

Private Rent Assistance Collection, 2020–21; Quality Statement

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Identifying and definitional attributes

Metadata item type:	Data Quality Statement
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Data quality

Data quality statement summary:

Description

All states and territories provide private rental assistance through a number of programs and maintain administrative data sets about these programs. Extracts of these data sets are provided annually to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW).

The Private Rent Assistance (PRA) programs offered by the states and territories are:

- bond loans (all states and territories)
- rental grants (New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia and Tasmania)
- ongoing rental subsidies (New South Wales)
- relocation expenses (Tasmania and the Australian Capital Territory)
- other assistance (Western Australia and Tasmania).

Data are provided for PRA received during the 2020–21 financial year.

Summary

- The data collected are an administrative by-product of the management of PRA programs run by the states and territories and conform well in terms of scope, coverage and reference period.
- The data are published in AIHW reports.
- Care should be taken when comparing data across time due to changes in the underlying PRA programs and how they are classified.

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:	The reference period for the PRA data collection is based on the financial year (ending 30 June). Data are collected and published annually. The specific reference period for these data is 2020–21.
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 http://www.aihw.gov.au/our-services/data-on-request . Depending on the nature of the request, unpublished data may also incur costs or require approval from the AIHW Ethics Committee. General enquiries about AIHW publications can be directed to info@aihw.gov.au .
Interpretability:	Metadata and definitions relating to this data source can be found in the Private rent assistance data set specification 2013- Supplementary information can be found in the housing collection data manuals which are available upon request.
Relevance:	The data collected are an administrative by-product of the management of PRA programs administered by the states and territories and conform well in terms of scope, coverage and reference period. PRA, for the purpose of this collection, relates to the provision of financial assistance to enable households to access and maintain accommodation in the private rental market and includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • bond loans • rental grants • rental subsidies • relocation expenses • other assistance grants.
Accuracy:	There are known accuracy issues with the data collected. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The administrative data sets from which this collection is drawn have inaccuracies to varying degrees including missing data and data coding or recording errors. • Not all states and territories collect data items as per data specifications. • Information about the Indigenous status of the household is not collected for some programs within the PRA collection. Approximately 5% of households recorded in the 2012–21 collection had an unknown Indigenous status. • Caution is also advised when reviewing the Indigenous status of the household. Households receiving more than one type of assistance may report different Indigenous statuses. <p><i>State- and territory-specific issues:</i></p> <p>Western Australia</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weekly rent charged is not available in Western Australia's reporting system. • All instances of 'other assistance' relate to a loan scheme for Aboriginal people who are at risk of eviction as a result of rent arrears and experiencing financial hardship. <p>South Australia</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reporting of non-assessable income is not mandatory. Therefore, gross weekly household income information may be under-reported. <p>Australian Capital Territory</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sex of main applicant is not part of the collection for the Australian Capital Territory. It is derived from the applicant's title and name. • Rent charged is not collected for 'relocation expenses assistance'. <p>Northern Territory</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weekly rent charged is not available in the Northern Territory's reporting system.

Coherence:

States and territories may publish their own analysis of private rent assistance data which may vary in scope from this collection.

Differences in the data collected and which records are included or excluded from a calculation in different states and territories affect the coherence of the output comparisons across states and territories.

Coherence over time has been affected by changes in the methodology. For example:

- Numbers of households assisted by rental grants, subsidies and relief cannot be directly compared with figures produced prior to 2011–12 due to a change in methodology.
- Since 2017–18, remoteness area (RA) is determined using the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2016 RA classification. Previous years used the 2011 RA classification. Care is therefore required when comparing remoteness data across time.

Income details (gross weekly household income and principal source of income) are at the time of application with the following exceptions:

- New South Wales – income details are recorded at the time of PRA application and updated in March and September of each year. The most recent record is used for reporting.
- Victoria and Queensland – at 30 June. Therefore, reported income may be different to the income received at the time of assistance.

Care should be taken when comparing gross weekly household income across states and territories. New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, South Australia and the Australian Capital Territory include CRA in gross weekly income, while Western Australia, Tasmania and the Northern Territory do not. Therefore, gross weekly household income in some states and territories may be artificially lower than others because of the non-reporting of CRA.

Weekly rent is at time of application with the following exceptions:

- New South Wales – weekly rent is recorded at the time of PRA application and updated as and when the rent increases. The most recent record is used for reporting.
- Queensland – at 30 June.
- Western Australia and the Northern Territory do not provide weekly rent.

State- and territory-specific issues:

New South Wales

- For the years up to and including 2010–11, temporary accommodation was included under 'rental grants, subsidies and relief'. Temporary accommodation was no longer included from 2011–12. Thus, data on the number of households assisted by 'rental grants, subsidies and relief' are not comparable with the data from 2010–11 and earlier reference periods.
- From 2011–12, hotel/motel assistance is not included in the collection. Prior to 2011–12, hotel/motel assistance was included under 'rental grants, subsidies and relief'. Thus, the number of households assisted through 'rental grants, subsidies and relief' from 2011–12 is not comparable with earlier collections.
- From 2015–16, Indigenous status of the household is required to be collected from all PRA recipients. This has led to better identification of Indigenous clients.

Victoria

- For the years up to and including 2012–13, unit record data could not be provided for households assisted under the housing establishment fund. As such, estimates were provided for these households, which were based on funding levels and historical data. From 2013–14, estimates were no longer provided. Thus, care is advised when reviewing data from 2013–14 onwards with that of previous years.
- As a result of a system change in 2012–13, caution is advised when comparing gross weekly household income. Although a household may

appear to have little or no income, they are most likely receiving appropriate levels of income and these changes may not be reflected accurately in the system.

Queensland

- Due to increased emergency responses provided in 2019–20, there was an increase in the number of households where income source was not stated/inadequately described.

Western Australia

- During the 2014–15 reporting period, systems were changed to allow better data validation to improve data quality of Indigenous status. Prior to 2014–15, there was greater variation in missing data for Indigenous status.
- The change to the reporting system in 2014–15 also resulted in the discontinuation of data relating to weekly rent charged from 2015–16 onwards.
- In 2014–15, Western Australia made improvements to the process through which income-related data was entered and validated. The new process provided an increased selection of income types. This enhanced the accuracy of mapping to national codes.

South Australia

- Prior to 2011–12, clients receiving emergency hotel/motel accommodation were reported under 'rental grants, subsidies and relief'.
- From 2011–12 to 2018–19, clients receiving emergency hotel/motel accommodation were reported under 'other'. Thus, the number of households assisted through 'other' assistance from 2011–12 is not comparable with earlier collections. Weekly rent was not available for this type of assistance and gross weekly income amount and source were not always available.
- From 2019–20, emergency hotel/motel accommodation is not considered in-scope for this collection.
- Prior to 2015–16, Indigenous status of the main applicant was reported rather than the Indigenous status of the household. Therefore, any comparisons with previous years for South Australia and other states and territories should be undertaken with caution.
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- In 2020–21, recipients of Carer's payment were included under the income code 'Other Centrelink pension/allowances for the aged and people with a disability'. Previously they were included under 'Other Government cash pension/allowances'.

Australian Capital Territory

- Until the commencement of the new Rental Bond Help program in November 2018, income information was generally collected for assessable income items only (assessable income as defined in the Public Rental Housing Assistance Program legislative instrument). Consequently, accurate gross income is not available for all program recipients and caution should be exercised when interpreting data for households experiencing housing stress.
- In 2016–17, there was improved data quality in the identification of Indigenous data.
- From 2018–19, income source by specific Centrelink payment type is not reported due to the introduction of a digital application method that has not been enabled to record specific Centrelink payment types. All Centrelink payments are now coded to 'Other government cash/pension allowances' (code 3.3).
- Prior to 2018–19, the date of assistance was the date the assistance was approved for payment. From 2018–19, the date of assistance is the date on which it was paid.

Northern Territory

- Prior to 2018–19, Indigenous households were under-reported because details of non-income earning household members were not captured in the collection.

Source and reference attributes

Submitting organisation: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare

Relational attributes

**Related metadata
references:**

Supersedes [Private Rent Assistance Collection, 2019–20; Quality Statement](#)
[AIHW Data Quality Statements](#), Superseded 16/06/2022

Has been superseded by [Private Rent Assistance Collection, 2021–22; Quality Statement](#)

[AIHW Data Quality Statements](#), Superseded 22/02/2024