



NSW Homelessness Action Plan Evaluation

Overarching evaluation report for
the long-term housing and support
service model

Housing NSW

March 2013

Acknowledgments

This work was completed with the assistance of Suzanne McMahon within the NSW Department of Family and Community Services, Community Services for the Riverina Murray HAP project (RMHAP); Anne Rix and Helen Sim within the NSW Department of Family and Community Services, Community Services for the Rural Homelessness New England project (RHNE); Frances Short from Housing NSW for the North Coast Accommodation Project (NCAP); and John Skrtic from Housing NSW for the South East NSW Community Connections project.

We would also like to thank the many key informants from the four projects. We thank them for their time and insights and trust that their views are adequately represented in this report.

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Abbreviations and acronyms

AHURI	The Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute
CALD	Culturally and Linguistically Diverse
CTTT	Consumer, Trader & Tenancy Tribunal
GSHS	Going Home Staying Home reform
HAP	Homelessness Action Plan 2009–2014
HREC	Human Research Ethics Committee
MA	Mission Australia
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
NSW	New South Wales
RDA	Regional Development Australia
RHC	Regional Homelessness Committees
RHNE	Rural Homelessness New England
RMHAP	Riverina Murray Homelessness Action Plan project
SAAP	Supported Accommodation Assistance Program
SHS	Specialist Homelessness Services
TFS	Tamworth Family Support
UNSW	University of New South Wales

Executive summary

This report brings together the findings from the individual evaluations of four long-term housing and support projects funded under the NSW Homelessness Action Plan 2009–2014: the Rural Interagency Homelessness Projects for people with complex needs in Riverina and New England, the North Coast Accommodation Project and South East NSW Community Connections.

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 these four long-term housing and support projects.

The four projects sit under the same HAP intervention focus area, long-term accommodation and support, rather than crisis responses to people who are already homeless. The projects are based on the exemplar model ‘supportive housing’ from AHURI’s 2009 review of the literature, which informed the HAP. However, while each delivers supportive housing, they can be distinguished in terms of their key features into three models.

- The two Rural Interagency Homelessness Projects in Riverina-Murray (RMHAP) and New England (RHNE) use a similar model. They each deliver two components (early intervention and housing intensive support), share the responsibility of case managing clients across a broad range of organisations, and coordinate local service delivery through monthly coordination group meetings with all participating organisations. Within this model, the service provider for one project (RHNE) delivers case management to some clients, while RMHAP brokers all case management services.
- The North Coast Accommodation Project (NCAP) focuses on lower needs clients and has an explicit emphasis on facilitating access to the private rental market, and all clients are case managed by the funded organisation.
- The South East NSW Community Connections project (Community Connections) covers a very broad range of clients’ needs, including many high needs clients, and all clients are case managed by the funded organisation.

We used a mixed-method approach for the four evaluations, drawing on existing data sources (project self-evaluation reports, HAP portal data and the research literature) and collecting new data through online surveys of project stakeholders (201 respondents across the four projects) and in-depth interviews with project stakeholders (n=81) and clients (n=23). We were able to implement our methods largely as planned

and triangulate the findings across the range of data sources. We are confident that the data provides the evidence for a sound assessment.

Key findings

All four projects were largely successful in reaching their targets for the number of clients assisted and housed, achieving outcomes at a reasonable cost, and with some preliminary indication of sustainable outcomes. The impact of the projects on the service system varied between the projects with some evidence of greater positive impact in the two Rural Interagency Homelessness Projects, which had shared responsibility for case management across organisations in their regions.

The four projects have addressed strong demand in each region

Three of the projects exceeded their initial targets to the end of June 2012. The RHNE project assisted marginally fewer clients than intended due to initial delays in implementation. NCAP and Community Connections assisted substantially more clients than initially planned. NCAP assisted 4.6 times its target and Community Connections 3.3 times its target. While target groups were different for the two projects, with a focus on the lower end of the needs spectrum for NCAP, both projects addressed a high demand that was not properly anticipated in the project plan. This shows that they were filling a service gap in their region.

Housing and support services delivered varied across the projects

Across the four projects, clients were provided with housing and non-housing support based on their identified needs. However, there were some differences between projects in the type of support provided.

Housing support included assisting clients to access housing and to maintain existing tenancies. The evaluation found that the RMHAP and RHNE projects (which provided mainly social housing and some private rental housing) and NCAP (which provided mainly private rental housing) were more successful than Community Connections in providing clients with longer term, rather than shorter term, types of housing.

Local support services or the funded organisation provided a range of non-housing services, most commonly financial but also legal; education, training and employment; and health-related services. The evaluation found that the RMHAP and RHNE projects were more successful than NCAP and Community Connections in linking clients to a wider range of non-housing services, particularly health related services (i.e. general health, mental health, drug and alcohol). This could be expected given that all projects reached a significant number of people who were living in short-term/emergency accommodation or “sleeping rough” prior to being assisted by the project.

The evaluation found that brokerage funding was used with flexibility, including to purchase household goods and case management and services not otherwise available. More than three-quarters of project stakeholders who responded to the online survey

generally considered brokerage funding to have been a major factor in providing clients with appropriate support.

The four projects have contributed to a shift from crisis intervention to prevention and long-term housing intervention

All four projects targeted and were successful in reaching people at risk of homelessness (requiring a prevention response) as well as people experiencing primary and marginal homelessness (requiring a crisis intervention response). The RMHAP and RHNE projects (more than one-third of clients) were somewhat more successful than NCAP and Community Connections (more than one-quarter of clients) in reaching people at risk of homelessness.

The RMHAP and RHNE projects had clear funding and service specifications structured around early intervention and housing intensive support clients. Data shows each project worked with approximately half of their total clients in each group. The other two projects had a different type of funding agreement and reporting requirements, so it is less clear how many clients in these projects can be classified as receiving early intervention. However, looking at level of needs as a proxy, the high proportion of low needs clients in the NCAP project suggests an early intervention focus.

Clients appear to be better off as a result of their participation in the project

The findings from the online survey of project stakeholders indicate that clients are better able to sustain a tenancy and their well-being has improved as a result of each of the projects. However, these findings need to be interpreted with some caution as a significant proportion of survey respondents in each project either did not respond to this question or indicated that they did not know.

There is limited data available on whether clients are sustaining their tenancies after leaving the project. Only the RMHAP project collected follow-up data for all clients assisted to the end of June 2012. This data showed that 80 per cent of clients were maintaining their tenancy until July or August 2012 when follow-up occurred. This is a very positive preliminary indication of successful outcomes, and is consistent with the anecdotal evidence from housing providers in this area.

The Rural Interagency Homelessness Project model has achieved a significant impact on the service system

The literature supports the need for some form of service integration or joint working for the effective provision of long-term housing and support. Interagency work can, however, be approached in a range of ways depending on the aims of working together and the local service system.

All projects involved the coordination of a range of government and non-government organisations (NGO) to assist clients which has strengthened working relationships. The Rural Interagency Homelessness Projects used a model of joint working based on shared responsibility between organisations (coordination approach), while NCAP and

Community Connections had a more conventional model involving a single organisation, that is the funded organisation, providing all case management (cooperation approach).

The Rural Interagency Homelessness Projects established coordination groups at the local level where participating organisations, which included new actors interested in the approach as well as stakeholders from the homelessness service system, shared the responsibility for approving and case managing clients. This approach proved very effective in providing a coordinated response to clients with multiple issues, and generated new solutions for supporting clients. It improved the service system by enabling the sharing of information, increasing knowledge about effective ways to meet the needs of people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, providing a platform for training and building trusting relationships, and improving accountability for service delivery. Despite ongoing service capacity issues in some local areas, these two projects provide an exemplar in achieving integrated delivery of services to people experiencing, or at risk of, homelessness.

Projects were successful in supporting clients' access to the private rental market

Projects have been particularly successful in supporting clients to access the private rental market, a housing option often neglected in homelessness programs. Clients housed in private rental properties made up a substantial proportion of clients assisted across all projects (76% in NCAP, which had a specific emphasis on the private rental market; 37% in each of the two Rural Interagency Homelessness Projects and 31% in Community Connections).

All projects built relationships with real estate agents using promotional strategies, for example, events such as breakfast or lunches.

NCAP focused mainly on this housing option and was most successful in this respect. This project developed a comprehensive marketing strategy and recruited staff with both case management and marketing skills who could gain the confidence of real estate agents. Real estate agents appreciated that the project provided ongoing support to tenants and the benefits of this with fewer tenancy management problems, evictions and associated loss of rent. Where relationships were well-established, real estate agents could advise the project when tenants were in arrears or if there were complaints, and the project could support clients to maintain their tenancy. This was considered a key success factor within the model.

All four projects appear to deliver value for money

The four projects had different service delivery models and timeframes. While the two Rural Interagency Homelessness Projects (RMHAP and RHNE) had been operating for more than two years at the time of the evaluation, NCAP and Community Connections had been operating for just over one year.

The projects' expenditure also differed. For instance, RHNE spent \$1.3m over 30 months, while NCAP spent \$2.4m over 15 months. To the end of June 2012, the average

actual monthly expenses varied considerably, from \$42,919 for RHNE to \$149,854 for NCAP.

Three of the four projects (RHNE, NCAP and Community Connections) had very similar cost structures, with approximately one-third spent on staff costs, one-third on operating costs and one-third on brokerage costs. The RMHAP project had a very different cost structure, reflecting the project's different service delivery arrangements, which relies on a network of organisations that receive funding to provide case management to clients.

In 2011/2012 (considered a typical year because all projects were operating during this period), the average cost per client was \$4,505 for RMHAP, \$4,793 for RHNE, \$2,841 for Community Connections and \$1,580 for NCAP. The difference in average client cost reflects differences between the projects' service delivery models and client mix. The two Rural Interagency Homelessness Projects use a similar model and, despite some differences in delivery arrangements, supported a similar number of clients for a similar cost across a mix of early intervention and housing intensive support clients. NCAP had the lowest average client cost reflecting the different model, in particular, the focus on lower needs clients.

The average client cost for each project is well below the budgeted client cost. The main lesson from this is that the costing used in the initial project plans clearly over-estimated the actual client costs. This enabled NCAP and Community Connections to assist many more clients than planned.

Compared to external benchmarks, the average client cost for all four projects is within the same range as other comparable homelessness programs, which confirms that they have been run efficiently and appear to deliver value for money.

Critical success factors

Key success factors identified by the evaluation were the level of organisational commitment demonstrated by key participating organisations; the coordinated model of working together reflected in the two Rural Interagency Homelessness Projects; the effectiveness of the coordination by each funded organisation; the holistic and client-centred approach to case management; innovative approaches to assisting clients to secure long-term housing, including the successful engagement of the private sector; and strategies for engaging Aboriginal clients in the projects.

Challenges

Key challenges were cultural change associated with the projects, and the responses to this from various stakeholders; managing demand for services; the availability of affordable longterm housing; the capacity of support services, particularly in some rural areas; and addressing the needs of clients with high and complex needs and assisting some demographic groups, including people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and older people.

1. Introduction

1.1 The evolving policy context for homelessness and housing services

Under-supply of affordable housing

There is a major under-supply of affordable housing in Australia (Eardley and Flaxley, 2012). The Global Financial Crisis (GFC) impacted on the supply of private rental properties (particularly those that would be affordable for potential social housing applicants) and saw financial institutions tighten lending practices. In some areas, the influx of mining and resources workers has driven rental prices higher and reduced availability of affordable rental properties.

National Agreements

As the supply and availability of affordable housing and the prevalence of homelessness have become an increasing concern, they have become a significant focus of policy at both the national and the state levels. In 2009, the state and territory governments and the Commonwealth Government agreed to the National Affordable Housing Agreement (NAHA), which is supported by the National Partnership Agreements on Homelessness, Social Housing and Remote Aboriginal Housing (FaHCSIA, 2012).

The National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness (NPAH) outlines a focus on three strategies to reduce homelessness: prevention and early intervention, breaking the cycle of homelessness, and improving and expanding the service response to homelessness. The NPAH has funded projects using service models with an evidence base in the international literature and positive evaluations in the Australian context.

Need for and move towards integrated systems

The policy focus on addressing homelessness, the lack of affordable housing, the increasing proportion of social housing tenants with complex needs, the use of private rental options as an alternative to social housing, and attempts to address the concentration of disadvantage in social housing are among the range of factors driving the need for more integrated service systems. In Australia, there have been moves towards integrated social housing systems which are now in place in New South Wales (Housing Pathways), Queensland, South Australia and Victoria. An AHURI study of these integrated systems shows three main challenges for integrated social housing systems in Australia. These are developing effective relationships between:

- public, community and Aboriginal housing sectors
- other human service providers, including homelessness services

- other policies and services concerned with providing housing assistance or affordable housing (Weisel, 2012).

An increasing role for community housing providers

While state and territory housing authorities have historically had the major role in housing provision in Australia, the community housing sector has grown rapidly in the last 10 years. The sector's role is increasing as housing Ministers have agreed the community housing sector should represent 35 per cent of social housing by 2014. This means community housing providers will be expected to take on more homeless people.

Some providers have already become involved with homelessness services. Eardley and Flaxley (2012) indicate that the UK's Housing Plus approach (which is focused on community housing providers' ability to achieve positive social and economic outcomes as well as housing, for example, by reducing isolation experienced by the previously homeless) and the Housing First model (which is based on the principle that a homeless individual's first and primary need is to obtain stable, permanent housing, and other issues can only be appropriately addressed once stable housing is obtained) are the two models most relevant to community housing providers' increasing role in responding to homelessness. While these providers may be 'well-placed' to support the homeless or those at risk of homelessness, the fact that the homeless are not an homogenous group and have complex needs, may entail 'significant challenges' (Eardley and Flaxley, 2012).

State and national peak advocacy bodies for community housing and homelessness generally support the current policy direction. However, there are concerns about the sustainability of the transfer of housing stock without ongoing operational subsidies and the significant costs associated with supporting high needs tenants, particularly those who have experienced homelessness (Eardley and Flaxley, 2012).

Reform of the specialist homelessness sector

The specialist homelessness service sector, which currently plays a key role in responding to homelessness, is also undergoing reform under the *Going Home Staying Home* initiative led by the NSW Department of Families and Community Services. The reforms aim to improve access to the right type of housing and support for homeless people and ensure service approaches that are funded deliver sustainable housing and support outcomes.

Specialist homelessness services face a range of challenges in service delivery including:

- lack of control over the drivers to homelessness service use (including lack of affordable housing and specialist services to address client needs)
- fragmented referrals and entry points to the system and inadequate formal mechanisms for information sharing
- system design that makes it difficult for clients to continue to receive support once they leave crisis accommodation
- difficulties finding appropriate long-term accommodation affecting services' ability to exit clients from crisis accommodation.

The reforms are focused on re-gearing towards more individualised approaches, streamlined access, planning and resource allocation based on need and covering the range of support types, promoting and supporting quality improvement, and industry workforce development. The reforms are to be put in place over the next two years and take full effect from July 2014 (NSW FACS, 2012).

1.2 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 Aboriginal 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. 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 (RHC) were established to support the development and implementation of ten Regional Homelessness Action Plans (2010 to 2014), which identified effective ways of working locally to respond to homelessness and provided the focus for many of the HAP projects.

1.3 The HAP evaluation strategy

Housing NSW, in consultation with government agencies and the non-government sector, developed an overall evaluation strategy for the HAP. The strategy outlines how each of the

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

The strategy involves three inter-related components.

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

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

Housing NSW has contracted external consultancies to conduct extended evaluations, which cover five exemplar models from AHURI's 2009 review of the literature (*Evidence to inform NSW homelessness action priorities 2009-10*), which informed the HAP.

1.4 Overview of service model and projects included in this extended evaluation

ARTD is responsible for the extended evaluation of the long-term housing and support model, which sits under the second HAP intervention focus area 'Providing long-term accommodation and support rather than crisis responses to people who are already homeless'. This extended evaluation covers four projects selected for individual evaluation:

- the Riverina Murray HAP project (RMHAP)
- the Rural Homelessness New England project (RHNE)
- the North Coast Accommodation Project (NCAP)
- South East NSW Community Connections (community Connections).

The HAP long-term supported housing projects are based on the exemplar model 'supportive housing' (AHURI, 2009). 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 a mix of housing types and clients—some across prevention and intervention, and some refer using a 'Housing First' approach.

- The two Rural Interagency Homelessness Projects in Riverina-Murray (RMHAP) and New England (RHNE) use a similar model. They each deliver two components (early intervention and housing intensive support), share the responsibility of case managing

clients across a broad range of organisations, and coordinate local service delivery through monthly coordination group meetings with all participating organisations. Within this model, the service provider for one project (RHNE) delivers case management to some clients, while RMHAP brokers all case management services.

- The North Coast Accommodation Project (NCAP) focuses on lower needs clients and has an explicit emphasis on facilitating access to the private rental market, and all clients are case managed by the funded organisation.
- The South East NSW Community Connections project (Community Connections) covers a very broad range of clients' needs, including many high needs clients, and all clients are case managed by the funded organisation.

The literature emphasises the need for prevention strategies to address homelessness, as well as the challenges associated with these in a system historically focused on crisis responses. Within the long-term housing and support model, each project targeted clients at risk of homelessness, as well as those experiencing primary and marginal homelessness.

In three projects, clients were targeted within two broad categories: people identified at risk of homelessness and people with more intensive housing and support needs. The fourth project targeted clients within four categories of need, from early intervention through to complex needs (see Table 1).

Table 1. Targets by project and service type

Project	Target no. clients per year	Service type
RMHAP	50	Early intervention/ prevention
	30	Housing intensive support
RHNE	50	Early intervention/ prevention
	30	Homeless
NCAP	275	Early intervention/ prevention and homeless
Community Connections	50	Early intervention
	22	Low support
	15	Medium support
	10	Complex needs

2. Literature review

Supportive housing is one of the long-term housing and support ‘models’ funded under the HAP. The other models are Housing First, Assertive Outreach – Street to Home and Foyers for young people. While considered part of the same model, the supportive housing projects covered by this evaluation are not implementing one tightly defined model and it was difficult to identify one supportive housing model considered effective in the research literature. This may be because projects have been adapted to local contexts and used flexible approaches to meet individual needs.

For the purposes of this review, we defined supportive housing as a model that provides clients with access to long-term housing and, through multidisciplinary case management, provides or links them to the supports and services they need.

2.1 What works

The evidence from the literature shows the need to provide both long-term housing *and* support to permanently move people on from homelessness (AHURI, 2010; Boulderstone and Button, 2012). The research on housing and support scanned for this evaluation is consistent with the findings from the literature review completed by AHURI to inform the development of the HAP (2009). It indicates an effective approach to supportive housing will provide:

- **housing** 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** clients need.

To be effective, a long-term housing and support model will require some level of **service integration or joint working**. There are different models for joint working that entail different levels of connectedness between services (from ad hoc interaction to collaboration to joint teams). Identifying which is most appropriate for a particular project will depend on the operating context and its intended aims.

However, it is possible for the other components of long-term housing and support to identify some broad principles of what works. Broadly, joint working is known to work 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 (Strategic Partnership Taskforce, UK Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, 2003).

Factors important to partnership working in housing policy and programs include these broad principles as well as some distinct factors.

- **Have an effective brief and tendering process** to foster innovation and maximise benefits of collaborative thinking from the outset.
- Develop a **comprehensive evidence base** to establish a **shared vision** and series of **shared outcomes**.
- Foster **shared understanding** across partners who are likely to have different skill sets, motivations and expectations.
- Ensure appropriate **allocation of risk (and reward)** and preparedness to share risks where necessary.
- **Build communication and trust**, valuing **informal synergies** but recognising the importance of the clarity and certainty provided by **formal, contractual** aspects of the partnership.
- Establish **structures that facilitate innovation**, but which **also enable best practice** and new ideas to feed back through to respective organisations and sectors (Pinnegar, 2011).

A long-term housing and support model with evidence

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 the most considerable evidence base in the literature. The term has become somewhat ubiquitous in practice, though not all services calling themselves Housing First have been completely faithful to the original model (Johnson et al, 2012; Pleace and Bretherton, 2012). While there is strong evidence for the model being effective with its original target group (homeless people with a mental illness in New York), there is a lack of evidence for the effectiveness of services which have adapted the model for other population groups and locations.

2.2 Challenges in delivering what works

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

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

2.3 What works with particular groups

The homeless population is not homogenous, so what works for one sub-group will not necessarily work for others, and even within sub-groups what is effective for one individual may not be for another (Deloitte, 2011).

Our scan focused on effective supportive housing approaches for people with psychiatric or addictive disorders, Aboriginal people and single homeless adults. While young people and women experiencing domestic violence are likely among clients of the four long-term housing and support projects, given their representation among the homeless population, we have not included the research on these groups here because the specialised models for these groups are covered by other extended evaluations.

The findings indicate differences in the specific ways of working with people with psychiatric disorders, Aboriginal people and single homeless adults. This reflects a need for flexibility within the broad supportive housing model to meet the needs of particular sub-groups and individuals.

2.3.1 People with psychiatric or addictive disorders

A recent AHURI review indicated overseas studies of supportive housing¹ interventions typically show improved housing outcomes when compared with case management-only interventions but no demonstrable impact on clinical outcomes (Flatau et al, 2010). A 2007 systematic review of supported housing models, Assertive Community Treatment, intensive case management and residential treatment models (where housing is provided only during the treatment phase) for homeless people with mental health issues found that positive housing outcomes were greatest for supported housing models (Flatau et al, 2010). There is also evidence that people with serious mental health or substance abuse issues benefit more from a multidisciplinary approach to case management (Gronda, 2009).

Recent research on available interventions to assist the homeless with psychiatric or addictive disorders suggests that, while these are significantly superior to control treatments, their effects are most often modest and centre on a single outcome domain, such as housing symptoms, benefits or employment. In other words, no single intervention seems to spread substantial benefit across multiple life domains (Rosenheck in Ellen and O’Flaherty, 2010). This makes an argument for the multidisciplinary approach the HAP projects take.

Two reviews by Vanderplasschen on case management with substance-using populations found little evidence of the effectiveness of case management at *directly* improving treatment outcomes for substance use disorders. The reviews show that ‘case management

¹ Defined as the provision of long-term housing that is additionally linked to a range of on-site and off-site supports.

operates as a comprehensive and practical *facilitator* to increase the effectiveness of particular, specialist interventions such as substance use treatments, by increasing engagement and treatment retention' (in Gronda, 2009).

2.3.2 Aboriginal people

Aboriginal people represent a particularly high proportion of the homeless population in regional and rural centres. AHURI research suggests that the causes and solutions for Aboriginal homelessness are different to those for non-Aboriginal Australians, with secondary homelessness and overcrowding connected to homelessness a significant concern (2010). Other AHURI research indicates a need for a broad policy response that addresses the deep-seated causes of homelessness among Aboriginal people (Flatau et al, 2009).

AHURI research on Aboriginal access to mainstream public and community housing concluded that better integration of the mainstream, public and community housing sector with homelessness services and other elements of the crisis and emergency accommodation sector is critical (AHURI, 2010). Other AHURI research suggests the need for a mix of Aboriginal services and culturally appropriate mainstream services that work together, with pre-conditions for good culturally appropriate service delivery defined as:

- understanding of the history and legacy of settlement
- strong knowledge of and respect for Aboriginal people and cultural values
- culturally inclusive policies and programs that engage Aboriginal people and promote self-determination and capacity
- culturally adapted and responsive services delivered by culturally competent staff with opportunity for Aboriginal clients to interact with Aboriginal staff
- specific attention to cultural values and Aboriginal lifestyles in housing design and location (Milligan et al, 2010).

This research also indicates an important role for Aboriginal housing organisations and a need for ongoing support and funding to build the capacity of these organisations as a sector and individually (Milligan et al, 2010). Other evidence supports the need for:

- holistic practice approaches that include strengthening Aboriginal social capital as a means of preventing homelessness (Memcott et al, 2012)
- a strong Aboriginal voice and participation in homelessness policy discussions (Milligan et al, 2010)
- access to tenancy and other social support services where needed to maintain stable tenancies and avoid homelessness (AHURI, 2010).

Research suggests, however, that there are significant difficulties integrating Aboriginal services with mainstream programs and service systems (Milligan et al, 2010).

2.3.3 Single adults experiencing homelessness

A recent literature review suggests the following elements of best practice for single adults:

- case management
- consumer choice to participate and involvement in planning
- accommodation options suited to client needs and situation (e.g. not housing clients with substance abuse issues still using with those abstaining as this can make it hard to prevent relapse) and facilitative of community engagement
- staffing and staff–client ratio suited to context and delivery model, with ongoing training and supervision provided (Deloitte, 2011).

Peer workers can also have a positive impact on single adults experiencing homelessness (Deloitte, 2011).

3. Evaluation scope and methods

3.1 Ethics process

ARTD submitted the evaluation methodology 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. Our processes were in line with ethics requirements as indicated below.

- **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 only contacted clients who returned consent forms for interviews. This process prevented any selection bias or sense of obligation that would come from having case workers identify clients for interview.
 - We used only de-identified client data at the aggregate project level; we did not access any individual client files.
- **Stakeholder processes**
 - The lead government agency and the funded organisation in each location identified stakeholders for interview. We only contacted those who agreed to participate.
 - The contact for the project 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 has been protected.

3.2 Summary of evaluation approach

3.2.1 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 re-grouped into four main evaluation areas (see Table 2).

Table 2. 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:

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

The framework guided the design of the evaluation methodology .

3.2.2 Methodology

We used a mixed-method approach and drew on existing data as well as collecting 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 review (see Appendix 7 for bibliography)
- analysis of existing client reporting data
- online survey of project stakeholders (see Appendix 5)
- in-depth interviews with project stakeholders (see Appendix 3) and clients (see Appendix 4) in nine sites (two for each project and an additional site for the North Coast Accommodation Project to cover both service providers)
- cost analysis.

More detail about the evaluation methodology is provided in Appendix 2.

3.3 Limitations

The triangulation of findings across the data sources gives us confidence that the data provide sufficient evidence for a sound assessment of the long-term housing and support model as implemented in the four projects covered by this evaluation. There were, however, some limitations which should be kept in mind when considering the findings presented in this report. Key among these is the differences between projects in terms of client mix, housing support provided and types of housing supported which makes comparing the projects difficult.

Comprehensiveness of the data

To ensure we could identify successes and challenges in the full range of project operating sites for each project, our survey was sent to all stakeholders in all sites, and included open-ended questions. It was not possible to visit all operating sites, so, in consultation with the Regional Homelessness Committee under which each project sits, we purposively selected sites that would provide broad coverage of the issues faced across each project site. While there may be other contextual considerations in the sites not visited, we are confident that our two-pronged approach enabled us to identify the main learnings from the project for future homelessness services.

Some projects chose to distribute the survey to a wide range of stakeholders who had come into contact with the project, while others distributed the survey to stakeholders core to the project. As a result, the response rate for each project varied widely (from 13% for Community Connections to 78% for RHNE). The actual number of respondents for each project was quite similar (n=45 for RMHAP, n=52 for RHNE, n=52 for NCAP and n=46 for Community Connections). We cannot be certain how representative the survey findings are of the views of the broader stakeholder population, particularly for Community Connections. However, we received responses from a reasonable spread of stakeholders

for each project in terms of the organisation they work for and their role and length of involvement in the project.

A small number of project clients (n=23) were interviewed. Therefore, the findings from client interviews may not be representative of the views of all project clients.

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. The portal 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 the collection of indicators of medium and long-term impact, for example, whether clients were sustaining their tenancies six 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 can be difficult to locate.

Only RDA Murray was able to provide follow-up client data for the RMHAP project. According to this data, 80 per cent of all clients assisted by the project until the end of June 2012 maintained their tenancy. The data collected did not include information about the time clients participated in the program, which would have given a better indication of the sustainability of client outcomes.

Cost-effectiveness analysis

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

The cost analysis included in this evaluation was 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 intention was to conduct a cost-effectiveness analysis, but this was limited by the availability of client outcomes data. Therefore, we focused on the analysis of project costs, especially the cost per client and the breakdown of costs, with a focus on brokerage costs, and compared project costs to other programs.

4. Findings on the service model

Overall, our findings relating to the long-term housing and support model are generally positive. All four projects largely reflect the core principles for effective service delivery, that is, timely access to housing, reliable case management and links to an appropriate range of services.

While each of the four projects delivers supportive housing, there are some significant differences between them in terms of joint working arrangements, client mix and housing support provided. The key features of each project are summarised below (Table 3). Notably, the categories of client needs are not directly comparable across all four projects—particularly as RMHAP and RHNE include two categories of need and NCAP and Community Connections include three categories. Client profiles are presented in more detail in Table 5.

Table 3. Summary of project features

Feature of project	RMHAP	RHNE	NCAP	Community Connections
Approach to joint working	Coordination	Coordination	Co-operation	Co-operation
Role of funded organisation in case management	Broker	Broker/ provider	Sole provider	Sole provider
Proportion high needs*	55%	53%	12 %	28%

Source: HAP data portal

* Housing intensive support clients for RMHAP and RHNE projects, high needs for NCAP and Community Connections.

4.1 The effectiveness of the service model for client outcomes

This section of the report presents findings on various aspects that are related to the effectiveness of the service model for client outcomes. This includes the characteristics of clients, the provision of housing and other support services, the use of brokerage funding, and the impact on homelessness and client well-being.

4.1.1 Clients assisted

More clients were assisted than planned

The NCAP and Community Connections projects assisted substantially more clients than initially planned. NCAP assisted 4.6 times more clients and Community Connections 3.3 times more clients than planned (see Table 4). In both cases, demand was strong from the inception of the projects and has continued over the life of the project to date.

The number of clients assisted by the RMHAP and RHNE projects was closer to the planned target numbers. RMHAP assisted 13 per cent more than the planned number. The RHNE project experienced initial delays and did not reach its June 2012 target (there were 5 per cent less clients than planned). However, the overall target of 270 clients assisted is likely to be met by the end of the project in June 2013.

These findings highlight the need for the services in each region, particularly in SE NSW and the North Coast, where there is a particularly high level of demand. The individual project evaluations show the projects were effectively targeted within each region. Generally, clients were in locations where the largest numbers of homeless people were based on 2006 census data. The one exception was in the Far South Coast within the Community Connections project, where the census data show a high incidence of homelessness but relatively few clients were assisted through this project.

Table 4. Number of clients assisted by projects to end June 2012

Number of clients	RMHAP	RHNE	NCAP	Community Connections
Length of the project	28 months	30 months	16 months	15 months
Target – total	180	200	325	144
Total number of clients	203	190	1,500	476

Source: HAP data portal

People at risk of homelessness and people who were homeless were assisted

All four projects targeted people at risk of homelessness, as well as those experiencing primary and marginal homelessness. All projects were effective in reaching people at risk of homelessness, thus contributing to the shift from crisis intervention to prevention and long-term housing intervention (see Table 5).

The RMHAP and RHNE projects were more successful than the other projects in reaching people at risk of homelessness (48% of RHNE clients, 38% of RMHAP clients). In the Community Connections project, in which rough sleepers were the largest client group (43%), people at risk of homelessness still made up over a quarter (27%) of all clients assisted. NCAP, which assisted the highest number of clients, had a broad distribution of clients in terms of situation prior to assistance. People at risk of homelessness made up about one-third (32%) of clients assisted.

Table 5. Client status prior to assistance

Client status	RMHAP* (n=273)	RHNE* (n=253)	NCAP (n=1,500)	Community Connections (n=476)
At risk of homelessness	38%	48%	32%	27%
Short-term or emergency accommodation	43%	30%	24%	17%
Sleeping rough	16%	19%	17%	43%
Other	3%	3%	22%	13%
Not known	0%	0%	5%	0%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: HAP data portal

*For both Rural Interagency Homelessness Projects client data on status prior to assistance reported in the HAP data portal covered new clients as well as ongoing clients for each year.

All projects appear to have provided some early intervention services

Only the Rural Interagency Homelessness Projects identified clients as early intervention or needing more intensive support. Table 6 shows the proportion of clients in each category, which aligns fairly closely with the data in Table 5 on status prior to receiving assistance.

There is no comparable data for the other two projects, although the level of client need may provide some proxy for this. While Table 5 indicates NCAP and Community Connections assisted a similar proportion of clients at risk of homelessness, Table 6 shows they worked with clients at different levels of need. The high proportion of clients assisted through NCAP with low to medium needs provides some further evidence of this shift in focus toward early intervention.

Table 6. Proportion of clients by service categorisation

Client status	RMHAP* (n=203)	RHNE* (n=253)	NCAP (n=1,500)	Community Connections (n=476)
Early Intervention	45%	47%		
Housing intensive support	55%	53%		
Low need support			62%	12%
Medium need support			27%	60%
High need support			11%	28%

Sources: RMHAP and RHNE data from service providers; NCAP and Community Connections HAP data portal

Different clients were assisted

When project stakeholders were asked the extent to which they agreed/disagreed with the statement “through this project we have worked with clients we would not normally be able to reach” in the online survey, at least two-thirds of RMHAP, RHNE and Community Connections respondents agreed or mostly agreed. Views among NCAP respondents were more mixed with less than half (42%) agreeing or mostly agreeing with this statement (one-fifth agreed).

The online survey also asked project stakeholders to indicate the extent to which they agreed/disagreed with the statement “this project has supported clients who were not covered by other existing initiatives.” More than two-thirds of respondents in all four projects agreed or mostly agreed with this statement. RMHAP, RHNE and Community Connections respondents were more likely than NCAP respondents to agree (69% of RMHAP respondents, 67% of RHNE respondents, 63% of Community Connections respondents, 44% of NCAP respondents).

These findings indicate that all projects were successful in assisting people who may otherwise not have received assistance. The RMHAP and RHNE projects appear to have been more successful than NCAP and Community Connections in this regard.

4.1.2 Differences in the types of housing clients were assisted with

The projects differed in the types of housing clients were assisted with (Table 7). The RMHAP and RHNE projects mostly assisted clients into social housing (60% of RMHAP clients, 56% of RHNE clients). The majority of these were housing intensive support, rather than early intervention, clients. Just over one-third (37%) of clients in both projects were assisted into private rental housing.

NCAP clients were usually (76%) assisted into private rental housing. A small proportion (11%) of clients was assisted into social housing.

Housing assistance provided through the Community Connections project was quite different to the other projects. The most common housing outcome was living temporarily with family/ friends (44%). Project staff report the main reason for this was the initial high demand and the lack of affordable housing in the area. They indicated that in many cases clients moved out of the area to live with friends/ relatives in other locations. Other Community Connections clients were most commonly assisted into private rental housing (31%) or social housing (13%).

There was no or little use of SAAP and temporary accommodation by all projects.

Table 7. Distribution of clients by type of housing type to end June 2012

Type of housing provided	RMHAP (n=203)	RHNE (n=165)	NCAP (n=822)	Community Connections (n=371)
Social housing (public/ community)	60%	56%	11%	13%
Private rental/ Landlord	37%	37%	76%	31%
SAAP	0%	0%	1%	4%
Temporary accommodation	0%	0%	5%	9%
Living temporarily with family/ friends	0%	0%	1%	44%
Did not take up housing/ other	3%	7%	6%	0%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: RMHAP and RHNE: client data from service providers; NCAP and Community Connections: HAP data portal

For both Rural Interagency Homelessness Projects, client data per housing types cover both early intervention and housing intensive support components.

For NCAP and Community Connections, client data per housing type reported here are only for clients that were housed.

Stakeholders are positive about clients' housing outcomes

The vast majority of project stakeholders surveyed in each of the four projects generally considered that the project helped clients to obtain or maintain accommodation appropriate to their needs (100% of RMHAP respondents, 95% of RHNE respondents, 85% of Community Connections respondents and 79% of NCAP respondents agreed or mostly agreed).

The vast majority of all stakeholders also generally considered that the projects helped clients into stable long-term accommodation (98% of RMHAP respondents, 93% of RHNE respondents, 90% of Community Connections respondents and 72% of NCAP respondents agreed or mostly agreed).

4.1.3 Linking to non-housing support services

In addition to assistance to access housing, all clients across the four projects were linked with other support services. This was done through the allocation of a case manager for each client, either from the funded organisation (in the case of NCAP and Community Connections) or from a partner agency (in the case of RMHAP and RHNE). There was variation between projects in terms of the type and number of services clients were linked to and how clients were linked to them.

Clients were linked to different non-housing services

In 2011/12 (see Table 8), the most common non-housing service clients were linked to was financial in the case of RMHAP (47%), RHNE (46%) and particularly NCAP (75% directly and 31% referred). The most common non-housing service Community Connections clients were linked to was legal (37% referred), followed by financial (19% direct, 7% referred).

There was considerable variation between projects in relation to other non-housing services clients were linked to. In the case of RMHAP, the next most common services were mental health (40%); education, training and employment (35%); and general health (32%). In the case of RHNE, the next most common services were drug and alcohol (33%), mental health (30%) and general health (24%). In the case of NCAP, the next common services were legal (24% direct, 6% referred) and education, training and employment (11%). In the case of Community Connections, the next most common service was education, training and employment (19% referred, 6% direct).

Clients in some projects were linked to more non-housing services than in others

While many of the clients interviewed described receiving a range of assistance to meet their needs, there was considerable variation between projects in relation to the number of non-housing services clients were linked to (see Table 8). The RMHAP and RHNE projects were more likely than NCAP and Community Connections to link a higher proportion of clients to a greater number of non-housing services. In the case of RMHAP, more than one-fifth of clients were linked to each of six services (financial; mental health; education, training and employment; general health; drug and alcohol; and legal). In the case of RHNE, more than one-fifth of clients were linked to each of four services (financial, drug and alcohol, mental health and general health). In the case of Community Connections, more than one-fifth of clients were linked to each of three services (legal; financial; and education, training and employment). In the case of NCAP, more than one-fifth of clients were linked to each of two services (financial and legal).

The RMHAP and RHNE projects were much more likely than NCAP and Community Connections to link clients to health related services (drug and alcohol, mental health and general health). This finding is somewhat unexpected given the likely health related needs of the high proportion of NCAP and Community Connections clients who were in short-term/emergency accommodation or sleeping rough (41% of NCAP clients, 60% of Community Connections clients) prior to them being provided with assistance.

When project stakeholders were asked the extent to which they agreed/disagreed with the statements “this project has been particularly effective in linking clients to the support services they need” and “this project provides clients with access to a broader range of support services than other projects in this area” in the online survey, the vast majority of RMHAP and RHNE respondents agreed or mostly agreed (96% of RMHAP respondents for both statements, 95% and 93% of RHNE respondents respectively). They were more likely than NCAP and Community Connections respondents to agree or mostly agree with the

statements (84% and 69% of Community Connections respondents respectively, 67% and 55% of NCAP respondents respectively).

Therefore, stakeholders in projects that linked clients to a greater number of non-housing services (RMHAP and RHNE) were more likely than stakeholders in projects that linked clients to a lower number of non-housing services to indicate positive views about clients being linked to appropriate and a broader range of services.

Project stakeholders were also asked the extent to which they agreed/disagreed with the statement “lack of service availability locally has limited the project’s ability to link clients to the supports they need.” While less than half of RMHAP respondents (27%) and Community Connections respondents (45%) agreed or mostly agreed, more than half of RHNE respondents (57%) and NCAP respondents (55%) agreed or mostly agreed with this statement. This finding may explain why a greater proportion of RMHAP clients than RHNE clients were referred to non-housing services. This is consistent with the finding that RHNE survey respondents were less likely than RMHAP survey respondents to agree (rather than mostly agree) that their project had been particularly effective in linking clients to the support services they need (60% of RHNE and 75% of RMHAP respondents respectively). Therefore, a lack of services available locally appears to adversely affect, at least to some extent, the effectiveness of projects in linking clients to non-housing services.

Clients were linked to non-housing services in an integrated way

Project stakeholders were asked in relation to support services the extent to which they agreed/disagreed with the statement “clients received improved integrated management through this project than usual” in the online survey. Most RMHAP, RHNE and Community Connections respondents agreed or mostly agreed, compared with less than half of NCAP respondents (85% of RMHAP respondents, 89% of RHNE respondents, 84% of Community Connections respondents, 47% of NCAP respondents). The responses of NCAP stakeholders to other questions related to working together, suggest that this finding may at least be partly explained by stakeholders considering that there was a relatively high level of integrated management prior to the project.

Clients were linked to non-housing services in different ways

The four projects differed in the way clients were linked to non-housing services through either direct service provision or referral to other agencies (see Table 8). RMHAP referred all clients to non-housing services. RHNE referred all clients to non-housing services apart from financial services which were provided directly. While Community Connections used a mix of direct and referred service provision, clients were more likely to be referred to services. NCAP used a mix of direct and referred service provision but was much more likely than the other projects to provide financial and legal services directly.

Table 8. Non-housing services provided to clients in 2011/12

Type of service provided	RMHAP (n=162)		RHNE (n=138)		NCAP (n=1,419)		Community Connections (n=476)	
	Direct	Referred	Direct	Referred	Direct	Referred	Direct	Referred
Financial	0%	47%	46%	0%	75%	31%	19%	7%
Drug & Alcohol	0%	24%	0%	33%	0%	6%	0%	3%
Education training employment	0%	35%	0%	18%	0%	11%	6%	19%
Legal	0%	24%	0%	4%	24%	6%	1%	37%
Mental Health	0%	40%	0%	30%	0%	5%	0%	6%
General Health	0%	32%	0%	24%	0%	7%	0%	2%
Family and relationship counselling	0%	9%	0%	9%	0%	9%	0%	7%
Disability support	0%	9%	0%	9%	0%	2%	0%	1%
Other	0%	60%	0%	38%	0%	23%	20%	30%

Source: HAP data portal (2011/12 clients assisted including new and ongoing clients)

Clients were also assisted through brokerage funding

The use of flexible funding is an important aspect of case management, as it allows for more flexible case plans targeted to individual clients. This was found to be true for the HAP projects, where service providers were creative in using brokerage funding to support clients maintain their tenancies.

Brokerage funding was used most commonly by clients to purchase household goods, pay their debts, attend budgeting courses and obtain financial counselling.

Project stakeholders were asked the extent to which they agreed/disagreed with the statement “this project has provided an easy access to brokerage funding” in the online survey. A vast majority of RMHAP (94%), RHNE (91%) and Community Connections (89%) respondents agreed or mostly agreed. This compares to less than three-quarters (71%) of NCAP respondents.

Project stakeholders were also asked the extent to which they agreed/disagreed with the statement “brokerage funding has been a major factor to support clients with appropriate support.” A vast majority of all project respondents agreed or mostly agreed (93% of RMHAP respondents, 86% of NCAP respondents, 84% of Community Connections respondents and 81% of RHNE respondents).

Client well-being usually improved

Project stakeholders were asked the extent to which they agreed/disagreed with the statement “clients’ well-being has improved as a result of the project” in the online survey. A significant proportion of stakeholders in each project either did not respond or indicated that they did not know. Therefore, findings need to be interpreted with some caution. Of those stakeholders who did respond, virtually all RHNE (96%), RMHAP (95%) and Community Connections (94%) respondents agreed or mostly agreed. This compares with about three-quarters (78%) of NCAP respondents.

Project stakeholders were also asked the extent to which they agreed/disagreed with the statement “clients have reduced use of acute services (e.g. hospital and emergency services) as a result of the project” in the online survey. A significant proportion of stakeholders in each project either did not respond or indicated that they did not know. Therefore, findings need to be interpreted with some caution. This finding is not unexpected given that stakeholders are unlikely to systematically obtain this information from clients. Of those stakeholders who did respond, more than three-quarters of Community Connections (86%), RHNE (80%) and RMHAP (76%) respondents and more than half (58%) of NCAP respondents agreed or mostly agreed.

These findings indicate some support for the well-being of clients, including reduced use of acute services, to have improved as a result of the project.

4.1.4 Impact on homelessness

Stakeholders are positive about impacts for participants

Project stakeholders were asked the extent to which they agreed/disagreed with the statement “clients are better able to sustain a tenancy as a result of this project” in the online survey. A significant proportion of stakeholders in each project either did not respond or indicated that they did not know. Therefore, findings need to be interpreted with some caution. Of those stakeholders who did respond, virtually all Community Connections respondents (94%), RMHAP respondents (93%) and RHNE respondents (93%) agreed or mostly agreed. This compares with less than three-quarters (72%) of NCAP respondents.

From our client interviews there is some anecdotal evidence that clients sustained their tenancy after exiting the project. Some housing providers interviewed confirmed that project clients were sustaining their tenancies. However, there is no systematic data on length of tenancies, particularly beyond the project support period, to indicate whether the project is helping to achieve sustainable housing outcomes. Only RMHAP has collected client follow-up data. This data suggests positive outcomes in that 80 per cent of clients assisted until June 2012 had sustained their tenancy until July or August 2012 when follow-up occurred. It is not possible, however, to disaggregate the data by exit date from the project to assess the sustainability of client outcomes beyond the project support period.

Broader impacts

At the state level, we know that between 2006 and 2011 the homeless population in New South Wales increased by 27 per cent, from 22,219 to 28,190 people, which equates to 40.8 homeless people per 10,000 of the population. Despite this increase, New South Wales remained sixth among Australia's states and territories in terms of the proportion of the population who are homeless.

At the regional level covered by the four projects, variations in the homeless population between 2006 and 2011 were much less than at the state level. While there was a slight increase in the homeless population in the North Coast (+3%) there was a slight decrease in the other three regions (see Table 9).

Table 9. 2006-2011 changes in the homelessness population across the four project regions

Homeless operational group	2006-2011 variation				NSW homeless
	Riverina Murray (RMHAP)	New England (RHNE)	North Coast (NCAP)	South East (Community Connections)	
Persons who are in improvised dwellings, tents or sleeping out	-50%	-53%	-2%	-48%	+19%
Persons in supported accommodation for the homeless	+14%	+41%	+11%	+48%	+28%
Persons staying temporarily with other households	+2%	-25%	-19%	-4%	+4%
Persons staying in boarding houses	-57%	+85%	+68%	+8%	+9%
Persons in other temporary lodging	0%	-75%	-15%	-17%	+49%
Persons living in 'severely' crowded dwellings	+28%	-41%	+6%	-17%	+63%
All homeless persons	-3%	-3%	+3%	-1%	+27%

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

Attributing any change directly to any of the projects is not possible. This is because there have been a wide range of reforms at the state and Commonwealth level to address homelessness and housing supply issues, including increasing tourism and mining which

have led to increases in rent and lack of vacancies in the private market in many regional areas. At best, we can say that the projects may have contributed to the changes.

Another way to look at the potential impact of the projects on homelessness is to examine eviction data over time. An expected positive impact of the projects would be a decrease in eviction for non-payment of rent. According to data provided by the Consumer, Trader and Tenancy Tribunal (CTTT) on termination on the grounds of non-payment of rent for social housing and private rental housing, the four project regions experienced different changes (see Table 10). However, most of the changes were increases and, in some cases, quite substantial increases, particularly for social housing (bearing in mind that the data covers different time periods for the projects). Again, it is not possible to attribute any change directly to any of the projects. This is because there are many factors that might contribute to any changes.

Table 10. Variation in the number of applications lodged to Consumer, Trader & Tenancy Tribunal for termination notice on the grounds of non-payment of rent (Tenancy and Social Housing Divisions)

CTTT division	Variation 2009/10 – 2011/12			Variation 2010/11 – 2011/12		
	Riverina Murray (RMHAP)	New England (RHNE)	NSW	North Coast (NCAP)	South East (Community Connections)	NSW
Tenancy Division	+18%	-12%	-1%	-2%	-4%	-1%
Social Housing Division	+11%	+51%	+14%	+24%	+3%	+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.

Variation is considered on two different timeframes because projects did not start at the same time: RMHAP and RHNE started in the last quarter of 2009/10 so that 2009/10 can be considered for baseline data to assess potential impact of the project; NCAP and Community Connections started in the last quarter of 2010/11 so that 2010/11 can be considered for baseline data.

4.2 Findings on particular target groups

This section of the report presents findings on the range of clients targeted and assisted by the projects.

4.2.1 A broad range of clients was targeted

Within the two overall service categories of early intervention and housing intensive support, the four projects targeted a broad range of clients, including single people, families, Aboriginal people, young people, and women escaping domestic violence (see

Table 11). Apart from people with complex needs, none of the projects set specific targets based on client characteristics.

Table 11. Target group by project and service type

Project	Service type	Client target group
RMHAP	Early intervention	Single adults, families, young people not in supported accommodation disengaging or at risk of disengaging with school/ family
	Housing intensive support	Single adults, families: experiencing primary homelessness, repeat users of crisis accommodation, at risk of chronic homelessness, rough sleepers
RHNE	Early intervention	Single adults, families: experiencing primary homelessness, repeat users of crisis accommodation, at risk of chronic homelessness, rough sleepers
	Housing intensive support	Single adults, families, young people not in supported accommodation disengaging or at risk of disengaging with school/ family
NCAP	Early intervention and homeless	Aboriginal families, people escaping domestic violence, young people, people leaving care, people with disabilities
Community Connections	Early intervention	Rough sleepers
	Low support	Young people with complex issues
	Medium support	Women and children escaping domestic violence
	Complex needs	Aboriginal people People exiting institutions People at risk of homelessness

4.2.2 A range of clients was assisted

While client demographic data for the RMHAP, RHNE and Community Connections projects is at the household level, it is at the individual level for NCAP (e.g. includes all members of a household assisted, including children and young people). Therefore, the findings need to be interpreted with some caution.

Women

Females made up a majority of clients in the RHNE (66%), Community Connections (64%) and RMHAP (58%) projects (see Table 12). Females made up slightly less than half (46%) of clients in the NCAP project but the inclusion of children in count means the data is impacted by male children in families who are assisted whereas in other projects this is not the case.

Young people

Young people (aged 16-24 years) made up one-quarter of both RMHAP and RHNE clients and less than one-fifth of Community Connections (16%) and NCAP (14%, although this may include dependent young people within families) clients (see Table 12).

Strategies implemented by projects to assist young people included:

- working with appropriate housing providers, for example, providers of private rental and long-term holiday rental properties, so that young people could obtain three month leases to establish a rental history
- encouraging young people to take up education and employment opportunities and referring them to these
- encouraging young people to consider shared accommodation opportunities, including through noticeboards advertising shared accommodation at TAFE institutes.

Older people

Three of the four projects reached very few people aged 65 years or over (see Table 12). Community Connections reached a relatively high proportion (10%) of clients this age .

Aboriginal people

Australian born people, other than Aboriginal people, made up the largest proportion of clients in each of the four projects (ranging from 55% of RHNE clients to 65% of NCAP clients) (see Table 12). Aboriginal people were the next most common group in each of the four projects (equal with another group in the case of Community Connections) with at least 16 per cent representation. Aboriginal people were particularly well-represented in the RHNE (42%) and RMHAP (39%) projects.

Stakeholders in the RMHAP and RHNE projects identified working closely with local Aboriginal organisations to promote the project and increase the number of referrals of Aboriginal people as being key to this success.

NCAP project stakeholders identified having Aboriginal case workers significantly contributed to its success in engaging with Aboriginal people and positively changing some of the perceptions real estate agents had about renting to Aboriginal people.

Non-English speaking people

Three of the four projects reached no or very few people born overseas (see Table 12). Community Connections reached few English speaking people born overseas, but reached a significant proportion (16%) of overseas born clients who were non-English speaking. RMHAP stakeholders identified this group as an area for improvement requiring specific actions to address.

Table 12. Demographics of clients assisted by project to end June 2012

Demographic characteristic	RMHAP* (n=273)	RHNE* (n=253)	NCAP** (n=3,311)	Community Connections (n=476)
Male	42%	34%	54%	36%
Female	58%	66%	46%	64%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%
<15 years	0%	0%	46%	0%
16–24 years	25%	25%	14%	16%
25–64 years	74%	74%	39%	74%
>65 years	2%	2%	1%	10%
Not known	0%	0%	2%	0%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	39%	42%	33%	16%
Other Australian born people	59%	55%	65%	57%
People born overseas, English speaking	2%	2%	2%	1%
People born overseas, non-English speaking	0%	0%	0%	16%
Not known	0%	1%	0%	9%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: HAP data portal

* For both Rural Interagency Homelessness Projects, client demographics data reported in the HAP data portal covered new clients as well as ongoing clients for each year.

** NCAP client demographics are reported in the HAP data portal at individual level whereas number of clients assisted is at household level.

People with complex needs

Three of the four projects (RMHAP, RHNE, and Community Connections) set a specific target for clients with complex needs, including mental health, drug and alcohol, and financial issues. No data is available to determine if these targets were met. However, data on client housing situations prior to assistance being provided (see Table 5) and non-housing support services provided (see Table 8) indicate that these projects were successful in assisting this group.

The fourth project, NCAP, while accepting a small proportion of clients with complex needs, did not set a specific target for this group. In addition, NCAP only accepted these clients where appropriate case management and others services could be easily arranged through the project's resources.

The integrated service model provided through the RMHAP and RHNE projects appears to have been most successful in meeting the needs of these clients. This is due to the wide range of services these projects linked clients to and which this group could be expected to require (see Table 8).

People in smaller towns and isolated settlements

The RMHAP and RHNE projects aimed to address a key problem in service delivery in rural areas by developing a regional service system with enhanced capacity for outreach to people in smaller towns and isolated settlements. Brokerage funding provided these projects with some flexibility to purchase services where other options were not available locally. However, lack of capacity for some services to provide outreach, in particular mental health services, remained a barrier. In some cases, identifying organisations to provide case management for clients in more remote areas was a problem.

4.3 The impact of the projects on the service system

This section of the report presents findings on various aspects that are related to the impact of the projects on the service system. This includes approaches to joint working, relationships between participating organisations, and changes to service delivery at the organisation and regional level.

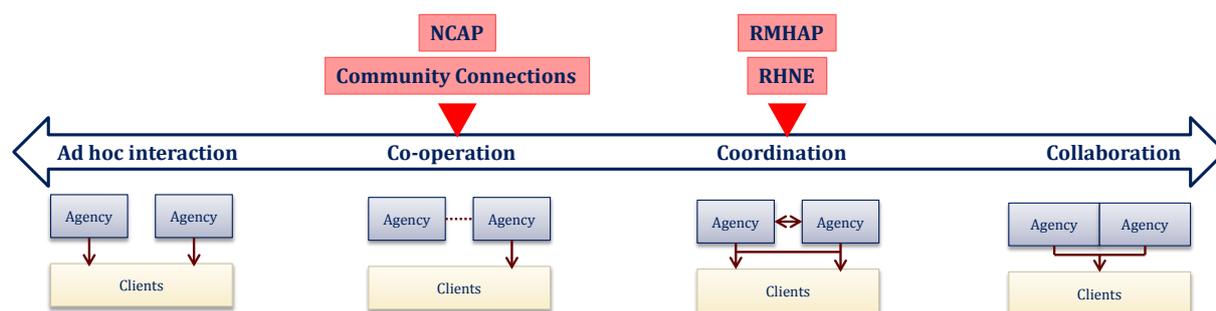
Measuring the impact of the projects on the service system is difficult, particularly given they have only been in place for a short time and broader system changes often take a long time to achieve and embed. However, the findings from the evaluation indicate that while there were some differences between projects, generally the projects had a positive impact on the service system, particularly at the regional system rather than individual project level, primarily through participating organisations working together.

4.3.1 The projects took different approaches to joint working

The literature points clearly to the need for some form of service integration or joint working for the effective provision of long-term housing support. Joint working was a key feature of all four projects, but was approached differently.

Each of the projects can be placed on a continuum of interagency activity (see Figure 1). While the continuum might suggest that collaboration is the most effective model, this is not necessarily the case. Interagency activity can be approached in a range of ways depending on the capacity of and existing arrangements within the local service system and the intended aims of working together.

Figure 1. Positioning of evaluated HAP projects on the continuum of interagency activity



Source: NSW Premier's Department, 2005, Effectiveness of Interagency Agreements, NSW Human Services CEOs Forum

The RMHAP and RHNE projects established coordination groups in key operating locations to bring together a range of local housing and other service organisations. The role of each coordination group includes assessing, approving, amending or rejecting applications and case plans, and regularly reviewing case plans. As part of the review of case plans, the designated case manager might ask for further brokerage funding or seek input from the group about other assistance needed. In this model a broad range of organisations share the responsibility for clients' case management. On the continuum of interagency activity, this could be considered 'coordination'.

NCAP had two contracted NGOs (one for each operating region) and Community Connections had one contracted NGO. Each NGO is responsible for developing and coordinating the implementation of all client case plans, and referring clients to other local services as needed. This approach is more closely aligned with the 'cooperation' delivery model, with the delivery agency being the funded NGO, working co-operatively with other organisations.

4.3.2 A range of organisations participated in the projects

Referrals

All four projects successfully established a range of referral pathways. The RMHAP project received referrals from 32 organisations, RHNE from 60 organisations, NCAP from more than 50 organisations (according to self-evaluation reports from these projects) and Community Connections from 177 organisations (according to Mission Australia data).

Specialist Homelessness Services (SHS) made approximately one-third of the referrals to RMHAP, RHNE and Community Connections projects² indicating that the projects were successful in engaging the SHS sector despite initial resistance reported in some areas.

² This data was not available for NCAP.

The finding that about two-thirds of the referrals came from non-SHS services demonstrates that these three projects were able to broaden their referral pathways beyond their “natural catchment”.

This is consistent with the findings from the project stakeholder online survey which found that more than two-thirds of stakeholders in these three projects generally considered that through the project they worked with clients they would not normally be able to reach and who were not covered by other existing initiatives (see 4.1.1).

Support and service provision

While all four projects worked with a range of organisations to provide support services to clients, the evaluation findings suggest that the RMHAP and RHNE projects worked with a broader range of organisations than NCAP and Community Connections, particularly health-related services.

Coordination of these services also differed between projects. In the RMHAP and RHNE projects responsibility for case managing clients was shared across the range of organisations. In NCAP and Community Connections, responsibility for case managing clients was the responsibility of a single organisation.

4.3.3 Most projects led to improved relationships between participating organisations

Project stakeholders were asked to rate certain aspects of relationships with other housing and service organisations before and after their involvement with projects in the online survey. Overall, project stakeholders in NCAP were less likely than stakeholders in the other projects to indicate any change in relationships with other housing and service organisations (see Table 13). This may have been at least partly because stakeholders considered their knowledge of, coordination with and trusting relationships with other local service organisations to have been relatively high before the project commenced. Determining whether this was in fact the case was outside the scope of the evaluation.

Table 13. Impact of the project on the relationships with other housing and service organisations

Type of impact	RMHAP (n=46)		RHNE (n=42)		NCAP (n=25)		Community Connections (n=20)	
	Before	After	Before	After	Before	After	Before	After
Mean score (1=None, 2=Limited, 3=Good, 4=Extensive)								
Knowledge of what other local service organisations can provide for my clients	2.6	3.4	2.7	3.5	3.2	3.3	3.1	3.6
Coordination with other local service organisations to support clients	2.6	3.3	2.8	3.5	3.1	3.1	2.9	3.5
Trusting relationships with other local service organisations	2.6	3.3	2.7	3.2	3.2	3.1	2.8	3.2

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 project.'

Stakeholders identified other impacts on the service system, especially in terms of capacity building. This was particularly evident in the two Rural Interagency Homelessness Projects. RHNE provided interagency training on integrated, individualised, and coordinated case management and planning. Stakeholders indicated this built capacity in the local area through increased case management skills and a consistent approach.

Stakeholders from the RMHAP project reported coordination group meetings provided education for those involved about legal issues, through the Legal Aid solicitor, and mental health, through mental health organisation representatives.

4.3.4 Working together changed the way some organisations delivered services and achieved regional system changes to varying degrees

About two-thirds of project stakeholders surveyed in three of the four projects generally considered that working together changed the way their organisation delivers services (70% of RMHAP respondents, 69% of RHNE respondents and 63% of Community Connections respondents agreed or mostly agreed). Half of NCAP project stakeholders surveyed generally considered that working together changed the way their organisation delivers services. This is consistent with the relative high ratings by NCAP project stakeholders of coordination with other local service organisations to support clients and trusting relationships with other local service organisations before the project commenced (see section 4.3.3).

More than three-quarters of project stakeholders surveyed in three of the four projects generally considered that working together in the project has achieved regional system

changes (e.g. in identification, assessment and referral; discharge planning; capacity building; policy development; case coordination) (83% of Community Connections respondents, 82% of RHNE respondents and 76% of RMHAP respondents agreed or mostly agreed). Half of NCAP project stakeholders surveyed generally considered that working together in the project has achieved regional system changes. Again, this may be, at least in part, a reflection of the relatively good relationships between organisations stakeholders considered existed before the project commenced (see section 4.3.3).

4.4 The critical factors for success

This section of the report presents the factors the evaluation identified as being critical to the success of the projects and improved outcomes for clients.

Commitment

A high level of organisational commitment was demonstrated by key participating organisations in the projects.

This usually included at the leadership level within participating organisations, particularly in the RMHAP and RHNE projects. Project stakeholders in the RMHAP and RHNE projects were much more likely than project stakeholders in NCAP and Community Connections to indicate in response to the online survey that the leadership of their organisation was strongly or quite strongly committed to the project (92% of RMHAP respondents, 74% of RHNE respondents, 60% of Community Connections respondents and 47% of NCAP respondents).

The interviews with project stakeholders indicate strongly that there was generally a high level of commitment at all levels within each project. In particular, the Regional Homelessness Committees and other project governance structures provided strong platforms to address any systemic issues projects encountered, especially for the RMHAP and Community Connections projects.

Coordinated approach to integrated case management

All projects involved integrated case management through the coordination of a range of government and non-government organisations to assist clients. The RMHAP and RHNE projects used a model of integrated case management based on shared responsibility between organisations (coordination approach). NCAP and Community Connections had a more conventional integrated case management model involving a single organisation, that is the contracted organisation, providing all case management (cooperation approach).

The RMHAP and RHNE projects established coordination groups at the local level through which participating organisations, which included new actors interested in the approach as well as stakeholders from the homelessness service system, shared the responsibility for approving and case managing clients. This approach proved very effective in providing a coordinated response to clients with multiple issues, and generated new solutions for

supporting clients. It improved the service system by enabling the sharing of information, increasing knowledge about effective ways to meet the needs of people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, providing a platform for training and building trusting relationships, and improving accountability for service delivery.

That the RMHAP and RHNE projects were more successful than NCAP and Community Connections in linking clients to a wider range of non-housing services, particularly health-related services (which would be expected given the living situations of clients prior to being assisted by the project), suggests that the coordination approach to integrated case management is more effective than the cooperative approach in meeting the needs of people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, at least where these people have other high or complex needs. Despite ongoing service capacity issues in some local areas, these two projects provide an exemplar in achieving integrated delivery of services to people experiencing, or at risk of, homelessness.

Effective coordination by funded organisation

All four projects were delivered or coordinated by funded organisations that were able to establish processes, templates and guidelines and helped to bring together very different organisations to work towards the common aim of achieving positive outcomes for clients. The funded organisations were a key driver in each project. Staff coordinating the projects appeared to have the necessary project management and negotiation skills.

Some project stakeholders interviewed felt that funded organisations had more flexibility than government agencies which can often be restricted by policy guidelines, for example, in determining client eligibility and managing brokerage funds.

Flexible, holistic and client-centred approach

All four projects used a flexible, holistic and client-centred approach which involved clients in setting achievable goals and addressed other needs in addition to housing.

All projects provided a range of non-housing services, most commonly financial but also legal; education, training and employment; and health-related services. The evaluation found that the RMHAP and RHNE projects were more successful than NCAP and Community Connections in linking clients to a wider range of non-housing services, particularly health related services (i.e. general health, mental health, drug and alcohol). This could be expected given that all projects reached a significant number of people who were living in short-term/emergency accommodation or sleeping rough prior to being assisted by the project.

Several project stakeholders identified legal services and budget counselling as making a key contribution to successful client outcomes. Legal services, for instance, were instrumental in helping clients to engage more generally in the project by achieving successful outcomes quickly (for example, through reducing client debts), thereby building client trust (Matrix on Board, 2013).

As previously mentioned, stakeholders in projects that linked clients to a greater number of non-housing services (RMHAP and RHNE) were more likely than stakeholders in projects that linked clients to a lower number of non-housing services to indicate positive views about clients being linked to appropriate and a broader range of services (see section 4.1.3).

Brokerage funding also contributed to the effectiveness of projects in meeting the needs of clients. Brokerage funding was used flexibly, including to purchase household goods and to purchase case management and services not otherwise available. More than three-quarters of project stakeholders who responded to the online survey generally considered that brokerage funding has been a major factor in providing clients with appropriate support.

Innovative approaches to housing solutions

A majority of project stakeholders for each project generally considered the project to have found new and innovative ways to secure housing for clients (85% of RMHAP respondents, 81% of RHNE respondents, 74% of Community Connections respondents and 58% of NCAP respondents agreed or mostly agreed).

Projects have been particularly successful in supporting clients to access the private rental market, a housing option historically often neglected in homelessness programs. Clients housed in private rental properties made up a substantial proportion of clients assisted across all projects (76% in NCAP, which had a specific emphasis on the private rental market; 37% in each of the two Rural Interagency Homelessness Projects and 31% in Community Connections).

NCAP had the strongest focus on facilitating clients' access to the private rental market. The two funded service providers developed a comprehensive marketing strategy. This strategy relied on the recruitment of staff with both case management and marketing skills who could gain the confidence of real estate agents.

Ongoing client support and supervision provided by the project also helped to engage real estate agents. NCAP case workers support clients in the early stages of their tenancy, for example, by helping them to gather all required documents (100 points of ID); and advising them on how to prepare an application, attend an inspection and put together a payment plan in case of financial difficulties.

Real estate agents appreciated that the project provided ongoing support to tenants and the benefits of this with fewer tenancy management problems, evictions and associated loss of rent. Where relationships were well-established, real estate agents could advise the project when tenants were in arrears or if there were complaints, and the project could support clients to maintain their tenancy. This was considered a key success factor within the model.

Effective engagement with Aboriginal people

All projects were successful in reaching Aboriginal people. Aboriginal people were the second most common (after other Australian born people) group in each of the four projects (39% of RMHAP clients, 42% of RHNE clients, 33% of NCAP clients and 16% of Community Connections clients).

In the case of the RMHAP and RHNE projects, this success was achieved by working closely with local Aboriginal organisations to promote the project and increase the number of referrals of Aboriginal people.

In the case of NCAP, this success was achieved by Aboriginal case workers engaging with Aboriginal people and positively changing some of the perceptions real estate agents had about renting to Aboriginal people.

These strategies are consistent with effective strategies for engaging with Aboriginal people identified by the literature review.

4.5 Key challenges for the service delivery model

This section of the report presents the key challenges that the evaluation identified for the service delivery model and the challenges that were faced in the implementation of the projects.

HAP projects brought cultural change

The initial stage of each project provided the opportunity to raise awareness of the project within the homelessness service system, in some cases to overcome a level of initial resistance, and to refine all project processes, templates and guidelines. The projects represented a different approach to homelessness support because they promoted a shift from crisis intervention and because new funding was involved. In some cases, funding was provided to organisations that had not previously worked with homeless clients.

The new approach required initial consultation with stakeholders, in particular specialist homelessness services (SHS), to promote the new model and sometimes to overcome initial resistance where service staff did not appear comfortable with the broad direction of housing reform, and the HAP project in particular. Initial project consultations included explaining and refining eligibility criteria, in particular clarifying differences from SHS clients.

There were also some discussions around the confidentiality of client information in the RMHAP and RHNE projects when applications and case plans were discussed at local coordination group meetings. Questions about client confidentiality arose in some projects and were a particular issue for the RMHAP project, where advice from one agency's legal department was sought, and client consent forms refined as a result. In some projects, there are some outstanding concerns, although the expectations that services will freely

share information (with client consent) is reflected in key reform plans such as *Going Home Staying Home*.

Implementation of the projects also raised some questions about the appropriateness of some Housing NSW policies, particularly around eligibility criteria, for example, in relation to previous client history. In some cases, housing staff applied criteria in a way that was flexible enough to enable the client to access the housing product or service they were applying for. However, staff were not always comfortable doing this.

Meeting demand within available staff resources

One of the most common challenges reported by stakeholders was a lack of resources available to deal with high demand. This is the case within the funded organisations, but also within the local services, which the projects are relying on to deliver case management and/or support services.

All funded organisations faced challenges in the starting phase of the project to identify and dedicate enough skilled staff to the project. For most of them, it required new staff to be recruited, delaying the capacity of these organisations to meet the immediate demand, which was particularly high in South East NSW. Both NCAP and Community Connections reports still having waiting lists at the time of the evaluation. This indicates that the number of project staff is not sufficient to provide timely assistance to all clients referred, a critical factor for effective long-term housing identified in the literature.

In the RMHAP and RHNE projects, where the responsibility for case managing clients is shared across a number of organisations, some project stakeholders from local organisations reported that lack of capacity to provide case management was a key barrier to taking on more clients. Both projects offer the option of brokerage funding to pay for case management hours. However, such funding is not always sufficient and does not provide a sustainable framework for human resources planning.

Lack of affordable housing

The lack of affordable housing, in particular social housing, is an ongoing challenge for project staff. Each project faced unique locational challenges, such as mining or tourism which impact significantly on the availability of affordable private rental housing.

A majority of project stakeholders in each of the four projects generally considered that the limited availability of affordable housing locally reduced the project's ability to assist clients into accommodation (82% of NCAP respondents, 75% of RHNE respondents, 70% of Community Connections respondents and 55% of RMHAP respondents agreed or mostly agreed). More than half of the RHNE (57%) respondents and Community Connections (55%) respondents agreed.

This is somewhat consistent with the finding that the NCAP and Community Connections projects, particularly the latter, were less likely than the RMHAP and RHNE projects to

result in clients being housed in social housing or private rental housing (see Table 7 where 44% of Community Connections clients and 87% of NCAP clients were housed in these types of housing). Therefore, it appears that the projects, particularly Community Connections, would have been more effective if more affordable housing was available locally.

Complex needs of clients

The range of needs and issues that clients present with is another key challenge for projects in assisting clients to access and maintain long-term housing.

One of the main issues is a poor rental history, which makes it difficult to access housing—either social or private. Projects worked effectively to address this problem, including through some creative solutions, for example, involving arrangements with private landlords around short-term tenancies that enabled clients to build up a rental history.

Clients with complex needs also need to be linked to a range of services to maintain their tenancy effectively. It appears that the Rural Interagency Homelessness Projects were the most effective in linking clients to a broad range of services, particularly health-related (general health, mental health, drug and alcohol); education, training and employment; and disability services.

The lack of availability of some services was commonly mentioned as a challenge to assist clients in regional areas. The lack of service capacity is particularly severe in the health and mental health areas. In response to the online survey, less than half of the project stakeholders in the RMHAP project and Community Connections compared to more than half of project stakeholders in the RHNE project and NCAP generally considered that lack of service availability locally limited the project's ability to link clients to the supports they need.

5. Findings on costs

5.1 Summary of cost analysis of individual projects

This section presents a summary each project's financial position—planned and annual income, expenditure and cost structure, and estimates its financial position at the end of project period.

5.1.1 Riverina Murray HAP project

The Riverina Murray HAP project was allocated a budget of \$712,000 per year over three years, and an additional \$200,000 per year for legal services paid directly to Legal Aid. Actual expenditure reported by the funded organisation—RDA Murray—to the end of June 2012 amounted to \$1,766,065, in line with the total project income RDA Murray reported for the period. The balance between income and expenditure was positive in the first two financial years of operation, creating a surplus, which was carried over and spent in 2011/12.

The project had been in operation for 28 months (four months in 2009/10 and two full financial years) by the end of June 2012. In this time, brokerage—for goods and services—made up the majority (64%) of project costs, followed by staff costs (30%) and operating costs (6%).

Total project expenses to the end of June 2012 (\$1,766,065) represent 83 per cent of the initial budget, with an additional year of operation left. Assuming the same amount of expenses for 2012/13 as 2011/12, the project would exceed the initial budget (\$2,136,000) by 17 per cent or by 22 per cent if we consider the budget specified in the service specification (\$2,040,000), but with four more months of operation than initially planned.

5.1.2 Rural Homelessness New England project

The RHNE project was allocated a budget of \$712,000 per year over three years. The income actually received by the funded organisation—Tamworth Family Support—as reported in their financial statements, was lower than the planned allocation of funding for each financial year because of delays in recruiting clients to the project (\$125,745 less in 2009/10 and \$289,589 less in 2010/ 11). Other factors may also explain the project's lower expenses in the initial years. Tamworth Family Support did not have higher operating costs in the first months of the project (2009/10) as is usually the case when implementing a new program, suggesting the organisation relied on existing resources (infrastructure, systems and staff) to start the project as it was already strongly involved in the homelessness system. Another reason for unexpended funding may be the underutilisation of brokerage funding to fund case management.

The funding not expended in 2010/11 is being used to cover the extension of the project for an additional six months to the end of June 2013.

The project started operating in January 2012. The total project expenditure reported to the end of June 2012 (30 months of operation) was \$1,287,559, which is \$1,225 under the total project income RHNE reported for the period (\$1,288,784).

Over the life of the project to June 2012, staff costs were the main expense (37%) followed by operating costs (32%) and brokerage costs (31%).

To the end of June 2012, total project expenses (\$1,287,559) represent 60 per cent of the initial budget, with an additional year of operation left. Assuming expenses are the same in 2012/13 as they were in 2011/12, the project expenditure would come in at 91 per cent of the initial budget (\$2,136,000). This is 96 per cent of the budget specified in the service specification (\$2,040,000), even with the extension of the operating time by six months.

5.1.3 North Coast Accommodation Project

The North Coast Accommodation Project (NCAP) was allocated a total approved budget of \$4.809m over three years, with 57 per cent allocated to On Track and 43 per cent to New Horizons. 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, a total of \$2,426,673 in funding for both organisations to the end of June 2012.

On Track began delivering the project on the Far North Coast in March 2011 and New Horizons began on the Mid North Coast in July 2012 after completing recruitment and setting up processes. The total project expenditure to the end of June 2012 (16 months of operation) was \$2,397,666—\$29,007 under the total project income received by On Track and New Horizons from HAP funding. The project surplus for the first financial year was \$28,884 in 2010/11 and \$123 in 2011/12. Both service providers had their 2010/11 surplus deducted from their payment the following financial year.

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%).

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.

5.1.4 South East NSW Community Connections project

The South East NSW Community Connections project was initially allocated a budget of \$1,525,903 per year over three years and an additional \$100,000 per year for legal services. The actual expenditure reported by the funded organisation—Mission Australia—

in their audited financial statements indicates that their expenditure was \$49,007 more than their income for the first three months of operation (April–June 2011 quarter) and \$644,882 below their income in the 2011/12 financial year. The income for the project's first quarter of operation (April–June 2011) consisted of \$342,964 in HAP funding less \$100,504 capital expenditure towards the purchase of motor vehicles, as a one-off initial establishment cost. Mission Australia reported that part of the \$644,882 surplus from 2011/12 was returned to Housing NSW and part was provided to fund inter-agency and community development positions, to improve interaction between local services.

The project commenced operations in April 2011. To the end of June 2012, the total project expenditure is \$1,643,604, which is \$595,875 under the total project income Mission Australia reported for the period (\$2,339,984).

Over the whole life of the project to June 2012, operating, staff and brokerage costs represented a similar proportion of total expenditure (34%, 33% and 32% respectively). During the first quarter of operation (April–June 2011), staff costs represented only 12 per cent of total costs, compared to 38 per cent in 2011/12 financial year, reflecting the fact that in its initial months of operation the project was understaffed.

To the end of June 2012, total project expenses (\$1,643,604) represent 36 per cent of the initial three year budget, with one year of operation remaining. Assuming the same level of expenses and income in 2012/13 as that incurred in 2011/12, by the end of 2012/13 financial year the project would have only used 65 per cent of the initial budget (\$4,577,709) or 70 per cent of the budget specified in the service specification (\$4,272,450).

5.1.5 Comparison of cost structure across the four projects³

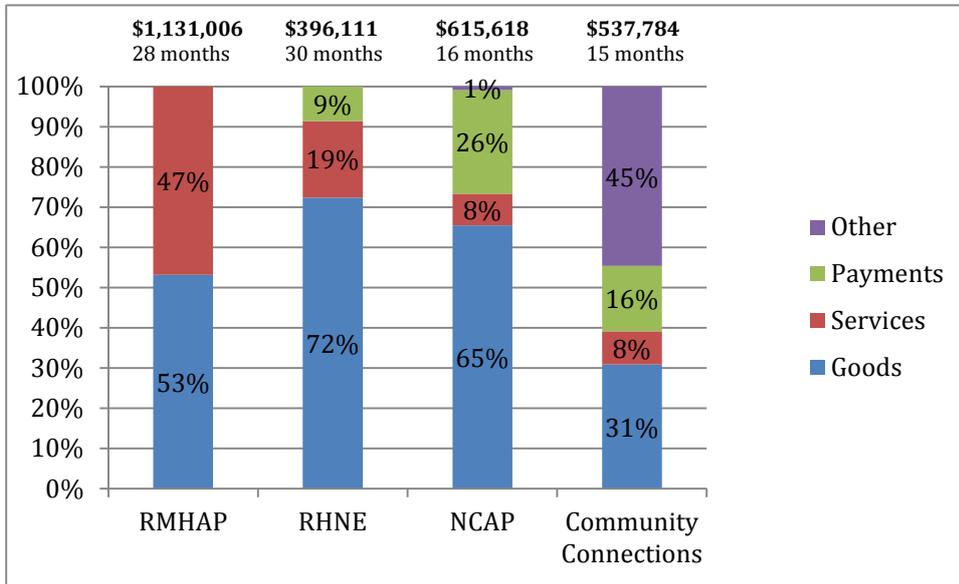
The projects had different timeframes. While the two Rural Interagency Homelessness Projects (RMHAP and RHNE) had been in operation for more than two years at the time of the evaluation, NCAP and Community Connections had only been operating for just over one year. Their expenditure also differed. For example, RHNE spent \$1.3 million over 30 months, while NCAP spent \$2.4 million over 15 months.

The distribution of costs within each project (see Figure 2) reflects the different approaches to service delivery within the four projects. The three projects providing case management internally—RHNE, NCAP and Community Connections—have very similar cost structures, with approximately one-third of total expenses spent on staff, one-third on operating costs and one-third on brokerage. Staff costs form the greatest proportion of expenses in NCAP, where client numbers are considerably higher than other projects. A relatively low proportion of RMHAP's costs (30%) are staff costs; the majority (64%) are on brokerage, reflecting RDA's role as broker and coordinator of services, including case management.

³ The full breakdown of expenses across the four projects is provided in Appendix 5.

Across the four projects, there was a wide range in average actual monthly expenses. To the end of June 2012, these were \$42,919 for RHNE, \$63,067 for RMHAP, \$109,574 for Community Connections and \$149,854 for NCAP.

Figure 2. Distribution of expenses across the four projects

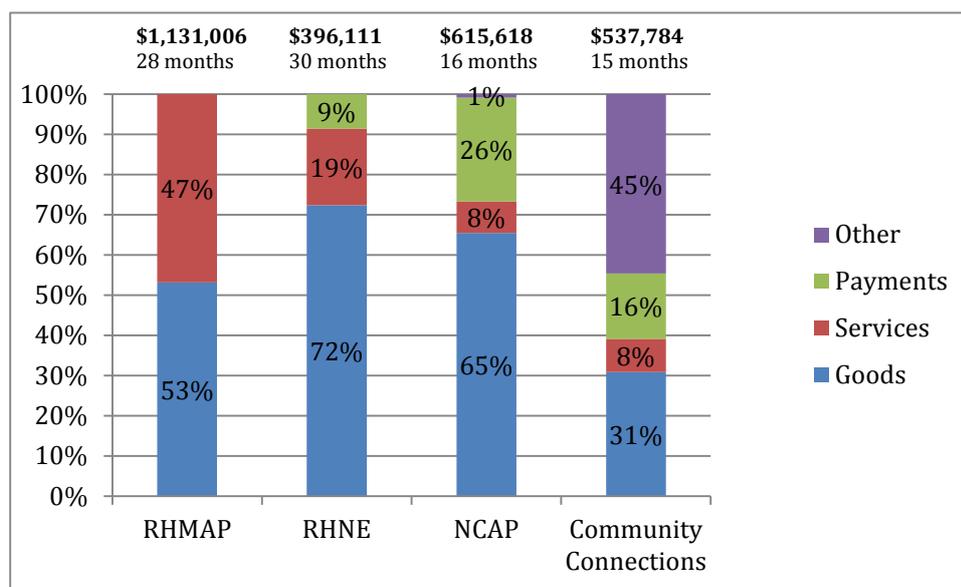


Source: Funded organisations' financial statements

A breakdown of brokerage costs (see Figure 3) further reflects differences in approach by each of the four projects. Given that brokerage paid for case management within RMHAP's brokerage costs, services constituted the highest proportion of brokerage costs in this project. While RHNE had a similar organisational model to RMHAP, the three case managing organisations made limited use of brokerage for case management hours. Consequently, services constituted a lower proportion of brokerage costs in these projects.

NCAP used brokerage funding mainly for goods to help clients establish their tenancies (for example, payment of rental arrears) which is reflected in a relatively high proportion (25%) of brokerage being attributed to payments. Community Connections used a high proportion of brokerage (45%) for temporary accommodation, classified as an 'other' type of brokerage cost.

Figure 3. Distribution of brokerage costs across the four projects



Source: Funded organisations' financial statements

All funded organisations reported attempts to reduce the cost of goods purchased, for example, by buying second-hand goods from charities, bulk-purchasing or establishing reimbursement plans with clients when appropriate.

5.2 Cost-effectiveness of the approaches

We used three methods to explore cost-effectiveness of the approaches used by each of the four projects.

1. We calculated the average client cost across each financial year.
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 2011/12 average client costs across projects noting differences in client type that may explain any cost differentials.

5.2.1 Average client cost over time

Pilot projects usually have higher average client costs in the first year of operation due to establishment costs. However, this is not always the case and to some extent can be explained by contextual issues. For example, funded organisations, such as Tamworth Family Support (RHNE), that had an established structure and staff already delivering similar services in the homelessness area prior to the project, reported lower establishment costs than other funded organisations.

The RMHAP and RHNE projects and NCAP each had a decreasing average client cost, reflecting higher costs in the first financial year of the project. This was especially the case for organisations like RDA Murray (RMHAP) and New Horizons (NCAP) that had to recruit

key project staff and set up new processes to be able to deliver the project. These projects became more efficient over time.

Community Connections is the only project in which the average client cost increased. This was due mainly to a shortage of project staff in the first months of operation and the hiring of additional staff in 2011/12. The average client costs should decrease in 2012/13 in line with the other projects.

5.2.2 Actual average client cost compared to the budgeted average client cost

Another way to assess the cost-effectiveness of the projects is to compare the actual average client cost with the budgeted client cost outlined in the initial project plan. As shown in Table 14, the average client cost for each project was well below the budgeted client cost.

The main lesson from this is that the costing used in the initial project plans clearly over-estimated actual client costs. For example, the very high estimated client cost in the initial budget for Community Connections (\$50,000) is more consistent with case management support involving caseloads much smaller than were possible within Community Connections. In practice, while Mission Australia supported high needs clients, given the high number of clients who were assisted, it is unlikely that as much as \$50,000 per client was spent on each high needs client.

Table 14. Average actual client cost compared to budgeted client cost

Project	Budgeted average client cost	Actual average client cost 2011/12*
RMHAP	\$8,068	\$4,505 (n=162)
RHNE	\$8,068	\$4,793 (n=138)
NCAP	\$10,000	\$1,580 (n=1,419)
Community Connections	\$14,698	\$2,841 (n=476)

Source: Funded organisations' financial statements

*Includes ongoing and new clients

5.2.3 Comparison across the four projects

There are differences between each of the four projects, including in the types of clients targeted, which need to be kept in mind when considering the variation in average client cost across the projects. Table 15 presents an overview of each project's key characteristics in terms of the service delivery context, and volume and mix of clients assisted, which should be taken into account in comparing project costs.

Table 15. Comparison of average client cost for each project

Project	Service delivery context	Volume of clients assisted	Client mix (actual)	Average client cost 2011/12*
RMHAP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Rural area with small towns ▪ Large number of organisations involved in clients' case management 	203 clients over 28 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Early Intervention: 45% ▪ Housing intensive support: 55% 	\$4,505 (n=162)
RHNE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Rural area with some towns ▪ Large number of organisations involved in clients' case management 	190 clients over 30 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Early Intervention: 47% ▪ Housing intensive support: 53% 	\$4,793 (n=138)
NCAP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Focus on supporting lower needs clients to enter the private market ▪ 2 service providers: On Track in the Far North Coast and New Horizons in the Mid North Coast ▪ Support provided to clients mainly to prepare applications to private rental 	1,500 clients over 16 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Low need support: 62% ▪ Medium need support: 27% ▪ High need support: 11% 	\$1,580 (n=1,419)
Community Connections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mission Australia delivering case management for all clients across the region ▪ High demand ▪ Strong lack of affordable housing 	476 clients over 15 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Low need support: 12% ▪ Medium need support: 60% ▪ High need support: 28% 	\$2,841 (n=476)

Source: Funded organisations' financial statements

*Includes ongoing and new clients

The two Rural Interagency Homelessness Projects (RMHAP and RHNE) are based on the same service delivery model and, despite some differences (i.e. in arrangements for case management), supported a similar number of clients for a similar mix of early intervention and housing intensive support clients. The RMHAP assisted 203 clients over 28 months at an average client cost of \$4,505 in 2011/12 (considered a typical year), while RHNE delivered services to 190 clients over 30 months at an average client cost of \$4,793 in 2011/12.

Because these two projects are based on a similar model, they can be more appropriately compared than the other projects. Despite an earlier start (in January 2010 compared to March 2010 for RMHAP), RHNE assisted fewer clients at a slightly higher cost. While

RMHAP is performing slightly better in terms of cost-effectiveness, both projects proved to be cost-effective when compared to the initial budget and to external benchmarks (see section 5.3.1). Differences in the service delivery arrangements for case management in the RMHAP do not seem to be a key influencing factor in the cost-effectiveness of the approach. This is because both projects involved a large number of organisations in case management—32 for RMHAP and 42 for RHNE and targeted a similar mix of clients.

NCAP had the lowest average client cost. However, it is difficult to compare it with the other projects because it assisted many more clients, worked with a high proportion of low needs clients and had a different service emphasis. Supporting clients to enter the private rental market means support services mainly involve helping clients to prepare applications and attend private rental inspections, and advising them on maintaining their tenancy. While NCAP coordinated case management with several support providers for their high needs clients, these clients made up a much smaller proportion of the client mix than in the other three projects, where coordinated case management was used for all (RMHAP and RHNE) or most (Community Connections) clients.

Community Connections' average annual client cost was in between the other three—higher than the cost for NCAP and lower than the cost for the two Rural Interagency Homelessness Projects. The project assisted more than twice as many clients as RMHAP and RHNE in about half the time. While it did support some lower needs clients, these made up only a small proportion of the project's client mix; 60 per cent of the project's clients had medium support needs and 28 per cent had high needs.

In Community Connections, 44 per cent of project clients assisted to access housing were recorded as living temporarily with family/ friends, while RMHAP and RHNE housing intensive support clients were assisted only into long-term housing (social housing or private rental market). Because Community Connections is still assisting a number of clients with temporary housing options, it could be seen as providing less value for money than the two Rural Interagency Homelessness Projects, which are more in line with the initial long-term housing and support model to provide timely access to long-term housing.

5.3 Important findings on cost differentials for different client groups

There are no specific requirements for cost reporting in service specifications. Funded organisations' accounting systems does not allow for disaggregation of costs by component (early intervention and housing intensive support) or by client type. This kind of breakdown would require funded organisations to use an activity-based accounting system that would allocate expenses to individual clients, and could then be linked to client or service characteristics (for example, support package, need level or target group).

In the absence of such data, the only differentials we can identify are those identified when comparing projects with a different client mix. The main difference in terms of target groups assisted is between NCAP and the other three projects. While NCAP is focused on

lower needs clients who can feasibly enter the private rental market, the other three projects work with more clients with higher service needs. The average client cost is therefore much lower for NCAP than for the other projects because targeting lower needs clients enables a higher number of clients to be assisted within a given budget. Supporting high needs clients requires a higher financial investment to achieve positive outcomes. In the long run, this higher investment may be offset by these clients' reduced use of acute services.

5.3.1 Cost benchmarking

While it is difficult to identify relevant and appropriate external benchmarks against which to compare costs, it is important to put project costs into perspective. In the literature we identified a 2008 AHURI study on the cost-effectiveness of homeless programs in Western Australia which might be considered an appropriate benchmark as it is from the Australian context and quite recent compared to other available studies. This research looked at the cost-effectiveness of 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 re-enter into the community on release
 - The Supported Housing Assistance Program (SHAP) and Private Rental Support and Advocacy Program (PRSAP), designed to assist public and private tenants maintain their tenancies.

While slightly different, the Western Australian Homelessness Prevention Programs can be considered comparable to the four HAP projects evaluated. The TASS and Re-entry Link program are similar to the housing intensive support component of the two Rural Interagency Homelessness Projects (RMHAP and RHNE), and the SHAP and PRSAP are similar to the early intervention component of these projects, as well as NCAP and Community Connections. The average client cost for SAAP gives an indication of the client cost of programs prior to the shift from crisis intervention to prevention/ long-term housing intervention introduced by HAP.

A summary of the average client cost for these programs, adjusted for inflation to 2012 AUD, as compared to the average client cost in each HAP project is provided in Table 16.

Table 16. Average client cost for comparable homelessness programs

Project	Average client cost
SAAP	\$ 4,190
TASS	\$ 12,991
Re-entry Link – no accommodation	\$ 1,654
Re-entry Link – with accommodation	\$ 5,673
SHAP	\$ 3,474
PRSAP	\$ 2,575
RMHAP	\$4,505
RHNE	\$4,793
NCAP	\$1,580
Community Connections	\$2,841

Source: Flatau et al, 2008.

The average client cost for all four HAP projects compares well with other homelessness programs that include a housing component like TASS and Re-entry link (with accommodation). The costs for NCAP and Community Connections compare well with those for SHAP, PRSAP and the Re-entry program.

6. Conclusions

6.1 Positive results provide a basis for lessons from the projects

Overall, the four projects have been largely effective in reaching their intended target groups and producing positive and reasonably cost-effective outcomes for their clients, at least in the short term. However, there were some differences between projects.

The four projects differ in terms of the approach to service integration or joint working and delivery mechanism for case management. The two Rural Interagency Homelessness Projects (RMHAP and RHNE) achieved a more collaborative approach to joint working than the other projects (NCAP and Community Connections). However, it is clear from the literature that to be effective joint working needs to be appropriate for the particular context and project aims. Stakeholders in the other two projects were generally satisfied with the approach taken. There is insufficient evidence to demonstrate whether different outcomes were achieved for clients through any one approach.

The evaluation findings suggest that the RMHAP and RHNE projects (which provided mainly social housing) and NCAP (which provided mainly private rental housing) were more successful than Community Connections in providing clients with more long-term, rather than temporary, types of housing. However, the evaluation findings also indicate that a lack of affordable housing available locally adversely affects, at least to some extent, the effectiveness of projects in providing clients with long-term, stable accommodation.

The evaluation findings also suggest that the RMHAP and RHNE projects were more successful than NCAP and Community Connections in linking clients to a wider range of non-housing services, particularly health-related services. This could be expected given that all projects reached a significant number of people who would be likely to benefit from non-housing services. However, a lack of services available locally adversely affects, at least to some extent, the effectiveness of projects in linking clients to such services.

The overall conclusion about the projects' success is supported by the views of the majority of stakeholder survey respondents who generally indicated they would like the project to continue beyond its planned termination date (97% of RHNE respondents, 96% of RMHAP respondents, 91% of NCAP respondents and 85% of Community Connections respondents agreed or mostly agreed). However, only a small proportion of survey respondents indicated that their organisation had secured some resources for continuing the project beyond its planned termination date (28% of Community Connections respondents, 26% of RHNE respondents, 18% of RMHAP respondents, 9% of NCAP respondents agreed or mostly agreed).

Key lessons learnt

Findings from the four projects suggest the following key lessons:

- Referral and assessment processes
 - It can be more difficult to identify those at risk of homelessness than those already homeless.
 - It is valuable to have agreed and transparent processes, including for decisions about client assessment and allocation of brokerage funding, from the outset.
- Supporting clients
 - Working together better supports clients; integrated case management is effective.
 - Case management should be holistic, flexible, strengths-based (i.e. capacity building), client-focused and reflect client needs.
 - The relationship between client and case worker is key, consistent with the literature.
 - Brokerage funding has benefits but also challenges where it is used to purchase goods for clients. It can also be useful to fund services and case management, but is insufficient to provide all additional services needed.
 - Support from legal services can achieve successful outcomes for clients quickly (for example, through assisting client to address debts and other outstanding legal issues), which in turn builds clients' trust in the project.
- Housing provision
 - Relationship building with real estate agents supports clients' access to private rental accommodation.
 - Where social housing is limited, agreements with Housing NSW and community housing providers can facilitate access to housing.
- Service system
 - Joint organisation responsibility for case management (provided through coordination groups established in the RMHAP and RHNE projects) can have additional benefits. These benefits include increasing organisations' knowledge about issues affecting people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness through information sharing, generating new ideas through collaborative problem solving, and increasing accountability through regular meetings. Such benefits are likely to result in more effective service provision.
 - A coordinator can play a vital role in driving the project and facilitating relationships between a broad range of organisations.
 - Time is needed to build trust, particularly where agencies have not worked well together or had issues in the past, as reflected in the literature on effective partnerships.

6.2 Implications for the future response to homelessness

Shift from crisis to early intervention, prevention and breaking the cycle

The system has traditionally been focused on crisis responses, and while there were some challenges associated with implementing this shift, all four projects have been successful in

assisting people at risk of homelessness. This target group represented between one-quarter and almost half of the clients assisted by each project.

Integrated case management

While all projects provided integrated case management, in that clients were linked to a range of targeted services, they differed in the way services worked together to provide case management. The RMHAP and RHNE projects used a 'coordination' approach (see Figure 1) through establishing coordination groups in key operating locations to bring together a range of local housing and other service organisations which provided services and shared responsibility for case management.

NCAP and Community Connections used a 'cooperative' approach (see Figure 1) through a single organisation in a smaller number of locations being responsible for case management and referring clients to other services as needed.

The RMHAP and RHNE projects were more successful than NCAP and Community Connections in linking clients to a wider range of non-housing services, particularly health-related services (which would be expected given the living situations of clients prior to being assisted by the project). This suggests that the 'coordination' approach to integrated case management is more effective than the 'cooperative' approach in meeting the needs of people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, at least where these people have other high or complex needs.

Workforce development

The experience of the projects suggests that organisations participating in an inter-agency project to address and prevent homelessness will have varying levels of existing capacity to provide case management. In the RMHAP and RHNE projects, participating organisations benefitted from direct training in integrated case management and from incidental training during local coordination group meetings, especially on legal and mental health matters when representatives of specialised organisations participated.

Service capacity

Individual homelessness projects lack power to address some systemic issues, particularly the lack of some support services, such as mental health services; and the lack of services in some locations, particularly outlying areas. They also lack the capacity to address the lack of available affordable housing options. These issues need to be addressed at a system level.

6.3 Implications for specific client groups covered in this evaluation

The long-term housing and support projects, unlike the other projects subject to extended evaluations, did not have a specific target group within the homeless or at risk of homelessness populations from which we can draw key learnings.

All projects targeted a broad range of clients, including single people, families, Aboriginal people, young people, women escaping domestic violence and people with complex needs. While all projects were successful in assisting a range of clients, particularly Aboriginal people and young people (16-24 years), and for one project a relatively large number of non-English speaking people born overseas, the specific outcomes for these groups is not known.

There was anecdotal evidence to indicate that the strategies below are effective for reaching and assisting Aboriginal people and young people.

Aboriginal people

- working closely with local Aboriginal organisations to promote the project and increase the number of referrals
- Aboriginal case workers engaging with Aboriginal people and positively changing some of the perceptions real estate agents had about renting to Aboriginal people.

Young people

- working with appropriate housing providers, for example, providers of private rental and long-term holiday rental properties, so that young people could obtain three month leases to establish a rental history
- encouraging young people to take up education and employment opportunities and referring them to these
- encouraging young people to consider shared accommodation opportunities, including through noticeboards advertising shared accommodation at TAFE institutes.

6.4 Other insights gained that can enrich the evidence base

The evaluation provides further evidence of the benefit of interagency working. All four projects achieved successful outcomes for clients through joint work. However, the impact on the service system seems to be more significant and more sustainable for the RMHAP and RHNE projects than for NCAP and Community Connections. The RMHAP and RHNE projects established effective coordination processes in the form of local coordination groups that enabled participating organisations to share responsibility for case management, and provide clients with access to the widest range of services, including financial; legal; education, training and employment; general and mental health, and drug and alcohol.

Where relationships between local service organisations were considered somewhat limited in terms of knowledge of the services other organisations provide, coordination with other service organisations to support clients, and trusting relationships between service organisations, the evaluation found that working together to provide services to clients can significantly improve these relationships.

6.5 Future research that could strengthen the evidence

6.5.1 Outcomes-related data

On the available evidence, it is difficult to assess whether each project has led to sustainable housing and broader outcomes for clients or has had an impact on homelessness. While specific strategies would need to be implemented to increase the likelihood of relevant data being collected, given it can be difficult to contact this group of clients after they cease involvement with the project, we believe that it should be attempted because it would provide stronger evidence for the model. This data should be collected at regular intervals after clients cease their involvement with the project.

6.5.2 Towards cost-benefit analysis of programs for high needs clients

To assess whether each project is the most efficient model for achieving the intended outcomes there is a need for additional cost-related data to be collected.

A potential significant benefit of programs aimed at reducing homelessness is the reduction in costs to government of providing acute services (e.g. ambulance, hospitals, police). A precise assessment of the cost offsets achieved by a project would require a rigorous cost-benefit analysis using pre- and post-project data on clients' use of services.

A cost-benefit analysis would usually require the establishment of a control group of similar clients not using the program for whom data could be collected. This would be very difficult with high needs clients. The approach generally followed in the literature is to compare changes in use of services with the general population. The main limitation with this is that changes for high needs clients are likely to be greater than for the general population, thus leading to an overestimation of savings.

It is not possible at this stage to conduct a reliable cost-benefit analysis for the projects and it was not within the scope of this evaluation. However, we believe that there is an opportunity for a cost-benefit analysis to be done in the future to show the potential of the projects to deliver cost savings.

Recent research from the University of Melbourne, RMIT University and Sacred Heart Mission (2012) used a methodologically sound cost-benefit analysis of Journey to Social Inclusion, a pilot project which aimed to break the cycle of long-term homelessness. The project provides intensive support for up to three years to assist long-term homeless people access the range of services they need. This project is different from the four HAP

projects in several respects in that it focuses only on long-term homelessness, provides support for up to three years, and project staff have a caseload limited to four clients.

We believe that the findings from this cost-benefit analysis have implications for the future of HAP projects. Benefit-cost ratios are positive, indicating that while the initial investment was high, the long-term benefits were potentially significant. In the short term (two years), the costs to government and the community outweighed the benefits in that for every dollar invested the savings were 0.24 cents and 0.35 cents respectively. However, the position was reversed after a 10 year timeframe, when for every dollar invested there was a saving of \$2.03 to the community. The researchers concluded that it takes a long time for homelessness programs to achieve their full benefits, especially with high needs clients. They argue that program decision-makers should have realistic expectations regarding outcomes and appreciate that few projects will deliver cost savings in the short term.

6.5.3 Other evaluation-related issues

While it is not new research, the evaluation found that, as a result of some limitations with evaluation-related data collected by the projects, there is a need to improve the data collected by projects to maximise the usefulness of future evaluations for decision makers.

Projects are required to report quarterly summary data on client numbers, characteristics and support to Housing NSW (through the HAP data portal). In addition, there are data needs for ongoing project management/monitoring and future evaluations. This requires projects to have unit-record data systems so that they can accurately provide the data.

At the project level, service providers did not always have the tools to collect and collate client data in a centralised and standardised manner. Future funded organisations should receive some guidance on the development of appropriate monitoring systems that enable them to collect data required for project reporting. For example, funded organisations were not able to provide data on the referring agency and location of the client from their monitoring systems which would have been useful for the evaluation. Another issue is that only two of the projects are able to report whether clients are receiving early intervention or more intensive assistance, important data for monitoring any shifts in this regard.

Contextual factors need to be considered when defining future reporting requirements, for instance, stakeholders in this area are working with other reporting systems such as SHIP for specialist homelessness services. Efforts should be made to harmonise reporting requirements, particularly in relation to the unit of reporting. Specialist homeless services are used to report at an individual level, whereas the current HAP data portal is at the household level.

Data collected should distinguish between clients who accessed new housing and clients who were assisted to maintain their existing housing through the project. Explicit financial reporting requirements should be included in the initial service specifications to make sure that appropriate costs data are collected.

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 the client play? What services were delivered most through the project? How important was the provision of legal services in delivering project outcomes? What assessment and case management processes are in place for delivering support services? What were the key success factors and barriers to effective support provision? 	<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 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. Evaluation methodology

Method/ source	Study population/ focus	Sample	Timing	Comments
Literature scan	Research literature	N/A	Aug–Sept 2012	This was a scan or brief evidence assessment, 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 documents to gain an in-depth understanding of each project and inform the evaluation design.
HAP data portal	Clients	All clients assisted to end June 2012 for each project	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 NGOs	Clients	All clients assisted to end June 2012	Oct–Nov 2012	
Online survey	Project stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ RMHAP: n=66 (51 responded) ▪ RHNE: n=67 (52 responded) ▪ NCAP: n=145 (52 responded) ▪ Community Connections: n=350 (46) 	Oct–Nov 2012	<p>A representative from the lead government agency for each project 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 for that project.</p> <p>The representative from the lead government agency distributed three reminders via email.</p> <p>We analysed the closed questions in Excel through cross-tabs and analysed the 3 open-ended questions for key themes.</p>

Method/ source	Study population/ focus	Sample	Timing	Comments
		responded)		
Stakeholder interviews	Project stakeholders	<p>Sample not representative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ RMHAP: n=23 ▪ RHNE: n=13 ▪ NCAP: n=24 ▪ Community Connections: n=21 	Oct–Nov 2012	<p>We interviewed 81 stakeholders across the four projects 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>We conducted interviews either face-to-face during site visits 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 3). 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	<p>Sample not representative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ RMHAP: n=7 ▪ RHNE: n=5 ▪ NCAP: n=9 ▪ Community Connections: n=2 	Oct–Nov 2012	<p>Across selected sites, we interviewed 23 clients who had 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 4). Each interviewee received a \$30 gift voucher to acknowledge their time. We analysed the data using a coding framework to identify broad and particular themes.</p>
Cost analysis	Costs	N/A	Nov 2012	<p>We collected actual costs data from the contracted NGOs in the form of acquittals or financial statements for the financial years covered by the project. We analysed the project costs using a cost structure as defined in a cost template designed by Housing NSW.</p>

Appendix 3. 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

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

Client referral/ nomination and assessment

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

Housing/ tenancy support provision

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

- What types of support were provided?
- 13. What housing options did this project make use of?
 - public housing
 - community housing
 - assisted private rental
 - other subsidies
- 14. **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?
- 15. **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

- 16. How has support been provided in this project?
 - case management
 - linking clients to other support services
 - providing direct support services
- 17. **How effective were these processes to provide clients with appropriate support meeting their needs?**
- 18. **Are support processes provided to HAP clients different to your normal support arrangements?**

Service system change

- 19. What structures/ processes were in place to support partnership and coordination between services? How effective were these structures/ processes?
- 20. **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?
- 21. **Has the project supported increased integration between housing and support services? If yes, how?**
- 22. Has the project supported increased integration **between support services?** If yes, how?
 - Mainstream services
 - Specialist Homelessness Services (previously SAAP)
- 23. **Did the project achieve an improved service system?**
 - Key success factors
 - Key barriers
- 24. **What are the remaining integration and linkage issues for this HAP project?**

Client outcomes

25. **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
26. **Have you been more successful for some types of clients than others?** Which one/s? What made it successful?
 - What about Aboriginal clients?
27. **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?
28. What aspects of the project have been **key to supporting successful client outcomes?**
29. What have been the **barriers to supporting successful client outcomes?**

Costs and workload

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

Sustainability

33. **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?
34. **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?
35. **Do you think the project should be continued?**
 - Why do you think that?
 - What would be needed?
 - **What would be your organisation's commitment?**
36. 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

37. **What innovative approaches have been developed as part of this project?**
 - to access appropriate housing options
 - in terms of support arrangements
38. What do you think are the main learnings from this project that can be applied to other long-term housing and support initiatives?
39. **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 4. 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 5. Online survey questions

Email

Dear all,

The [name of the HAP project] has been selected to be part of the evaluation of long-term housing and support provided under the NSW Homelessness Action Plan (HAP) that ARTD is conducting for Housing NSW. As part of this evaluation you are invited to participate in an online survey of staff from organisations with some involvement in this project. The survey is brief and should take between 5 and 15 minutes to complete depending on your level of involvement.

Your participation is voluntary.

Your feedback will help us to understand how the project is working, how organisations involved perceive the project, and the impact on clients as well as on the service system. Your views are important to us even if you have had limited involvement in the [name of the HAP project]. Participating in the survey is a great opportunity for everyone to have their say.

Please submit your answer by [insert date].

Link to the survey: [insert hyperlink]

If you wish, you have the opportunity to save your answers and go back to the survey later. You can save your answers by hitting the button 'Save and continue later' at the top of the page where you are. To go back to the survey, you simply have to click again on the survey link and it will bring you to the last survey page visited.

Your responses will be confidential. No individuals or agencies will be identified to Housing NSW in any way in the analysis or report.

Please do not forward this email to anyone else. If you identify another person that would be interested to take part in the survey please send an email to [Name of the key contact person].

Thank you for your contribution.

Regards,

[Name of the key contact person]

Welcome to the HAP long-term housing and support projects online survey for project staff

This survey is your opportunity to contribute to the evaluation of long-term housing and support provided under the NSW Homelessness Action Plan (HAP).

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey about the South East NSW Community Connections project. Your responses are greatly appreciated and will be used in conjunction with other data to inform the evaluation findings.

This survey includes nine short sections, covering various aspects of the project. You will have the opportunity to provide overall feedback in the last section of the survey.

- Your involvement in the project
- Client referral/ nomination and assessment
- Housing provision
- Support provision
- Service system
- Client outcomes
- Costs/ workload
- Sustainability
- Overall feedback.

If you have had limited involvement in the project you won't have to answer all the questions.

You can save your response and come back later to finish completing your survey by clicking on 'Save and continue survey later' at the top of the page.

Your views are important and will remain confidential. The survey is administered by ARTD Consultants. If you have any questions about the form you can contact Florent Gomez, ph 02 9373 9911, florent.gomez-bonnet@artd.com.au.

Please submit your responses by Friday 9 November.

Thank you for your contribution.

Click 'next' to begin.

Your involvement with the [insert name of specific HAP project]

1. What type of organisation do you work for? *Tick one option only.*

Commonwealth Government agency

NSW Government agency

Local government

Non-government organisation

- Private sector company (e.g. real estate agency)
- Other, please specify

2. What is the name of your organisation? (optional)

3. How would you rate your level of involvement in [name of the project]? *Tick one option only.*

- No awareness, no involvement
- Limited awareness, no direct involvement
- Limited/ occasional involvement
- Involved in the operation of the project in relation to a few clients (less than 5)
- Involved in the operation of the project in relation to a number of clients (more than 5)
- Involved in the overall coordination of the project

[If 'No awareness, no involvement', then Disqualify and display 'Sorry, you do not qualify to take this survey'. If 'Limited awareness, no direct involvement or Limited/ occasional involvement', then go to 'Overall feedback']

4. What is the main role of your organisation in [name of the project]? *Tick one option only.*

- Contracting government agency, e.g. Housing NSW, Community Services
- Partner government agency, e.g. Legal Aid, NSW Health, ADHC
- Coordinating NGO
- Specialist Homelessness Service
- Support service provider, e.g. mental health, family support, drug and alcohol, etc.
- Housing provider
- Other, please specify

If response to Q4 is 'Housing provider', what type of housing provider is your organisation? *Tick one option only.*

- Public social housing
- Community housing
- Real estate agency
- Landlord
- Other, please specify

5. In what ways have you been involved in [name of the project]? *Tick all that apply.*

- Participating in project coordination meetings
- Making referrals
- Case managing clients

- Directly providing housing solution to clients of the project

- Directly providing support services to clients of the project

- Other, please specify _____

6. How long have you been involved in [name of the project]? *Tick one option only.*

- Less than six months
- Between six months and one year
- Between one and two years
- More than two years

7. How committed to this project is the leadership of your organisation? *Tick one option only.*

- Not at all
- Somewhat committed
- Quite strongly
- Strongly

Client referral/nomination and assessment

8. Please indicate the level to which you agree or disagree with the following statements. *Tick one option only for each statement.*

	Disagree	Mostly disagree	Mostly agree	Agree	Don't know/ Does not apply
Overall, the client nomination/ referral processes for [name of the project] are effective	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Organisations involved in the project agreed on eligibility criteria	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Overall, the client assessment process for this project is effective	<input type="checkbox"/>				

	Disagree	Mostly disagree	Mostly agree	Agree	Don't know/ Does not apply
Through this project we have worked with clients we would not normally be able to reach	<input type="checkbox"/>				
This project has supported clients who were not covered by other existing initiatives (e.g. gaps in geographic coverage or target groups)	<input type="checkbox"/>				

Housing/ tenancy support provision

9. Please indicate the level to which you agree or disagree with the following statements. *Tick one option only for each statement.*

	Disagree	Mostly disagree	Mostly agree	Agree	Don't know/ Does not apply
The [name of the project] has assisted clients to obtain or maintain accommodation appropriate to their needs	<input type="checkbox"/>				
This project has assisted clients into stable long-term accommodation	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Limited availability of affordable housing locally has limited the project's ability to assist clients in accommodation	<input type="checkbox"/>				
This project has found new and innovative ways of securing housing for clients	<input type="checkbox"/>				

Support provision

10. Please indicate the level to which you agree or disagree with the following statements. *Tick one option only for each statement.*

	Disagree	Mostly disagree	Mostly agree	Agree	Don't know/ Does not apply
The [name of the project] has been particularly effective in linking clients to the support services they need	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Lack of service availability locally has limited the project's ability to link clients to the supports they need	<input type="checkbox"/>				

This project provides clients with access to a broader range of support services than other projects in this area	<input type="checkbox"/>				
The [name of the project] has provided an easy access to brokerage funding					
Brokerage funding has been a major factor to support clients with appropriate support	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Clients received improved integrated management through this project than usual					

Service system

11. Thinking about the organisations involved in [name of the HAP project], what has been the frequency of your interactions with each one? *Tick one option only for each organisation.*

	Never	Just once	For a few clients (less than 5)	For a number of clients (more than 5)	For all clients	For all project issues	Don't know/ Does not apply
Lead agency, e.g. Housing NSW, Community Services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Partner government agencies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lead NGO	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Specialist Homelessness Services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Support service providers, e.g. mental health, family support, drug and alcohol, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Housing organisations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Real estate agents/ landlords	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

12. Please rate the following aspects of relationships with other housing and service organisations before and after your involvement in [name of the HAP project]. *Please rate on a scale from 1=none to 5= extensive.*

	Before HAP	After HAP	Don't know/ Does not apply
Knowledge of what other local service organisations can provide for my clients	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Coordination with other local service organisations to support clients	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Trusting relationships with other local service organisations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

13. **Governance.** Please indicate the level to which you agree or disagree with the following statements. *Tick one option only for each statement.*

	Disagree	Mostly disagree	Mostly agree	Agree	Don't know/ Does not apply
The organisations involved in the [name of the HAP project] share the project's goals and values	<input type="checkbox"/>				
The organisations involved in this project agreed on the project governance structure (e.g. establishment of local coordination groups)	<input type="checkbox"/>				
The governance structure of this project has been effective in supporting implementation of the project	<input type="checkbox"/>				

14. **Communication and information sharing.** Please indicate the level to which you agree or disagree with the following statements. *Tick one option only for each statement.*

	Disagree	Mostly disagree	Mostly agree	Agree	Don't know/ Does not apply
There are <i>formal</i> structures/ processes for communication and information sharing between organisations involved in the [name of the HAP project]	<input type="checkbox"/>				
There are <i>informal</i> processes for communication and information sharing	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Communication and information sharing is effective	<input type="checkbox"/>				

15. **Working together.** Please indicate the level to which you agree or disagree with the following statements. *Tick one option only for each statement.*

	Disagree	Mostly disagree	Mostly agree	Agree	Don't know/ Does not apply
The roles, responsibilities and expectations of organisations involved in the [name of the HAP project] project are clearly defined and understood by all	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Responsibilities for implementing this project are shared appropriately	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Through this project I have worked with organisations I would not have worked with previously	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Working together has changed the way our organisation delivers services	<input type="checkbox"/>				
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)	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Working together in this project generates better outcomes for clients than if each organisation worked with the clients separately	<input type="checkbox"/>				
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)	<input type="checkbox"/>				

Client outcomes

16. Please indicate the level to which you agree or disagree with the following statements. *Tick one option only for each statement.*

	Disagree	Mostly disagree	Mostly agree	Agree	Don't know/ Does not apply
The [name of the HAP project] has effective measures for assessing outcomes for clients	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Clients are better able to sustain a tenancy as a result of the project	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Clients' well-being has improved as a result of the project	<input type="checkbox"/>				

Clients have reduced use of acute services (e.g. hospital and emergency services) as a result of the project	<input type="checkbox"/>				
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Costs/ workload

17. Please indicate the level to which you agree or disagree with the following statements. *Tick one option only for each statement.*

	Disagree	Mostly disagree	Mostly agree	Agree	Don't know/ Does not apply
I spend too much time on coordination activities as part of my involvement in [name of the HAP project]	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Through this project I am able to spend more time in supporting clients than in other projects	<input type="checkbox"/>				
The resources required for this project are justified by the benefits for clients	<input type="checkbox"/>				

Sustainability of the project

18. Please indicate the level to which you agree or disagree with the following statements. *Tick one option only for each statement.*

	Disagree	Mostly disagree	Mostly agree	Agree	Don't know/ Does not apply
The [name of the HAP project] has the potential to achieve sustainable reductions in homelessness into the future	<input type="checkbox"/>				
I would like this project to continue beyond its planned termination date	<input type="checkbox"/>				
My organisation would not be able to maintain its participation in this project without government funding	<input type="checkbox"/>				
My organisation has secured some resources for the project beyond its planned termination date	<input type="checkbox"/>				
We could expand the number of HAP clients we assist in this area with only a small increase resources	<input type="checkbox"/>				

This project has the potential to be replicated in other areas of the state	<input type="checkbox"/>								
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Overall feedback

- 19. From your perspective, what have been the main benefits of the [name of the HAP project]? *150 words maximum*
- 20. From your perspective, what have been the main challenges for this project? *150 words maximum*
- 21. What do you think are the main learnings from this project that can be applied to other long-term housing and support initiatives? *150 words maximum*
- 22. If you could change just one thing in the design of this HAP project, what would it be? *150 words maximum*

Appendix 6. Breakdown of projects costs for 2011/12

	5.6a-RMHAP		5.6b-RHNE		5.9-NCAP		5.10-Community Connections	
	\$ Value	%	\$ Value	%	\$ Value	%	\$ Value	%
Project income - Inputs								
HAP funding	\$713,449	100%	\$654,840	98%	\$2,242,071	100%	\$1,997,020	100%
Other Government funding	\$ -	0%	\$ -	0%	\$ -	0%	\$ -	0%
In-kind	\$ -	0%	\$ -	0%	\$ -	0%	\$ -	0%
Third party donations	\$ -	0%	\$ -	0%	\$ -	0%	\$ -	0%
Other: interests received	\$ 2,870	0%	\$ -	0%	\$ -	0%	\$ -	0%
Other: Funding unexpended	\$ -	0%	\$7,457	1%	\$ -	0%	\$ -	0%
Other: Other funding	\$ -	0%	\$4,820	1%	\$ -	0%	\$ -	0%
Total Project income	\$716,319	100%	\$667,117	100%	\$2,242,071	100%	\$1,997,020	100%
Expenditure								
Staff costs Direct Client Services	\$110,614	15%	\$174,821	26%	\$787,018	35%	\$ 424,942	31%
Staff costs Admin and support	\$ -	0%	\$ -	0%	\$ -	0%	\$ -	
Staff costs Staff related on-costs	\$18,534	3%	\$17,869	3%	\$150,161	7%	\$ 85,817	6%
Staff costs External consultants / professional services	\$44,506	6%	\$65,483	10%	\$8,578	0%	\$ 740	0%
Staff costs Other: Co-ordinator group costs	\$51,061	7%	\$6,654	1%	\$ -	0%	\$ -	0%

Final Overarching evaluation report for the long-term housing and support service model

	5.6a-RMHAP		5.6b-RHNE		5.9-NCAP		5.10-Community Connections	
	\$ Value	%	\$ Value	%	\$ Value	%	\$ Value	%
Total Staff costs	\$224,715	31%	\$264,827	40%	\$945,757	42%	\$ 511,499	38%
Operating costs Meetings, workshop, catering	\$-	0%	\$ -	0%	\$808	0%	\$ -	0%
Operating costs Staff training and development	\$-	0%	\$10,695	2%	\$31,958	1%	\$ 2,873	0%
Operating costs Motor vehicle expenses	\$-	0%	\$5,270	1%	\$66,983	3%	\$ 106,392	8%
Operating costs Other travel	\$20,690	3%	\$9,396	1%	\$10,242	0%	\$ 18,237	1%
Operating costs Host Organisation Management Fee and Administration costs	\$25,054	3%	\$145,258	22%	\$269,988	12%	\$ 204,187	15%
Operating costs Other: office rent and running costs	\$ -	0%	\$ -	0%	\$180,979	8%	\$ -	0%
Operating costs Other: communication and stationary	\$ -	0%	\$ -	0%	\$58,645	3%	\$ -	0%
Operating costs Other: Other operating costs	\$ -	0%	\$ -	0%	\$66,028	3%	\$ 129,772	10%
Total Operating costs	\$45,744	6%	\$170,619	26%	\$685,632	31%	\$ 461,461	34%
Brokerage costs Total Goods	\$206,323	28%	\$160,009	24%	\$399,743	18%	\$ 117,038	9%
Brokerage costs Total Services	\$252,972	35%	\$50,822	8%	\$48,028	2%	\$ 31,310	2%
Brokerage costs Total Payments	\$-	0%	\$ 20,384	3%	\$157,349	7%	\$ 61,704	5%
Brokerage costs Total Other	\$-	0%	\$ -	0%	\$5,438	0.2%	\$ 169,126	13%
Total Brokerage costs	\$459,296	63%	\$231,215	35%	\$610,559	27%	\$ 379,178	28%

Final Overarching evaluation report for the long-term housing and support service model

	5.6a-RMHAP		5.6b-RHNE		5.9-NCAP		5.10-Community Connections	
	\$ Value	%	\$ Value	%	\$ Value	%	\$ Value	%
Total Expenditure	\$729,755	100%	\$666,661	100%	\$2,241,948	100%	\$1,352,138	100%

Appendix 7. Literature scan bibliography

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