

# Reaching the limits

## A profile of Emergency Relief provision across Anglicare Australia agencies

November 2010

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Anglicare Australia is the peak body for a national network of locally based Anglican care organisations serving the needs of disadvantaged Australians and their communities. The Anglicare network provides a wide range of services to people in need; and works to address issues of injustice across the nation. In 2009-10 Anglicare agencies served over 615,000 clients in rural, remote, regional and urban communities using the services of 13,000 staff and nearly 13,000 volunteers and spending over \$886 million. Anglicare Australia seeks to influence social and economic policy to advocate for a society where the contribution, dignity and participation of everyone are equally valued.

Anglicare Australia's Research Network is a special interest group within the Anglicare Australia network comprising researchers and research units working toward building a greater evidence base on social issues.

## Acknowledgements

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Finally, Anglicare Australia would like to thank all the Project Partners and Emergency Relief Services of the organisations who have participated in this research, without whom this project would not have been possible.

## Summary

A total of 11 Anglicare organisations took part in a survey of emergency relief providers conducted in August 2010. Participating organisations represented 31 Services across 76 delivery sites covering all States and Territories except ACT. The survey has sought for the first time to provide data on the provision of emergency relief across the Anglicare network.

The survey lays the groundwork for a subsequent research project to better understand the role emergency relief plays in assisting disadvantaged families and households to survive poverty and social exclusion.

## Funding sources

Responding Agency staff were asked about their main sources of funding used to provide Emergency Relief in 2009-10 financial year. As expected the overwhelming majority (90%) relied on Commonwealth Government Emergency Relief Program (ERP) grants through the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA). Overall, Services reported three different categories of funding source. Nearly three quarters (73%) of the Services received funds from internal Agency or parish donations. In addition, a significant source of funding is through the range of utility assistance programs in some States.

## Emergency Relief assistance

Services were asked to identify the type of Emergency Relief assistance provided by their outlets (see Figure 3). On average, Services provide over 4 categories of assistance across the network, including financial support (93%), referral and advice (90%), material aid (87%) and groceries/sundries (84%). Case management (case planning, ongoing support) is provided by just over one third (35%) of the Services.

The most common category of financial support is for utilities by 93% of Services. An average of 3 types of financial support was reported as being provided. Essentials are the second ranked type of financial support provided (79%), followed by transport (52%) and

housing (28%). Financial support specifically for education related costs is provided by 21% of Services.

A total of 62,866 households were reported as being helped by 31 Services operating through 76 sites in 2009/10. This equated to an average of 5,240 households per month. The median number of households assisted was 960 per Service. On average, households were assisted on two occasions with some form of Emergency Relief in the 12 months (based on data from 24 Services).

## Service expenditure

Services were asked to report the extent of Emergency Relief assistance in dollars (\$) provided to clients – preferably for each month in 2009/10 or alternatively to give their monthly expenditure based on April 2010 data. A total of \$4.534 million was provided as cash, vouchers or material aid by 26 Services in 2009/10. The average expenditure per month was \$377,860 across the network. However, this should be considered an underestimate of expenditure due to the level of missing data in the survey and additional Emergency Relief provision by Services not participating in this survey. An estimate of median Service expenditure on Emergency Relief has been calculated to be \$98,600 annually.

Overall, the monthly data on expenditure suggests a significant increase in Emergency Relief provision over the 12 month period. The median amount of assistance provided to households has been estimated at \$86.

## Unmet demand

The survey sought data on the extent of possible turn-aways where households could not be assisted with Emergency Relief. The monthly and annual data have been combined to give an estimate of total turn-aways in 2009-10 reported by 22 Services. The total number of reported turn-aways was 21,200 over the 12 months. This equates to an average of 1,760 per month across the network and 960 turn-aways per Service. The median turn-away rate was 157 households per Service. This data reflects not only the capacity of Service delivery sites to meet presenting demand but also on operational policies concerning delivery of Emergency Relief assistance, for example several Services do not turn away clients.

The monthly turn-away data indicates a significant downward trend over the 12 month period. Comparison of this trend in unmet demand with the increase in monthly Emergency Relief expenditure across participating Services suggests that the Anglicare network in aggregate was able to assist a higher proportion of presenting demand through the year.

### Presenting demand

Based on combining the number of households assisted and total turn-aways reported by Services, we estimate that annual demand exceeded 84,000 households over the 12 months (2009/10). This figure should be considered as indicative of measured demand due to the limitations in collecting data on individual households versus occasions that assistance was sought.

It was not possible to definitively report on trends in demand for assistance through the year, however the data on increased monthly expenditure supports a conclusion that demand had increased. A final question in the survey asked Service staff to provide their assessment on presenting demand for assistance over the year. The overwhelming majority of Services reported that demand had increased (27 Services, 93%) either 'considerably' (76%) or 'a little' (17%).

Comments by respondents on presenting demand at their Service sites indicated three themes:

- a) Rise in complexity of client need
- b) Increased frequency of demand from existing clients, and
- c) A greater level of 'new' clients.



## Introduction

Anglicare Australia is the peak body for a national network of locally based Anglican care organisations serving the needs of disadvantaged Australians and their communities. It is a network of 43 agencies across Australia providing services in every region and across the lifespan. Nearly 13 000 volunteers, 13 000 staff and over \$866 million support over 600 000 vulnerable Australians every year.

Anglicare Australia seeks to influence social and economic policy to advocate for a society where the contribution, dignity and participation of everyone is equally valued.

Emergency relief has over the past years become increasingly visible in the public sphere. This type of service delivery, carried out by Anglicare Australia network members across the country, has particularly been of interest to Government following the fallout of the global economic downturn.

The purpose of this project has been to establish a national perspective on the use of emergency relief services by people pushed to the margins of society through hardship and disadvantage and to demonstrate the importance of emergency relief providers for these people. It is a joint project of Anglicare agencies working together with the Anglicare Australia Research Network. This report is the first phase of the project, focussing on the providers of emergency relief.

It is our belief that emergency relief provision is no longer simply the supply of food and other goods but is becoming a mechanism through which services are linking with the most disadvantaged in their communities. This project seeks to describe the role and significance of emergency relief provision and provide an indication of its future direction.

## Methodology

The Reaching the Limits: Emergency Relief Project is a two phased multicentre research project aiming to provide a national perspective on the use and provision of emergency relief services. This report outlines the processes undertaken for phase one of the project.

Under the management of a working group comprised of researchers from Anglicare organisations who provide or have an interest in emergency relief services; phase one involved a service audit to determine a baseline from which phase two of the project would be developed.

The audit consisted of a short survey comprising eight items which was conducted with emergency relief providers seeking information on a site-by-site basis relating to the take up of emergency relief and the variables which impact on its provision, such as funding.

A total of 20 Anglicare organisations were approached to participate in the survey. Each participating organisation was invited to nominate a project partner who as a representative of the organisation would liaise with the project working group and conduct all surveys within their own organisation. Comprehensive guidelines were developed for project partners to assist in their application of the survey and information sessions were also held to provide further support or assistance.

It should be noted that significant limitations became apparent in undertaking the survey despite substantial planning and piloting of the questionnaire. Resources were not available to support Services to collect the data (if not available through existing regular monitoring or reporting) or complete the survey. Some services rely on volunteers and have substantial constraints on their time to take on additional tasks. Most providers do not receive funding to enable data collection and analysis as a standard element of service provision and review. This was reflected in the participation rate of 11 Anglicare organisations and 31 Services out of a potential 20 organisations. Despite careful consideration of the survey design, there was a level of misinterpretation of some items causing a lower response rate or poor quality data that has limited the analysis. Despite these limitations the phase one survey provides a solid baseline on the extent and nature of Emergency Relief provision across the Anglicare network.

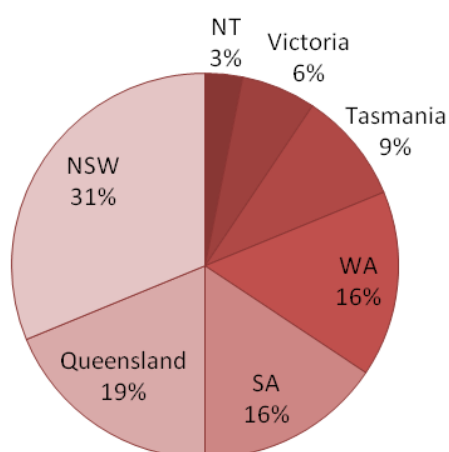


## Survey Findings

### Profile of participating Services

A total of 11 parent Anglicare organisations took part in the survey conducted in August 2010, representing 31 Services. All States and Territories except ACT were covered by the survey of Emergency Relief provider Services. The distribution of participating Services by State and Territory is shown in Figure 1 below and indicates that NSW had the highest level of participation in the survey with 10 Services (31%) representing 3 parent organisations.

**Figure 1: Distribution of participating services**

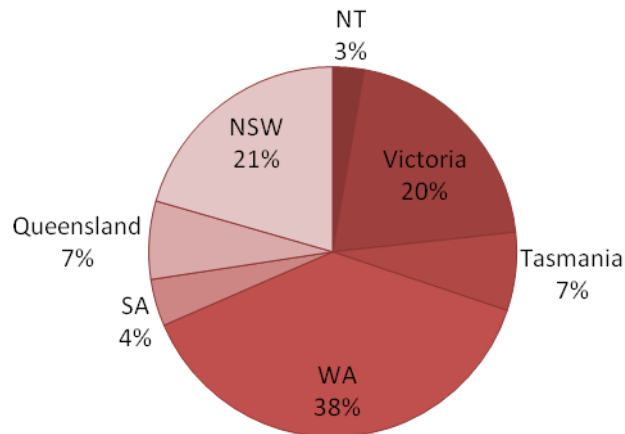


The 31 Services provide Emergency Relief assistance at 76 sites. It should be noted that some Services are not site specific, such as case management or outreach assistance to Emergency Relief clients, and therefore the locational data (number of sites and suburbs) does not equate to geographic coverage of the participating Services.

This data on level of state participation should be treated with caution, as the number of Services reported as delivering Emergency Relief is dependent on the structure and related operational arrangements of the larger parent organisations. Thus one large southern organisation completed a single survey form as the Service and parent agency, representing however 13 delivery sites. Although the profile of participating services suggests a large number of smaller agencies delivering Emergency Relief through a single site or location, the analysis indicates that a small number of

the large Anglicare parent agencies deliver most of the Emergency Relief through their range of Services in metropolitan or regional areas. These include one in New South Wales (8 Services) and one in Queensland (6 Services). The distribution of site locations (office location) shown in Figure 2 below indicates a different pattern of Emergency Relief delivery nationally. One of the larger organisations recorded 28 site locations for Emergency Relief, however, their completion of the survey forms was separated according to type of service, including church parishes, and case managed Emergency Relief, community outlets, hospitals and specific Emergency Relief outlets.

**Figure 2: Site location of Services by State/Territory**



This diversity of organisational structures and internal reporting requirements across the Anglicare network makes comparative analysis of Emergency Relief assistance (and other forms of service delivery) a real challenge. The following analysis of the survey data has attempted to take into account this challenge in seeking to provide a reasonable profile of Emergency Relief provision across the network.

### Funding sources

Responding Agency staff were asked about their main sources of funding used to provide Emergency Relief in 2009-10 financial year. As expected the overwhelming majority (90%) relied on Commonwealth Government ERP grants through FaHCSIA last year. Four Services specifically reported receiving FaHCSIA grants as part of the response to the Global Financial Crisis. Nearly one quarter (23%) received State Government funding under

Emergency Relief grants or other poverty assistance (for example the NSW Vulnerable Families Program).

Nearly three quarters (73%) of the Services received funds from general Agency or parish donations. In addition, a significant source of funding is through the range of utility assistance programs: Telstra vouchers (33% of Services), gas/electricity assistance (27%) and water assistance (23%). One source of funding in one State has been the gambling revenue program. Overall, Services reported three different categories of funding source: Government funding, Agency funding or utility assistance programs.

**Table 1: Funding sources for Emergency Relief provision (2009-10)**

Funding source	Services	%
FaHCSIA ERP grants	27	90
FaHCSIA GFC funding	4	13
State Government funding	7	23
State Government gambling revenue program	4	13
Donations	18	60
Donations - parish	4	13
Energy utilities assistance	8	27
Telstra vouchers	10	33
Water utility assistance	7	23
Other	3	10
<b>Total number of Services</b>	<b>30</b>	

*Missing data 1 Service*

As expected the type of assistance provided to clients was tied to the source of funding. Thus untied donations were available for general Emergency Relief relief and FaHCSIA grants were tied to the program constraints for Emergency Relief provision. Monies received from state governments were directed to the category of utility help sought by clients, often through the provision of vouchers.

Responding Services were asked for the proportion of total Emergency Relief budget last year from each main funding source. Overall, FaHCSIA ERP grant funding ranged from 6% to 100% across the 25 Service answering this question. On average, FaHCSIA funding represented approximately 53% of Service funding for Emergency Relief in the period (for the 25 Services who

provided data). Donations (parish or general sources) made up an average of 23% of funding received by those Services that received some level of funding from this source.

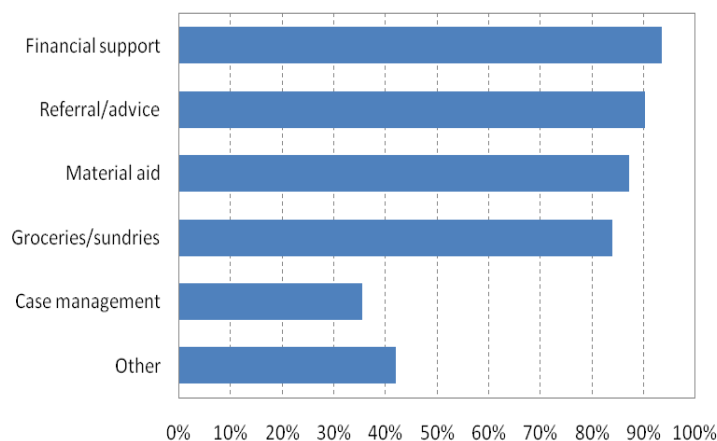
Only one Service responded that they do not have reporting requirements for funding as would be expected. Twenty Services explicitly stated that they did not have trouble with their acquittals. Four Services – all from a single parent organisation - stated that they have trouble meeting their reporting requirements. This may reflect an issue faced by the parent organisation in reporting, rather than a systemic issue shared by Services across organisations. The two reasons given for struggling to meet requirements were:

- a) No funding to cover data entry costs
- b) Complexity of the reporting requirements.

### Emergency Relief service provision

Services were asked to identify the type of Emergency Relief assistance provided by their outlets (see Figure 3). On average, Services provide over 4 categories of assistance across the network, including financial support (93%), referral and advice (90%), material aid (87%) and groceries/sundries (84%). Case management (case planning, ongoing support, etc) is provided by just over one third (35%) of the Services.

Figure 3: Type of ER assistance

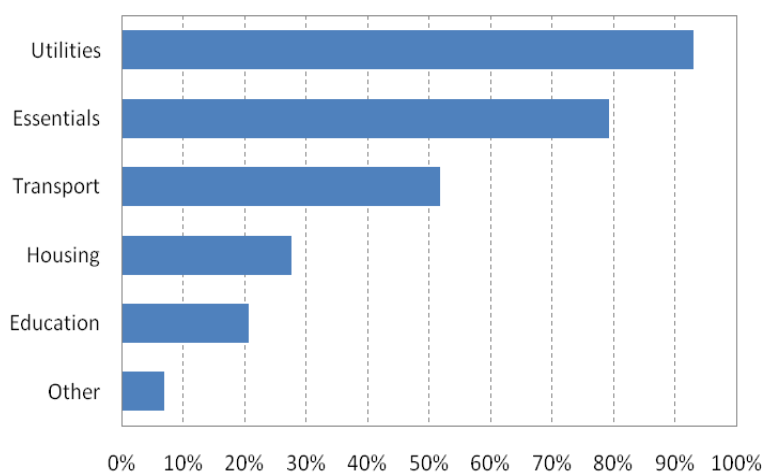


*Missing data: 1 Service*

Looking at the types of financial support given to clients, the most common category is for utilities by 93% of the responding 29 Services. An average of 3 types of

financial support was reported as being provided by Services (see Figure 4). Essentials are the second ranked type of financial support provided (79%), followed by transport (52%) and housing (28%). Financial support specifically for education related costs is provided by 21% of Services. The 'other' category included medical, pharmacological or other health needs, storage fees, specific needs of babies and infants and funeral expenses.

Figure 4: Type of financial support



*Missing data: 3 Services and 2 Services do not provide financial support*

There were some differences in the categories of Emergency Relief assistance provided by Services across the States and Territories. Most categories were provided almost universally, including referral & advocacy, material aid, utilities, groceries & sundries and financial support. However, case management was only provided predominantly in Victoria, South Australia, Western Australia and Tasmania. No Queensland based Services and only one out of eight NSW based Services provided case management.

In the category of financial assistance, education related help was provided by 21% of Services. However, none of the NSW, Tasmania or South Australia based Services assisted with these costs.

These differences may reflect Anglicare parent organisation decisions about use of Emergency Relief monies, but equally they might reflect State government policies that reduce demand from clients for particular types of help, such as education related items.

### Case study

*Ms M learnt about this Anglicare service through a mobile mechanic that a work colleague of her husband's had recommended. She and her family were from a Culturally and Linguistically Diverse background and had relocated to this area from the eastern states. Three children were attending school and the youngest attended day-care a couple of days per week. They had left previous rental accommodation due to numerous repairs not being done by the owner and consequently had to pay a much higher rental price. The clients had started a small business and had been doing well but they began to experience financial stress due to having to borrow money when an elderly parent in their country of origin fell gravely ill and they had to return home for an extended period to provide support and finally bury the deceased. With this absence away from Australia, seasonal changes and the global credit crisis, the demand for their business was affected. Upon their return to Australia, the clients were faced with rental and other accounts arrears to address. Their relationship was also under severe strain and the client was very distressed.*

*They were issued with a Notice of Termination for Non-Payment of Rent but managed to stay further proceedings when the male client gained other part-time work.*

*A successful application was made to an Anglicare Family Rental Respite Program. This cleared rental arrears which secured the family's accommodation. The remaining allocated funds paid other accounts preventing electricity disconnection, enabling telephone landline restoration (which was needed for personal communication and business resurrection), getting the family vehicle back on the road for work and clearing childcare arrears.*

*Intensive budgeting education and assistance was done with the client for future management of the family's finances. General financial literacy education was undertaken on subjects that included dealing with debt, understanding credit better, different types of banking accounts, understanding paperwork and consumer rights and responsibilities. The Financial Counsellor referred the clients to a small business centre for specialist advice and assistance regarding their business and to Counselling for personal issues.*

*The client was very pleased with the outcome. She felt more empowered to manage the family's income and most importantly, she had discovered a valuable source of information and support at a critical time and for the future as well.*

## Level of assistance

The survey asked for the number of clients or households provided with Emergency Relief by Services in the last financial year (2009/10). A total of 62,866 households were reported as being helped by 31 Services operating through 76 sites. This equated to an average of 5,240 households per month.

It should be noted that the survey asked respondents to identify whether they counted 'clients' or 'households'. The analysis has assumed that households have been counted to yield a more conservative figure. This may mean that there has been an undercount of individuals who have received Emergency Relief assistance, as some households would have included couples or families with children.

As the profile data above has indicated, there is a wide variance in size of Service nationally due to organisation structure and reporting. This is reflected in the wide range in numbers of households assisted from 12 at a small regional outlet to over 29,000 by a large statewide organisation. In the latter case, this organisation represented 13 sites assisting on average 2,240 households per site. The average number of households assisted was 2,028 per Service. However, it is more appropriate to use the median which is 960 households per Service.

If the number of sites where Emergency Relief was delivered in the period is considered, the average number of households assisted was 827 per site.

The survey also requested the total number of occasions of assistance provided to individual clients/households in the same year. Two Services were unable to provide this data and several Services misunderstood this question: these have been excluded from this analysis. On average, households were assisted on two occasions with some form of Emergency Relief in the 12 months (based on data from 24 Services). However, this figure should be considered as indicative only of multiple use as it is calculated from the total number of occasions of assistance and number of households assisted in the period. Four Services reported a higher level of multiple or repeat use – 3 occasions or more per household. It should be noted that this data on multiple use does not

include possible client use at either non-participating Anglicare or other not-for-profit Services.

### Service expenditure

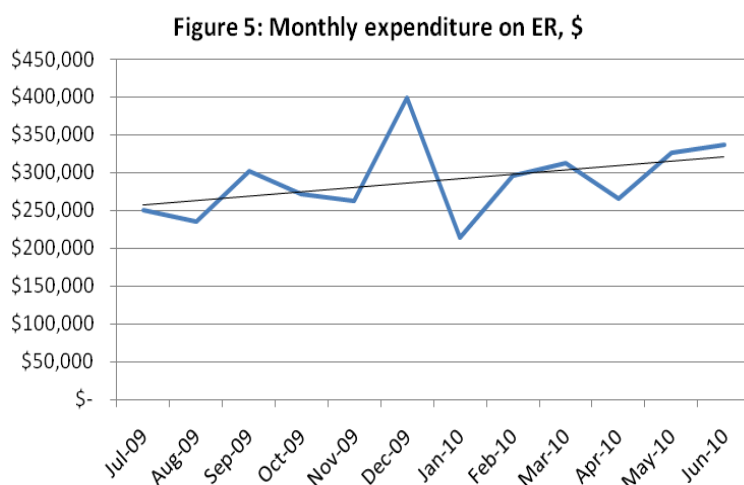
Services were asked to report the extent of Emergency Relief assistance in dollars (\$) provided to clients – preferably for each month in 2009/10 or alternatively to give their monthly expenditure based on April 2010 data. Monthly data over the whole year was reported for 16 Services and an additional 10 Services provided a single monthly figure on expenditure. Expenditure data for 81% of the 31 Services could be analysed. April expenditure was found to be in the mid range of monthly data for those reporting full expenditure. Therefore in order to derive a total expenditure for the full year, an annual figure was calculated by factoring up the April figure for the 10 Services providing this month's data only. These totals were added to the total expenditure of the remaining 16 Services.

A total of \$4.534 million was provided as cash, vouchers or material aid by the 26 Services in 2009/10. The average expenditure per month was \$377,860 across the network. However, this should be considered an underestimate of expenditure due to the level of missing data in the survey and additional Emergency Relief provision by Services not participating in this survey.

An estimate of median Service expenditure on Emergency Relief has been calculated to be \$98,600 annually.

For those Services providing full monthly data over the 12 months, as might be expected, there is significant variance in Emergency Relief spending across the months (Figure 5), ranging from a low of \$214,480 in January 2010 to a high of \$399,460 in the previous month of December 2009. The graph shows the spike in the pre Christmas period reflecting the extra demand on service providers and the specific provision of Christmas packs by many agencies. Similarly, the post Christmas drop in January is likely to be linked to the holiday period reflecting reduced demand and more limited opening hours of services. Overall, the monthly data suggests a significant increase in Emergency Relief provision over the 12 month period.





*Note: monthly data available for 16 Services*

It was not possible to definitively report on trends in household demand for assistance through the year, however the data on increased monthly expenditure supports a conclusion that demand had increased. Monthly data on households assisted was not sought in the survey. However, the median amount of assistance provided to households has been calculated to be \$86. This median figure was calculated only from data provided by those Services who were able to give monthly expenditure figures. Examination of the variance across Services suggests this figure is a reasonable proxy for the median level of assistance provided with a limited range. On this basis the above expenditure profile is likely to reflect increasing demand over the period.

### Unmet demand

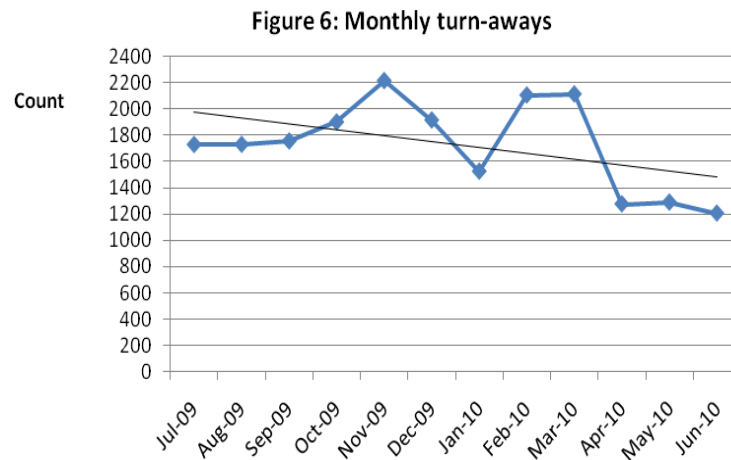
Question 3 in the survey asked about levels of turn-aways, that is, presenting households who could not be assisted with Emergency Relief, during 2009/10 financial year.

Thirteen Services were able to provide monthly turn-away numbers; an additional nine provided a total count of turn-aways for the full year; while 5 Services explicitly stated that they do not collect turn-away data.

The monthly and annual data have been combined to give an estimate of total turn-aways in 2009-10 reported by the 22 Services. The total number of reported

turn-aways was 21,200 over the 12 months. This equates to an average of 1,760 per month across the network and 960 turn-aways per Service. The number of turn-aways ranged from 0 for five Service sites in any particular month to a high of 1,301 turn-aways in February 2010 for one large Service site in South Australia. The median turn-away rate was 157 households per Service. This data reflects not only the capacity of Service delivery sites to meet presenting demand but also on operational policies concerning delivery of Emergency Relief assistance, for example several Services do not turn away clients.

Figure 6 below indicates the trend in turn-aways numbers over the 12 month period aggregated across the 13 Services who provided monthly data. This trend should be considered indicative due to the number of Services who were unable to give this data. However, it is interesting to compare the downward trend in unmet demand over the year with the increase in monthly expenditure across participating Services, suggesting that the network in aggregate was able to assist a higher proportion of presenting demand through the year.



*Note: monthly data available for 13 Services*

Service staff were asked if referrals are provided to clients who are unable to be assisted. Only 3 Services said that they do not provide onward referrals to clients. The great majority (82%) of Services have in place policies that limit the amount of assistance given to clients, with only 5 Services that do not have such policies in place. Twenty Services were able to describe the types of policies limiting assistance:

- 60% have a cap on the dollar amount of assistance
- 55% have limits on frequency of assistance
- 40% had other criteria that limit assistance provided

As an example of current procedure, one Service described their process as follows:

*'It must be over one month before seeking further Emergency Relief assistance. The client may not come every month otherwise we are supplementing their benefit. If 3 consecutive months seeking Emergency Relief (we give for third), we delve deeper as to why they needed us – we give them our budget form and as always try to get them to pay off bills ahead of time...'*

Another Service stated that financial assistance is generally only given once a year to clients, but clarified that they do not turn away people and hence could not report a count of turn-aways as the following explains,

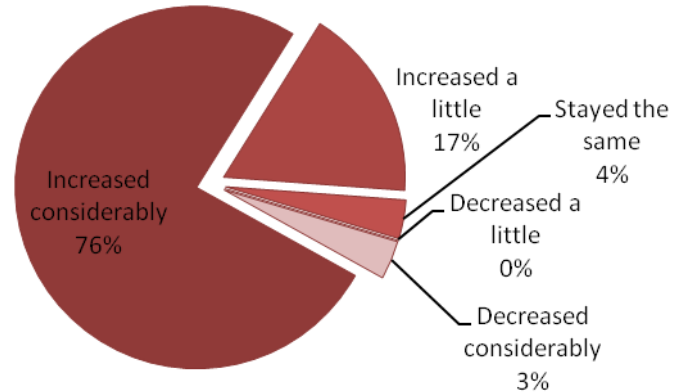
*'It is difficult to give a definite number to this question because we (name removed) do not turn anyone away. If a person comes in seeking financial assistance and we cannot help because they have already had financial assistance within 12 months, or the type of bill is not covered by our scope of assistance (eg car registration), then they are always asked if they would like a food parcel'. (Queensland provider)*

### Trends in presenting demand

Based on combining the number of households assisted and total turn-aways reported by Services, we estimate that annual demand exceeded 84,000 households over the 12 months (2009/10). This figure should be considered as indicative of presenting demand due to the limitations in collecting data on individual households versus occasions when assistance was sought.

A final summative question in the survey asked Service staff to assess whether the extent to which presenting demand for assistance had increased or decreased over the past year (2009/10). Two Services were unable to make this assessment. The overwhelming majority of Services reported that demand had increased (27 Services, 93%) either 'considerably' (76%) or 'a little' (17%) as shown in Figure 7 below.

Figure 7: Service perception of trend in presenting need over past year (2009/10)



A range of additional comments were made by several Services at the end of the Survey. Some of these addressed the changing demand for assistance presenting at their Service sites. These were grouped into three main themes:

- a) Rise in complexity of client need
- b) Increased frequency of demand from existing clients, and
- c) A greater level of 'new' clients.

Comments included:

*'There is a new category of persons presenting for assistance namely New Zealand citizens, without Australian citizenship - not eligible for Centrelink payments - with no funds and no income'* (Queensland provider)

*'Demand for services has increased numerically but also in complexity, demanding more time and professional expertise.'* (NSW provider)

*'Unemployment situations affecting older age group clients is on the increase, particularly the blue collar sector with families.'* (Queensland provider)

### Case study

*Mrs W was referred to the financial counselling service as her hot water system was on the way out.*

*Mrs W is a 79 year old widow who lives in her own home with the assistance of in home care providers who help with general household chores and repair. Mrs W suffers with a number of health problems including constant strokes that badly affect her mobility and speech.*

*The financial counsellor applied to a local Trust for financial assistance, as Mrs W had obtained a quote from a local repairer. The cost of replacing the old storage hot water system was \$2008.60. The financial counsellor discussed with Mrs W that it was an expensive item to replace and run given that she was now the only person living in the house.*

*Mrs W's application was not approved by the trust. Following this, the financial counsellor explained the price differences between the old storage system and a new instantaneous one. Mrs W wanted to think about it.*

*After talking to her neighbour who reported that the instantaneous system was much better and cheaper for her to run; Mrs W contacted the financial counselor suggesting that she would apply for a Centrelink advance. On assessing Mrs W's budget including her medical expenses and in home care, the financial counselor believed Mrs W could not afford to take out the advance.*

*The financial counsellor contacted an Anglicare agency and asked if it was possible for Mrs W to receive some assistance. The financial counsellor had thought that if the agency could assist with some of the funds, Mrs W could apply for a No Interest Loan for the balance which was still cheaper than the Centrelink Advance. The Anglicare agency agreed they would assist with \$1000.00 towards the \$1495.00 for a new instantaneous system. It was suggested by the Anglicare worker to contact the Emergency Relief service to see if they were able to pay the balance.*

*The Emergency Relief Coordinator was contacted and agreed that the service could assist with the remaining \$495.00. The three services worked together to get the best possible outcome for the client.*

*Mrs W gets to remain living independently in her own home. She has a more energy efficient and cost effective water heater that will reduce her energy bills. The most important thing of all, Mrs W doesn't have to worry that she can't afford to pay her bills or buy food or medication because her Pension was reduced because she took out an advance payment or a No Interest Loan.*

## Conclusion

This first phase of the project has identified the extent of emergency relief services provided through the Anglicare network across Australia. The project has found that Anglicare emergency relief services operate in all States and in the Northern Territory; the survey identified 11 Anglicare organisations that provide emergency relief through 31 services. With \$4.5 million expended in 2009-10 across 26 services, it is clear that Anglicare is among the most significant providers of such services in Australia.

Anglicare receives substantial funding from the Commonwealth, with FaHCSIA funding representing approximately 53% of Service funding for emergency relief in 2009-10. However the research has also identified that funding through donations (parish or general sources) made up an average of 23% of funding received by Services. Perhaps more than many other types of services, emergency relief is fairly reliant upon these other sources of funding apart from that provided by Government.

Based on combining the number of households assisted and total turn-aways reported by the Services, it is estimated that the total annual demand for Anglicare's emergency relief services exceeded 84,000 households over the 12 months (2009-10), which is a substantial number of households. The research also points to an increased demand for such emergency relief services during 2009-10, evidenced by an increase in expenditures on a monthly basis.

It was also noted, however, that while demand was increasing, the number of people being turned away from services actually decreased over this period. This may well reflect the increased Government commitment to emergency relief during the Global Financial Crisis. Therefore, it is a matter for concern that any future withdrawal of additional Government funding could lead to a rise in the number of turn-aways. This situation should be closely monitored.

In any event, additional funding is needed in order for the Services to provide a more holistic approach to care. Emergency relief services do much in meeting basic, short-term needs, but they are generally not equipped to deal with the underlying causes of poverty. In this

respect, the third of Anglicare services that do provide casework is significant and one which should be expanded in order to more fully address the problems of multiple disadvantage and social exclusion and build resilience against financial hardship.

Finally, it is concluded that phase 1 of this research project has provided a basis for proceeding to a second phase, which will involve interviewing people who use emergency relief services about their situation. Most Services have indicated that they would be prepared to assist in the undertaking of client interviews. Consideration should also be given to updating phase 1 of the project on a regular basis, in order to monitor the demand for and expenditure upon emergency relief services in the Anglicare network.

## Appendices

### Extent of regular data collection by Services

All but 3 of the 31 Services in the survey collect data on Emergency Relief provision. Twenty-two Services have a data collection form or template used to report or monitor their Emergency Relief delivery.

Eighteen Services are able to provide copies of their data collection form to assist in the next stage of the project.

For those unable to provide a data form, several do collect data on variables relating to their provision of Emergency Relief to clients. The table below summarises the key variables identified as being collected by these Services.

**Table A1: Data variables collected by Services who do not have a data collection form or template that can be provided**

Variable	Positive
Client name	7
Address	6
Age, gender	5
Dependents	7
Source of income	7
CALD, ATSI background	3
Household tenure	4
Reason for assistance	5
Referrals	3
\$ provided to each client	5
Turn-aways	4
Type of assistance provided	4
Other (financial counselling)	2
Total number of Services	7

Services were asked in the survey whether they could provide an average dollar amount of financial aid given to each household during April 2010. Three quarters of all those surveyed were able to give a figure, thus indicating that most providers record level of assistance given to households on a regular basis.



The main method, used by 23 Services, to collect data on households using Emergency Relief services is the client's Centrelink card, which provides proof of income for eligibility purposes. Five additional Services reported using other documentation provided by clients as proof of identity to obtain assistance. Two Services relied on information received during the interview process to gather information on utilisation.

### Interest in further research on Emergency Relief provision

Services were asked whether they would be prepared to take part in a targeted and time limited data collection: 23 out of the 31 Services (74%) said yes to participation.

In response to a follow up question on possible limitation or prevention from including additional data in current collection methods, 14 responses cited time restrictions and 2 mentioned a limitation of their current IT system (presumably incapacity to add extra variables).

Nineteen Services (61%) would like to participate in a subsequent client survey (15 minutes) if part of the project whilst 9 Services said 'no'. Seventeen of those agreeing to take part in a client survey suggested a probable number of client surveys that could be undertaken (in the assumed absence of additional resources). The number of surveys ranged from 2 by one Service to 20 by three Services. The total number of surveys possible from this indicative assessment of interest was 150 from the 17 Services. It should be noted that no mention or suggestion of help to enable client participation (such as back filling staff, use of volunteer or paid interviewers) was put to Service staff in this survey. Such assistance would increase both the Service participation and survey response rates. As one Queensland based respondent commented, *'full data collection..would be most difficult, as our staff are volunteers and kept very busy with the clients on the day'*.