

National Social Housing Survey, 2021; Quality Statement

Identifying and definitional attributes

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Data quality

Quality statement summary:

Description

The 2021 National Social Housing Survey (NSHS) collects information from tenants of three social housing programs—public housing (PH), community housing (CH) and state owned and managed Indigenous housing (SOMIH).

Summary

- The NSHS provides information on characteristics of tenants, information about their housing histories, the suitability of the housing to the household's needs, their satisfaction with the services provided by their housing provider and information about their household's use of other health and community services.
- The response rate for the mail-out/online component of the 2021 survey was 26%; for face-to-face it was 52%. Some non-response bias is expected, but this bias has not been measured.
- Both sampling and non-sampling errors should be considered when interpreting results.
- There are major methodological differences between cycles of the NSHS affecting comparability over time.

Institutional environment:

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) is an independent corporate Commonwealth entity under the [Australian Institute of Health and Welfare Act 1987](#) (AIHW Act), governed by a [management board](#) and accountable to the Australian Parliament through the Health portfolio.

The AIHW is a nationally recognised information management agency. Its purpose is to create authoritative and accessible information and statistics that inform decisions and improve the health and welfare of all Australians.

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For further information, see the AIHW website <https://www.aihw.gov.au/about-us>, which includes details about the AIHW's governance (<https://www.aihw.gov.au/about-us/our-governance>) and vision and strategic goals (<https://www.aihw.gov.au/about-us/our-vision-and-strategic-goals>).

The 2021 NSHS was managed jointly by the AIHW and states and territories. Lonergan Research undertook the fieldwork on behalf of the AIHW and states and territories.

Timeliness:	<p>Data are not collected annually. Surveys for PH and CH were conducted in 2001, 2003, 2005, 2007, 2010, 2012, 2014, 2016, 2018 and 2021. Surveys for SOMIH were conducted in 2005, 2007, 2012, 2014, 2016, 2018 and 2021. A survey for Indigenous community housing was conducted for Queensland in 2018.</p> <p>The 2021 fieldwork for the combined mail-out/online components was conducted from 30 March to 28 June for the Australian Capital Territory and from 30 March to 14 September for all other jurisdictions. Fieldwork for the SOMIH face-to-face component was undertaken in New South Wales from 10 April to 17 May.</p> <p>Data on the characteristics of the household and its members relate to the time of the survey. Data on tenant satisfaction relate to the 12 months up to the time of the survey.</p>
Accessibility:	<p>Published results from the 2021 NSHS will be available on the AIHW website (Housing assistance), and the Productivity Commission's annual Report on government services. Access to the confidentialised unit record file may be requested through the AIHW Ethics Committee.</p> <p>Users can request additional disaggregations of data which are not available online or in reports (subject to the AIHW's confidentiality policy) via the AIHW's online customised data request system at: https://www.aihw.gov.au/our-services/data-on-request. Depending on the nature of the request, access to unpublished data may incur costs or require approval from the AIHW Ethics Committee.</p> <p>General enquiries about AIHW publications can be directed to info@aihw.gov.au.</p>
Interpretability:	<p>Information to aid in interpretation of 2021 NSHS results will be available on the AIHW website including the 2021 NSHS methodological report, code book and other supporting documentation.</p>
Relevance:	<p>The 2021 NSHS was conducted among tenants from PH (all jurisdictions), CH (all jurisdictions except the Northern Territory) and SOMIH (New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia and Tasmania).</p> <p>The data were collected via a combination of mail-out self-completed paper questionnaires, online self-completed questionnaires and face-to-face interviews. PH and CH tenants completed the survey via a combined mail-out/online methodology for all jurisdictions. For SOMIH tenants, surveys were completed via a combined mail-out/online methodology for three jurisdictions (Queensland, South Australia and Tasmania) and face-to-face interview in the other jurisdiction (New South Wales).</p>
Accuracy:	<p>All remoteness areas were included in the sample. For the postal component of the survey, the speed of delivery to, and returns from, more remote locations may have affected the number of responses received from tenants in these areas.</p> <p>Response rates</p> <p>Response rates are a key factor contributing to the accuracy of estimates produced from the 2021 NSHS. Higher response rates often lead to estimates that are more accurate.</p> <p>For PH, CH and SOMIH (Queensland, South Australia and Tasmania only), 34,844 questionnaires were sent to tenants using the combined mail-out/online approach. Of these, 8,443 responses were categorised as being complete and useable (3,130 online responses and 5,313 paper responses). The 2021 response rate for the combined mail-out/online approach was 26% (9 percentage points lower than in 2018).</p> <p>In 2021, 37% of all surveys were completed online—higher than the 2018 online proportion of 32%.</p> <p>For the jurisdiction where SOMIH tenants completed the survey face-to-face (New South Wales), 1,021 interviews were attempted and 533 completed, with an overall response rate of 52%.</p> <p>The 2021 response rates varied across jurisdictions (see Table 1). A low response rate does not necessarily mean that the results are biased. If the non-respondents are not systematically different in terms of how they would have answered the questions, there is no bias. However, given the relatively low response rates for this</p>

survey, it is likely there is some bias in the estimates. No adjustments have been made to mitigate potential non-response bias.

Table 1: Response rate, by program type and jurisdiction, 2021

Program/Jurisdiction	Total responses	Response rate (%)
Public housing		
NSW	487	19
Vic	475	21
Qld	949	28
WA	513	31
SA	561	45
Tas	517	32
ACT	583	32
NT	471	20
Community housing		
NSW	564	23
Vic	350	25
Qld	509	26
WA	443	32
SA	677	29
Tas	342	28
ACT	201	27
State owned and managed Indigenous housing		
NSW (face-to-face)	533	53
Qld	522	20
SA	263	21
Tas	52	24

Scope and coverage

The 2021 NSHS was designed to meet minimum reliability objectives for key variables for each participating jurisdiction/housing program.

Sample design

Stratified sampling was undertaken to reduce sampling error and maximise the chance that jurisdiction/housing program sample targets were met.

In 2021, minimum sample quotas were employed for remoteness-based strata. This will improve the reliability of estimates for some of the jurisdiction/housing program/remoteness-based populations that have smaller populations.

Quotas were set for each jurisdiction/housing program strata (see Table 2). After the initial mail-out, booster samples were lodged (see Table 2).

Table 2: Quotas and booster samples, by program type and jurisdiction, 2021

Program/Jurisdiction	Quota	Booster
Public housing		
NSW	500	1,360

Vic	500	859
Qld	1,000	599
WA	500	211
SA	500	*
Tas	500	296
ACT	500	250
NT	500	770
Community housing		
NSW	540	635
Vic	350	223
Qld	500	322
WA	350	130
SA	700	413
Tas	350	*
ACT	200	*
State owned and managed Indigenous housing		
NSW (face-to-face)	500	..
Qld	500	..
SA	300	..
Tas	200	..

* A booster send was not required.

.. SOMIH jurisdictions were face-to-face interview or Census sends so a boost was not applicable.

Weighting

Consistent with the 2018 NSHS, a grouped weighting methodology was employed. Population groups were created across three variables: housing type, jurisdiction and remoteness. The weighting was calculated as: the number of households in each population group divided by the number of usable survey responses. All population counts were confirmed by the jurisdictions.

Sampling error

The estimates are subject to sampling error. Relative standard errors (RSEs) are provided with estimates from the 2021 NSHS to assist the reader assess the reliability of the estimates. Only estimates with RSEs of less than 25% are considered sufficiently reliable for most purposes. Results subject to RSEs of between 25% and 50% should be considered with caution and those with RSEs greater than 50% should be considered as unreliable for most purposes.

Non-sampling error

In addition to sampling errors, the estimates are subject to non-sampling errors. These can arise from errors in reporting of responses (for example, failure of respondents' memories or incorrect completion of the survey form), or the unwillingness of respondents to reveal their true responses. The survey findings are based on self-reported data. Non-sampling errors can also arise from coverage, interviewer or processing errors. It is also expected there is some level of non-response error where there are higher levels of non-response from certain subpopulations.

Missing data

Some survey respondents did not answer all questions, either because they were unable or unwilling to provide a response. The survey responses for these people

Coherence:

were retained in the sample, and the corresponding values were set to missing. Cleaning rules resulted in the imputation of responses for some missing values. For the 2021 NSHS, caution should be used when comparing trend data or data between jurisdictions due to differences in response rates and non-sampling error.

The 2021 NSHS sampling and stratification methods were similar to the 2018 survey: a sample was randomly selected from each stratum.

The data collected for SOMIH was sourced using two methodologies (via mail-out in three jurisdictions and via face-to-face interview in one jurisdiction). Trend data from before 2016 and comparisons between jurisdictions should be interpreted with caution.

Surveys in this series commenced in 2001. Over time, modifications have been made to the survey's methodology and questionnaire design. As noted above, the sample design and the questionnaire of the 2021 survey differ in a number of important respects from previous versions of the survey.

Refer to data quality statements and technical reports for the relevant historical surveys before comparing data across surveys.

Source and reference attributes

Submitting organisation: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare

Relational attributes

Related metadata references:

Supersedes [National Social Housing Survey, 2018: Quality Statement](#)

- [AIHW Data Quality Statements](#), Superseded 13/01/2022