The average client cost for NCAP compares very well against all other homelessness programs, regardless of whether they include housing components (like TASS and Re-entry link – with accommodation), or not (such as SHAP, PRSAP and the Re-entry program without accommodation).

6.3.4 Contextual issues affecting value for money

Resources invested in the project are appropriately spent

The main reason for such a low average client cost is that service providers were able to assist a significantly higher number of clients within the same budget. Clients targeted by this project are at the lower end of the support need spectrum, thus requiring, on average, less support than very high needs clients like people who experience long-term homelessness.

Eighty per cent of respondents to the online survey do not consider (40% disagreed and 40% mostly disagreed) that they spend too much time on coordination activities as part of their involvement in the project. On Track staff estimated that they spend around 40 to 50 per cent of time directly with clients and the rest on administrative tasks like assessment and reporting. External stakeholders had a positive view on the balance between administrative tasks and the time spent with clients, saying that project

processes, in particular for the initial referral, were quite streamlined and did not require a lot of paperwork.

Stakeholders from Housing NSW and Community Housing felt that the project saved a lot of time for their organisations by bringing these clients to real estate agents, which they would not be able to do because of limited resources, but also because they don't feel in the right position to do so.

Overall, 81 per cent of respondents to the online survey (67% agreed and 14% mostly agreed) consider that the resources required for this project are justified by the benefits.

The project is bringing additional benefits to clients and communities

According to 58 per cent of respondents to the online survey (33% agreed and 25% 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 (Flateau 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 who are not involved in the program). 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.

6.4 How effective was the use of brokerage funding

Seventy-one per cent of respondents to the online survey claimed that the project has provided easy access to brokerage funding (38% agreed and 33% mostly agreed). Some stakeholders interviewed reported that brokerage made a big difference, and valued in particular the flexibility attached with the use of the brokerage. For instance, brokerage is sometimes used as a complement to payments made by clients on rent arrears.

According to the self-evaluation report, some brokerage arrangements were pre-existing before the project, while others required the development of new guidelines and service level agreements. The only negative aspect associated with the brokerage funding is the time required for contracted NGOs to administer the funding, in particular to set up monitoring and reporting systems.

To tackle the waiting list, one NCAP staff member suggested reducing the amount of brokerage and increasing the number of case workers with this funding.

7. Assessment of the effectiveness of the model

The vast majority of stakeholders consulted through interviews or the online survey (74% agreed and 17% mostly agreed) wish to see the project continue beyond its planned termination date of June 2013. Ninety five 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 nine per cent of respondents indicated that their organisation had secured some resources for the project beyond June 2013.

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.

7.1 Success factors for the service delivery model

7.1.1 Relationships established with real estate agents

Stakeholders overwhelmingly identified as a success for the project the relationships established with real estate agents to assist clients to access and secure accommodation within private rental. One of the support providers we interviewed was particularly positive about the engagement shown by real estate agents, which was not the case before the project.

It's amazing how the real estate agents are reacting: they wouldn't have helped those clients before. Because of the advocacy made by [NCAP], they are getting reassured that clients are supported to support the tenancy.

Contracted NGOs report in their self-evaluation report that outcomes achieved through real estate agents exceeded their own expectations. They also managed to have some private landlords involved in the project. A couple of them have made several houses available to NCAP clients, which enabled a number of Aboriginal families to gain a rent history.

The primary reason for this success has been the marketing strategy developed by NCAP service providers to approach and gain the confidence of real estate agents to build a trusting relationship, for instance through lunches or a regular catch-up.

Engaging successfully with real estate agents allowed to overcome some of the initial stigma and sometimes racism towards NCAP clients, in particular Aboriginal clients. This strategy also contributed to find appropriate housing solutions for clients that had poor rental history or were recorded on TICA.

7.1.2 Ongoing supervision of clients

A key aspect that also contributed to the successful engagement of real estate agents is the ongoing support and supervision provided to clients. This created confidence and trust among real estate agents in that they had a valuable interlocutor who could identify any issue early on and raise client awareness on how to maintain a tenancy.

NCAP case workers provide support to each client in the early stages, to access a tenancy, e.g. by helping them to gather all required documents (100 points of ID), giving them advice on how to prepare an application and attend an inspection, how to put together a payment plan in case of financial difficulties, etc. The use of Housing NSW schemes, e.g. Rent It Keep It or Rentstart, also contributed to providing clients with the appropriate level of financial support to establish the tenancy.

Real estate agents particularly appreciated that this support did not stop when the client entered the tenancy, but that the project allowed for the necessary follow-up support to ensure that the client is maintaining his/ her tenancy properly. Most clients interviewed feel they were able to cope and maintain their tenancy without any additional support at the end of the assistance provided by the project.

7.1.3 Appropriate employment strategies within the two service providers

Finally, the employment strategy adopted by New Horizons and On Track has been key to achieving successful outcomes, firstly in engaging with real estate agents and secondly in helping a high number of Aboriginal clients to access or maintain housing.

NCAP staff proved to have the right mix of skills, case management as well as marketing skills, to be able to engage successfully with real estate agents through a step-by-step approach, for instance by ensuring success with the first clients housed by a real estate agent.

The service specification had a requirement around the recruitment of Aboriginal officers in each area contracted for. The Aboriginal workers employed by On Track and New Horizons have been very successful in achieving a high number of referrals from the Aboriginal community. They also contributed to breaking down stigma, in particular among real estate agents.

7.1.4 Creativity and flexibility to deliver tailored support to clients

Some stakeholders highlighted the flexibility of the project in the support provided to clients to adapt to the circumstances of each client. The brokerage funding was particularly useful to tailor the support plan to the client needs. It gave additional flexibility to existing support networks. In particular, legal support appears to have made a key contribution to successful client outcomes.

One stakeholder emphasised the capability of NCAP case workers to listen to client needs and provide tailored support:

The project is innovative in terms of not only filling in forms and providing support, but bringing personal connections to the client. [NCAP case workers] genuinely know how to meet the client's needs. They show dignity and respect, listen to them, build relationships. It makes the clients feel they matter.

Some stakeholders felt that contracted organisations had more flexibility than government agencies, which are often tightened by policy guidelines.

Of note, the project was one of the four finalists of the Premier's Partnership Awards among 42 approved applications. The nomination form emphasised the extent to which the project developed and applied innovative solutions to address the goal to 'better protect the most vulnerable members of our community and break the cycle of disadvantage'.

7.2 Challenges for the service delivery model

7.2.1 Initial challenges faced in the establishment phase

The main change to the delivery model has been the increase of the target of clients to be assisted. Because many more clients have been referred than expected in the initial project plan, the project does not consider the initial target of 275 clients per annum as an appropriate target to judge the success of the project. The main objective for the remaining time of the project (to the end of June 2013) is to assist as many clients as possible and to reduce the number of clients on the waiting list.

The two contracted NGOs report in their self-evaluation report that the project would have benefitted from having an establishment phase prior to accepting referrals as the project started early on with a high demand. NCAP has been a pilot project and the two contracted organisations learned a lot in the early stages, progressively refining their structure, systems and processes to deliver services more efficiently.

7.2.2 Capacity to meet demand to ensure the sustainability of the project

The vast majority of stakeholders agreed that the waiting list the project had to deal with was the main challenge for the next phase of the project. Most of them acknowledge that this is due to limited resources within the contracted NGOs, On Track and New Horizons. However, this issue requires particular attention as stakeholders are concerned about not providing timely support to clients who have high needs.

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 the participating organisation and internal staff capacity came clearly first. The long waiting list to receive services through NCAP was stated frequently also. Another challenge that was stated by

a few stakeholders was the lack of housing stock available. Issues with NCAP staff were less frequently stated but included non-response to phone calls and not working in partnership with other services.

Table 15. Main challenges for the project (stakeholders online survey, n=33)

- | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Insufficient resources (staff and funding) ▪ Long waiting list ▪ NCAP staff not responsive to phone calls or not acknowledging referrals received ▪ Lack of housing stock ▪ NCAP do not work in partnership with other services ▪ Lack of consistency in decisions about brokerage amount ▪ Clients being dishonest about their circumstances ▪ Not enough promotion and information on what NCAP services do ▪ Inadequate other support services in the area |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

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

The limited impact of the project on interactions between organisations (see section 5.1.3) indicates that future developments of the project could also aim at achieving a more collaborative approach to service delivery.

8. Conclusion

8.1 Summary of key lessons learnt

This willingness stakeholders show to see the project continue reflects the fact that the North Coast Accommodation Project is seen as a success by the majority of those involved, including those that expressed some concerns about the waiting list. Stakeholders mentioned that the project has been able to produce positive outcomes for clients. According to some stakeholders stopping the project would put a lot of clients at risk.

One of the respondents to the online survey describes the kind of outcomes achieved for clients:

I have seen the direct changes in tenants who have been given a chance to have their own home, in a very positive way. I think they have a sense of worth and achievement as they have control over their lives once they have a stable roof over their heads.

The main learnings identified by respondents to the online survey are presented in Table 16 below by order of priority. Most of them are in line with key success factors and challenges identified in chapter 7.

Table 16. Main learnings that can be applied to other long-term housing and support initiatives (stakeholders online survey, n=25)

- | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Case management support provided by NCAP is effective ▪ There is a need for brokerage funding ▪ It is important to understand clients' individual needs ▪ Increased publicity and information about the NCAP service is required for other services and the community ▪ More support is required specifically for young people ▪ Consistency is required in service provision and brokerage decisions |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

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 NCAP are

- **Housing:** NCAP has been successful in providing support a high number of clients in accessing housing in the private market. In particular the strategy used to engage with real estate agents should be considered as a best practice to inform future similar projects in regions facing shortage in local affordable housing. The literature identified timely access to housing as a key success factor for an effective approach to supportive housing. As such the project should tackle the waiting list generated as a consequence of the success of the project.

- **Case management:** because the focus of the program was on housing, case managed has been applied only for a limited number of clients with high needs and mostly through a traditional case conferencing approach. While anecdotal evidence confirmed that this approach has proven to be successful, some stakeholders suggested more flexibility around the length of support as six months may not be sufficient for some clients.
- **Linkages:** the main impact of the project on the service system has been his ability to bring a new key player—real estate agents—in the homelessness area, which open additional housing opportunities for future projects in this area.

8.2 Areas for improvement for the future of the project

When asked about one thing they would like to change about the project a lot of stakeholders didn't identify anything as the project proved to work effectively. However, we were able to identify some areas for improvement throughout the evaluation. The following table presents a summary of suggestions identified 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	Suggestion
Program design	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Allow for more flexibility around the length of case management support (not systematically 6-months) 2. Consider the extension of the project scope with an additional component focusing on high needs clients
Communication	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Improve the communication with referring organisations around services provided by the project
Funding	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Increase staff resources to be able to provide timely assistance to all eligible clients
Brokerage	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Establish systematic processes to identify the best value for money when using brokerage for goods, e.g. secondhand, bulk-purchasing 6. Consider extending the scope of reimbursement plans for clients, when appropriate
Monitoring and reporting	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Develop normalised monitoring systems to track status of clients (e.g. referred, accepted, not accepted, waiting list), output (e.g. housed, withdrawn), outcome (e.g. sustained tenancy) and other key information like the referring organisation or the location, to inform ongoing project management and reporting more precisely and accurately 8. Specify cost reporting requirements in line with accountability requirements as well as evaluation expectations

Suggestion 2 relates to high needs clients, who have not been specifically targeted by the project. One stakeholder expressed concern that these clients were still falling into a service gap although they are the most in need.

I would like to see additional funding to target high needs clients. It will be more much challenging to secure tenancy for them as they are clients with mental health issues, transient lifestyle.

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

This project, unlike other projects subject to extended evaluations under the HAP, did not have a specific target group within the homeless or at risk populations for which we can draw key learnings.

However, the North Coast Accommodation Project worked with specific priority subgroups, in particular Aboriginal families, young people and people exiting institutions.

The project has been particularly successful with Aboriginal clients, who represent one third of clients assisted to the end of June 2012. Having Aboriginal case workers significantly contributed to this success vis-à-vis the Aboriginal community but also by breaking some stigma towards Aboriginal clients among real estate agents.

NCAP has also been successful in assisting a number of children and young clients: 59 per cent of individuals assisted by the project to the end of June 2012 are aged under 24. Key strategies for this client group included working with appropriate housing providers, e.g. private rental and long-term holiday rental, whereby young people can commence a three month lease which assists with establishing rental history; to encourage and refer young people to employment and educational opportunities; and to encourage them to look at shared accommodation opportunities, such as shared accommodation boards at TAFE.

Contracted NGOs reported some success with people exiting institutions, in particular correctional services; however, they identify this client group as an area for improvement in terms of engaging with this group.

Overall, using a tailored approach to case management appears to have achieved positive outcomes for most clients, providing further evidence for this approach to supporting homeless clients with complex needs.

8.4 Implications for the homelessness system in this region

One key impact of the project on the homelessness system has been the connections established with real estate agents to successfully house homeless people or people at risk of homelessness. This is a very successful outcome because real estate agents are a relatively new player in this area and they can offer valuable additional accommodation options in a geographical area that seems to be desperately lacking affordable housing.

While the project has helped to develop relationships and improve collaboration among stakeholders, it has done so through a model in which the contracted NGOs—On Track and New Horizons—are responsible for most aspects of implementation, and through ad hoc rather than through formal partnerships or shared operational responsibility. Given the evidence that some stakeholders have not experienced changes in working relationships, it is important for the project to continue to work closely with all local service providers so that they do not disengage from working together.

8.5 Future research that could strengthen the evidence in this area

On the available evidence it is difficult to assess whether the project has led to sustained housing and broader client outcomes or had an impact on homelessness. It can be difficult to collect data on sustainment of tenancies post support periods, particularly where support is short-term, but this should be attempted to provide better evidence for the model. This could be done through ongoing data collection; 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 standardised outcomes measures and data on costs avoided. Collecting data on service use pre and post involvement in the project would help to assess costs avoided.

Appendix 1. Evaluation framework

Scope	Evaluation questions	Factors	Data sources
Project delivery			
Context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent do local contextual issues influence the implementation of the project? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distances Availability of transport Availability of housing stock influenced by external factors (e.g. tourism, mining) Capacity of local services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Site visits: interviews with local project staff
Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How long did it take to establish the project? To what extent do the governance arrangements support the successful implementation of the project? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional Homelessness Committee (RHC) Local coordination groups Reporting avenues Communication & information processes (formal and informal) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online survey of project staff Site visits: interviews with local project staff
Service delivery model	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Site visits: interviews with local project staff
Client reach and referral pathways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local service capacity and demand Socio-economic and market factors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Referral data Online survey of project staff Site visits: interviews with local project staff

Scope	Evaluation questions	Factors	Data sources
Housing provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Availability of housing stock Use of subsidy schemes in tenant support packages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online survey to project staff Site visits: interviews with local project staff
Support service provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How were service needs assessed and what role did client play? What were 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? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online survey of project staff Site visits: interviews with local project staff
Effectiveness: service system outcomes			
Overall system change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pre-existing service networks and structures Motivation, incentives and barriers to joint working 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online survey of project staff Site visits: interviews with local project staff

Scope	Evaluation questions	Factors	Data sources
Relationships within the housing sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has the project contributed to improved coordination between housing services (specialist homelessness, social housing, and private market)? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Innovative strategies to extend the range of housing solutions Involvement of real estate agents and private landlords 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HAP data portal: type of housing Online survey of project staff Site visits: interviews with local project staff
Relationships with support service organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has the project contributed to improved coordination between housing services and support services? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HAP data portal: range of services provided Online survey of project staff Site visits: interviews with local project staff
Effectiveness: client outcomes			
Client reach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has the project reached its target in terms of the number of clients assisted? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unit used to measure client outputs (households or individual) Measure for sustained tenancies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HAP data portal
Client groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Filling gaps in coverage (geographic, target groups) Remaining gaps 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HAP data portal Online survey of project staff Site visits: interviews with local project staff
Aboriginal clients	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accessibility issues Employment of Aboriginal case workers Connection with Aboriginal communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HAP data portal Site visits: interviews with local project staff
Housing outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has the project delivered appropriate housing solutions for referred clients? To what extent have these resulted in sustained tenancies for clients? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Homelessness prevented Sustained tenancies Develop rental histories 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online survey of project staff Site visits: interviews with local project staff Site visits: interviews with

Scope	Evaluation questions	Factors	Data sources
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How do outcomes from the model compare to outcomes achieved in other long-term housing and support projects? 		clients
Non-housing outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What broader (non-housing) outcomes have been achieved for clients? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Restoration of children Improvements in mental and physical health Debt waived, fines paid, mortgage default settled Remaining gaps in services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is the impact of the project/approach on reducing homelessness? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Considering all other influencing factors (e.g. economic downturn, increased scrutiny) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ABS census SHS (SAAP) data
Impact of benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is impact has the project had in addressing homelessness over the longer-term? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustained tenancies in the longer term 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HAP data portal Site visits: interviews with local project staff
Cost-effectiveness			
Project specific	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Actual costs if available from lead NGO accounting systems Service provider outcomes data if/ where available from NGO case management systems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lead NGO costing data HAP data portal Lead NGO pre-post client surveys (if any) Site visits: interviews with local project staff
Across projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How do client outputs and impacts compare against costs across the various projects and service delivery models? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comparison may be difficult considering variations in terms of the range and duration of support provided to clients 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lead NGO costing data HAP data portal Lead NGO pre-post client surveys (if any) Site visits: interviews with local project staff

Appendix 2. Key documents reviewed

Table 18. List of documents reviewed

Document	Date
North Coast Accommodation Project (NCAP) Project plan	
Service specifications	Feb 2010
North Coast Homelessness Service System Mapping	Aug 2012
Self-evaluation report	Jul 2012
HAP data portal reports	Jan 2010 – Jun 2012
NCAP nomination form for the Premier's Partnership Awards	Aug 2012
New Horizons client referrals data per location	Nov 2012
On Track client referrals data per location	Nov 2012
New Horizons acquittals	FY 2010-11 FY 2011-12
On Track Profit & Loss statement	FY 2010-11 FY 2011-12

Appendix 3. List of interviews

Table 19. List of interviews with project stakeholders

Location	Organisation	Number of interviewees	Date
New Horizons – Mid North Coast			
Kempsey	Community Housing	1	29/10/2012
Kempsey	New Horizons	3	31/10/2012
Kempsey	Housing NSW	1	31/10/2012
Kempsey	Aboriginal Employment Strategy	1	31/10/2012
Kempsey	Kempsey Women and Children's Refugee	1	31/10/2012
Kempsey	Housing NSW	1	6/11/2012
Nambucca	Ray White Nambucca	1	25/10/2012
Port Macquarie	People Builders	1	31/10/2012
Port Macquarie	Hope Shop	1	31/10/2012
Port Macquarie	Hastings Women and Children's Refuge	1	2/11/2012
Total	10	12	
On Track – Far North Coast			
Tweed Heads	On Track	4	18/10/2012 6/11/2012
Tweed Heads	Elders Cabarita Beach (real estate agent)	1	12/11/12
Tweed Heads	Community Services	1	12/11/12
Tweed Heads	Legal Aid	1	12/11/2012
Tweed Heads	The Family Centre	1	6/11/12
Tweed Heads	Bugalwena Aboriginal Health Services Tweed Heads	1	20/11/2012
Murwillumbah	Murwillumbah Community Centre	1	7/11/2012
Murwillumbah	Elders Murwillumbah (real estate agent)	2	7/11/2012
Total	8	12	

Table 20. List of client interviews per location

Location	Face-to-face/ Phone	Date
New Horizons – Mid North Coast		
1. Kempsey	Face-to-face	31/10/2012
2. Kempsey	Face-to-face	31/10/2012
Total	2	
On Track – Far North Coast		
1. Tweed Heads	Phone	5/11/2012
2. Tweed Heads	Phone	8/11/2012
3. Tweed Heads	Face-to-face	6/11/2012
4. Tweed Heads	Face-to-face	6/11/2012
5. Tweed Heads	Face-to-face	6/11/2012
6. Tweed Heads	Face-to-face	6/11/2012
7. Murwillumbah	Face-to-face	7/11/2012
Total	7	

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?

- 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 different 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	157
Emails bounced	12
Population surveyed	145
Complete responses	31
Partial responses	18
Disqualified	3
Total responses	52
Response rate	36%

Involvement with the North Coast Accommodation Project

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

Organisation	n	%	Missing
Commonwealth Government agency	5	10%	
NSW Government agency	9	17%	
Local government	1	2%	
Non-government organisation	24	46%	
Private sector company (e.g. real estate agency)	11	21%	
Other, please specify*	2	4%	
Total	52	100%	0

*When specified, 'Other' responses were: 'JSA', 'federally funded programme'.

Table 23. Q3. How would you rate your level of involvement in the North Coast Accommodation Project?

Level of involvement	n	%	Missing
No awareness, no involvement	3	6%	
Limited awareness, no direct involvement	10	19%	
Limited/ occasional involvement	7	13%	
Involved in the operation of the project in relation to a few clients (less than 5)	10	19%	
Involved in the operation of the project in relation to a number of clients (more than 5)	21	40%	
Involved in the overall coordination of the project	1	2%	
Total	52	100%	0

Table 24. Q4. What is the main role of your organisation in the North Coast Accommodation Project?

Organisation's main role	n	%	Missing
Contracting government agency e.g. Housing NSW, Community Services	3	6%	
Partner government agency e.g. Legal Aid, NSW Health, ADHC	5	10%	
Coordinating NGO	2	4%	
Specialist Homelessness Service	13	25%	
Support service provider e.g. mental health, family support, drug and alcohol, etc.	7	14%	
Housing provider	10	20%	
Other, please specify*	11	22%	
Total	51	100%	1

*When specified, 'Other' responses were: 'JSA', 'Housing NSW as partner agency who work directly with homeless clients', 'housing, support, prevention and outreach to women and women with children escaping domestic and family violence', 'income support provider', 'welfare/ referral', 'referral only', 'provider of whitegoods', 'Non-SHS funded homeless program', 'community centre', 'information provision'.

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

Housing provider type	n*	%	Missing
Public social housing	1	10%	
Community housing	0	0%	
Real estate agency	8	80%	
Landlord	1	10%	
Other, please specify	0	0%	
Total	10	100%	0

*Question for housing providers only

Table 26. Q5. In what ways have you been involved in the North Coast Accommodation Project?

Ways involved	n	% of cases *
Participating in project coordination meetings	7	14%
Making referrals	36	78%
Case managing clients	15	33%
Directly providing housing solution to clients of the project	15	33%
Directly providing support services to clients of the project	13	28%
Other, please specify**	5	11%

*Percent 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: 'co-case management', 'liaising with NCAP worker to negotiate with a real estate agent', 'supplying whitegoods', 'nil', 'providing information to clients about the project'.

Table 27. Q6. How long have you been involved with the North Coast Accommodation Project?

Length of involvement	n	%	Missing
Less than six months	7	16%	
Between six months and one year	13	29%	
Between one and two years	22	49%	
More than two years	3	7%	
Total	45	100%	7

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

Level of commitment	n	%	Missing
Not at all	8	17%	
Somewhat committed	17	36%	
Quite strongly	13	28%	
Strongly	9	19%	
Total	47	100%	5

Client referral/ nomination and assessment**Table 29. Q8. Please indicate the level to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.**

	n	Disagree		Mostly disagree		Mostly agree		Agree		DK/ N/A	Missing
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	n
Overall, the client nomination/ referral processes for the North Coast Accommodation Project are effective	27	2	7%	4	15%	10	37%	11	41%	1	8
Organisations involved in the project agreed on eligibility criteria	21	3	14%	1	5%	10	48%	7	33%	7	8
Overall, the client assessment process for this project is effective	25	2	8%	6	24%	9	36%	8	32%	3	8
Through this project we have worked with clients we would not normally be able to reach	24	8	33%	6	25%	5	21%	5	21%	4	8
This project has supported clients who were not covered by other existing initiatives (e.g. gaps in geographic coverage or target groups)	27	2	7%	6	22%	7	26%	12	44%	1	8

Housing/ tenancy support provision**Table 30. Q9. Please indicate the level to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.**

	n	Disagree		Mostly disagree		Mostly agree		Agree		DK/ N/A	Missing
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%		
The North Coast Accommodation Project has assisted clients to obtain or maintain accommodation appropriate to their needs	28	3	11%	3	11%	7	25%	15	54%	0	8
This project has assisted clients into stable long-term accommodation	25	3	12%	4	16%	7	28%	11	44%	2	9
Limited availability of affordable housing locally has reduced the project's ability to assist clients in accommodation	23	0	0%	4	17%	9	39%	10	43%	5	8
This project has found new and innovative ways of securing housing for clients	24	5	21%	5	21%	8	33%	6	25%	4	8

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

	n	Disagree		Mostly disagree		Mostly agree		Agree		DK/ N/A	Missing
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%		
The North Coast Accommodation Project has been particularly effective in linking clients to the support services they need	24	4	17%	4	17%	7	29%	9	38%	3	9
Lack of service availability locally has limited the project's ability to link clients to the supports they need	20	2	10%	7	35%	4	20%	7	35%	7	9
This project provides clients with access to a broader range of support services than other projects in this area	20	2	10%	7	35%	5	25%	6	30%	7	9
The North Coast Accommodation Project has provided an easy access to brokerage funding	21	3	14%	3	14%	7	33%	8	38%	6	9
Brokerage funding has been a major factor to support clients with appropriate support	21	0	0%	3	14%	6	29%	12	57%	6	9
Clients received improved integrated management through this project than usual	19	4	21%	6	32%	4	21%	5	26%	8	9

Service system**Table 32. Q11. Thinking about the organisations involved in the North Coast Accommodation 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
Lead government agency e.g. Housing NSW, Community Services	19	1	5%	1	5%	5	26%	11	58%	0	0%	1	5%	6	11
Partner government agency	20	5	25%	1	5%	3	15%	9	45%	1	5%	1	5%	5	11
Lead NGO	19	3	16%	1	5%	5	26%	6	32%	2	11%	2	11%	5	12
Specialist Homelessness Services	20	6	30%	0	0%	3	15%	10	50%	0	0%	1	5%	5	11
Support service providers e.g. mental health, family support, drug and alcohol, etc.	19	4	21%	1	5%	5	26%	7	37%	0	0%	2	11%	6	11
Housing organisations	19	4	21%	0	0%	4	21%	8	42%	1	5%	2	11%	6	11
Real estate agents/ landlords	19	5	26%	0	0%	4	21%	9	47%	0	0%	1	5%	5	12

Table 33. Q12. Please rate the following aspects of relationships with other housing and service organisations before and after your involvement in the North Coast Accommodation Project.

	n	1=None		2=Limited		3=Good		4=Extensive		Missing
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n
Pre: Knowledge of what other local service organisations can provide for my clients	25	0	0%	6	24%	9	36%	10	40%	11
Post: Knowledge of what other local service organisations can provide for my clients	25	1	4%	2	8%	11	44%	11	44%	11
Pre: Coordination with other local service organisations to support clients	25	0	0%	7	28%	8	32%	10	40%	11
Post: Coordination with other local service organisations to support clients	25	2	8%	3	12%	11	44%	9	36%	11
Pre: Trusting relationships with other local service organisations	25	0	0%	5	20%	11	44%	9	36%	11
Post: Trusting relationships with other local service organisations	25	2	8%	3	12%	11	44%	9	36%	11

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

	n	Disagree		Mostly disagree		Mostly agree		Agree		DK/ N/A	Missing
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%		
Q13. Governance											
The organisations involved in the North Coast Accommodation Project share the project's goals and values	18	1	6%	0	0%	9	50%	8	44%	7	11
The organisations involved in this project agreed on the project governance structure (e.g. establishment of local coordination groups)	10	3	30%	0	0%	3	30%	4	40%	15	11
The governance structure of this project has been effective in supporting implementation of the project	11	1	9%	3	27%	2	18%	5	45%	13	12
Q14. Communication and information sharing											
There are formal structures/ processes for communication and information sharing between organisations involved in the North Coast Accommodation Project	22	3	14%	2	9%	9	41%	8	36%	3	11
There are informal processes for communication and information sharing	24	1	4%	3	13%	7	29%	13	54%	1	11
Communication and information sharing is effective	24	1	4%	7	29%	7	29%	9	38%	1	11

	n	Disagree		Mostly disagree		Mostly agree		Agree		DK/ N/A	Missing
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%		
Q15. Working together											
The roles, responsibilities and expectations of organisations involved in the North Coast Accommodation Project are clearly defined and understood by all	21	2	10%	4	19%	9	43%	6	29%	4	11
Responsibilities for implementing this project are shared appropriately	13	0	0%	4	31%	6	46%	3	23%	11	12
Through this project I have worked with organisations I would not have worked with previously	25	10	40%	6	24%	6	24%	3	12%	0	11
Working together has changed the way our organisation delivers services	22	9	41%	2	9%	9	41%	2	9%	3	11
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)	18	6	33%	3	17%	4	22%	5	28%	7	11
Working together in this project generates better outcomes for clients than if each organisation worked with the clients separately	22	0	0%	3	14%	5	23%	14	64%	3	11
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)	18	4	22%	5	28%	5	28%	4	22%	7	11

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

	n	Disagree		Mostly disagree		Mostly agree		Agree		DK/N/A	Missing
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%		
The North Coast Accommodation Project has effective measures for assessing outcomes for clients	12	4	33%	0	0%	2	17%	6	50%	13	11
Clients are better able to sustain a tenancy as a result of the project	21	4	19%	2	10%	6	29%	9	43%	4	11
Clients' wellbeing has improved as a result of the project	18	2	11%	2	11%	5	28%	9	50%	7	11
Clients have reduced use of acute services (e.g. hospital and emergency services) as a result of the project	12	3	25%	2	17%	3	25%	4	33%	13	11

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

	n	Disagree		Mostly disagree		Mostly agree		Agree		DK/ N/A	Missing
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%		
I spend too much time on coordination activities as part of my involvement in North Coast Accommodation Project	15	6	40%	6	40%	1	7%	2	13%	10	11
Through this project I am able to spend more time in supporting clients than in other projects	12	4	33%	3	25%	4	33%	1	8%	13	11
The resources required for this project are justified by the benefits for clients	21	3	14%	1	5%	3	14%	14	67%	4	11

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
The North Coast Accommodation Project has the potential to achieve sustainable reductions in homelessness into the future	21	5%	1	10%	2	29%	6	57%	4	11
I would like this project to continue beyond its planned termination date	23	0%	0	9%	2	17%	4	74%	2	11
My organisation would not be able to maintain its participation in this project without government funding	17	35%	6	24%	4	0%	0	41%	7	11
My organisation has secured some resources for the project beyond its planned termination date	11	73%	8	18%	2	9%	1	0%	0	14
We could expand the number of HAP clients we assist in this area with only a small increase in resources	14	29%	4	29%	4	14%	2	29%	4	11
This project has the potential to be replicated in other areas of the state	20	5%	1	0%	0	20%	4	75%	15	11

Appendix 7. Breakdown of project costs for 2011/12

HAP Project ID:5.9 NCAP		On Track	New Horizons	Total NCAP 2011/12 \$ Value	%
Project income - Inputs					
Income	HAP funding	\$1,287,240	\$954,831	\$2,242,071	100%
Income	Other Government funding	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	0%
Income	In-kind	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	0%
Income	Third party donations	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	0%
Income	Other	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	0%
Total Project income		\$1,287,240	\$954,831	\$2,242,071	100%
Expenditure					
Staff costs	Direct Client Services	\$451,992	\$335,026	\$787,018	35%
Staff costs	Admin and support	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	0%
Staff costs	Staff related on-costs	\$116,608	\$33,553	\$150,161	7%
Staff costs	External consultants / professional services	\$8,400	\$178	\$8,578	0%
Staff costs	Other	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	0%
Total Staff costs		\$577,000	\$368,757	\$945,757	42%
Operating costs	Meetings, workshop, catering	\$808	\$ -	\$808	0%
Operating costs	Staff training and development	\$19,358	\$12,600	\$31,958	1%
Operating costs	Motor vehicle expenses	\$44,122	\$22,861	\$66,983	3%
Operating costs	Other travel	\$940	\$9,302	\$10,242	0%
Operating costs	Host Organisation Management Fee and Administration costs	\$217,723	\$52,265	\$269,988	12%
Operating costs	Other: Office Rent and	\$43,910	\$137,069	\$180,979	8%

HAP Project ID:5.9 NCAP		On Track	New Horizons	Total NCAP 2011/12 \$ Value	%
Running Costs					
Operating costs	Other: Communication & Stationary	\$38,755	\$19,890	\$58,645	3%
Operating costs	Other: Film production	\$38,800	\$ -	\$38,800	2%
Operating costs	Other: Other operating costs	\$2,337	\$24,891	\$27,228	1%
Total Operating costs		\$406,753	\$278,879	\$685,632	31%
Brokerage costs	Total Goods	\$125,375	\$274,368	\$399,743	18%
Brokerage costs	Total Services	\$15,571	\$32,457	\$48,028	2%
Brokerage costs	Total Payments	\$157,349	\$ -	\$157,349	7%
Brokerage costs	Total Other	\$5,068	\$370	\$5,438	0.2%
Total Brokerage costs		\$303,364	\$307,195	\$610,559	27%
Total Expenditure		\$1,287,117	\$954,831	\$2,241,948	100%

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