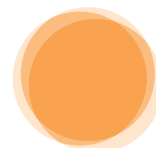


# Housing Seeker Snapshot

May 2021



# Housing Hub

## Housing Seekers Snapshot

### Housing Hub

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*The Housing Hub is an initiative of the Summer Foundation.*

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We would like to thank the many Housing Hub seekers who contributed to this report with their housing needs and preference data, for their time and valuable insights.

### DISCLAIMERS

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# Introduction

Welcome to the first snapshot of Housing Seeker data from the Housing Hub.

A new version of the Housing Hub website was launched in August 2020. This new version of the website was developed through co-design with housing seekers, housing providers and supporters of people with disability. The result is a feature-rich website with a user experience that is comparable to commercial offerings in the mainstream real estate market.

This version of the Housing Hub has a data model that it sits upon. People with disability can provide data about their housing needs and preferences and the website can then identify properties listed that are a close match. Through this, the Housing Hub takes the hassle out of finding a new home, as housing seekers can be alerted when new properties that match are added or can quickly and easily search via location, property type, support needs and property features.

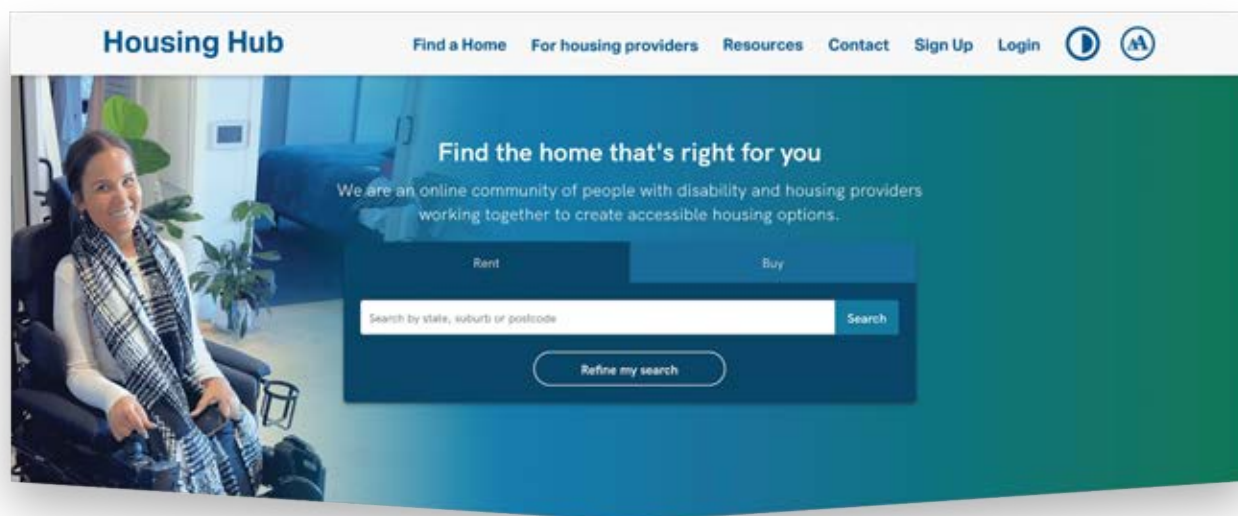
A key component of the website for housing seekers is the ability to set up a Housing Seeker Profile. This is a series of questions about where and with whom the housing seeker would like to live, and what type of property features the housing seeker is looking for. In this data snapshot, the Housing Hub is releasing data from housing seekers in a summarised way to inform the market. By doing this, the Housing Hub is working to ensure that the wants and needs of housing seekers are driving the market.

Housing providers report that they need access to data on the market. By releasing this information, the Housing Hub aims to give both seekers and providers insights into the accessible housing market. The Housing Hub will never release housing seekers' private or identifying information.

Since the Housing Hub website was first launched in 2017, over 219,000 people have accessed the Housing Hub to search for accessible housing. In the last six months alone, over 60,000 people have accessed the website. Use of the Housing Hub continues to grow each month.

## About the Housing Hub

The Housing Hub is an online community of people with disability and housing providers working together to create accessible housing options.



The Housing Hub website is free to use for housing seekers, supporters and providers.

The Housing Hub lists properties for rent or sale that may be suitable for people with disability. Over 4,500 properties have been listed since the website was launched and over 1,500 properties are currently listed. The Housing Hub features all design categories of Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA), as well as many other types of accessible housing.

Housing seekers can search through the listings, or create a Housing Seeker Profile by answering a few questions about where they want to live, what type of home they're looking for, what features are required and who they would like to live with. The Housing Hub will then show the seeker listed properties that are a good match for their profile. Each listing includes a 'Suitability Score', which tells the housing seeker just how good a match the property is to their preferences. When creating a profile, housing seekers can also elect to be automatically notified when a property is listed that is a good match for their Housing Seeker Profile.

Generalised data resulting from Housing Seeker Profiles on the Housing Hub provide insights into the demand for accessible housing across Australia. With almost 10,000 new users and around 65,000 page views every month – and over 700 enquiries generated to property owners per month (and growing) – the insights generated are significant. Sharing the data gleaned from these interactions with the housing market enables the needs and preferences of people with disability to shape future development.

The screenshot displays a property listing on the Housing Hub website. The listing is for a house in Ivanhoe, VIC, 3079, titled "Quiet home in the suburbs". The property features 2 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, and 1 car. It is described as a "House" that is "Fully Accessible" and "Bedroom Only". The listing includes a "Suitability Score" of 86%, which is displayed in a circular gauge. The listing also mentions "Reasonable Rent Contribution as set by the NDIA" and provides information about funding options, including "Plus 100% of Commonwealth Rent Assistance" and "Plus 100% of the SDA funding in your NDIS plan". The listing is available from 23/04/2021. The website interface includes a navigation bar with options like "Find a Home", "For housing providers", "Resources", and "Contact". There are also buttons for "Download application form", "Download brochure", and "Print Listing".

## Terms Used

Seekers	(Housing) seekers are people who are using the Housing Hub searching for housing. Seekers are usually people with disability looking for accessible housing options.
Providers	(Housing) providers are the organisations or individuals who are offering accessible housing for rent or sale on the Housing Hub.
Supporters	Supporters are the people who work with people with disability to support their housing search. Supporters include family members, support coordinators and allied health professionals.
SDA	Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA) is housing for people with an extreme functional impairment and/or very high support needs. SDA is funded under the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). SDA has design features that maximise the residents' independence.
Profiles	(Housing Seeker) Profiles are a set of data that housing seekers may choose to provide to the Housing Hub. This is data about seekers' housing needs and preferences. This data enables the Housing Hub to suggest properties to the seeker that meet their needs and preferences.



**Housing Seeker**



**Housing Provider**



**Support Team**

# Data

As well as its primary function of connecting housing seekers with homes that suit their wants and needs, the Housing Hub has been built to collate data that will assist the market to develop new housing that aligns with what people with disability are looking for.

A number of data sources have been used to develop this report, as described below. Throughout the report, the following data labels will show which data source is being used.

## Profile Data

Housing seekers can use the Housing Hub to set up a Housing Seeker Profile. This is completely voluntary and the site can be used without creating a profile.

If housing seekers provide their information to the Housing Hub, it is made clear that the information will be used in a deidentified way to inform the market about what seekers want. It is an aim of the Housing Hub to support the development of the new disability housing market. If housing providers know what types of housing people with disability want, where people with disability want to live, who they want to live with and what features they require, appropriate housing can be developed.

There are 1,592 seekers who have chosen to create a Housing Seeker Profile on the Housing Hub as at 16 April 2021.

All fields are optional except for Name, Email and State.

Many people who complete a profile on the Housing Hub will come into contact with the Housing Hub Team. This may be via a Housing Hub event, responding to emails received about property alerts, calling the Housing Hub's SDA Housing Advice Line or by the Housing Hub calling to offer support. Collectively, this activity has benefits – it helps ensure that Housing Seeker Profiles are developed with some capacity building support for people with disability. This in turn helps to ensure people who spend time making a profile get some support to move ahead with their housing journey. Capacity building support is important as the market has changed considerably over the last 5 years and many housing seekers do not know what housing options are now available.

## Search Data

Searches can be made on the Housing Hub without creating a Housing Seeker Profile. When people use the Housing Hub to search for properties and use the various search filters, the Housing Hub collects de-identified data showing what people are searching for. This information can be viewed down to suburb level. All search filters are optional and a search can be made on a location only.

There has been an average of 11,000 searches conducted on the site each month over the last 6 months.

## NDIA Data

The National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) is collecting and reporting on data relating to accessible housing. This data is about NDIS Participants (housing seekers) who are eligible for SDA. It is also about properties which are built and designed to be provided as SDA housing.

This data is available on the [NDIS website](#) and is released quarterly.

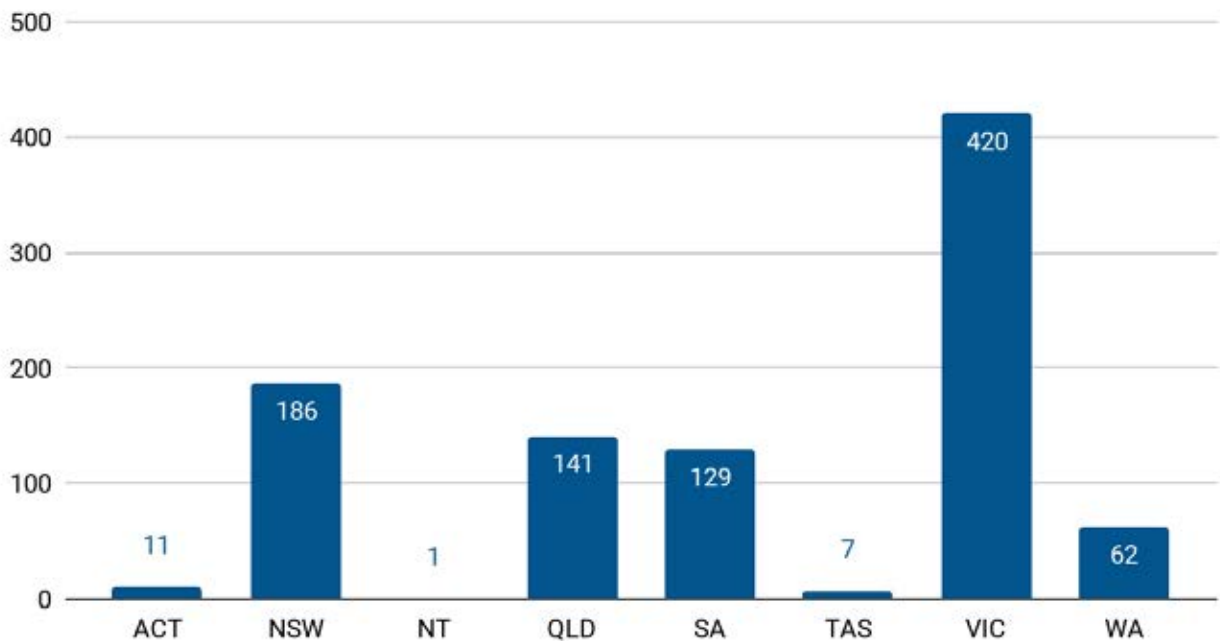
Where this data is relevant to be viewed alongside the Housing Hub data, it is shown below. The data used is from the most recent release dated 31 December 2020.

# Housing Seekers

Seekers who create a Housing Seeker Profile tell us a little about themselves. This data is shown below.

The data shows that the highest numbers of housing seekers are in the eastern states, with Victoria having 44% of Housing Seeker Profiles, New South Wales 19% and Queensland 15%.

### Location of Seekers by State (Profile Data)



Website usage data also shows the locations of those using the Housing Hub. Over 219,000 people have used the website since it was launched. It shows usage across the country with the highest rates in Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland.



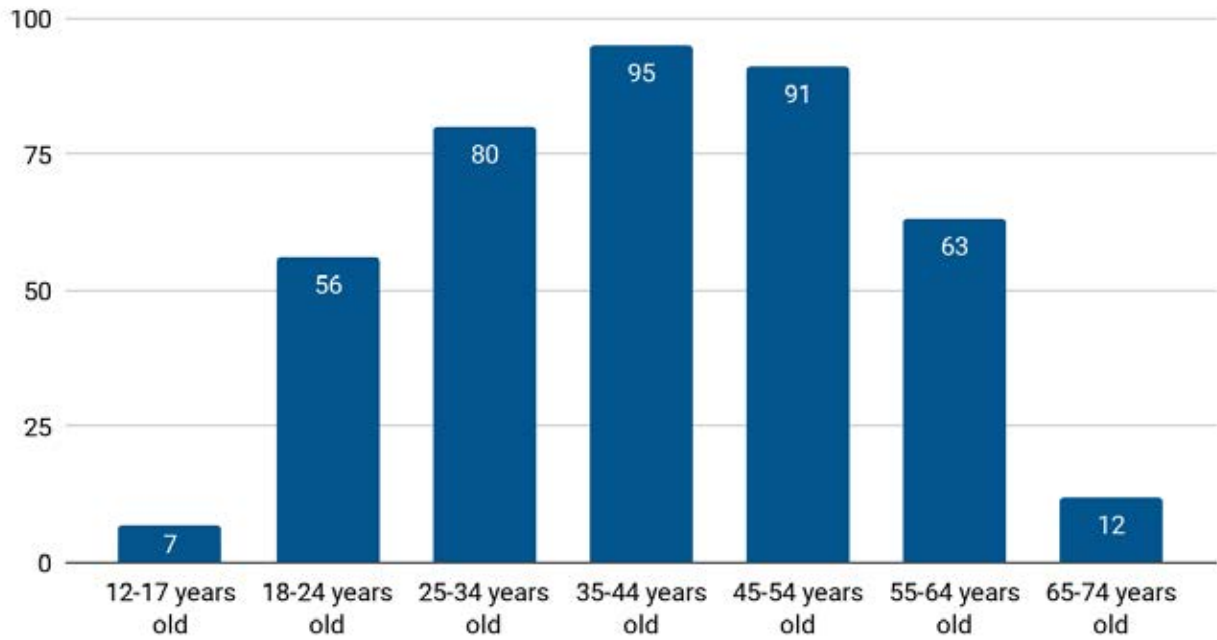
Number of Housing Hub website users since inception:





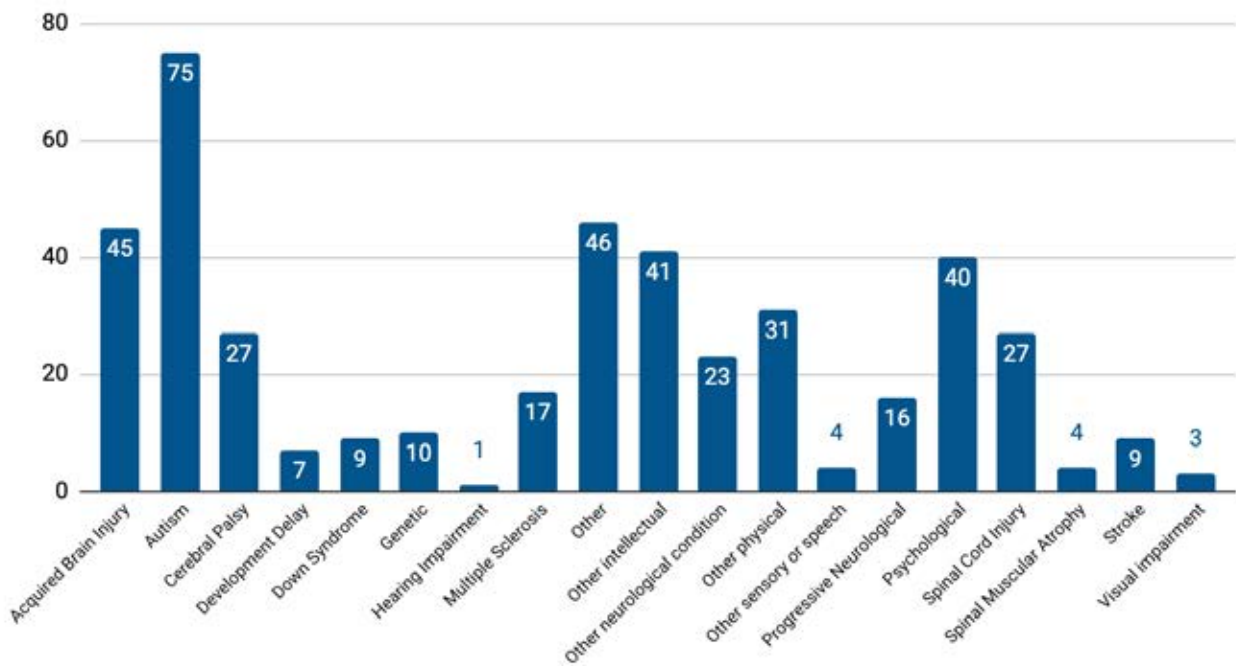
In regards to age, the distribution of seekers with a Housing Seeker Profile is consistent with the general population in Australia.

### Age Range of Seekers (Profile Data)



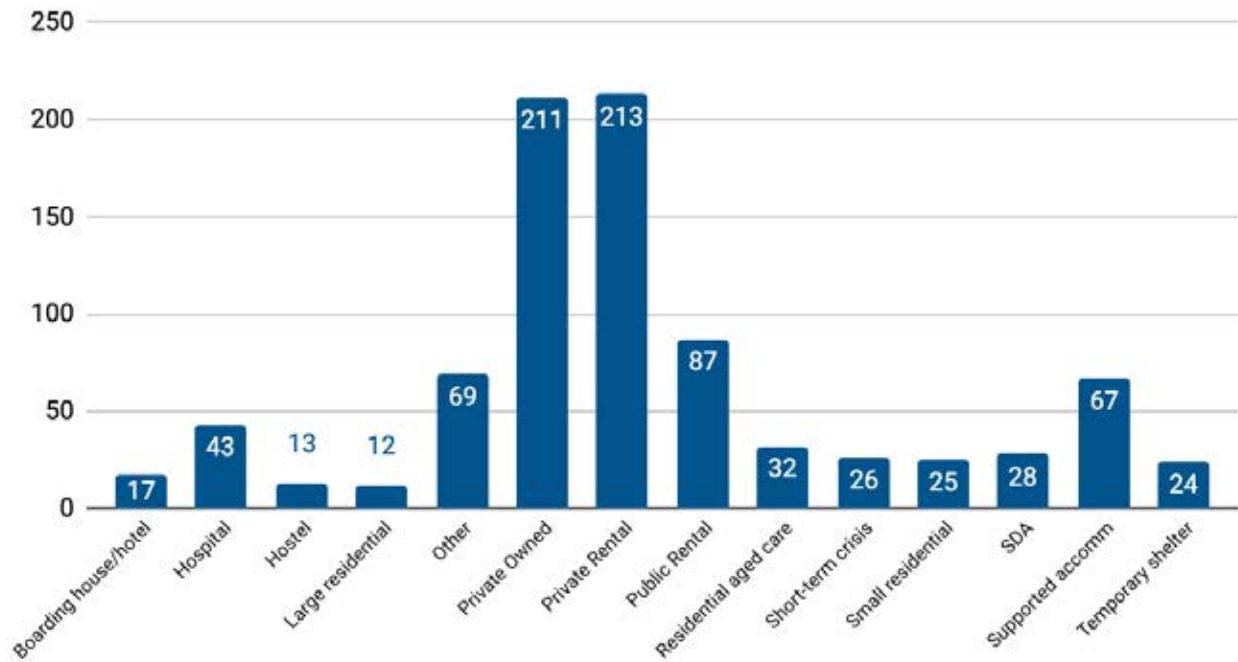
The most reported primary disability was Autism (17%), followed by Other (11%) and Acquired Brain Injury (10%).

### Primary Disability of Seekers (Profile Data)



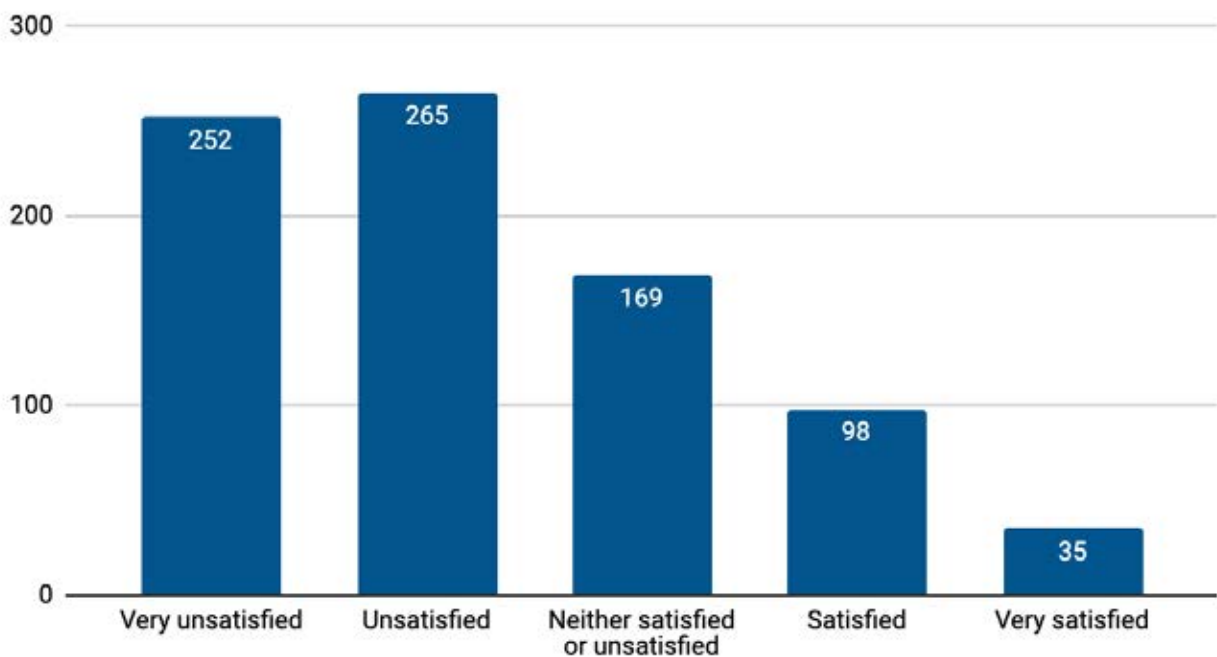
Most people currently live in private homes – Private Rental (25%) followed by Private Owned (24%).

### Current Housing Arrangement of Seekers (Profile Data)



The vast majority of Seekers (63%) are dissatisfied with their current living arrangements showing a real need for more appropriate accessible housing across Australia that better meets the needs and preferences of people with disability.

### Current Housing Satisfaction of Seekers (Profile Data)



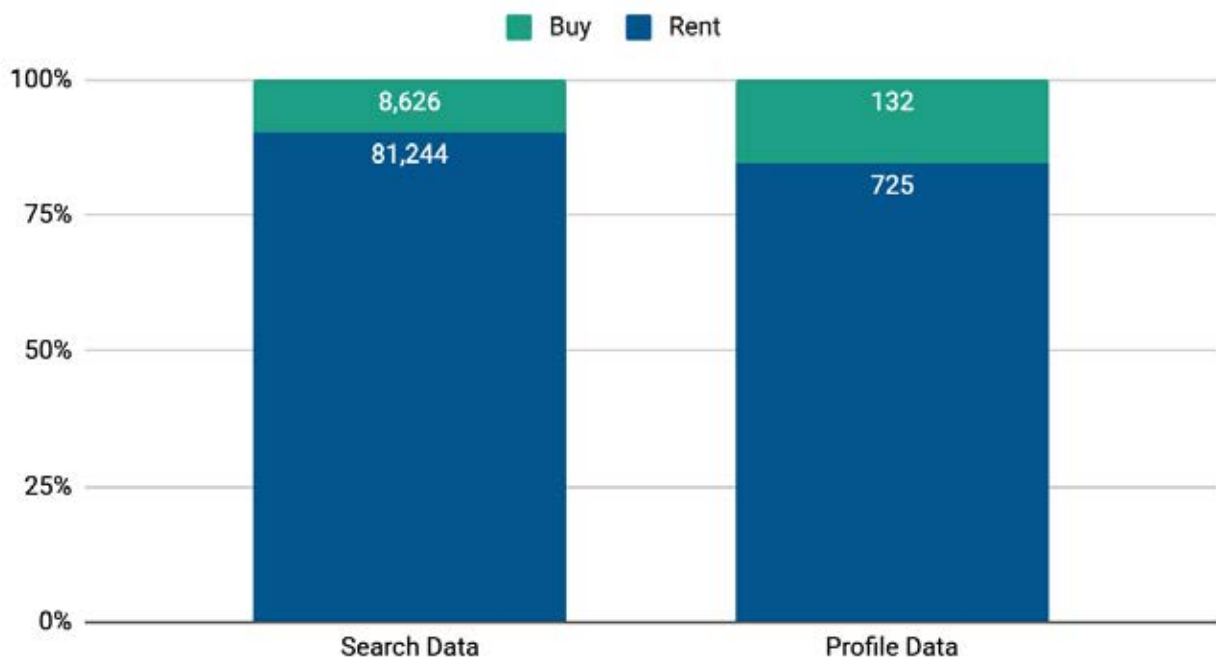
# Housing Needs and Preferences

Housing seekers who create a Housing Seeker Profile on the Housing Hub have the choice to provide information about their housing needs and preferences. It is also possible to use Search Data from Housing Hub searches as a proxy for demand for certain preferences. The below data is shown with both Profile Data and Search Data where available. There is one data point where NDIA data is available.

Profile Data shown is across all Housing Seeker Profiles on the Housing Hub as at 16 April 2021. Search Data is for all searches from 10 August 2021 (when the current version of the website was launched) to 16 April 2021. Data is shown as a percentage so that it is comparable. The volume of searches is significantly greater than the number of profiles.

Search and Profile Data shows that most housing seekers are looking for a rental property (over 85% of seekers wish to rent).

### Seekers Preference to Rent or Buy



The Search Data on the Housing Hub reveals that 69% of Seekers are wanting an ongoing lease when searching for rental properties.

### Seekers Preference for Rental Term

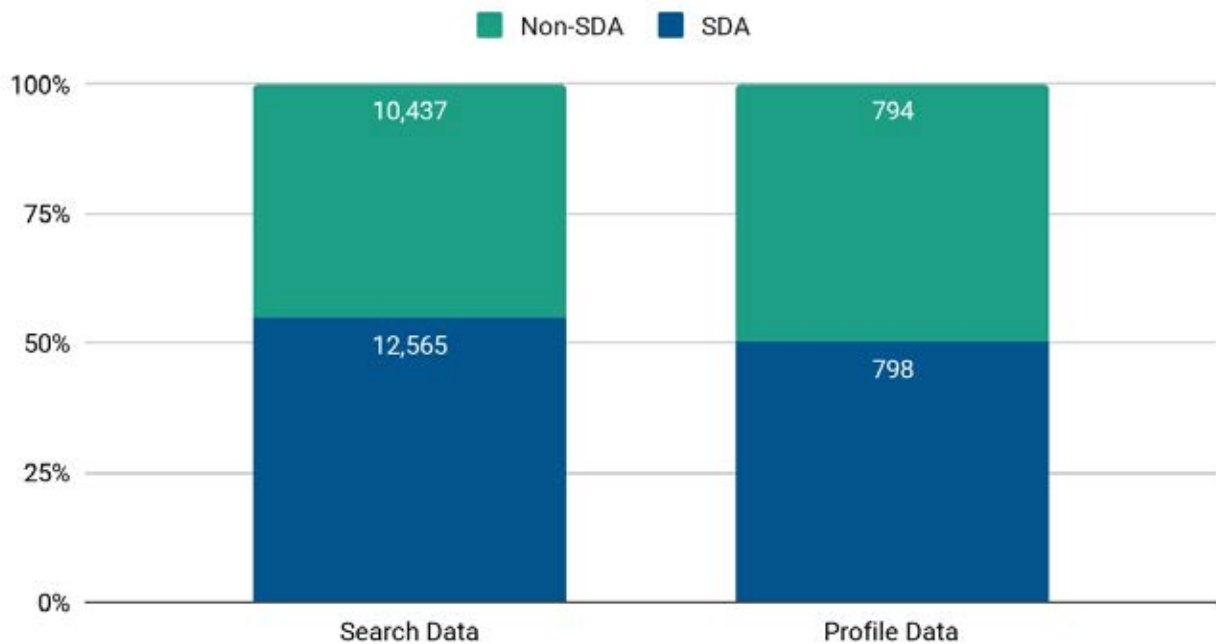


Search and Profile Data is consistent when reviewing seekers' needs for SDA properties or other properties. Close to half of seekers are looking for SDA versus other properties (55% for Search Data and 50% for Profile Data).

This is interesting given that only 6% of NDIS Participants are expected to be eligible for NDIS funding (Winkler et al, 2020). The Housing Hub team developed a campaign in September 2020 to work across Australia to increase the knowledge of people with disability around various housing options. A particular focus of this work was to reach people who may be eligible for funding to live in an SDA property. The high proportion of seekers who are requiring SDA properties suggests that this targeted approach has been effective.

This work is important as there has been steady growth in the supply of SDA dwellings over the past 3 years, however this has not been matched with adequate demand – SDA eligible seekers with SDA funding in NDIS plans. The latest data provided by the NDIA shows that there are only 15,667 of the anticipated 28,000 people with SDA funding in their NDIS Plans (NDIA 2020). Urgent action is required to ensure that people with disability who are eligible for SDA funding are identified and provided with information and capacity building to define their housing needs and preferences and then receive the required funding.

## Seekers Need for SDA or Non-SDA Properties

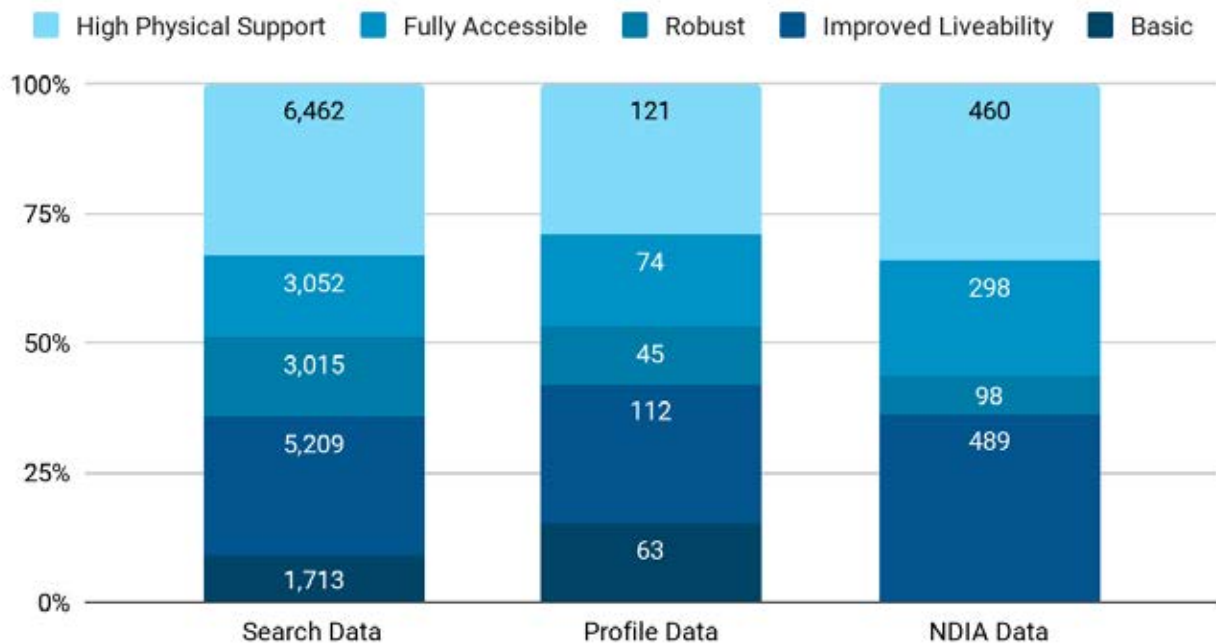


SDA properties are available in five different design categories. Housing seekers who know that they are SDA eligible are likely to search for the appropriate design category, as each category carries different design features. The data across Search, Profile and NDIA are shown below.

The NDIA Data does not show any participants with SDA in their plans searching for SDA properties in the Basic design category. The NDIA Data differs from Housing Hub data, where Search Data and Profile Data are fairly consistent. NDIA Data shows a higher number of people with Improved Liveability SDA funding searching for housing compared to the Housing Hub data sets, and a lower number of seekers with Robust SDA housing needs than the Housing Hub.



## Seekers Need for SDA Design Category Properties



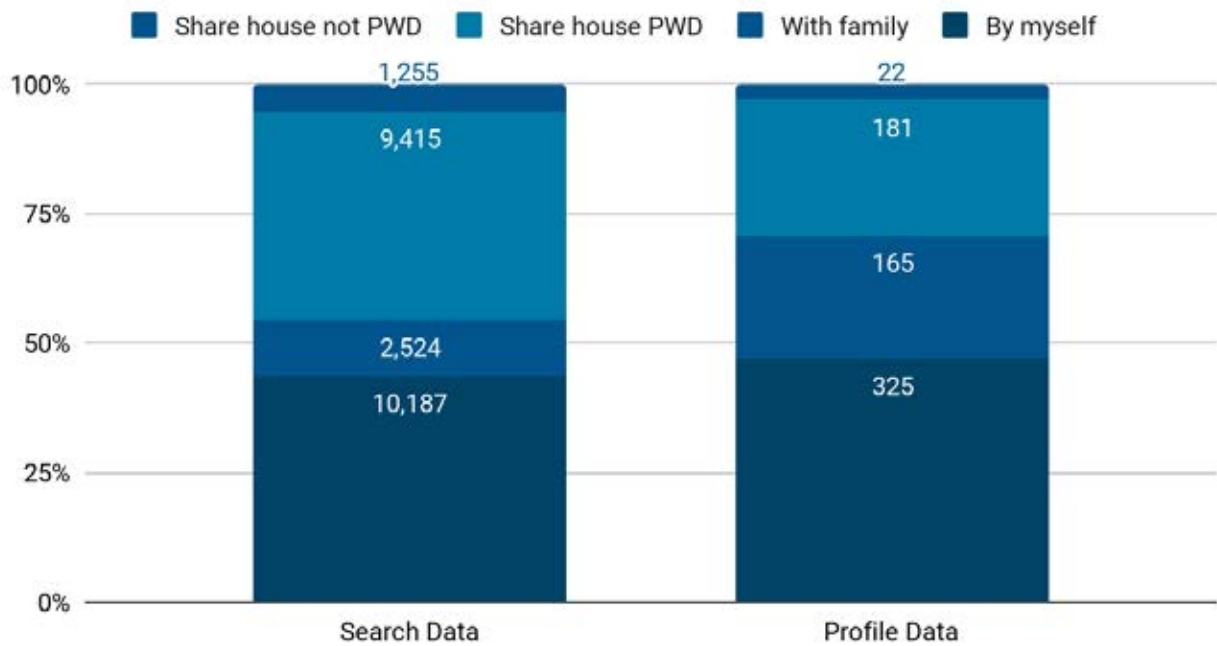
Housing Hub data shows that almost half of all seekers wish to live on their own. This is a significant finding. In the past, housing for people with disability was largely through private means with family or through disability support organisations and government agencies who provided shared living (often referred to as group homes) – where a number of people with disability share with other people with disability. This provided limited choice for people with disability in regard to who to live with.

Both Search and Profile Data show that more than half of the housing seekers wish to live alone or with their family, not with other people with disability.

The Search Data and Profile Data differ for living with people with disability. There is a higher proportion of searches for people to live with other people with disability (40%) compared to 26% of Housing Seeker Profiles.

Housing providers working with the Housing Hub have reported a trend in decision making by the NDIA which has emerged over the past six months. This trend has been to move away from approving people for SDA Funding which would enable people to live alone. The Housing Hub team has witnessed the same trend in its tenancy matching work. This suggests that the housing needs and preferences of people with disability are not aligned to the SDA funding decision making processes.

## Seekers Preference of Who To Live With



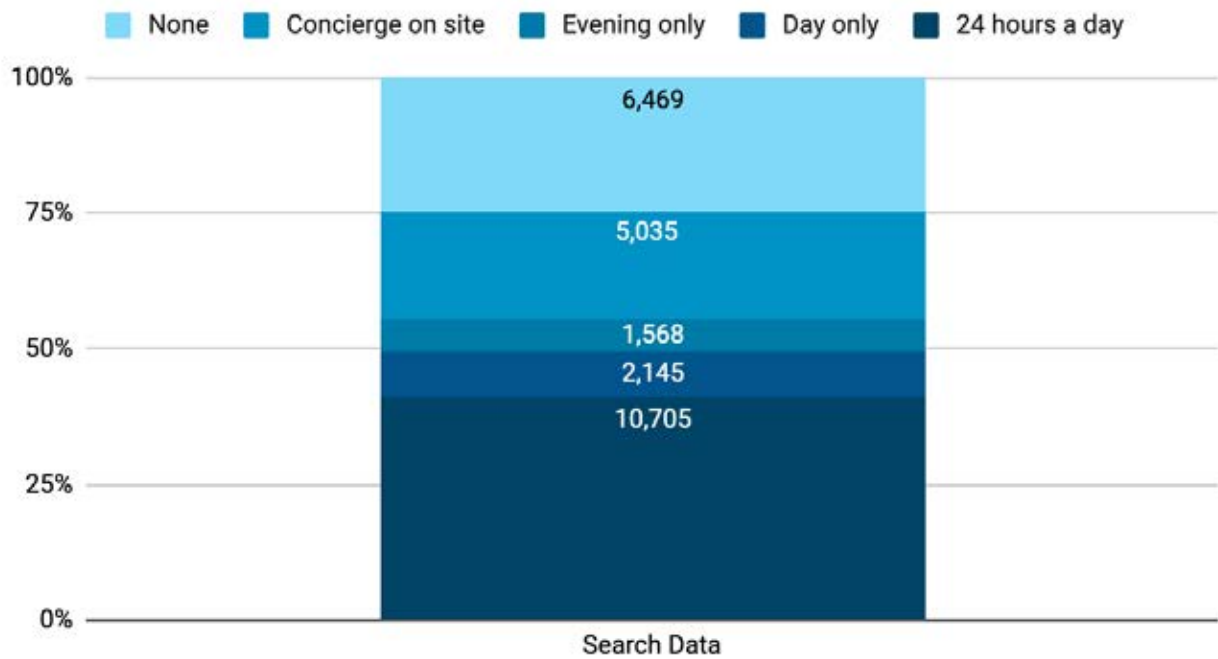
Profile Data shows that 67% of people wish to move immediately.

## Seekers Preference for When To Move



Search Data provides information on the support needs of housing seekers using the Housing Hub. 41% have a need for support available 24 hours a day while a quarter have indicated that they do not require any support. Those who do not require support likely include seekers who wish to choose their own support workers for all support and bring their own support into their home.

## Seekers Support Needs

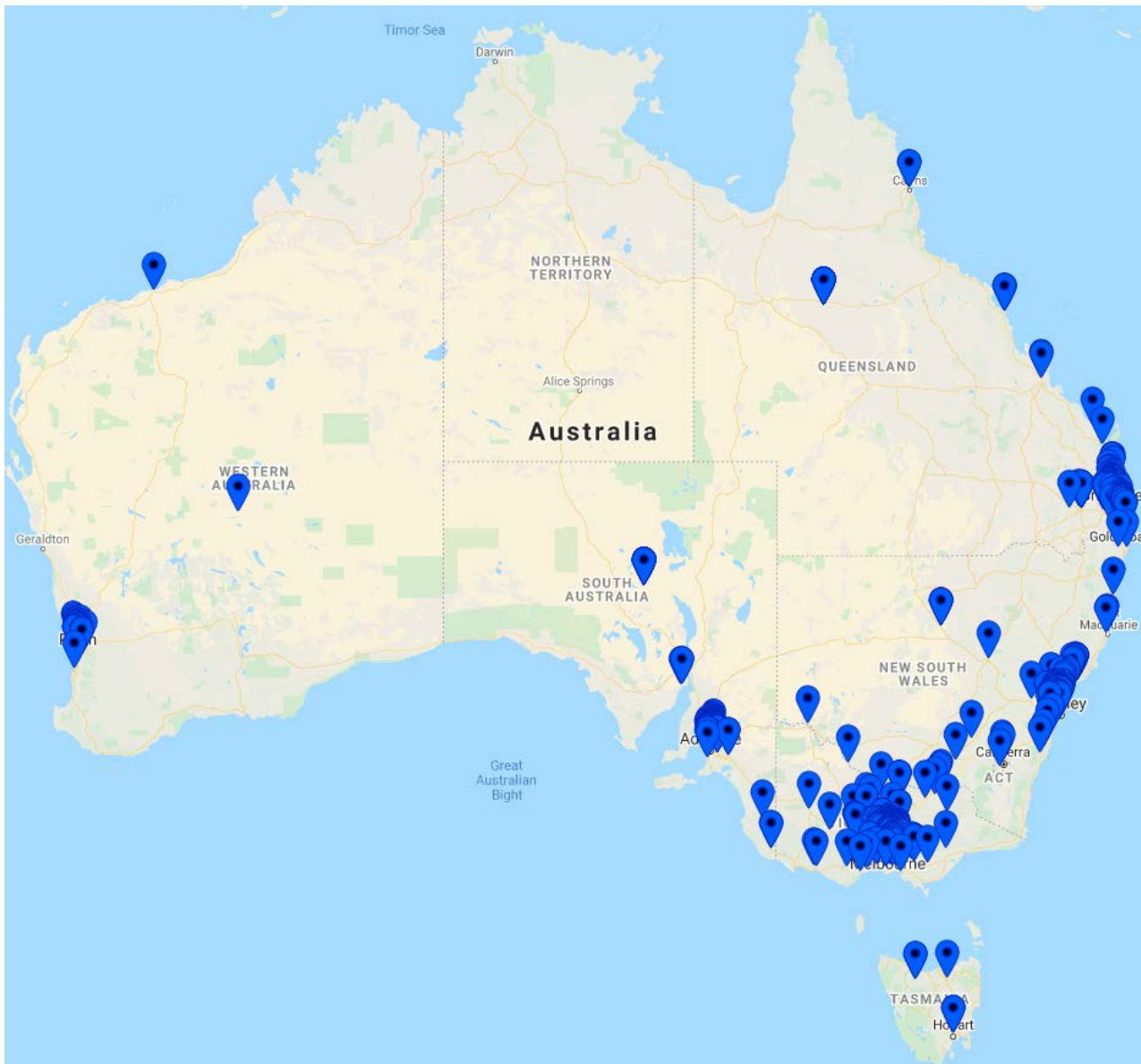




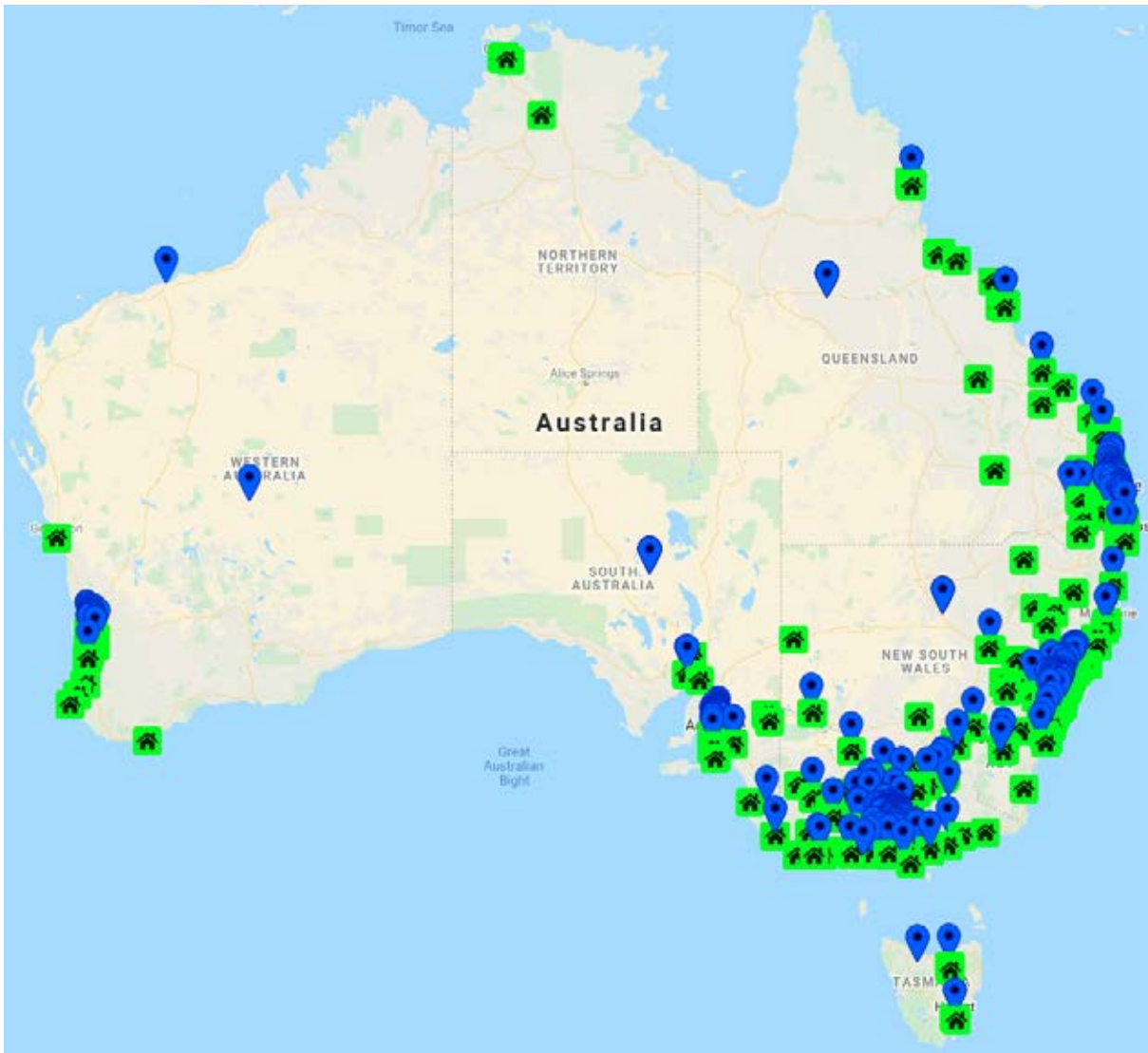
## Location

Seekers with Housing Seeker Profiles are asked to indicate the locations they wish to be alerted to when properties are added to the Housing Hub. The below map shows the locations identified by seekers across Australia. Consistent with the state data above, the majority of seekers using the Housing Hub are looking for properties in the eastern states and in capital cities around Australia.

Profile Data is showing that more seekers are joining from regional locations where there are limited properties listed on the Housing Hub. Work to develop properties for people in regional areas is important so these needs are met.



While this report does not intend to explore supply, the following image has been created to show the above seeker location preferences with published Housing Hub listings to demonstrate that the distribution of seekers is largely consistent with the listed properties across Australia.



## Property features

The data contained in Housing Seeker Profiles also provides some insight into the property features that seekers value in a new home. The most popular features are shown below with 1 being the most popular feature:

1. Cooling
2. Heating
3. Private Bathroom
4. Outdoor area
5. Built-in wardrobes
6. Accessible Features
7. Wheelchair Accessibility
8. Broadband internet available
9. Parking
10. Dishwasher
11. Pets Allowed
12. Ensuite
13. Strong walls/doors/glass/soundproofing
14. Lift in building
15. Fire sprinklers

**Housing Hub** Find a Home For housing providers Resources Contact

Go back Property for rent

Zoom

Photos (8) Floorplan

For Rent SDA

**Suburban living**  
Essendon, VIC, 3040

Reasonable Rent Contribution as set by the NDIA [More info](#) 2 Bedroom 2 Bathroom 1 Car park  
Bedroom Only Available 23/04/2021

**Suitability Score**  
88%  
View score breakdown  
My Preferences

**Property Features**  
Includes the following features

- Doorway Widths > 1000mm
- Accessible Features
- Outdoor Area
- Built-in Wardrobes
- Heating
- Wheelchair Accessible
- Ceiling Hoist
- Ensuite
- Energy Efficiency Rating: Medium
- Cooling

# What does the data say?

This snapshot of Housing Hub seeker data shows that use of the site in the first year has increased each month and is providing some insights into the needs and preferences of people with disability across Australia. A large proportion of users are ready to move now and are dissatisfied with their current housing.

Usage of the site started in Victoria in 2017 and then expanded to New South Wales, Queensland and South Australia. The location of seekers reflects the history of the launch of the Housing Hub in various states and territories over time.

The activities of the wider Housing Hub team to build the capacity of housing seekers through Housing Options workshops, the SDA Housing Advice Line, developing resources and providing support over email and phone to use the site, appears to have been successful in raising awareness of SDA as a housing option and to bring SDA eligible people to the site to search for housing. This is positive to see given the current imbalance in the SDA market between demand for housing from people with SDA funding compared to supply of SDA dwellings (Winkler et al, 2020).

The data reviewed above reveals the following:

- The Housing Hub attracts seekers across all states and territories with the most in Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland and South Australia.
- The most reported primary disability is Autism followed by Other and Acquired Brain Injury.
- Most Seekers are currently living in private settings such as rented or owned properties, followed by public housing, other and supported accommodation.
- 63% of Seekers are dissatisfied with their current housing.
- Over 85% of seekers are looking for a rental property. Of these, 69% wish to have an ongoing lease with 19% looking for Medium Term Accommodation and 12% looking for Short Term Accommodation.
- 50% of seekers using the Housing Hub are looking for SDA properties. The most sought SDA Design Categories are High Physical Support, followed by Improved Liveability. Combined, these two design categories are sought by approximately two-thirds of seekers using the Housing Hub.
- Almost half of all seekers wish to live alone.
- Well over half of seekers wish to move immediately.
- 40% of seekers are looking for a property with support available 24 hours a day.
- The most sought after property features include cooling, heating, a private bathroom, an outdoor area and built in wardrobes.

## References

NDIA (2020). "SDA Enrolled Dwellings and NDIS Demand Data." Appendix P. Data available at: <https://data.ndis.gov.au/media/2497/download>

Winkler, D., McLeod, J., Mulherin, P., Rathbone, A. and Ryan, M. (2020) "Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA) Explainer for Investors." Melbourne, Australia: Summer Foundation and JBWere. <http://summerfoundation.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/SDA-Explainer-for-investors-web.pdf>

# Housing Hub Services for Housing Providers

Generalised data resulting from Housing Seeker Profiles on the Housing Hub can help build an understanding of the demand for accessible housing. With insights into what types of housing (and housing features) are desired in certain locations, providers can build to address demand with greater certainty. The Housing Hub regularly releases data insights to the market; while more detailed analyses are available for a fee. For example, a data report on types of housing and features desired by seekers in a given Local Government Area can be developed on request.

For a fee, providers and vendors can promote a listing as a 'Featured Property'. Featured properties appear on the homepage of the Housing Hub website, and are promoted via the Housing Hub's social media channels and via email to our subscriber list of more than 5,000 people.

The Housing Hub also offers a tenant matching service for SDA Providers on a fee-for-service basis. The team identifies prospective tenants who may be a good fit for the SDA design category and features of the property, then supports prospective tenants to secure SDA funding and, if they wish to, apply for a vacancy at the property.

For more information on the Housing Hub's services for housing providers and vendors, email: [support@housinghub.org.au](mailto:support@housinghub.org.au)

## Featured Homes

North Eastern Melbourne 




**Bundoora VIC**  
 3  3  2 | Villa



Sydney Sutherland 



**Kirrawee NSW**  
 1  1  1 | Apartment

Adelaide Central Hills 



**Unley SA**  
 3  2  2 | House