

Indigenous Community Housing Collection, 2020–21; Quality Statement

Identifying and definitional attributes

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Data quality

Quality statement summary:

Description

Data are provided annually to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) by jurisdictions and are sourced from Indigenous Community Housing Organisations (ICHOs) and jurisdictions' administrative systems and audits.

An ICHO is any organisation that is responsible for managing medium- to long-term housing for Indigenous people. This includes community organisations such as resource agencies and land councils, which have a range of functions, provided that they manage housing for Indigenous people. Where a state or territory housing authority is responsible for managing Indigenous Community Housing tenancies for Indigenous people, they are classified as an ICHO.

The annual data collection captures information about ICHOs, the dwellings they manage and the households assisted at 30 June 2021. Financial information is for the year ending 30 June 2021.

Summary

- All states and territories, except the Australian Capital Territory (which does not have Indigenous community housing), provide the AIHW with Indigenous Community Housing (ICH) data from their administrative systems. The AIHW compiles these data for national reporting in the *Report on government services* (RoGS). The data are also published in AIHW reports.
- Additionally, unit record Indigenous community housing data are collected from ICHOs via data collection tools managed by the AIHW.
- In many cases complete data were not available for all dwellings or ICHOs in a given jurisdiction.
- 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).

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.

Compliance with the confidentiality requirements in the AIHW Act, the Privacy Principles in the [Privacy Act 1988](#) (Cth), and AIHW's data governance arrangements ensures that the AIHW is well positioned to release information for public benefit while protecting the identity of individuals and organisations.

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 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, analysis and approved ad hoc data requests. Requests for jurisdiction-level data releases must be signed off by the relevant state or territory.

Timeliness: Data are collected annually. The reference period for this collection is the 2020–21 financial year and is mostly a 30 June 2021 snapshot.

Accessibility: Data are reported in the AIHW's annual [Housing assistance in Australia](#) reports.

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 <https://www.aihw.gov.au/our-services/data-on-request>. Depending on the nature of the request, access to unpublished data may also incur costs or require approval from the AIHW Ethics Committee.

General enquiries about AIHW publications can be made to info@aihw.gov.au.

Interpretability: Metadata and definitions relating to this data source can be found in the [Indigenous Community Housing data set specification 2018-](#)

Supplementary information can be found in the housing collection data manuals which are available upon request.

Relevance: The scope of Indigenous community housing, for the purpose of this collection, only includes information about ICHOs that received government funding for the provision of housing assistance within the financial year, with the exception of counts of known unfunded ICHOs and the number of permanent dwellings managed by these unfunded ICHOs.

The data collected are from states and territories and comprise information from administrative systems, dwelling audits conducted by states and territories and from ICHOs through data collection tools. The data conform well in terms of scope and reference period, but vary considerably in terms of coverage as data in a number of jurisdictions are not complete for all dwellings or ICHOs.

Classifications used are not always consistent across the states and territories. For example, total recurrent costs and net recurrent costs are meant to exclude depreciation but do not in all jurisdictions or all ICHOs within a jurisdiction.

The data are highly relevant for monitoring trends in households assisted in Indigenous Community Housing. The data are used for many purposes, including by policy-makers to evaluate both the living conditions of tenants in Indigenous community housing dwellings, the amount of rent paid by tenants, and to assess the efficiency of Indigenous community housing organisations in providing dwellings.

Accuracy:

The information is sourced via jurisdiction administrative systems, dwelling audits conducted by states and territories and from ICHOs through data collection tools. Data are incomplete for some states and territories due to non-reporting or under-reporting by ICHOs.

There are known accuracy issues with the data collected:

- The ICHO and state/territory housing authority administrative systems 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.
- Information on Indigenous status is not collected. All households are assumed to include at least one Indigenous member.

State and territory-specific issues:

New South Wales

- Depreciation expenses incurred on the dwellings they own are under-reported by ICHOs. Furthermore, ICHOs manage a large number of state-owned dwellings on which depreciation is incurred by the responsible government agency, rather than the managing ICHO. These depreciation expenses are included in 'total recurrent costs' despite not being incurred directly by the relevant managing ICHO.
- Transfers of the management of dwellings occur between ICHOs, between NSW Government agency (Aboriginal Housing Office) and ICHOs or vice versa, quite regularly. The Aboriginal Housing Office manages dwellings in the interim period while a suitable ICHO to manage the dwelling is sourced. This means that dwellings reported in one year as managed by the state/territory housing authority may be reported as managed by an ICHO in the following year.
- Financial data from 21 ICHOs, representing 15% of dwellings managed by funded organisations are not included. Therefore, rents collected/charged and total/net recurrent costs for the year ending 30 June 2021 are an under-representation.
- Expenditure and rent data are available predominantly for dwellings and tenancies funded and managed by the Queensland housing authority. Relatively little expenditure and rent data are available for properties managed by ICHOs.

Western Australia

- 'Total recurrent costs' excludes depreciation. This is consistent with previous years.
- From 2018–19, Western Australia has been unable to distinguish between net and recurrent costs.

South Australia

- As per 2019–20, a tenancy audit was not undertaken in 2020–21.

Tasmania

- Some information on households, including the number of additional bedrooms required, is not reported by ICHOs. Therefore, this information is not available for national reporting.
- From 2018–19, person level information is missing for one ICHO and incomplete for the other ICHO.

Northern Territory

- Information is supplied only about dwellings that are occupied. The Northern Territory only contributes funds to permanently occupied dwellings in remote homelands and town camps that are not leased for public housing.

Coherence:

States and territories may publish their own analysis of Indigenous community housing data which may vary in scope from this collection.

Variation over time is in part due to fluctuations in collection coverage (such as the number of organisations supplying data) and the completeness of data provided.

Data for individual states and territories may not be comparable to previous years as accuracy of the data can vary over time. These differences include the data collection source and the completeness of reporting – in regard to ICHOs, the data and instances of unknown values recorded for data items. Data quality issues have varied over the years. For specific caveats on previous years' data, consult the footnotes and data quality statements in the relevant edition of the *Housing assistance in Australia* report.

From 2009–10, the scope of most data items within the ICH collection was restricted to ICHOs that received funding within the financial year. This is consistent with the scope of the 2006–07 and earlier collections. In comparison, in the 2007–08 and 2008–09 collections, more data items reflected the performance of both funded and unfunded ICHOs.

Previously, the Australian Government had administrative responsibility for some ICHOs in Victoria and Queensland, and all ICHOs in Tasmania. Data for these dwellings were reported collectively under the jurisdiction 'Australian Government'. In 2009, responsibility for these ICHOs was transferred to the respective state or territory. Data for these dwellings are now reported under the relevant state or territory.

State and territory-specific issues:

New South Wales

- From 2012–13, New South Wales reported information about funded ICHOs, the dwellings they managed and the households they assisted. Prior to 2012–13, New South Wales reported proxy information about providers that were actively registered with the Aboriginal Housing Office. Some of these registered providers were not funded. This change in the population reported within the data collection may have contributed to the reported decrease in the number of funded ICHOs in 2012–13 and the reported changes across a number of descriptive data and performance indicators. Therefore, data from 2012–13 may not be comparable with earlier reporting periods.
- Improved coverage from 2013–14 resulted in increased rental data compared with previous years.
- Complete data for capital expenditure at the organisation level was unavailable in 2013–14. Thus, capital expenditure data for permanent dwellings in 2013–14 may not be comparable to that of other years.
- ICHOs provided more complete data in 2015–16 and 2016–17 than in previous years meaning there are increases in rent charged to (and collected from) tenants. Collection of arrears also contributed to an increase in rent collected.
- In 2016–17, New South Wales, for the first time, included 207 ICH dwellings that are managed by mainstream community housing providers. These properties were not previously reported under any other social housing program. Thus, caution is advised when comparing data from 2016–17 onwards with that of previous years.
- Unit record information at the household level was reported from 2018–19.

Victoria

- From 2009–10, both Aboriginal Housing Victoria activity and ICHO activity are reported by Victoria, since they assumed administrative responsibility for the former Community Housing and Infrastructure Program (CHIP), previously managed by the Commonwealth. For the 2 years prior to 2009–10, Victoria reported Aboriginal Housing Victoria activity only.

Queensland

- Queensland provided data collected from ICHOs for the first time in 2015–16. Prior to 2015–16, data were sourced only from Queensland's administrative systems.
- From 2017–18, apportioned indirect costs were included in total and net recurrent costs. Indirect costs have not been included in previous years.
- In 2018–19, there was an increase in reporting of households from a small number of ICHOs. This reflects an increase in coverage and therefore an

increase in quality, but it is still unclear how complete household data are.

- In 2019–20 and 2020–21, there was a decrease in reporting from ICHOs and subsequently a decrease in coverage.
- Due to tenancy data quality issues, historically, partial information is known when calculating overcrowding. Thus, care is advised when using and comparing overcrowding results.
- Changes in methodology over time affect coherence of these data.

Western Australia

- Historically, where only partial information was known when calculating overcrowding, Western Australia imputed the remaining information. This change in methodology contributed to the reported increase in the number of households included in the calculation of overcrowding and may have contributed to the reported decrease in overcrowding from 2013–14 onwards.

South Australia

- From 2012–13, data are only reported for tenancies managed by the state housing authority (with the exception of an estimated count of permanent dwellings managed by funded ICHOs). Prior to 2012–13, all dwelling and household data were based on tenancy and asset audit data.
- Data for rates of overcrowding cannot be compared with those from 2012–13 and 2013–14, as unexpected data quality issues contributed to a lack of availability of overcrowding data for these two reporting periods.
- Approximately 24 dwellings previously reported were excluded from the collection in 2018–19. They are out of scope and incorrectly included in previous years.
- Data quality may be affected by the following factors:
 - From March 2020, SA Housing Authority (SAHA) staff were unable to visit remote Aboriginal areas due to COVID-19 restrictions.
 - In April 2020, dwelling and person data for ICH were migrated into SAHA's new data system to better align with public housing (PH) and state owned and managed Indigenous housing (SOMIH) data.

Tasmania

- A new arrears policy was implemented in 2012–13. This has contributed to improvements in data quality for rent since 2013–14.
- In 2012–13, data for net recurrent costs included costs for depreciation on rental housing which resulted in identical information for total and net recurrent costs. This has been excluded from 2013–14 onwards. Thus, care is advised when comparing data from 2013–14 onwards with previous years.
- Due to data quality issues, household data are not comparable from 2014–15 onwards with previous years.
- Improved data submissions from ICHOs from 2016–17 onwards resulted in increases in rent collected and charged from tenants, compared with 2015–16.
- In 2017–18, one ICHO provided capital expenditure while the other did not. Care is advised when comparing capital expenditure with that of other years.
- In years prior to 2018–19, one ICHO included depreciation in the calculation of net expenditure while the other did not.
- In 2018–19, one ICHO reported the number of households while the other did not.

Northern Territory

- Around 5,000 social housing dwellings in the Northern Territory have been excluded from administrative data collections since being transferred from Indigenous community housing to remote public housing between 2008 and 2010. From 2016–17, these data are included in the State Owned and Managed Indigenous Housing data collection.
- From 2014–15, the data relates to annual grant funding provided to ICHOs by the Northern Territory Government for the delivery of housing maintenance services to permanently occupied communally-owned

dwellings in remote homelands, and also in town camps that are not leased for public housing. Only habitable houses are eligible for funding; improvised dwellings do not receive funding. In 2013–14, the count of permanently occupied dwellings included improvised dwellings, thus, caution is advised when comparing data from 2014–15 onwards with that of previous years.

- Northern Territory Government funding is not provided to ICHOs for tenancy management services, as residents in these communities are responsible for the management of their own dwellings.
- In the Northern Territory, rent is not charged. These dwellings are communally-owned and not under ICHO, government or private ownership, and as such are not covered by tenancy legislation, tenancy agreements or requirements for the residents to pay rent or service levies. ICHOs may ask for a voluntary service delivery contribution (previously reported as rent collected) but have no jurisdiction to charge rent. From 2020–21, the voluntary service delivery contribution is not reported.

Source and reference attributes

Submitting organisation: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare

Relational attributes

Related metadata references: Supersedes [Indigenous Community Housing Collection, 2019–20: Quality Statement](#)

- [AIHW Data Quality Statements](#), Superseded 16/06/2022

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