

# Community Housing Data Collection, 2016–17; Quality Statement

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# Community Housing Data Collection, 2016–17; Quality Statement

## Identifying and definitional attributes

Metadata item type:	Data Quality Statement
METEOR identifier:	677769
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## Data quality

Data quality statement summary:	Description
	<p>Data are provided annually to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) by jurisdictions and are sourced from community housing organisations (CHOs) and from the jurisdiction's administrative systems. The annual data collection captures information about CHOs, the dwellings and tenancy rental units they manage, households on the waiting list, and the tenants and households assisted. Limited financial information from the previous financial year is also collected.</p>
	<p><b>Summary</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• All states and territories provide the AIHW with community housing data from their administrative systems. The AIHW compiles their data for national reporting in the <i>Report on government services</i> (RoGS). The data are also published in AIHW reports.</li><li>• Additionally, unit record community housing data are collected from CHOs via an Excel survey tool managed by the AIHW. One jurisdiction, the Northern Territory, does not use the AIHW-managed survey and does not provide any unit record household data.</li><li>• Care is required when comparing outputs across states and territories. Differences in the data collected, including which records are included or excluded from a calculation can affect the coherence of the outputs. Coherence over time has been affected by changes in methodology (see 'coherence' section for details).</li></ul>

<b>Institutional environment:</b>	<p>The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) is a major national agency set up by the Australian Government under the <a href="#">Australian Institute of Health and Welfare Act 1987</a> to provide reliable, regular and relevant information and statistics on Australia's health and welfare. It is an independent corporate Commonwealth entity established in 1987, governed by a <a href="#">management Board</a>, and accountable to the Australian Parliament through the Health portfolio.</p> <p>The AIHW aims to improve the health and wellbeing of Australians through better health and welfare information and statistics. It collects and reports information on a wide range of topics and issues, ranging from health and welfare expenditure, hospitals, disease and injury, and mental health, to ageing, homelessness, disability and child protection.</p> <p>The AIHW also plays a role in developing and maintaining national metadata standards. This work contributes to improving the quality and consistency of national health and welfare statistics. The AIHW works closely with governments and non-government organisations to achieve greater adherence to these standards in administrative data collections to promote national consistency and comparability of data and reporting.</p> <p>One of the main functions of the AIHW is to work with the states and territories to improve the quality of administrative data and, where possible, to compile national data sets based on data from each jurisdiction, to analyse these data sets and disseminate information and statistics.</p> <p>The <a href="#">Australian Institute of Health and Welfare Act 1987</a>, in conjunction with compliance to the <a href="#">Privacy Act 1988</a>, (Commonwealth of Australia), ensures that the data collections managed by the AIHW are kept securely and under the strictest conditions with respect to privacy and confidentiality.</p> <p>For further information see the AIHW website <a href="http://www.aihw.gov.au">www.aihw.gov.au</a>.</p> <p>The AIHW receives, compiles, edits and verifies the data in collaboration with states and territories. The finalised data sets are signed off by the states and territories and used by the AIHW for reporting and analysis.</p>
<b>Timeliness:</b>	<p>Data are collected annually. The reference period for this collection is the 2016–17 financial year. The collection is mostly a 30 June 2017 snapshot, but also captures information regarding new households assisted during 2016–17. Limited financial information from the 2015–16 financial year is also collected.</p>
<b>Accessibility:</b>	<p>Data are reported in the AIHW's annual <a href="#">Housing assistance in Australia</a> reports and the Productivity Commission's annual <a href="#">Report on government services</a>.</p> <p>Users can request additional disaggregation of data which are not available online or in reports (subject to the AIHW's confidentiality policy and state and territory approval) via the AIHW's online data request system at <a href="https://datarequest.aihw.gov.au">https://datarequest.aihw.gov.au</a>. Depending on the nature of the request, requests for access to unpublished data may also incur costs or require approval from the AIHW Ethics Committee.</p> <p>General enquiries about AIHW publications can be directed to <a href="mailto:info@aihw.gov.au">info@aihw.gov.au</a>.</p>
<b>Interpretability:</b>	<p>Metadata and definitions relating to this data source can be found in the <a href="#">Mainstream community housing data set specification 2013-</a>.</p> <p>Supplementary information can be found in the housing collection data manuals which are available upon request.</p>

**Relevance:**

The scope of community housing, for the purpose of this collection, includes all tenancy rental units under the management of a community housing organisation, excluding Indigenous community housing organisations. Dwellings are excluded where the tenancy is managed by the state/territory housing authority or by a specialist homelessness services agency. Additional jurisdiction-specific inclusions and exclusions also apply. These jurisdiction-specific inclusions and exclusions reflect a number of factors including differences in the definition of community housing across jurisdictional legislation; difficulties in identifying some organisations among those that are not registered or funded by the state/territory housing authority; and some inconsistencies in reporting, such as the inclusion of transitional housing and National Rental Affordability Scheme (NRAS) dwellings.

The data collected by the jurisdictions conform well in terms of reference period. However, due to the jurisdiction-specific inclusions and exclusions, the data do not conform well in terms of organisation coverage and reporting at a national level.

New South Wales, Victoria, Western Australia, South Australia, Tasmania and the Australian Capital Territory supply unit record level data. These data include details on individuals, organisations, dwellings and associated tenancies of the organisations that responded to the survey. Queensland supply unit record data supplemented by aggregate administrative data for funded organisations, properties and current waitlist applications. The Northern Territory submits aggregate data, which includes dwelling- and organisational-level data, but not information on individual tenancies or persons.

The data are highly relevant for monitoring trends in the number of households assisted in community housing. The data are used for many purposes, including by policy-makers to evaluate both the circumstances of tenants in community housing dwellings and the amount of rent paid by tenants relative to their income; and to assess the efficiency of community housing organisations in providing dwellings.

**Accuracy:**

The information was sourced by state/territory housing authorities from community housing organisations and/or from administrative records held by them. Data are incomplete for some jurisdictions due to non-reporting or under-reporting by CHOs. The response rate differs between jurisdictions—as outlined below:

State/territory	Coverage
New South Wales	Of the 154 community housing organisations, 33 completed the survey tool accounting for 89% of the total dwelling portfolio. This represents a decline from the 92% coverage rate in 2015–16.
Victoria	Of the 93 community housing organisations, 64 completed the survey tool. This was a decrease from the 80 community housing organisations who responded to the survey in 2015–16. Information regarding dwellings for which the organisation did not provide unit record data was not reported for 2016–17 so the coverage rate cannot be calculated by AIHW.
Queensland	Of the 193 community housing organisations, 102 completed the survey tool accounting for 89% of the total dwelling portfolio. This is not comparable to 2015–16 due to a change in methodology.
Western Australia	Of the 32 registered community housing organisations, 30 completed the survey tool accounting for 99% of the total dwelling portfolio. This represents a slight increase from the 98% coverage rate in 2015–16.
South Australia	All of the 48 community housing organisations completed the survey tool covering 100% of the total dwelling portfolio. The same coverage rate was observed in 2015–16.
Tasmania	Of the 57 community housing organisations, 37 completed the survey tool accounting for 96% of the total dwelling portfolio. This same coverage rate was observed in 2015–16.
Australian Capital Territory	All of the 7 community housing organisations completed the survey tool covering 100% of the total dwelling portfolio. The same coverage rate was observed in 2015–16.

Northern Territory	Only administrative data was provided for 34 community housing organisations. This is a slight increase from the 33 community housing organisations that provided administrative data in 2015–16.
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There are some accuracy issues with the data collected, more specifically:

- The community housing organisation and state/territory housing authority administrative systems from which this collection are drawn have inaccuracies to varying degrees including missing data, inconsistent data, out-of-date data and data coding or recording errors.
- Not all organisations capture and report all data items—data may not be collected and reported in a manner consistent with national data definitions.
- For some organisations, some information may be self-identified and not reported under eligibility requirements for some programs (for example, Indigenous status and disability information).
- The sum of 'tenancy rental units by remoteness' may differ to 'total tenancy rental units' due to missing postcode information, the exclusion of postcodes belonging to PO boxes, mismatches between postcode and remoteness concordance files and proportioning of postcodes across remoteness areas (as many postcodes belong to more than one remoteness area).
- There are inconsistencies across jurisdictions in the reporting of National Rental Affordability Scheme (NRAS) properties managed by community housing organisations. Data for these properties are unavailable for Queensland, the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory.
- Waitlist data are reported separately for each social housing program. Where states and territories have an integrated waitlist (New South Wales, Queensland, Western Australia, Tasmania, the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory), applicants are generally counted once irrespective of the number of programs for which they are applying. In some states and territories, CHOs may additionally maintain and allocate housing to households on their own waiting list.

#### *State- and territory-specific issues:*

##### **New South Wales**

- Data quality submissions vary across data providers. Data mismatches between files relating to the same concept are a significant data quality issue.
- The number of New South Wales tenancies is likely to be undercounted because of unknown number of tenancies assigned, number of tenancies, tenantable vacancies and untenable vacancies.
- Data quality for income in comparison to rent charged is still a significant issue. Improvements are expected for the 2017–18 collection.
- Care is advised when interpreting income and rent data; affordable housing incomes are rent based and not set at 25% of household income.
- Data for additional affordable housing properties have been included for the first time in 2016–17.
- Improved data quality resulted in an increase in total rents charged.

##### **Victoria**

- Care is advised when reviewing data for waitlist applicants for 2016–17. In 2017–18, CH applicants will be transferred to the Victorian Housing Register which will integrate public and community housing waiting lists. In the meantime, a review of current housing applications, to remove those that are duplicates, inaccurate or out of date has commenced. This could have contributed to the decrease in waitlist numbers.
- Reduced survey returns from CHOs resulted in a decrease in net recurrent costs per unit and total rents charged. Thus, care is advised when comparing data for 2016–17 with previous years.

##### **Queensland**

- For 2016–17, data was provided for current tenancies and households as at 30 June only. Thus care is advised when comparing data for 2016–17 with that of previous years.

- In 2016–17, several small providers were merged with their parent provider and 7 organisations that ceased to provide services were removed from scope. This resulted in a reduction in the total number of CHOs.
- In 2016–17, due to a change in policy, all applicants on the housing waitlist for social rental housing were counted, whereas in previous years only those listed for community housing were counted. Thus data for 2016–17 are not comparable with that of previous years.

### Western Australia

- Care is advised when reviewing data for overcrowding due to inconsistencies in the data reported.
- Errors have occurred when Commonwealth Rent Assistance (CRA) has been considered as household income and used in the calculation of rent. This issue has been compounded when CRA has not been able to be separated from either household income or rent charged. While this has improved since 2014–15, some organisation still don't separate CRA from household income, therefore caution should be taken when interpreting data pertaining to rent charged and gross weekly income.
- Due to turnover of staff at some CHOs, some program types and dwelling types have been reclassified. Thus care is advised when comparing data with previous years.
- Care is advised when reviewing data for rent charged:
  - Rent charged on NRAS properties is not income based. It is set at 80% of market rent.
  - Some CHOs charge a flat fee for board or lodging and may include support care, utility and communal costs.
  - Income is not used to calculate rent payable for student housing. Rent is set at 74.99% of market rent.

### South Australia

- In 2016–17, a single housing register was implemented for public and community housing resulting in an increase in the number of applicants on the waiting list. Thus, caution is advised when comparing data for 2016–17 with previous years.

### Tasmania

- Survey data received from CHOs contained a large number of errors and a high proportion of 'unknown' data. While substantial data cleaning was undertaken, it is likely that data quality issues still exist.
- The overall number of organisations in scope for the survey decreased from 66 organisations in 2015–16 to 57 in 2016–17.

### Australian Capital Territory

- Care is advised when reviewing data for overcrowding due to inconsistencies in the data reported between CHOs.
- Integrated waitlist data are unable to differentiate between new applicants and applicants requesting a transfer.
- In 2016–17, improved reporting and data quality resulted in better identification of untenable dwellings.
- Caution is advised when interpreting rent data as some providers offer a rent free period. As a result, rent collected as a percentage of rent charged has declined over time.
- Under the efficiency dividend there has been consistent effort to rationalise Data for individual states and territories may not be comparable across reporting periods, nor with other social housing sectors due to variability in the state and territory government programs reported in the community housing data collection; coverage and completeness rates; and other data quality issues. Differences between states and territories concerning incomplete or missing information, out-of-date information and coding errors can affect the coherence of the outputs

### Coherence:

Coherence over time has also been affected by changes in methodology:

- Comparisons of waitlist data prior to 2010–11 should not be made with data from subsequent years due to the implementation of integrated waitlists in some jurisdictions. In May 2009, Housing Ministers agreed to integrate public and community housing waiting lists in all jurisdictions by July 2011. New

South Wales, Queensland, Western Australia, the Australian Capital Territory, and the Northern Territory each have integrated waiting lists. In 2016–17, South Australia also implemented integrated waiting lists. In Tasmania, the 4 main Better Housing Futures community housing providers use a shared Housing Register (public and community housing) to select tenants. The other smaller providers have no requirement to use this register and therefore may have their own waitlists. In Victoria, community housing organisations may fill some vacancies using the public housing waiting list.

- Measurements using low income cannot be directly compared with low income figures produced prior to 2013–14 due to a change in methodology. Low income cut-offs were revised for 2014–15 data based on ABS 2013–14 Survey of Income and Housing results. This led to substantial increases in the number of households considered to be receiving a low income. Care is therefore required when comparing 2014–15 data with previous years.

#### *State- and territory-specific issues:*

##### **New South Wales**

- From 2013–14, New South Wales have provided unit record data. Data prior to this is therefore not comparable.
- In 2014–15, the tenancy management of 666 public rental housing dwellings was transferred to the community housing sector with a corresponding impact on the number of households assisted.
- New South Wales reported NRAS dwellings for the first time in 2015–16.
- From 2015–16, NRAS dwellings were excluded from the calculation of the occupancy rate.

##### **Victoria**

- In 2014–15, two organisations ceased to provide CH services and one provider amalgamated with another provider. Thus, caution is advised when comparing data with previous years.

##### **Queensland**

- Queensland provided unit record data for the first time in 2015–16. This was supplemented by aggregate administrative data for funded organisations, properties and current waitlist applications. Data prior to this is therefore not comparable.
- From 2013–14, Affordable Housing Program data has been provided. These data were not available in prior collection periods.
- Improvements have been made to the identification of households containing a member identifying as Indigenous, and/or having a disability and/or from a non-English speaking background.
- From 2015–16, CH program administration and regulation costs were included. Previously, only rates and maintenance paid by the Department of Housing and Public Works were reported.

##### **Western Australia**

- From 2014–15, methodological changes have resulted in a better identification of households with Indigenous members.

##### **South Australia**

- In 2015–16, the number of in-scope CH dwellings increased due to the transition of about 1,000 public rental housing dwellings to the community sector.
- From 2014–15, methodological improvements have resulted in better identification of households with Indigenous members.
- Prior to 2012–13, the waitlist data reported were based solely on the Community Housing Customer Register. Applicants for National Rental Affordability Scheme (NRAS) properties were registered on a separate waitlist and not reported. Since 2012–13, waitlist data have been reported for the total number of applicants for community housing and affordable housing.
- As affordable housing rent setting policies are based on a discount to the

market and not as a proportion of income (the norm for community housing), the inclusion of affordable housing data would tend to increase the proportion of income allocated to rent.

### Tasmania

- The number of in-scope CH dwellings increased significantly in 2013–14 and 2014–15. This was mainly due to the transition of about 3,500 public rental housing dwellings to the community sector under the Better Housing Futures program during this period.
- From 2015–16 onwards, waitlist data represents information captured by the CHOs and not the shared waitlist. Thus, care is advised when comparing waitlist data from 2015–16 onwards with that of previous years.

### Northern Territory

- Changes to stock holdings changed the distribution of tenancy rental units by remoteness area.
- A review of portfolios in 2014–15 resulted in better identification of community housing dwellings.

## Source and reference attributes

**Submitting organisation:** Australian Institute of Health and Welfare

## Relational attributes

### Related metadata references:

Supersedes [Community Housing Data Collection, 2015–16; Quality Statement AIHW Data Quality Statements](#), Superseded 22/12/2017

Has been superseded by [Community Housing Data Collection, 2017–18; Quality Statement AIHW Data Quality Statements](#), Superseded 19/12/2019