

# **Australian Institute of Health and Welfare Canberra**

## **Housing Assistance in Australia 2011**

### **June 2011**

#### **Housing assistance to people with disability**

Disability affects about one in five Australians and one in 20 in a significant way. The 2003 Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers found that 6.3% of Australians had a profound or severe core activity limitation and sometimes or always needed assistance with self-care, communication or mobility (ABS 2004).

People with disability are likely to have lower incomes than the general population, fewer housing options, and higher dependence on social housing and support services (Beer & Faulkner 2009).

The 2006 Census showed that the rate of home ownership was lower in all age groups for those with a need for assistance (that is, needing help with self-care, mobility and/or communication because of a disability, long-term health problem or old age) than those who did not have a need for assistance.

One in ten people with a need for assistance were renting from state or territory housing authorities, housing cooperatives, community groups or church groups. This is higher than the rate in the general population (ABS 2008b).

Social housing offers a safety net to people with disability who have difficulty securing and sustaining appropriate accommodation.

As at 30 June 2010, public rental housing provided accommodation to more than 129,000 households with at least one member with a disability, corresponding to 40% of public rental housing households overall. State Owned and Managed Indigenous Housing (SOMIH) accommodated 2,900 households and mainstream community housing (CH) accommodated a further 13,800 households with a member with a disability.

Source: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) analysis of National Housing Assistance Data Repository 2009–10.

In 2009–10, 79% of households with a member with a disability that were newly allocated to public rental housing were deemed to be in greatest need.

A similarly high proportion (66%) of newly allocated SOMIH households with a member with a disability were in greatest need (AIHW analysis of National Housing Assistance Data Repository 2009–10).

Figure 5.5 charts the main ‘greatest need’ reason nominated by these households allocated to public rental housing and SOMIH in 2009–10. Almost half (44% for public rental housing and 42% for SOMIH) nominated homelessness as their main reason for seeking support.

The next most frequently nominated main reason for seeking support was that their health condition was aggravated by their previous housing.

The Commonwealth Rent Assistance (CRA) is another avenue in which housing assistance can be provided to households with one or more persons with disability.

In 2010, CRA supported almost 220,000 households with a member that was receiving a Disability Support Pension (SCRGSP 2011). Although CRA provides significant assistance to households, around one in three income units in receipt of the Disability Support Pension were still spending more than 30% of gross household income in rent after CRA (34%) (SCRGSP 2011).