

National Social Housing Survey, 2023; Quality Statement

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Identifying and definitional attributes

Metadata item type:	Data Quality Statement
METEOR identifier:	782830
Registration status:	AIHW Data Quality Statements , Standard 13/12/2023

Data quality

Data quality statement summary:

Description

The 2023 National Social Housing Survey (NSHS) collects information from tenants of four social housing programs – public housing (PH), community housing (CH), state owned and managed Indigenous housing (SOMIH) and Indigenous community housing (ICH – Queensland only).

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 2023 survey was 26%; for face-to-face it was 65%. 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.

Weighting

Consistent with the 2018 and 2021 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.

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](#), which includes details about the [AIHW's governance](#) and [role and strategic goals](#).

The 2023 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: Data are not collected annually. Surveys for PH and CH were conducted in 2001, 2003, 2005, 2007, 2010, 2012, 2014, 2016, 2018, 2021 and 2023. Surveys for SOMIH were conducted in 2005, 2007, 2012, 2014, 2016, 2018, 2021 and 2023. A survey for Indigenous community housing was conducted for Queensland in 2018 and again in 2023. ICH was not conducted in 2021 due to COVID-19 disruptions.

The 2023 fieldwork for the combined mail-out/online components was conducted from 6 April to 16 June for the Australian Capital Territory and from 6 April to 1 September for all other jurisdictions. Fieldwork for the SOMIH face-to-face component was undertaken in New South Wales from 3 June to 21 July and in Queensland from 2 June to 10 July; and for ICH in Queensland from 6 June to 1 September.

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.

Accessibility: Published results from the 2023 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.

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](#). 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 directed to info@aihw.gov.au.

Interpretability: Information to aid in interpretation of 2023 NSHS results will be available on the AIHW website including the 2023 NSHS methodological report, code book and other supporting documentation.

Relevance: The 2023 NSHS was conducted among tenants from PH (all jurisdictions), CH (all jurisdictions except the Northern Territory), SOMIH (New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia and Tasmania), and ICH (Queensland).

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 two jurisdictions (South Australia and Tasmania) and face-to-face interview in the other two jurisdictions (New South Wales and Queensland). Queensland ICH tenants completed the survey via face-to-face interviews.

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.

Accuracy: **Response rates**

Response rates are a key factor contributing to the accuracy of estimates produced from the 2023 NSHS. Higher response rates often lead to estimates that are more accurate.

For PH, CH and SOMIH, 30,455 questionnaires were sent to tenants using the combined mail-out/online approach. Of these, 7,468 responses were categorised as being complete and useable (3,098 online responses and 4,370 paper responses). The 2023 response rate for the combined mail-out/online approach was 26% (the same response rate as 2021). In 2023, 41% of all surveys were completed online – higher than the 2021 online proportion of 37%.

For the jurisdictions where SOMIH tenants completed the survey face-to-face (New South Wales and Queensland), 1,724 interviews were attempted and 1,060 completed, with an overall response rate of 61%.

For Queensland ICH tenants, 646 attempts were made to conduct a face-to-face interview, of which 483 interviews were completed – a response rate of 75%.

Out of the 2,370 attempted face-to-face interviews across SOMIH and ICH, a total of 1,543 interviews were completed – an overall response rate of 65%.

The 2023 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 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, 2023

Program/Jurisdiction	Total responses	Response rate (%)
Public housing		
NSW	457	22
Vic	517	27
Qld	941	25
WA	500	32
SA	500	37
Tas	397	34
ACT	524	33
NT	464	18
Community housing		
NSW	529	23
Vic	344	23
Qld	502	29
WA	336	31
SA	653	25
Tas	384	25
ACT	167	23
State owned and managed Indigenous housing		
NSW (face-to-face)	548	56
Qld (face-to-face)	512	68
SA	226	18
Tas	27	17
Indigenous community housing		
Qld (face-to-face)	483	75

Sample design

The 2023 NSHS was designed to meet minimum reliability objectives for key variables for each participating jurisdiction/housing program.

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

In 2023, minimum sample quotas were employed for remoteness-based strata to 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, 2023

Program/Jurisdiction	Quota	Booster
Public housing		
NSW	500	514
Vic	500	*
Qld	1,000	832
WA	500	56
SA	500	159
Tas	400	91
ACT	500	*
NT	500	533
Community housing		
NSW	540	48
Vic	350	176
Qld	500	*
WA	350	45
SA	700	647
Tas	400	209
ACT	200	**
State owned and managed Indigenous housing		
NSW (face-to-face)	500	..
Qld (face-to-face)	500	..
SA	300	..
Tas	200	..
Indigenous community housing		
Qld (face-to-face)	500	..

* A booster send was not required.

** Census send so a boost was not applicable.

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

Sampling error

The estimates are subject to sampling error. Relative standard errors (RSEs) are provided with estimates from the 2023 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 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.

Coherence:

For the 2023 NSHS, caution should be used when comparing trend data or data between jurisdictions due to differences in response rates and non-sampling error.

The 2023 NSHS sampling and stratification methods were similar to the 2018 and 2021 surveys: a sample was randomly selected from each stratum.

The data collected for SOMIH was sourced using two methodologies (via mail-out in two jurisdictions and via face-to-face interview in two jurisdictions). 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 2023 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, 2021; Quality Statement](#)
[AIHW Data Quality Statements](#), Superseded 13/12/2023