

Children, Australia: A Social Report

1999

**Dennis Trewin
Acting Australian Statistician**

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P R E F A C E

This publication describes social conditions of Australia's children, looking across a number of aspects of their lives. *Children, Australia: A Social Report* brings together data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) and other official sources. Children are defined as persons aged from 0 to 17 years. This reflects the age of 'majority' which is 18 in all States and Territories, and is consistent with the definition used in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1990). The report focuses on the vast majority of children who live with a least one of their parents, but some information is also presented on young people aged 15–17 who have made or commenced the transition from parental home to independent living.

The information is presented in six chapters, and organised by major areas of social concern: population, social environment, economic environment, physical environment, health and education. The report also includes summary tables which illustrate the changes that have taken place over the last decade, and highlight State and Territory differences. For each topic, every effort was made to provide the most appropriate and accurate data. Since the report draws on data from different sources, including the Census of Population and Housing, sample surveys and administrative data, some differences may occur.

The production of this report reflects domestic and international concern with issues affecting children, and with the need to produce regular national social reports on specific population groups. *Children, Australia: A Social Report* is the second in a series of three social reports focusing on population groups. The first in the series, *Youth, Australia: A Social Report* (ABS Cat. no. 4111.0), was published by the ABS in 1997. A report on older people is planned for release later in 1999.

ABS publications draw extensively on information provided by individuals, businesses, governments and other organisations. Their continued cooperation is very much appreciated: without it, the wide range of statistics published by the ABS would not be available. Information received by the ABS is treated in strict confidence as required by the *Census and Statistics Act 1905*.

Dennis Trewin
Acting Australian Statistician

SYMBOLS AND OTHER USAGES

ABBREVIATIONS

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
AIHW	Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
BMI	Body Mass Index
CDEP	Community Development Employment Project
DEETYA	Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs
ESL	English as a Second Language
Hib	Haemophilus influenzae type b
MESC	Main English-Speaking Country
NHMRC	National Health and Medical Research Council
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OMESC	Other than Main English-Speaking Country
RDI	Recommended Dietary Intake
SAAP	Supported Accommodation Assistance Program
SLA	Statistical Local Area
SIDS	Sudden Infant Death Syndrome
TAFE	Technical and Further Education

SYMBOLS

g	grams
kJ	kilojoules
n.a.	not available
n.e.c.	not elsewhere classified
n.p.	not available for publication but included in totals where applicable
p	preliminary data
r	revised data
*	this estimate has a relative standard error between 25% and 50% and should be used with great caution
**	subject to sampling variability too high for most practical purposes (relative standard error greater than 50%)
—	nil or rounded to zero
..	not applicable

OTHER USAGES

Where figures have been rounded, discrepancies may occur between the sums of component items and totals.

MAIN FINDINGS

POPULATION

At 30 June 1997 there were 4.7 million children aged 0–17 in Australia. Although the number of children is increasing each year, they make up a declining proportion of the population. Children comprised 34% of the total population in 1971 but this had declined to 25% in 1997. The decline is expected to continue into the next century. From around 2020, for the first time, children are projected to form a smaller proportion of the population than persons aged 60 and over.

Indigenous children represent around 4% of all children in Australia. The number of Indigenous children increased by 12% between 1991 and 1996, compared with a 2% increase in the total number of children.

SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

In 1996, the vast majority (94%) of children lived with at least one of their parents. However, children were more likely to have parents who were in a de facto relationship or to be living in one-parent families than they were ten years previously.

In 1996, 91% of Australian families with children were so-called 'nuclear' families with only parents, or a parent, and their children usually resident in the household. Of the 165,400 children in extended one-family households, 56% had a grandparent living with them, and of the 106,000 children in multifamily households, 71% were living with their grandparents' family.

The average Australian family (with at least one child aged 0–17) had 1.9 children aged 0–17 in 1996. Among these families, 38% had only one child in this age range, while 40% had two children, 17% had three children and 6% had four or more children. Indigenous families, families in rural areas and blended families tended to have more children than the average.

More than 50,000 children were affected by the divorce of their parents during 1997. Although the annual number of divorces rose from 39,700 to 51,300 between 1987 and 1997, the proportion involving children fell from 59% to 54% of all divorces. Almost 1 million children (21% of all children) had one natural parent living outside their household, usually as a consequence of marriage or relationship breakdown.

ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

The economic wellbeing of children is largely determined by their parents' employment, income and assets. In 1996–97, just over half (54%) of children in couple families had both parents employed and a further 38% had one parent employed. For children in one-parent families, less than half (44%) lived with a parent who was employed. Parents with young children, particularly mothers, were less likely than those with older children to be employed.

ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT *continued*

Children were slightly more likely to live in families ranked at the lower end of the income distribution. When ranked on income adjusted for the differing needs of different sized families (i.e. equivalent income), 70% of children in one-parent families and 41% of children in couple families were in the lowest 40% of the income distribution in 1996–97.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

In 1996, 88% of families with children lived in separate houses, 5% lived in semi-detached dwellings and 5% lived in flats, units or apartments. Living in medium and higher density dwellings was more common among one-parent families than couple families, and was also associated with the presence of young children in the family and low income.

In 1996, 76% of all couple families with children owned or were purchasing the home in which they lived, compared with 39% of one-parent families. Home ownership was less common among low income families, families which had young children only and Indigenous families. In 1996, 26% of Indigenous families owned or were purchasing the home in which they lived.

HEALTH

Overall Australian children are the healthiest group in the population. In 1995, 18% of children had visited a doctor in the two weeks prior to interview, compared with 25% of the adult population. Fewer children (52%) than adults (75%) had used medication during this period. The most commonly reported medical condition among children was asthma, affecting 16% of all children as either a recent illness or a long-term condition.

Australia's infant mortality rate has shown a continuing and appreciable decline during this century, and in more recent years fell from 17 per 1,000 live births in 1971 to 5.3 per 1,000 in 1997. Of all infant deaths during the period 1992–96, 38% occurred on the day of birth, 27% in the remainder of the neonatal period (the first 28 days after birth) and 35% in the postneonatal period (from 28 days until the end of the first year). Deaths among children over the age of 1 are relatively uncommon. In 1997, there were 1,106 deaths of children aged 1–17, with almost half (48%) attributable to accidents, poisonings or violence. Motor vehicle accidents and drownings were the major causes of these deaths.

EDUCATION

In 1997, there were 1.9 million primary students and 1.3 million secondary students in Australian schools. Almost three-quarters (74%) of all primary students and two-thirds (66%) of all secondary students attended government schools. Of the remainder, most attended Catholic schools.

CHILD INDICATORS, National and State Summary

	Units	Reference period	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Aust.
POPULATION											
Estimated Resident Population											
Total persons aged 0–17	'000	Jun 1997p	1 574.9	1 136.6	891.0	357.1	473.4	125.6	58.4	80.9	4 699.0
Males	'000	Jun 1997p	806.9	581.7	457.9	183.1	243.2	64.2	30.3	41.2	2 409.2
Females	'000	Jun 1997p	767.9	554.9	433.1	174.0	230.2	61.3	28.1	39.7	2 289.8
Persons aged 0–4	'000	Jun 1997p	438.4	313.8	242.7	96.8	127.0	33.4	18.0	21.9	1 292.2
Persons aged 5–11	'000	Jun 1997p	615.3	445.1	345.8	139.7	187.0	49.2	23.1	31.3	1 837.0
Persons aged 12–14	'000	Jun 1997p	262.0	188.9	153.1	61.5	81.0	21.8	8.9	13.6	791.1
Persons aged 15–17	'000	Jun 1997p	259.1	188.8	149.5	59.2	78.4	21.1	8.4	14.1	778.6
Persons aged 0–17 as a proportion of total population	%	Jun 1997p	25.1	24.7	26.2	24.1	26.3	26.5	31.2	26.1	25.4
Indigenous persons aged 0–17(a)	'000	Jun 1997	55.1	10.5	51.9	10.4	26.7	7.9	23.5	1.5	187.5
Persons aged 0–17 born overseas	'000	Aug 1996	121.4	78.1	50.7	17.0	42.8	2.9	2.4	6.1	321.5
Proportion from a MESC	%	Aug 1996	25.5	25.1	52.4	38.1	54.1	51.6	33.6	32.5	34.5
Persons aged 0–17 who arrived from overseas between 1991 and 1996	'000	Aug 1996	57.3	34.5	22.8	7.1	17.4	1.1	1.0	2.5	143.7
Proportion of persons aged 0–17 in rural areas	%	Aug 1996	13.3	14.4	21.6	15.9	14.3	29.9	30.2	0.8	15.9
Number of births	'000	1997	87.2	60.7	47.0	18.4	24.8	6.0	3.6	4.2	251.8
Teenage birth rate: mothers aged 15–17 (confinements per 1,000 females aged 15–17)(b)	no.	1997	9.3	5.7	12.7	8.1	10.9	14.7	58.1	7.8	9.8
Total fertility rate	no.	1997	1.8	1.7	1.8	1.7	1.8	1.8	2.2	1.6	1.8
SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT											
Families with dependants aged 0–24											
Couple families	'000	Jun 1998	672.2	512.4	367.9	156.3	193.9	50.1	16.3	33.1	2 002.2
Lone mother families	'000	Jun 1998	171.1	115.3	91.9	40.8	45.9	13.3	3.2	6.6	488.0
Lone father families	'000	Jun 1998	18.8	17.7	10.5	4.7	5.4	1.9	**0.2	1.6	60.8
One-parent families as a proportion of all families	%	Jun 1998	22.0	20.6	21.8	22.5	20.9	23.3	17.0	19.9	21.5
Children aged 0–17 living with parents(c)	'000	Apr 1997	1 553.3	1 124.7	865.9	351.7	460.4	124.3	39.6	79.6	4 615.3
In intact family	%	Apr 1997	72.8	78.0	72.1	73.2	70.9	68.1	70.9	72.0	73.6
In step/blended family	%	Apr 1997	7.6	6.8	8.5	8.5	8.8	10.9	11.8	7.0	7.9
In lone mother family	%	Apr 1997	16.9	13.1	17.5	15.8	18.1	18.1	14.9	17.0	16.1
In one-parent family	%	Apr 1997	19.3	15.0	19.3	18.2	20.3	20.8	17.3	20.7	18.3
Who live with natural mother	%	Apr 1997	95.9	96.8	96.6	96.4	96.3	94.9	94.4	94.7	96.2
Who live with natural father	%	Apr 1997	77.9	82.7	76.9	78.3	75.7	74.7	78.6	77.5	78.6
Children aged 0–17 with a natural parent living elsewhere(c)	'000	Apr 1997	342.5	195.2	194.5	75.6	108.9	30.4	9.3	18.8	978.4
Who visited parent frequently (at least once per fortnight)	%	Apr 1997	44.7	48.6	34.2	49.6	42.8	47.5	44.7	49.2	43.7
Who visited parent rarely (at most once per year) or never	%	Apr 1997	35.1	29.9	42.6	30.2	34.4	37.0	32.4	28.2	35.0
Living in sole care arrangements	%	Apr 1997	97.8	97.2	98.6	96.4	97.6	93.1	97.3	90.0	97.4
Children aged 0–11(d)											
Attending formal child care only	%	Mar 1996	12.3	11.9	13.3	12.0	9.5	8.1	*11.9	17.3	12.0
Attending informal child care only	%	Mar 1996	26.4	31.2	25.6	32.2	28.6	32.7	26.4	27.5	28.3
Attending both formal and informal child care	%	Mar 1996	8.1	8.4	7.4	10.3	6.7	7.1	*6.9	11.7	8.1
Not attending child care	%	Mar 1996	53.3	48.5	53.7	45.5	55.2	52.1	54.8	43.5	51.6
Divorces											
Involving children	'000	1997	7.5	6.7	6.5	2.3	2.7	0.8	0.2	0.9	27.7
Involving children as a proportion of all divorces	%	1997	51.3	53.4	55.7	56.5	53.8	62.9	56.0	56.7	54.0
Children affected	'000	1997	13.7	12.5	12.4	4.3	5.0	1.6	0.5	1.7	51.7
Children affected (per 1,000 children aged 0–17)	no.	1997	8.7	11.0	14.0	12.2	10.5	12.8	7.8	20.6	11.0

(a) Estimates for Indigenous persons are high series projections—see *Experimental Projections of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Population, 30 June 1996 to 30 June 2006* (ABS Cat. no. 3231.0) for further explanation.

(b) Includes confinements of mothers aged under 15 years in some States and Territories, particularly the NT.

(c) Estimates for the NT exclude remote and sparsely settled areas. As a result, numbers for the States and Territories do not add to the Australian total which is weighted independently to the total population.

(d) Estimates for the NT exclude remote and sparsely settled areas.

CHILD INDICATORS, National and State Summary *continued*

	Units	Reference period	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Aust.
ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT											
Couple families with dependants aged 0–17(a)											
Mean gross weekly income	\$	1996–97	1 049.8	943.1	940.4	945.6	1 042.6	867.5	1 162.4	1 247.6	992.9
Median gross weekly income	\$	1996–97	896.6	860.0	859.9	837.2	946.8	812.5	*1047.5	1 155.2	877.9
Government support as principal source of income	%	1996–97	11.9	11.6	13.4	*12.6	*7.0	*12.4	**7.0	**5.7	11.5
Couple families with dependants aged 0–24											
Both parents employed	%	Jun 1998	56.6	58.3	58.9	54.5	56.4	53.5	68.9	70.3	57.5
Both parents employed full-time	%	Jun 1998	24.5	24.2	23.5	18.9	20.6	19.3	40.7	31.8	23.6
Neither parent employed	%	Jun 1998	8.9	8.1	7.2	9.7	6.9	11.6	5.6	3.5	8.6
Mother employed full-time	%	Jun 1998	26.6	26.8	25.9	21.7	23.0	23.1	41.9	35.5	26.0
Mother employed part-time	%	Jun 1998	32.6	34.3	36.1	36.8	36.7	36.2	28.8	39.1	34.6
Mother not employed	%	Jun 1998	40.8	38.9	38.1	41.5	40.3	40.7	29.3	25.4	39.5
One-parent families with dependants aged 0–17(a)											
Mean gross weekly income	\$	1996–97	448.8	411.4	397.5	380.6	460.6	446.9	458.6	487.4	427.0
Median gross weekly income	\$	1996–97	344.0	318.2	362.8	322.0	385.7	*415.3	*402.4	*373.8	346.6
Government support as principal source of income	%	1996–97	67.1	68.6	61.7	75.5	55.0	*50.8	**52.4	*51.2	65.1
One-parent families with dependants aged 0–24											
Parent employed	%	Jun 1998	43.3	49.2	47.0	38.5	47.4	53.8	49.7	67.9	46.1
Parent employed full-time	%	Jun 1998	21.9	27.3	24.5	14.3	22.3	25.2	34.8	47.1	23.7
Families with children aged 0–17 with a natural parent living elsewhere(b)											
Who received cash child support	%	Apr 1997	44.4	43.8	39.4	42.1	39.7	41.4	42.8	37.3	42.3
Who received in-kind child support only	%	Apr 1997	16.1	17.9	13.0	14.7	17.0	20.3	*26.0	24.5	16.3
Who did not receive child support	%	Apr 1997	38.7	37.9	47.6	43.1	42.4	38.3	*31.2	38.2	40.9
PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT											
Couple families with dependants aged 0–17											
Owner without a mortgage	%	Aug 1996	31.6	33.3	27.2	29.1	26.9	31.2	12.8	23.7	30.2
Owner with a mortgage	%	Aug 1996	42.1	47.3	44.2	51.1	50.6	48.1	31.7	52.4	45.5
Renter	%	Aug 1996	23.0	16.2	25.3	17.3	19.5	17.9	44.6	22.3	21.0
Living in a separate house	%	Aug 1996	86.2	92.1	93.7	92.9	93.9	96.8	85.4	93.6	90.7
Living in a semidetached/row or terrace house/town house	%	Aug 1996	4.9	2.5	2.2	4.8	3.3	1.0	3.4	4.7	3.5
Living in a flat/unit/apartment	%	Aug 1996	6.5	3.4	1.8	1.2	0.9	0.9	3.6	1.1	3.6
One-parent families with dependants aged 0–17											
Owner/purchaser of home	%	Aug 1996	37.5	45.9	35.5	39.1	41.5	40.1	22.4	40.7	39.4
Renter	%	Aug 1996	58.7	50.2	60.9	58.0	54.9	56.9	63.5	57.0	56.7
Living in a separate house	%	Aug 1996	70.9	80.0	79.5	73.6	80.7	87.6	72.1	78.3	76.5
Living in a semidetached/row or terrace house/town house	%	Aug 1996	11.7	6.4	8.9	19.8	13.2	5.1	7.4	15.2	10.6
Living in a flat/unit/apartment	%	Aug 1996	14.5	11.3	8.5	5.4	3.9	6.0	9.6	5.6	10.3

(a) Estimates for the NT exclude remote and sparsely settled areas.

(b) Estimates for the NT exclude remote and sparsely settled areas. As a result, numbers for the States and Territories do not add to the Australian total which is weighted independently to the total population.

CHILD INDICATORS, National and State Summary *continued*

	Units	Reference period	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Aust.
HEALTH											
Infants with low birthweight (less than 2,500g)(a)	%	1995	5.8	6.5	6.8	6.8	6.6	6.4	8.8	5.8	6.4
Children aged 3 months to 6 years who were fully immunised for age											
1994 NHMRC schedule	%	1995	32.1	34.3	28.9	31.8	41.5	26.8	36.5	47.5	33.1
1991 NHMRC schedule	%	1995	53.9	51.2	47.5	49.7	59.3	43.0	53.5	63.5	52.1
Children who reported a long-term medical condition	%	1995	42.9	44.3	49.6	48.7	50.2	50.3	44.3	52.7	46.1
Children with asthma as a recent or long-term condition	%	1995	14.8	16.0	19.4	16.0	16.4	16.0	16.8	17.1	16.3
Children aged 0–17 with a disability	%	1993	6.5	6.6	7.2	7.8	8.3	6.8	*3.6	*7.3	6.9
Deaths											
Infants aged under 1 year	no.	1997	451	300	272	87	131	39	45	16	1 341
Rate per 1,000 live births	no.	1997	5.2	4.9	5.8	4.7	5.3	6.5	12.5	3.8	5.3
Children aged 1–17	no.	1997	359	248	216	82	119	36	33	13	1 106
Rate per 100,000 children aged 1–17	no.	1997	24.1	23.1	25.6	24.2	26.5	30.2	60.3	17.0	24.9
Children aged 15–17 caused by accidents, poisoning & violence	no.	1997	76	48	48	15	32	n.p.	n.p.	3	227
Males (rate per 100,000 males aged 15–17)	no.	1997	40.5	38.4	53.2	36.5	59.6	n.p.	n.p.	41.9	43.6
Females (rate per 100,000 females aged 15–17)	no.	1997	17.5	11.9	9.7	13.8	21.0	n.p.	n.p.	—	14.0
EDUCATION											
Preschool attendance	'000	Aug 1996	94.1	59.2	48.0	17.2	28.3	4.3	2.8	4.4	258.4
Primary school attendance	'000	Aug 1997	614.9	438.1	347.7	160.7	189.8	46.5	25.4	32.7	1 855.8
Attending government schools	%	Aug 1997	73.7	69.6	76.8	73.9	76.4	76.7	80.2	67.4	73.7
Attending non-government schools	%	Aug 1997	26.3	30.4	23.2	26.1	23.6	23.3	19.8	32.6	26.3
Attending Catholic schools	%	Aug 1997	19.5	23.1	15.7	15.2	16.4	15.8	14.2	26.6	18.9
Secondary school attendance	'000	Aug 1997	459.3	343.3	227.4	87.3	121.2	37.7	11.1	28.6	1 315.8
Attending government schools	%	Aug 1997	67.4	62.3	65.1	66.1	66.8	72.3	71.6	61.5	65.6
Attending non-government schools	%	Aug 1997	32.6	37.7	34.9	33.9	33.2	27.7	28.4	38.5	34.4
Attending Catholic schools	%	Aug 1997	21.9	22.1	18.5	17.8	18.7	15.7	12.6	26.9	20.6
Year 12 apparent retention rates											
Males	%	Aug 1997	62.0	69.3	72.9	61.3	65.3	54.1	36.7	92.5	66.2
Females	%	Aug 1997	72.8	83.8	83.2	72.9	78.1	63.4	47.8	90.7	77.8

(a) Source: Day et al. 1997.

CHILD INDICATORS, Annual Comparisons

	Units	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
POPULATION												
Estimated Resident Population(a)												
Total persons aged 0–17	'000	4 541.4	4 557.4	4 560.5	4 563.1	4 572.7	4 585.7	4 594.1	4 612.9	4 642.8	4 676.8	4 699.0
Males	'000	2 326.6	2 335.7	2 338.6	2 341.0	2 346.6	2 352.8	2 356.7	2 366.0	2 380.9	2 397.7	2 409.2
Females	'000	2 214.8	2 221.7	2 221.9	2 222.1	2 226.1	2 233.0	2 237.4	2 246.9	2 261.9	2 279.1	2 289.8
Persons aged 0–4	'000	1 218.7	1 229.6	1 243.9	1 258.2	1 271.7	1 284.7	1 292.5	1 298.0	1 299.5	1 297.0	1 292.2
Persons aged 5–11	'000	1 680.7	1 702.2	1 727.2	1 750.7	1 770.0	1 788.0	1 793.4	1 800.5	1 812.3	1 828.2	1 837.0
Persons aged 12–14	'000	787.9	767.3	753.8	746.1	743.8	743.6	751.6	761.5	776.3	786.1	791.1
Persons aged 15–17	'000	854.0	858.4	835.6	808.1	787.2	769.4	756.5	752.8	754.7	765.5	778.6
Persons aged 0–17 as a proportion of total population	%	27.9	27.6	27.1	26.7	26.5	26.2	26.0	25.8	25.7	25.5	25.4
Indigenous persons aged 0–17(b)	'000	121.5	123.2	124.8	126.8	159.3	162.7	166.2	169.9	173.9	177.8	187.5
Number of births	'000	244.0	246.2	250.9	262.6	257.2	264.2	260.2	258.1	256.2	253.8	251.8
Teenage birth rate: mothers aged 15–17 (confinements per 1,000 females aged 15–17)(c)	no.	10.3	10.3	10.7	11.0	10.9	10.6	10.4	10.5	10.6	10.6	9.8
Total fertility rate	no.	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.9	1.9	1.9	1.9	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8
SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT												
Families with dependants aged 0–24												
Couple families	'000	1 887.0	1 934.2	1 930.5	1 976.2	1 965.6	1 992.3	1 990.5	1 960.0	1 982.5	1 963.0	1 999.8
Lone mother families(d)	'000	306.7	300.0	292.9	314.7	335.2	363.6	368.4	368.7	407.4	406.6	443.9
Lone father families(d)	'000	41.6	42.6	37.4	46.4	48.3	48.5	47.8	54.9	56.5	60.6	65.0
One-parent families as a proportion of all families(d)	%	15.6	14.8	14.5	15.4	16.2	17.0	17.2	17.8	19.0	19.2	20.0
Children aged 0–11(e)												
Attending formal child care only	%	9.1	n.a.	n.a.	9.3	n.a.	n.a.	11.0	n.a.	n.a.	12.0	n.a.
Attending informal child care only	%	31.7	n.a.	n.a.	33.9	n.a.	n.a.	29.4	n.a.	n.a.	28.3	n.a.
Attending both formal and informal child care	%	6.6	n.a.	n.a.	8.4	n.a.	n.a.	8.3	n.a.	n.a.	8.1	n.a.
Not attending child care	%	52.5	n.a.	n.a.	48.4	n.a.	n.a.	51.2	n.a.	n.a.	51.6	n.a.
Divorces												
Involving children	'000	23.3	23.6	22.9	23.7	24.7	24.2	25.5	25.3	n.a.	28.1	27.7
Involving children as a proportion of all divorces	%	58.6	57.5	55.3	55.6	54.2	53.0	52.6	52.4	n.a.	53.6	54.0
Children affected	'000	44.1	44.4	43.3	44.9	46.7	45.8	48.1	47.5	n.a.	52.5	51.7
Children affected (per 1,000 children aged 0–17)	no.	9.7	9.7	9.5	9.8	10.2	10.0	10.5	10.3	n.a.	11.2	11.0
ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT												
Couple families with dependants aged 0–24												
Both parents employed	%	50.2	50.9	53.8	55.9	53.4	53.3	52.5	52.8	57.7	55.7	56.3
Both parents employed full-time	%	20.3	20.3	21.8	23.4	22.0	20.9	21.9	21.5	23.8	22.8	23.1
Neither parent employed	%	8.1	7.9	7.2	6.8	8.4	9.9	10.8	9.9	8.5	8.5	8.8
Mother employed full-time	%	22.3	22.1	23.7	25.0	24.4	23.6	24.0	24.2	26.5	25.3	25.8
Mother employed part-time	%	30.1	30.9	32.3	32.8	32.4	33.0	31.5	32.2	34.3	33.6	33.7
Mother not employed	%	47.7	46.9	44.0	42.1	43.2	43.3	44.5	43.7	39.2	41.1	40.5
One-parent family with dependants(d)												
Parent employed	%	42.1	43.9	50.2	49.0	47.0	45.7	45.3	45.9	46.9	46.8	46.5
Parent employed full-time	%	28.3	28.7	31.0	31.6	29.8	27.4	27.0	27.4	26.8	27.7	26.1

(a) Estimated resident population data for 1997 is preliminary.

(b) Estimates from 1987 to 1990 have been benchmarked to the 1991 Census. From 1991 to 1995, estimates have been benchmarked to the 1996 Census. Data for 1996 and 1997 are high series projections—see *Experimental Projections of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Population, 30 June 1996 to 30 June 2006* (ABS Cat. no. 3231.0) for further explanation.

(c) Includes confinements of mothers aged under 15 years in some States and Territories, particularly the NT.

(d) Prior to 1989 one-parent families include a small number of other non-couple families with dependent children.

(e) Estimates for the NT exclude remote and sparsely settled areas.

CHILD INDICATORS, Annual Comparisons *continued*

	Units	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
HEALTH												
Deaths												
Infants aged under 1 year	no.	2 116	2 132	2 004	2 145	1 836	1 843	1 591	1 512	1 449	1 460	1 341
Rate per 1,000 live births	no.	8.7	8.7	8.0	8.2	7.1	7.0	6.1	5.9	5.7	5.8	5.3
Children aged 1–17	no.	1 392	1 472	1 381	1 295	1 174	1 180	1 156	1 137	1 105	1 112	1 106
Rate per 100,000 children aged 1–17	no.	32.4	34.1	32.0	30.1	27.2	27.3	26.7	26.1	25.2	25.1	24.9
Children aged 15–17 caused by accidents, poisoning & violence	no.	331	365	332	280	267	244	213	232	189	217	227
Males (rate per 100,000 males aged 15–17)	no.	53.7	63.6	58.4	48.7	50.8	46.6	39.1	45.0	35.4	42.0	43.6
Females (rate per 100,000 females aged 15–17)	no.	23.2	20.5	20.1	19.8	16.2	16.0	16.6	15.8	14.2	13.9	14.0
EDUCATION												
Primary school attendance	'000	1 687.4	1 704.9	1 734.6	1 763.5	1 786.4	1 804.4	1 816.1	1 825.7	1 833.7	1 848.2	1 855.8
Secondary school attendance	'000	1 295.3	1 296.6	1 277.0	1 278.2	1 288.7	1 294.6	1 282.3	1 273.6	1 275.7	1 294.8	1 315.8
Year 12 apparent retention rates												
Males	%	49.4	53.4	55.5	58.3	66.1	72.5	71.9	69.6	66.7	65.9	66.2
Females	%	57.0	61.8	65.2	69.9	76.7	82.0	81.4	79.9	77.9	77.0	77.8
Children aged 15–17 attending school or tertiary institution	%	74.3	73.6	75.8	77.6	82.6	83.3	83.3	83.2	83.9	83.9	85.5

THE CHILD POPULATION

Children (persons aged 0–17 years) are a dynamic subgroup of the Australian population. Each year the number of children increases through births and as a result of net migration gains. Annual growth is partially offset by those children attaining adulthood (as they turn 18) and, to a lesser extent, through child mortality.

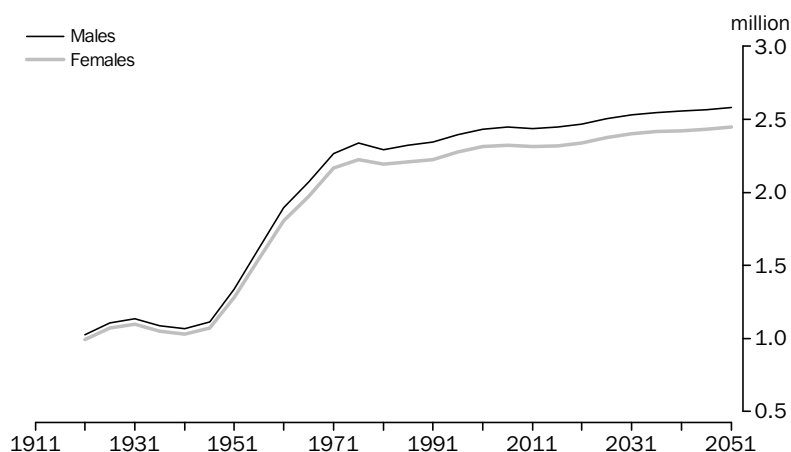
This chapter presents information on the size of the child population, trends in the population and influences on those trends, including fertility. Children's geographic distribution in Australia and the Indigenous child population are also described.

Population change

At 30 June 1997, there were 4.7 million children in Australia. The child population comprised 2,409,200 males (51%) and 2,289,800 females (49%); a sex ratio of 105. The greater number of male than female children reflects a greater number of male births (see table 1.13).

The number of children increased rapidly between 1947 and 1975, when it reached a peak of 4.6 million children. After a brief period of decrease, the number of children has increased slowly since 1980. Growth in the child population over the past 50 years was associated with the 'baby boom' after the second world war and an 'echo' effect as the baby boom generation had children of their own. Projections indicate that the number of children will continue to increase slowly into the next century, reaching 5 million by the year 2051.

1.1 NUMBER OF CHILDREN AGED 0–17

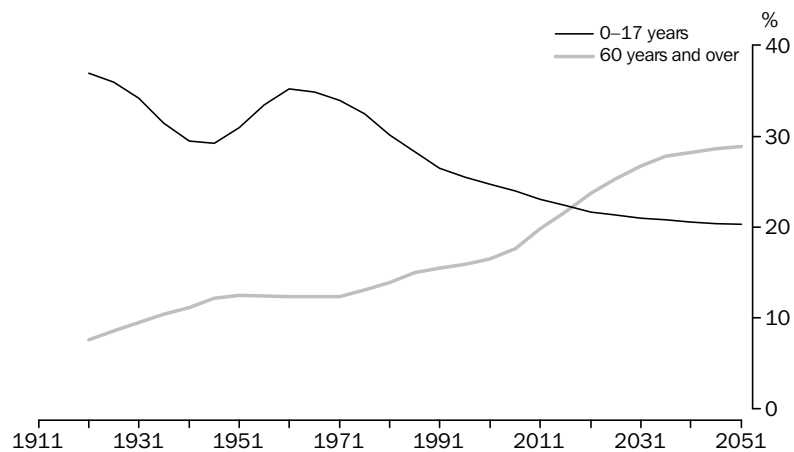


Source: *Population by Age and Sex, Australian States and Territories* (ABS Cat. No. 3201.0); *Population Projections, 1997 to 2051* (ABS Cat. No. 3222.0); ABS, unpublished data, estimated resident population.

A decreasing proportion

Children represent a declining proportion of the total population. After falling from 37% of the population in 1921 to 29% between 1942 and 1946, the proportion of children rose to a post-war peak of 35% in 1961. This proportion had decreased to 25% in 1997, and is projected to continue declining to around 20% in 2051. The decreasing proportion of children resulted from the effects of the baby boom, together with decreasing fertility and increasing life expectancy and is part of the wider phenomenon of an ageing population. From around 2020, for the first time, children are projected to form a smaller proportion of the population than persons aged 60 and over.

1.2 AGE GROUPS IN THE POPULATION



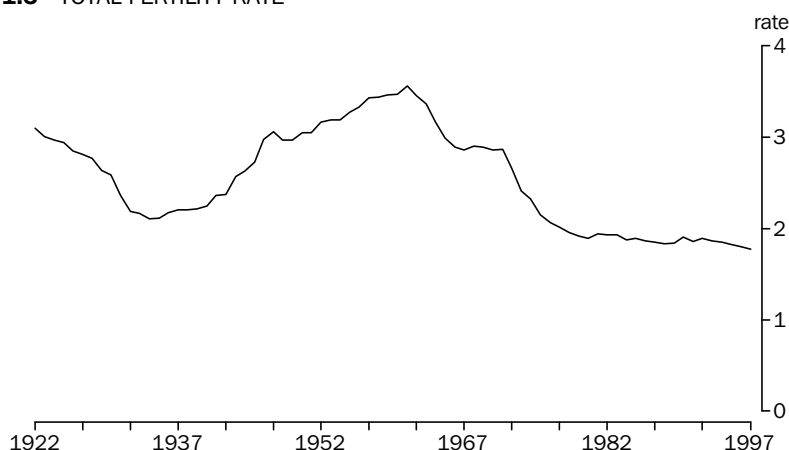
Source: *Population by Age and Sex, Australian States and Territories (various issues)* (ABS Cat. no. 3201.0); *Population Projections, 1997 to 2051* (ABS Cat. no. 3222.0); ABS, unpublished data, estimated resident population and population projections.

Fertility

The total fertility rate for a particular year is defined as the number of children a woman could expect to have in her lifetime, given the fertility pattern observed in that year. In 1997 there were 52 births per 1,000 women aged 15–49 which resulted in a total fertility rate of 1.8.

Australia's total fertility rate has risen and fallen this century. It declined to 2.1 in 1934 during the great depression and then rose to 3.6 in 1961. After another period of decline, the rate has been relatively stable since 1976, although consistently below 2.1, the rate necessary to ensure long-term replacement of the population.

1.3 TOTAL FERTILITY RATE



Source: *Births, Australia (various issues)* (ABS Cat. no. 3301.0); ABS, unpublished data, vital statistics collection.

Births and deaths

Since 1973 the annual number of births has fluctuated around 250,000, from a low of 223,100 in 1979 to a high of 264,200 in 1992. Over this time, the decline in the fertility rate has been partially offset by an increase in the number of women of childbearing age. In 1973 there were 3.2 million women aged 15–49, compared with 4.8 million in 1997 (*Population by Age and Sex, Australian States and Territories* (ABS Cat. no. 3201.0)).

The number of deaths of children is relatively small, and has declined over the past 25 years. In 1997, 2,400 children and infants died, reflecting a 66% reduction from the 1971 figure of 7,100 deaths (*Deaths, Australia* (ABS Cat. no. 3302.0)). (Child mortality is examined in greater detail in the Health chapter.)

GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION

With the exception of the Northern Territory, the proportion of children in the population is similar across States and Territories. The Northern Territory has a noticeably higher proportion of children in its population (31% in 1997) than the rest of the country (25%). This is due to the relatively large Indigenous population in the Northern Territory, which has both a younger age structure than the non-Indigenous population and a higher fertility rate.

1.4 CHILDREN, States and Territories—June 1997

State or Territory	Males.....		Females.....		Persons.....	
	'000	% of all males	'000	% of all females	'000	% of all persons
New South Wales	806.9	25.9	767.9	24.3	1 574.9	25.1
Victoria	581.7	25.6	554.9	23.8	1 136.6	24.7
Queensland	457.9	26.9	433.1	25.5	891.0	26.2
South Australia	183.1	25.0	174.0	23.3	357.1	24.1
Western Australia	243.2	26.9	230.2	25.8	473.4	26.3
Tasmania	64.2	27.5	61.3	25.6	125.6	26.5
Northern Territory	30.3	30.6	28.1	31.8	58.4	31.2
Australian Capital Territory	41.2	26.8	39.7	25.4	80.9	26.1
Australia(a)	2 409.2	26.1	2 289.8	24.6	4 699.0	25.4

(a) Includes 'Other Territories'.

Source: *Population by Age and Sex, Australian States and Territories, 1997* (ABS Cat. no. 3201.0).

Section of State

The proportions of children living in urban and rural areas reflect the highly urbanised nature of the Australian population. In 1996, 59% of Australia's children were located in the larger cities (major urban centres with a population of 100,000 or more) on census night, compared with 64% of the population aged 18 and over. The proportion of children located in rural areas was higher than that for adults, with 16% of children and 13% of adults located there. These differences are associated with the movement of adults to urban centres for education and employment purposes.

1.5 ALL PERSONS(a), Section of State—1996

Section of State	AGE (YEARS).....				All persons
	0–17	18–24	25–59	60 and over	
	%	%	%	%	%
Major urban	59.1	68.5	63.5	62.5	62.7
Other urban	25.0	21.0	22.0	25.6	23.2
Locality	2.8	1.8	2.4	2.9	2.5
Rural balance	13.1	8.6	12.0	9.0	11.5
Total(b)	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000
Total(b)	4 588.9	1 821.1	8 508.1	2 834.7	17 752.8

(a) Excludes overseas visitors.

(b) Includes migratory collection districts.

Source: ABS, unpublished data, 1996 Census of Population and Housing.

INDIGENOUS CHILDREN

In 1996, there were 386,000 Indigenous people in Australia of whom 177,800 were children aged 0–17. The Indigenous population has a much younger age structure than the total Australian population with 46% of Indigenous persons aged under 18 years, compared with 26% of the total population. The Indigenous child population is growing faster than the general child population, with growth of 12% and 2% respectively between 1991 and 1996. Part of this apparent growth may be due to a greater willingness by Indigenous people to nominate their Indigenous origins in the Census of Population and Housing. The total fertility rate of the Indigenous population, while declining, is still well above that of the general population.

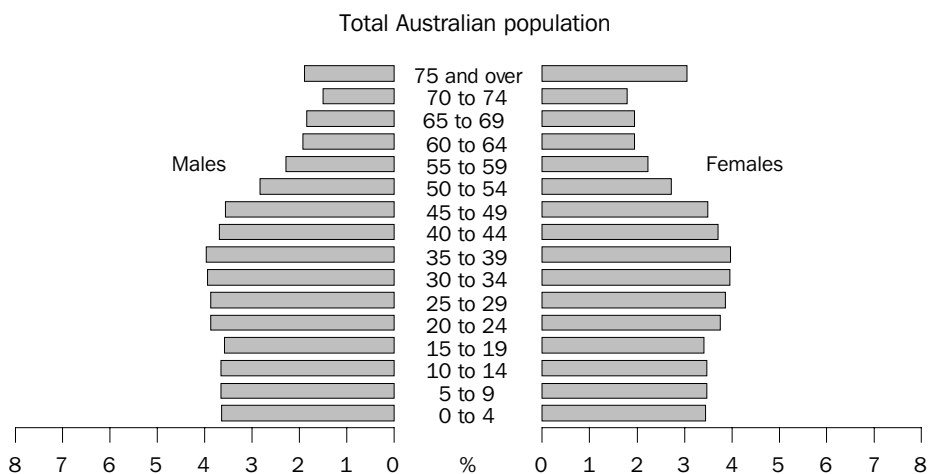
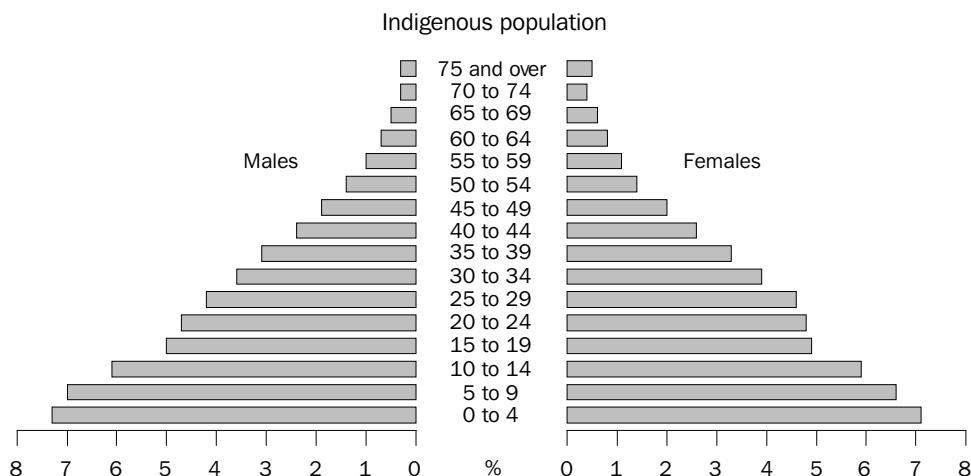
1.6 CHILDREN, Proportion of All Persons

Indigenous status	1991	1996
Indigenous children(a)		
Number ('000)	159.3	177.8
Proportion of total Indigenous population (%)	46.1	46.1
Percentage change 1991–96 (%)	..	11.6
All children		
Number ('000)	4 572.7	4 676.8
Proportion of total population (%)	26.5	25.5
Percentage change 1991–96 (%)	..	2.3

(a) Data for 1991 is experimental estimated resident population, revised figures based on the 1996 Census of Population and Housing. Data for 1996 is experimental estimated resident population.

Source: ABS, unpublished data, estimated resident population.

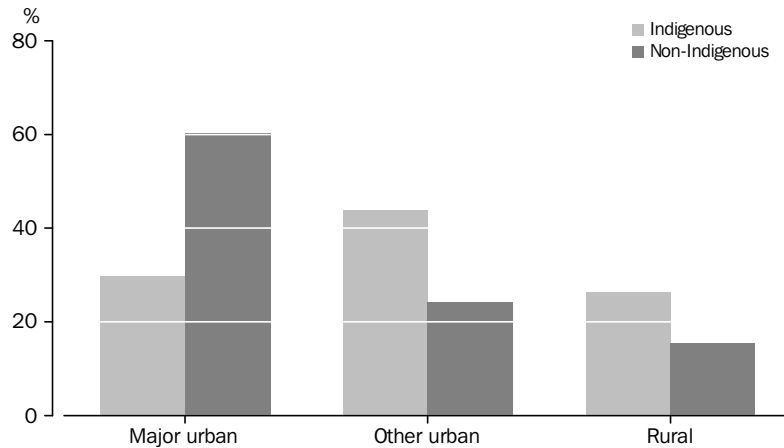
1.7 AGE STRUCTURE (YEARS) OF POPULATION—June 1996



Source: *Experimental Estimates of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Population, June 1991–1996* (ABS Cat. no. 3230.0); *Australian Demographic Statistics, December Quarter 1997* (ABS Cat. no. 3101.0).

Section of State

In contrast to non-Indigenous children, only 30% of Indigenous children were located in larger cities in 1996, while 44% were in smaller towns and cities (population clusters with 1,000 to 99,999 persons) and 26% were in rural areas. This pattern closely reflected the distribution of the total Indigenous population.

1.8 CHILDREN, By Section of State—1996

Source: ABS, unpublished data, 1996 Census of Population and Housing.

OVERSEAS-BORN CHILDREN

In addition to births, the number of children in Australia is also affected by the number of children who have arrived from overseas. In 1996 there were 321,500 children who had been born overseas, representing 7% of all children in Australia. The proportion of adults born overseas was much higher (27%), reflecting the large number of settlers who arrived in the migration waves of the post-war years. In addition, adult settlers, but not their Australian-born children, are identified as overseas-born.

Birthplace

The main countries of origin for children born overseas were the United Kingdom and Ireland (15% of overseas-born children) and New Zealand (13%). Other significant countries of origin were the Philippines (5%), Viet Nam (5%) and Hong Kong and Macau (5%).

The mix of birthplaces of children changed considerably over the past decade, in line with the changing patterns of migration. The proportion born in the United Kingdom and Ireland fell from 24% in 1986 to 15% in 1996. Viet Nam's share fell from 7% in 1986 to 5% in 1996. China, Hong Kong and Macau and the Philippines each more than doubled their share over the decade.

1.9 TOP TEN BIRTHPLACES OF OVERSEAS-BORN CHILDREN—1996

Country of birth	1986.....		1996.....	
	'000	%	'000	%
United Kingdom and Ireland	73.4	23.9	48.6	15.1
New Zealand	39.5	12.9	40.4	12.6
Philippines	6.7	2.2	17.5	5.4
Viet Nam	23.0	7.5	15.8	4.9
Hong Kong and Macau	7.3	2.4	15.5	4.8
Former Yugoslavia	7.0	2.3	11.5	3.6
Malaysia and Brunei	9.5	3.1	10.5	3.3
China	2.1	0.7	9.8	3.1
United States of America	9.1	3.0	9.5	3.0
South Africa	9.2	3.0	8.8	2.7
All overseas-born(a)	307.6	100.0	321.5	100.0

(a) Only selected countries are shown, therefore the components do not add to the total.

Source: ABS, unpublished data, 1986 and 1996 Census of Population and Housing.

Numbers migrating

In 1996–97, 56,700 children aged 0–17 from overseas arrived in Australia intending (or with parents intending) to stay permanently or long-term. This represented 22% of all permanent and long-term arrivals (see table 1.15 for information on birthplace of overseas arrivals). During the same year, 28,800 children left Australia on a permanent or long-term basis. Following adjustment for the net effect of category jumping (see Glossary), there was an overall net migration gain of 28,200 children.

1.10 NET MIGRATION

Migration details	AGE (YEARS).....		
	0–17	18 and over	All persons
	no.	no.	no.
1976–77			
Arrivals	45 914	110 328	156 242
Departures	27 448	85 655	113 103
Net migration(a)	22 782	35 115	57 897
1986–87			
Arrivals	55 802	148 660	204 462
Departures	20 737	74 584	95 321
Net migration(a)	39 620	86 110	125 730
1996–97			
Arrivals	56 721	204 280	261 001
Departures	28 772	137 833	166 605
Net migration(a)	28 229	67 546	95 775

(a) Net migration includes an adjustment for the net effect of category jumping—see Glossary.

Source: ABS, unpublished data, migration collection.

ADDITIONAL TABLES

1.11 ESTIMATED RESIDENT POPULATION

Age (years)	1986.....		1996.....		1997p.....	
	'000	%	'000	%	'000	%
MALES						
0	122.4	1.5	130.9	1.4	129.4	1.4
1	123.9	1.5	133.2	1.5	131.3	1.4
2	123.4	1.5	133.6	1.5	133.8	1.5
3	125.5	1.6	134.0	1.5	134.2	1.5
4	123.8	1.5	133.8	1.5	134.6	1.5
5	122.3	1.5	136.0	1.5	134.5	1.5
6	120.3	1.5	136.2	1.5	136.6	1.5
7	119.7	1.5	133.1	1.5	136.9	1.5
8	121.2	1.5	132.1	1.5	133.8	1.5
9	121.5	1.5	131.9	1.4	132.8	1.4
10	124.7	1.6	133.9	1.5	132.5	1.4
11	128.4	1.6	133.1	1.5	134.6	1.5
12	133.5	1.7	134.1	1.5	133.8	1.5
13	139.3	1.7	135.4	1.5	134.8	1.5
14	146.3	1.8	133.7	1.5	136.2	1.5
15	148.5	1.9	132.1	1.5	134.6	1.5
16	139.2	1.7	130.4	1.4	133.3	1.4
17	137.6	1.7	130.1	1.4	131.6	1.4
<i>Total 0–17</i>	<i>2 321.5</i>	<i>29.0</i>	<i>2 397.7</i>	<i>26.3</i>	<i>2 409.2</i>	<i>26.1</i>
18 and over	5 678.7	71.0	6 710.3	73.7	6 808.8	73.9
Total males	8 000.2	100.0	9 108.1	100.0	9 218.0	100.0
FEMALES						
0	116.2	1.4	124.3	1.4	122.7	1.3
1	118.7	1.5	126.3	1.4	124.6	1.3
2	118.1	1.5	126.6	1.4	126.8	1.4
3	118.9	1.5	127.2	1.4	127.2	1.4
4	117.6	1.5	127.0	1.4	127.7	1.4
5	116.4	1.5	129.4	1.4	127.6	1.4
6	113.6	1.4	129.4	1.4	130.0	1.4
7	113.5	1.4	126.6	1.4	130.0	1.4
8	115.6	1.4	125.8	1.4	127.1	1.4
9	115.5	1.4	125.6	1.4	126.4	1.4
10	118.2	1.5	127.4	1.4	126.2	1.4
11	122.0	1.5	127.7	1.4	128.0	1.4
12	126.4	1.6	128.1	1.4	128.4	1.4
13	132.7	1.7	128.3	1.4	128.8	1.4
14	140.0	1.7	126.5	1.4	129.0	1.4
15	142.5	1.8	125.9	1.4	127.3	1.4
16	133.0	1.7	123.6	1.3	127.0	1.4
17	131.6	1.6	123.3	1.3	124.8	1.3
<i>Total 0–17</i>	<i>2 210.5</i>	<i>27.6</i>	<i>2 279.1</i>	<i>24.8</i>	<i>2 289.8</i>	<i>24.6</i>
18 and over	5 807.7	72.4	6 923.6	75.2	7 024.5	75.4
Total females	8 018.2	100.0	9 202.7	100.0	9 314.2	100.0

Source: *Population by Age and Sex, Australian States and Territories (various issues)*
(ABS Cat. no. 3201.0).

1.11 ESTIMATED RESIDENT POPULATION *continued*

Age (years)	1986.....		1996.....		1997p.....	
	'000	%	'000	%	'000	%
PERSONS						
0	238.6	1.5	255.3	1.4	252.1	1.4
1	242.6	1.5	259.5	1.4	255.9	1.4
2	241.5	1.5	260.2	1.4	260.6	1.4
3	244.4	1.5	261.2	1.4	261.3	1.4
4	241.4	1.5	260.8	1.4	262.3	1.4
5	238.7	1.5	265.4	1.4	262.0	1.4
6	233.8	1.5	265.6	1.5	266.6	1.4
7	233.2	1.5	259.6	1.4	266.9	1.4
8	236.8	1.5	257.9	1.4	260.9	1.4
9	237.0	1.5	257.6	1.4	259.2	1.4
10	242.9	1.5	261.3	1.4	258.7	1.4
11	250.4	1.6	260.8	1.4	262.7	1.4
12	259.9	1.6	262.2	1.4	262.2	1.4
13	272.0	1.7	263.7	1.4	263.7	1.4
14	286.3	1.8	260.2	1.4	265.2	1.4
15	291.0	1.8	258.1	1.4	261.9	1.4
16	272.2	1.7	254.0	1.4	260.3	1.4
17	269.2	1.7	253.4	1.4	256.4	1.4
<i>Total 0–17</i>	<i>4 532.0</i>	<i>28.3</i>	<i>4 676.8</i>	<i>25.5</i>	<i>4 699.0</i>	<i>25.4</i>
18 and over	11 486.4	71.7	13 633.9	74.5	13 833.3	74.6
Total	16 018.4	100.0	18 310.7	100.0	18 532.2	100.0

Source: *Population by Age and Sex, Australian States and Territories (various issues)* (ABS Cat. no. 3201.0).

1.12 NUMBER OF CHILDREN

Year	Males.....		Females.....		Persons.....	
	'000	% of all males	'000	% of all females	'000	% of all persons
Estimates						
1971	2 269.8	34.6	2 167.1	33.3	4 436.9	34.0
1976	2 338.7	33.3	2 224.6	31.8	4 563.4	32.5
1981	2 293.8	30.8	2 194.0	29.4	4 487.8	30.1
1986	2 321.5	29.0	2 210.5	27.6	4 532.0	28.3
1991	2 346.6	27.2	2 226.1	25.7	4 572.7	26.5
1996	2 397.7	26.3	2 279.1	24.8	4 676.8	25.5
Projections						
2001	2 433.4	25.3	2 312.4	23.8	4 745.8	24.5
2006	2 447.7	24.2	2 322.4	22.7	4 770.1	23.4
2011	2 440.0	23.0	2 313.4	21.6	4 753.4	22.3
2016	2 445.4	22.1	2 318.6	20.7	4 763.9	21.4
2021	2 470.2	21.5	2 341.6	20.2	4 811.9	20.8
2026	2 503.9	21.1	2 373.2	19.7	4 877.1	20.4
2031	2 533.1	20.8	2 400.4	19.4	4 933.5	20.1
2036	2 549.3	20.5	2 415.4	19.0	4 964.7	19.8
2041	2 556.8	20.2	2 422.3	18.7	4 979.1	19.4
2046	2 566.5	19.9	2 431.4	18.5	4 997.9	19.2
2051	2 584.4	19.8	2 448.2	18.4	5 032.5	19.1

Source: *Population by Age and Sex, Australian States and Territories (various issues)* (ABS Cat. no. 3201.0); *Population Projections, 1997 to 2051* (ABS Cat. no. 3222.0) (Series II).

1.13 BIRTHS, Time Series

Year	Males	Females	All births.....	
	no.	no.	no.	sex ratio
1987	125 265	118 694	243 959	105.5
1992	135 601	128 550	264 151	105.5
1997	129 179	122 663	251 842	105.3

Source: Births, Australia, 1997 (ABS Cat. no. 3301.0).

1.14 INDIGENOUS CHILDREN, Section of State—1996

State or Territory	Major urban	Other urban	Locality	Rural balance	Total(a)
	%	%	%	%	'000
New South Wales	38.6	46.0	5.6	9.8	47.6
Victoria	42.9	43.8	2.5	10.8	9.5
Queensland	27.6	49.0	10.3	13.2	44.8
South Australia	44.2	33.1	3.9	18.8	9.2
Western Australia	30.0	38.9	12.7	18.3	23.3
Tasmania	19.5	49.9	8.0	22.6	6.7
Northern Territory	..	39.9	27.8	32.3	20.3
Australian Capital Territory	98.7	..	0.2	1.1	1.3
Australia(b)	29.8	43.9	10.5	15.8	162.9

(a) Includes migratory collection districts.

(b) Includes 'Other Territories'.

Source: ABS, unpublished data, 1996 Census of Population and Housing.

1.15 BIRTHPLACE OF PERMANENT AND LONG-TERM ARRIVALS—1997(a)

Country of birth	Persons aged 0–17.....		Persons aged 18 and over.....	
	no.	%	no.	%
New Zealand	5 971	10.5	13 886	6.8
United Kingdom and Ireland	4 422	7.8	25 033	12.3
Hong Kong and Macau	3 616	6.4	9 772	4.8
United States of America	2 020	3.6	6 506	3.2
Indonesia	2 726	4.8	7 817	3.8
China	1 994	3.5	11 514	5.6
South Africa	1 799	3.2	3 421	1.7
Korea	1 965	3.5	4 488	2.2
Former Yugoslavia	1 645	2.9	4 688	2.3
Japan	1 672	2.9	7 391	3.6
All arrivals(b)	56 721	100.0	204 280	100.0

(a) Year ending 30 June.

(b) Only selected countries are shown, therefore components do not add to total. Total also excludes 9,012 Australian-born children and 36,023 Australian-born adults who arrived from overseas.

Source: ABS, unpublished data, migration collection.

1.16 LANGUAGE SPOKEN AT HOME—1996

<i>Language spoken at home</i>	CHILD BORN OVERSEAS....			CHILD BORN IN AUSTRALIA.....				
	<i>Born in OMESC(a)</i>	<i>Born in MESC(b)</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Both parents born in Australia</i>	<i>Both parents born in MESC(b)</i>	<i>At least one parent born in OMESC(a)</i>	<i>Total(c)</i>	<i>Total(c)</i>
	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000
English	40.7	99.0	139.8	2 704.6	546.4	376.0	3 652.1	3 883.4
Australian Indigenous languages	0.1	—	0.1	17.9	0.1	0.2	18.4	18.6
Arabic (including Lebanese)	9.9	0.2	10.1	1.2	0.1	50.8	52.2	63.9
Greek	1.6	0.2	1.8	9.9	0.5	31.1	41.6	44.2
Italian	1.2	0.2	1.4	10.4	0.7	27.3	38.5	41.0
Cantonese	18.7	0.6	19.3	0.4	0.1	27.8	28.4	48.2
Vietnamese	16.6	0.4	17.0	0.2	—	27.2	27.4	44.9
Macedonian	2.3	—	2.3	0.7	—	12.2	12.9	15.5
Spanish	8.6	0.2	8.8	0.3	0.1	12.2	12.6	21.8
Croatian	2.1	—	2.1	0.5	—	9.0	9.5	11.9
Mandarin	12.9	0.3	13.1	0.2	—	7.8	8.1	21.5
German	2.6	0.2	2.8	1.6	0.3	4.6	6.5	9.5
Other Chinese	4.9	0.1	5.1	0.1	—	6.0	6.1	11.4
Polish	4.0	0.1	4.2	0.3	—	5.8	6.1	10.4
Other	81.3	7.8	89.1	17.9	3.3	106.6	128.9	231.7
Not stated	3.1	1.4	4.5	13.5	2.7	11.3	32.2	111.1
Total	210.6	110.9	321.5	2 779.6	554.3	715.8	4 081.5	4 588.9

(a) Other than Main English-speaking country (OMESC).

(b) Main English-speaking country (MESC).

(c) Includes 'not stated' and 'inadequately described' responses.

Source: ABS, unpublished data, 1996 Census of Population and Housing.

1.17 INTERNATIONAL COMPARISONS(a)

Country of birth	Total population	0–14 years	Median age
	millions	%	years
1995			
Australia	17.9	21.5	33.7
Canada	29.4	20.4	34.7
China	1 220.2	26.3	27.6
France	58.1	19.4	36.2
Greece	10.5	16.8	37.7
Hong Kong	6.1	19.6	33.7
Indonesia	197.5	32.9	23.2
Italy	57.2	14.9	38.1
Japan	125.1	16.2	39.4
Korea (Republic of)	44.9	23.3	29.2
Malaysia	20.1	38.0	21.7
New Zealand	3.6	23.2	32.2
Papua New Guinea	4.3	39.5	20.0
Philippines	67.8	38.5	20.5
Singapore	3.3	22.4	31.8
United Kingdom	58.1	19.3	36.8
United States of America	267.1	22.2	34.2
Viet Nam	73.8	37.0	21.3
World total	5 687.1	31.4	25.4
2050(a)			
Australia	25.3	18.3	41.1
Canada	36.4	17.5	43.2
China	1 516.7	18.7	40.3
France	58.4	17.1	44.5
Greece	9.0	15.3	47.9
Hong Kong	5.6	14.1	50.7
Indonesia	318.3	20.1	37.7
Italy	42.1	12.4	53.5
Japan	109.5	15.8	47.5
Korea (Republic of)	52.1	17.5	42.9
Malaysia	38.1	19.8	37.8
New Zealand	5.3	18.7	40.3
Papua New Guinea	9.6	22.4	34.1
Philippines	130.5	20.6	36.8
Singapore	4.2	17.1	43.1
United Kingdom	58.7	18.0	42.0
United States of America	347.5	18.7	40.5
Viet Nam	129.8	19.6	38.1
World total	9 366.7	20.5	36.5

(a) Medium variant projections.

Source: United Nations 1998a.

CHAPTER 2

SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

INTRODUCTION

Parents, siblings and other key caregivers play an important role in shaping the wellbeing, attitudes and future choices of children. While children's living arrangements have a significant influence on their lives, important relationships can also exist beyond the immediate household, for example, with a parent who lives elsewhere as a result of marriage separation, or with grandparents.

As a signatory to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, Australia has made a commitment to protect the rights of children. Included in this undertaking is the acknowledgment that children have the right to know and be cared for by parents, and have direct contact with both parents on a regular basis, except when this is contrary to the child's best interests.

This chapter presents information on children's relationships with family members and the care and support that takes place both within the home and beyond household boundaries. Since for some children the family environment may be less than ideal, the chapter also looks at children at risk of child abuse and neglect. In conclusion, the chapter briefly examines children both as offenders and victims of crime.

LIVING ARRANGEMENTS

Children aged 0–17 have a variety of living arrangements. While the 1996 Census showed that the vast majority (94%) lived with at least one of their parents, households varied according to whether both parents or only one lived with the child, whether parents were registered as married or de facto married, whether children lived with their lone mother or lone father and whether or not stepchildren or members of the extended family were also present.

A very small proportion of children lived apart from parents in institutions, predominantly boarding schools or residential colleges (see also table 2.21). There were also a small number of young people aged 15–17 who had made, or had commenced, the transition from parental home to independent living (see also table 2.22).

2.1 LIVING ARRANGEMENTS OF CHILDREN AGED 0–17

Living arrangements	1986.....		1996(a).....		Change
	'000	%	'000	%	1986–1996
.....					
In private dwellings					
With parents					
Couple families					
Parents in a registered marriage	3 558.7	80.1	3 308.9	72.1	-7.0
Parents in a de facto marriage	134.7	3.0	279.4	6.1	107.4
Total	3 693.4	83.1	3 588.3	78.2	-2.8
One-parent families					
With lone mother	437.3	9.8	659.1	14.4	50.7
With lone father	59.4	1.3	81.3	1.8	36.9
Total	496.7	11.2	740.4	16.1	49.1
Total(b)	4 209.0	94.7	4 328.7	94.3	2.8
Not with parents(c)					
As parent or partner	9.6	0.2	7.0	0.2	-27.7
With other relatives	18.6	0.4	20.1	0.4	8.1
Not with other relatives	26.7	0.6	23.5	0.5	-12.0
Total	54.9	1.2	50.6	1.1	-7.9
Visitors	117.3	2.6	86.6	1.9	-26.1
Not elsewhere classified	—	—	61.3	1.3	..
Total in private dwellings	4 381.2	98.6	4 527.2	98.7	3.3
In non-private dwellings	61.6	1.4	61.5	1.3	-0.2
Total(d)	4 445.3	100.0	4 588.9	100.0	3.2

(a) 1996 data include same-sex couples.

(b) 1986 total includes a small number of children in other family arrangements.

(c) Comprises young people aged 15–17 only.

(d) Includes a small number of children classified as campers out in 1986 or as migratory.

Source: ABS, unpublished data, 1996 Census of Population and Housing.

Recent trends

Between 1986 and 1996 the following trends were observed:

- The number of children rose by 143,600 or 3%.
- The number of children in one-parent families rose by almost 50% from 496,700 to 740,400, and as a result the proportion of children in one-parent families rose from 11% to 16%.
- The proportion of children in couple families fell from 83% to 78%.
- The number of children whose parents were in a de facto relationship more than doubled, rising from 134,700 to 279,400 (or from 3% to 6%).

LIVING WITH PARENTS

Of the 4.6 million children living with parents in 1997, 82% were in couple families and 18% were in one-parent families. This closely reflected the distribution of the two types of families, where 79% were couple families with children and 21% were one-parent families. The difference between the distribution of children and families was due to the larger size of couple families which had, on average, 2.0 children compared with 1.7 for one-parent families. Irrespective of family type, of those children who lived with at least one of their natural parents, 97% lived with their natural mother and 79% with their natural father.

2.2 CHILDREN AGED 0–17 LIVING WITH PARENTS—1997

Living arrangements	AGE GROUP (YEARS).....					Total children	Total families
	0–2	3–4	5–11	12–14	15–17		
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
In couple families							
Parents in a registered marriage	73.0	74.8	75.3	76.3	77.3	75.3	72.4
Parents in a de facto marriage	12.3	7.9	5.5	4.5	3.1	6.4	6.8
Total	85.3	82.7	80.7	80.8	80.5	81.7	79.2
In one-parent families							
With lone mother	14.3	16.5	17.1	15.3	16.4	16.1	18.1
With lone father	0.4	0.9	2.2	3.9	3.2	2.2	2.7
Total	14.7	17.3	19.3	19.2	19.5	18.3	20.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000
Total	768.7	522.9	1 833.1	779.9	710.8	4 615.3	2 414.3

Source: ABS, unpublished data, 1997 Family Characteristics Survey.

Couple families

Of the 3.8 million children in couple families in 1997, nine out of ten lived with parents who were in a registered marriage and the remainder lived with parents who were in a de facto relationship. The proportion of children living with parents who were in a de facto relationship decreased as the age of the child increased. Around one in seven children aged 0–2 in couple families had parents who were in a de facto relationship, compared with less than one in thirty children aged 15–17.

There were 363,800 children (8% of children living with parents) living in step and blended families. Of these, the majority (seven out of ten) were stepchildren who lived with one of their natural parents and a step-parent, and the remainder were children who lived with both their natural parents, but who also had a stepbrother or stepsister present in the household. There was a strong association between de facto relationships and step-families. Of children whose parents were in a de facto relationship, 42% lived in step or blended families.

2.3 STRUCTURE OF COUPLE FAMILIES, Marital Status of Parents—1997

Family structure	Registered married.....		De facto married.....		Total.....	
	'000	%	'000	%	'000	%
FAMILIES						
Intact	1 636.0	93.6	105.1	64.0	1 741.1	91.1
Step	50.2	2.9	38.7	23.6	88.9	4.7
Blended	55.6	3.2	19.7	12.0	75.3	3.9
Total(a)	1 747.1	100.0	164.2	100.0	1 911.3	100.0
CHILDREN						
Intact	3 228.7	92.9	168.6	57.5	3 397.3	90.1
Step	78.3	2.3	66.9	22.8	145.2	3.9
Blended	161.7	4.7	57.0	19.4	218.6	5.8
Total(a)	3 476.4	100.0	293.2	100.0	3 769.6	100.0

(a) Includes a small number of 'other' family types.

Source: ABS, unpublished data, 1997 Family Characteristics Survey.

One-parent families

There were 845,700 children in one-parent families, of whom nine out of ten lived with their mother (see table 2.2). In general, lone mother and lone father families have marked differences. Lone father families tend to have fewer children and to have greater proportions of older children than lone mother families. Also, lone fathers are more likely than lone mothers to be in paid employment and, as a consequence, to have higher incomes (see *Australian Social Trends, 1997*, pp. 34–38 (ABS Cat. no. 4102.0)).

The majority of one-parent families are formed following the separation of married couples. However, in some cases, they form when a child is born to an unmarried parent or following widowhood. In 1997, 62% of lone parents were separated or divorced and 31% stated that they were not previously registered as married. Data are not available to determine how many of the latter were in established de facto relationships prior to becoming lone parents. A further 7% of lone parents were widowed.

2.4 REGISTERED MARITAL STATUS OF LONE PARENTS—1997

Registered marital status	Males	Females	Total
NUMBER ('000)			
Never married	12.1	144.1	156.2
Separated/divorced	47.8	265.5	313.3
Widowed	5.3	27.2	32.5
Total(a)	65.2	437.7	502.9
PROPORTION (%)			
Never married	18.6	32.9	31.1
Separated/divorced	73.3	60.7	62.3
Widowed	8.1	6.2	6.5
Total(a)	100.0	100.0	100.0

(a) Includes a small number of lone parents who reported their marital status as 'currently married'.

Source: ABS, unpublished data, 1997 Family Characteristics Survey.

Impact of divorce

Patterns of divorce and re-partnering influence the formation of one-parent families and step-families. Between 1987 and 1997 the divorce rate increased from 10.6 to 12.5 divorces per 1,000 married men. Although the annual number of divorces in this period rose from 39,700 to 51,300, the proportion involving children fell from 59% to 54% of all divorces. In 1997, more than 50,000 children were affected by the divorce of their parents (see *Marriages and Divorces, Australia (various issues)* (ABS Cat. no. 3310.0)). In addition, some children were affected by de facto separations but these data are not available.

Extended family

In 1996, the vast majority (91%) of Australian families with children were so-called 'nuclear' families, with only parents, or a parent, and their children usually resident in the household. Of the remaining families, 4% were in extended one-family households (containing relatives in addition to the immediate family of parents and children) and 2% were in one-family households with only non-relatives, such as boarders, living with them. A further 3% of families lived in households comprised of more than one family unit. Households which include people in addition to the nuclear family sometimes reflect transitional living arrangements. Relatives or non-relatives may live with a family, for caring, support or economic reasons, for a relatively short time before moving out to separate accommodation.

Children in one-parent families were more likely than children in couple families to live in extended one-family or multifamily households. In 1996, 13% of children in one-parent families lived in these household types, compared with 5% of children in couple families.

2.5 FAMILY HOUSEHOLDS—1996

Living arrangements	INDIGENOUS FAMILIES(a).....			ALL FAMILIES.....		
	Couple families	One-parent families	Total	Couple families	One-parent families	Total
FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN AGED 0–17						
	%	%	%	%	%	%
One-family households						
Parent(s) and children only	79.2	56.3	70.8	93.7	77.9	90.6
Parent(s), children and other relatives	8.8	14.9	11.0	3.4	6.7	4.1
Parent(s), children and non-relatives	2.2	6.4	3.8	1.1	7.1	2.3
Total	90.2	77.7	85.6	98.2	91.8	96.9
Multifamily households	9.8	22.3	14.4	1.8	8.2	3.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000
Total	39.1	22.6	61.7	1 808.6	439.8	2 248.5
CHILDREN AGED 0–17 LIVING WITH PARENTS						
	%	%	%	%	%	%
In one-family households						
With parent(s) and siblings only	78.0	58.4	71.4	94.2	80.5	91.8
With parent(s), siblings and other relatives	9.9	15.8	11.9	3.3	6.4	3.8
With parent(s), siblings and non-relatives	2.2	5.9	3.4	1.0	6.2	1.9
Total	90.0	80.1	86.7	98.5	93.1	97.6
In multifamily households	10.0	19.9	13.3	1.5	6.9	2.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000
Total	90.9	46.2	137.2	3 588.3	740.4	4 328.7

(a) Families which contain at least one Indigenous parent—see Glossary.

Source: ABS, unpublished data, 1996 Census of Population and Housing.

Children in extended family households often had grandparents resident. Of the 165,400 children in extended one-family households, 56% had a grandparent living with them. Similarly, of the 106,000 children in multifamily households, 71% were living with their grandparents' family (see table 2.6).

Grandparents in three-generation families may have an important caring role, both in supporting their adult children and in helping to nurture their grandchildren. In a small minority of families, grandparents assume full responsibility for parenting. In 1997 there were around 12,000 children aged 0–14 who were living with their grandparents but not their parents (ABS, unpublished data, 1997 Family Characteristics Survey).

2.6 HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION—1996

Living arrangements	Indigenous households(a).....		All households.....	
	'000	%	'000	%
HOUSEHOLDS WITH CHILDREN AGED 0–17				
One-family households	52.8	90.5	2 179.8	97.5
Multifamily households				
With grandparents' family	3.3	5.7	42.3	1.9
With other related family	1.9	3.3	9.2	0.4
With non-related family	0.3	0.6	3.7	0.2
<i>Total</i>	5.5	9.5	55.1	2.5
Total	58.4	100.0	2 234.9	100.0
CHILDREN AGED 0–17 LIVING WITH PARENTS				
In one-family households	118.9	86.2	4 222.7	97.6
In multifamily households				
With grandparents' family	10.5	7.6	75.0	1.7
With other related family	7.5	5.4	22.2	0.5
With non-related family	1.0	0.7	8.8	0.2
<i>Total</i>	19.0	13.8	106.0	2.4
Total	137.9	100.0	4 328.7	100.0

(a) Households which contain at least one Indigenous family—see Glossary.

Source: ABS, unpublished data, 1996 Census of Population and Housing.

Indigenous families and children

In this report, Indigenous families and households are defined as those which have at least one Indigenous parent usually resident. Care should be taken when interpreting data on Indigenous families as ABS coding does not always align with the traditional composition of Indigenous households. Indigenous families with children were more likely than all families to include people in addition to the immediate family of parents and children. In 1996, 71% of Indigenous families were nuclear families, 11% were in extended one-family households and 4% were in one-family households with only non-relatives also resident. The remaining 14% of Indigenous families lived in multifamily households (see table 2.5).

While grandparents were likely to live with children in extended Indigenous families, so also were other relatives. Of the 16,300 children in extended one-family households, 28% had a grandparent (and possibly other relatives) usually resident and the remaining 72% lived with relatives other than grandparents (see table 2.23). Of the 19,000 children in Indigenous multifamily households, 55% were living with their grandparents' family and 39% were living with families comprised of other relatives (see table 2.6).

Consistent with the pattern for all families, Indigenous one-parent families were more likely than couple families to live in extended family households. One-parent families were more common among Indigenous families than among families overall. In 1996, 37% of Indigenous families with children were one-parent families compared with 20% of all families.

Indigenous families and children *continued*

In 1996, of the 146,500 Indigenous children who lived with at least one parent, 61% lived with only one Indigenous parent, 25% lived with two Indigenous parents and 14% lived with parents who did not identify themselves as Indigenous. Of Indigenous children who lived with only one Indigenous parent, half lived in one-parent families and half lived in couple families.

2.7 INDIGENOUS CHILDREN(a), Indigenous Status of Parents—1996

	AGE GROUP (YEARS).....							
	0-4.....		5-11.....		12-17.....		Total.....	
<i>Living arrangements of child</i>	'000	%	'000	%	'000	%	'000	%
In Indigenous families								
Couple families								
Both parents Indigenous	11.5	24.4	16.5	26.4	9.4	25.2	37.3	25.5
One parent Indigenous	15.1	32.1	18.5	29.6	11.2	30.3	44.8	30.6
One-parent families	14.4	30.7	19.1	30.5	10.9	29.3	44.4	30.3
Total	40.9	87.2	54.1	86.5	31.4	84.8	126.4	86.3
In non-Indigenous families	6.0	12.8	8.4	13.5	5.6	15.2	20.1	13.7
Total	46.9	100.0	62.5	100.0	37.1	100.0	146.5	100.0

(a) Comprises Indigenous children who live with at least one parent.

Source: ABS, unpublished data, 1996 Census of Population and Housing.

Children with a parent living elsewhere

In 1997, while three-quarters (76%) of children lived with both of their natural parents, a significant number lived with only one natural parent, but had another natural parent living elsewhere, usually following separation or divorce. In 1997, 978,400 children (21%) lived with one natural parent and had another natural parent living elsewhere. The proportion of children with a parent living elsewhere rose with the age of the child, from 15% of children aged 0-2 to 24% of those aged 12-14 and 15-17. A further 102,800 children (2% of children living with parents and aged 0-17) lived with only one natural parent but reported no parent living elsewhere.

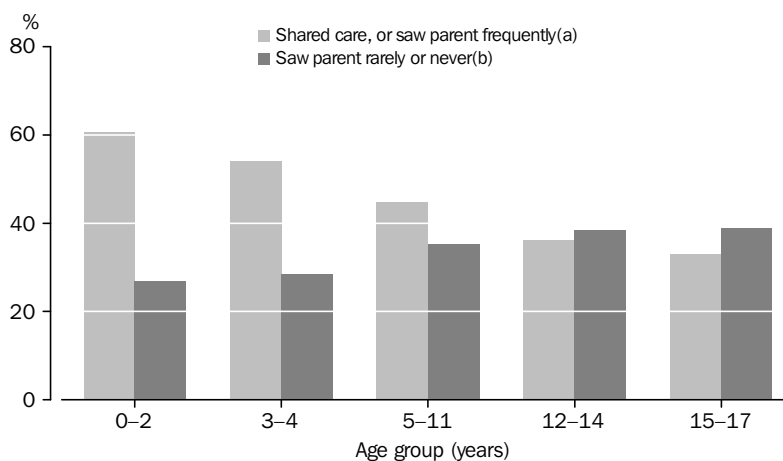
2.8 CHILDREN WITH A PARENT LIVING ELSEWHERE—1997

<i>Age group (years)</i>	<i>In couple families</i>	<i>In one-parent families</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>As a proportion of all children</i>
	'000	'000		
0-2	5.1	106.6	111.7	14.5
3-4	10.8	85.4	96.2	18.4
5-11	88.4	321.4	409.8	22.4
12-14	63.4	126.5	189.9	24.3
15-17	55.0	115.9	170.9	24.0
Total	222.7	755.8	978.4	21.2

Source: ABS, unpublished data, 1997 Family Characteristics Survey.

Children with a parent living elsewhere *continued*

Two-thirds (65%) of children with a parent living elsewhere continued to visit that parent at least once every six months. A small proportion (3%) were in a shared care arrangement where the other parent played a major caring role, and a sizeable proportion (41%) were in a sole care arrangement but saw their parent frequently (at least once per fortnight) (see *Family Characteristics, Australia, 1997* (ABS Cat. no. 4442.0)).

2.9 CHILDREN WITH A PARENT LIVING ELSEWHERE, Visiting Arrangements—1997

(a) Visits parent at least once per fortnight.

(b) Visits parent once per year, or less often.

Source: *Family Characteristics, Australia, 1997* (ABS Cat. no. 4442.0).

Visiting arrangements varied with the age of the child. Younger children were more likely than older children to be in a shared care arrangement or to see their other parent frequently. Of children with a parent living elsewhere, 61% of children aged 0–2 were in a shared care arrangement or saw their parent at least once per fortnight, compared with 33% of children aged 15–17. This may occur because parents and children who live apart lose contact with each other over time, or because children, as they grow older and more independent, spend less time with their parents.

Family size

In 1996, the average Australian family (with at least one child aged 0–17) had 1.9 children aged 0–17. Among families with at least one child aged 0–17, 38% had only one child in this age range, while 40% had two children, 17% had three children and 6% had four or more children. Some of these families were young families who would eventually have more children, while others were families where the children had siblings aged 18 and over.

Indigenous families (2.2 children aged 0–17 on average per family) and families in rural areas (2.1 children) tended to have more children than families overall. One-parent families (1.7 children) tended to have fewer children on average than couple families (2.0 children).

2.10 FAMILIES, Number of Children in Family—1996

Selected characteristics	NUMBER OF CHILDREN AGED 0–17 IN FAMILY.....					Total families.....	Average number of children aged 0–17 in family
	1	2	3	4 or more	%		
	%	%	%	%	%	'000	no.
.....							
Section of State							
Major urban	39.8	39.7	15.4	5.0	100.0	1 375.9	1.9
Other urban	35.7	39.5	18.1	6.7	100.0	543.2	2.0
Rural	32.9	38.8	20.0	8.3	100.0	329.4	2.1
Total	37.8	39.6	16.7	5.9	100.0	2 248.5	1.9
Family type							
Couple family	34.2	41.4	18.1	6.3	100.0	1 808.6	2.0
One-parent	52.6	31.9	11.3	4.2	100.0	439.8	1.7
Total	37.8	39.6	16.7	5.9	100.0	2 248.5	1.9
Birthplace of parents(a)							
Both Australian-born	31.9	41.7	19.6	6.8	100.0	1 030.2	2.0
One Australian and one overseas-born	34.6	42.4	17.3	5.7	100.0	331.8	2.0
Both overseas-born	40.0	39.8	14.5	5.7	100.0	352.1	1.9
Total(b)	34.2	41.4	18.1	6.3	100.0	1 808.6	2.0
Indigenous family	35.0	31.5	19.1	14.5	100.0	61.7	2.2

(a) Comprises couple families only.

(b) Includes couple families where the birthplace of one parent was not determined.

Source: ABS, unpublished data, 1996 Census of Population and Housing.

In 1997, families containing only stepchildren tended to be smaller (1.6 children) than intact couple families (2.0 children), while blended families, which contain both stepchildren and children from the current relationship, tended to be much larger (2.9 children) (see *Family Characteristics, Australia, 1997* (ABS Cat. no. 4442.0)).

Age of parents

In 1996, the majority (76%) of parents with children aged 0–17 were themselves aged 25–44. Relatively few were aged under 25 or 55 and over. On average, parents with resident children aged 0–17 were slightly older in 1996 than their counterparts were in 1986, with the median age of mothers rising over the period from 35 to 37 and the median age of fathers rising from 38 to 39.

2.11 AGE OF PARENTS(a)

Age group (years)	1986.....		1996.....			
	Total mothers	Total fathers	Mothers in couple families	Lone mothers	Total mothers	Total fathers
	%	%	%	%	%	%
15–24	7.0	2.7	4.1	11.6	5.4	2.0
25–34	38.7	30.2	34.0	32.9	33.8	25.1
35–44	40.4	42.9	46.7	40.0	45.6	45.8
45–54	12.1	19.2	14.3	13.7	14.2	23.3
55 and over	1.9	5.1	0.9	1.7	1.1	3.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000
Total	2 082.3	1 839.7	1 797.0	384.7	2 181.7	1 806.5
	years	years	years	years	years	years
Median age	35	38	37	36	37	39

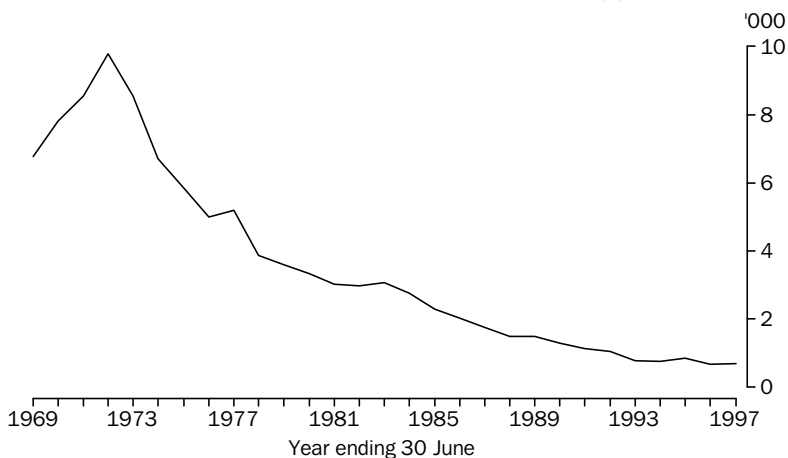
(a) Comprises parents with at least one child aged 0–17.

Source: ABS, unpublished data, 1986 and 1996 Census of Population and Housing.

ADOPTION

The number of children being adopted in Australia has decreased over the last 25 years. Factors which have contributed to the fall in the number of Australian-born children available for adoption include access to effective contraception and increased support for lone parents. In 1971–72 there were 9,798 adoptions recorded in total. Four years later this number had almost halved, dropping to 4,990, and by 1996–97 it had decreased to just 709.

2.12 ADOPTIONS IN AUSTRALIA—1971–72 to 1996–97(a)



(a) Data for 1985–86 and 1986–87 have been imputed, since no data on adoptions were collated nationally for these years.

Source: AIHW 1998.

ADOPTION *continued*

In 1996–97, 440 adoptions were of Australian-born children and 269 were of overseas-born children. Of the Australian-born children, 60% were adopted by non-relatives. The remainder were adopted by relatives, of whom nine out of ten were step-parents incorporating children into new families. Children who were adopted by non-relatives tended to be much younger than children adopted by relatives.

2.13 RELATIONSHIP TO ADOPTIVE PARENTS—1996–97

	AGE GROUP (YEARS).....					Total(b)
	Less than 1	1–4	5–9	10–14	15 and over(a)	
<i>Relationship to adoptive parents</i>	no.	no.	no.	no.	no.	no.
.....						
Child born in Australia						
Adopted by relatives	—	21	69	67	16	177
Adopted by non-relatives	159	27	34	26	14	263
Total	159	48	103	93	30	440
Child born overseas(c)	80	133	41	14	1	269
Total	239	181	144	107	31	709

(a) Includes a small number of children aged 18 years and over.

(b) Includes a small number of children whose age was unknown.

(c) Comprises adoption by non-relatives only.

Source: AIHW 1998.

In contrast to the decreasing number of adoptions of Australian-born children, there has been an increase in the number of overseas-born adoptions. In 1996–97, for the second year in succession, the number of overseas-born children adopted exceeded the number of Australian-born children adopted by non-relatives (269 compared with 263). Korea was the main source country, accounting for 31% of overseas adoptions, followed by India and Thailand (13% each). All overseas-born adoptions are by non-relatives. The small number of overseas-born children who are adopted by relatives are not included in statistics on adoptions (AIHW 1998).

CHILD CARE

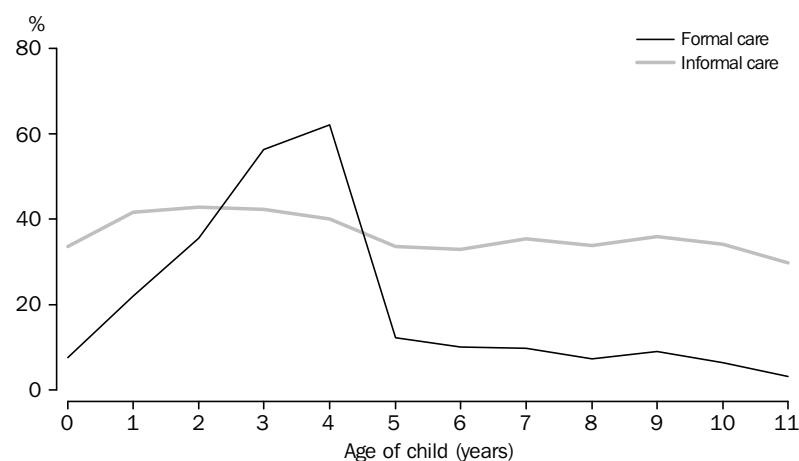
Child care refers to arrangements other than parental care made for the care of children aged under 12. Access to high quality, affordable child care is regarded as important, not just for children and families, but for Australia's wider social and economic development. As a consequence, the government has played an extensive role in planning, regulating and subsidising child care. Government assistance is paid to child care providers in the form of capital grants for establishing and equipping facilities, for operational funding, and for vacation care programs. Further, Childcare Assistance is paid to approved child care services on behalf of enrolled children, in order to reduce the fees payable by low- and middle-income families. Families who utilise care for work-related reasons may also receive government subsidy in the form of the Childcare Rebate.

Formal and informal care

Formal child care is regulated care which takes place away from the child's home, and includes attendance at long day care centres, family day care, occasional care, preschools and outside school hours programs. Informal child care is non-regulated care which can take place in the child's home or elsewhere and includes care by family members, friends and paid baby-sitters. In 1996, 1.5 million children aged under 12, representing almost half (48%) of children of this age, used some type of child care. Of children under 12 years, 12% used formal care only, 28% used informal care only and 8% used a combination of both formal and informal care (*Child Care, Australia, 1996* (ABS Cat. no. 4402.0)).

The proportion of children attending formal child care increased from 8% of children aged less than 1 year to 62% of children aged 4, the peak age for preschool attendance. The proportion of children in formal care declined sharply at age 5, when most children start school, and continued to decrease as children grew older. The use of informal care was more consistent across age groups, although higher for children below school age than for older children. The proportion of children in informal care peaked at 43% of children aged 2 years.

2.14 TYPE OF CARE—1996



Source: *Child Care, Australia, 1996* (ABS Cat. no. 4402.0).

Of those children who attended care, just over half (51%) were in care for less than 10 hours per week, while 8% were in care for 40 hours or more. To some extent, the hours of care varied with the age of the child. Children aged 0–2 were more likely than those aged 3–4 to spend a short time (under 5 hours per week) in care. However, both age groups were almost equally likely to spend extended time (20 hours or more per week) in care. A high proportion (43%) of school-aged children who attended child care were doing so for under 5 hours per week.

2.15 CHILDREN WHO ATTENDED CARE, Number of Hours—1996

WEEKLY HOURS SPENT IN CARE.....							
	<i>Under 5</i>	<i>5–9</i>	<i>10–19</i>	<i>20–39</i>	<i>40 and over</i>	<i>Total.....</i>	
<i>Age group (years)</i>	%	%	%	%	%	%	'000
0–2	27.1	17.0	18.8	24.7	12.4	100.0	402.2
3–4	12.2	18.8	34.0	23.7	11.2	100.0	392.4
5–11	42.6	24.2	20.0	8.7	4.4	100.0	707.2
Total	30.5	20.9	23.4	16.9	8.3	100.0	1 501.8

Source: ABS, unpublished data, 1996 Child Care Survey.

Many children attend child care so that their parents can participate in paid employment. The demand for child care for work-related reasons has grown substantially over the past 20 years, reflecting the increased labour force participation of women and growth in the number of couple families with dependants where both parents are working. In 1996, parents of almost half of all children attending formal or informal care stated that the main reason their child attended care was work-related. For 37% of children using formal care, the main reason given by parents was that such care was beneficial for the child—almost three-quarters (71%) of these children were attending preschool. For 41% of children using informal care, parents stated personal reasons, including non work-related study, social and sporting activities.

2.16 MAIN REASON FOR USING CHILD CARE—1996

MAIN REASON FOR USING CARE...						
	<i>Work-related</i>	<i>Personal</i>	<i>Beneficial for child</i>	<i>Other</i>	<i>Total.....</i>	
<i>Type of care used</i>	%	%	%	%	%	'000
Formal care						
Out of school hours program	86.8	6.7	*4.3	*2.1	100.0	111.7
Long day care centre	60.0	17.4	20.0	*2.4	100.0	177.7
Family day care	74.3	12.0	10.8	*2.9	100.0	96.2
Occasional care	30.5	29.8	37.4	*2.3	100.0	52.4
Preschool	11.3	4.1	81.3	3.2	100.0	200.6
Other formal care	n.p.	53.6	25.7	n.p.	100.0	22.2
Total formal care(a)	47.5	12.8	36.9	2.8	100.0	624.4
Informal care						
Brother/sister care	47.1	47.2	*1.4	4.3	100.0	165.1
Other relative	45.5	41.9	3.2	9.4	100.0	726.0
Non-relative	52.0	35.9	4.4	7.7	100.0	318.0
Total informal care(a)	47.2	41.2	3.3	8.3	100.0	1 128.3

(a) Some children received more than one type of child care, therefore components do not add to totals.

Source: *Child Care, Australia, 1996* (ABS Cat. no. 4402.0).

CHILDREN AS CARERS

While children are usually the recipients of care, a small number of children provide care for a family member with a disability. In 1993 there were 70,900 children aged under 18 providing care. Those aged 15–17 accounted for just over half (52%) of all young carers.

2.17 CHILD CARERS, Age and Sex—1993

Age of child (years)	Males	Females	Total.....	
	'000	'000	'000	%
Under 12	5.8	8.4	14.2	20.0
12–14	10.4	9.2	19.6	27.6
15–17	19.0	18.1	37.1	52.4
Total	35.2	35.7	70.9	100.0

Source: ABS, unpublished data, 1993 Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers.

A small proportion (9%) of these children were principal carers who provided substantial assistance in the areas of self-care tasks, communication and mobility. The remainder (91%) added to the help provided by other people. The most common forms of care were helping with housework and light home maintenance tasks. The vast majority of young carers were providing care for a parent (75%) or sibling (20%).

2.18 CHILD CARERS, Selected Characteristics—1993

Selected characteristics	Carers aged less than 18
	%
Principal carer	8.6
Other carer	91.4
Total	100.0
Provides care for	
Parent	74.5
Sibling	20.0
Other relative	5.5
Total	100.0
	'000
Total	70.9

Source: ABS, unpublished data, 1993 Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers.

CHILDREN AT RISK

For some children the family environment may be harmful because their safety or wellbeing is seriously threatened, particularly if they have been, or are at risk of being, abused or neglected. As a result, these children may come into contact with government community service departments for care and protection.

Child abuse and neglect

While there is some variation in reporting procedures across jurisdictions, a total of 91,700 cases of child abuse and neglect were recorded by State and Territory community service departments in 1995–96. Nationally, of those cases where investigations were finalised by 31 August 1996, 49% (29,800 cases) were substantiated (see Glossary) and a further 4% classified the child as being at risk. Substantiated cases were almost evenly divided between those involving boys (47%) and those involving girls (53%).

The rate of substantiated cases of child abuse and neglect increased between 1988–89 and 1994–95, from 4.1 to 6.6 cases per 1,000 children aged 0–17, and decreased slightly to 6.4 cases per 1,000 children in 1995–96. During the seven-year period to 1995–96, the number of substantiated cases of physical abuse, emotional abuse and neglect rose but the number of substantiated cases of sexual abuse remained relatively constant.

2.19 SUBSTANTIATED CASES OF ABUSE—1990–91 to 1995–96

Source: Broadbent & Bentley 1997.

In 1995–96, emotional abuse accounted for 31% of cases, physical abuse for 28%, followed by neglect (24%) and sexual abuse (16%). The type of abuse varied with the age and sex of the child. Children under the age of one year were more likely to sustain abuse than children of any other age, accounting for 8% of all substantiated cases. Emotional abuse and neglect were most common among very young children. Physical abuse, which involved girls and boys equally, was highest for both sexes in the early teenage years. Sexual abuse, which was generally more likely to involve girls than boys, peaked for girls at age 12–14 (see table 2.25).

Indigenous children, who comprised only 3% of the child population, accounted for 8% of substantiated cases of abuse and neglect. Their highest level of over-representation was among substantiated cases of neglect, where 13% of cases involved Indigenous children (Broadbent & Bentley 1997).

Child abuse and neglect continued

Data on persons believed responsible for abuse and neglect are only available for Queensland, Western Australia, the Northern Territory and the Australian Capital Territory. In these jurisdictions in 1995–96, natural or adoptive parents were responsible for the majority of substantiated cases (71%), followed by step-parents (17%). The pattern was similar for all types of abuse and neglect except sexual abuse, where natural/adoptive parents and step-parents each accounted for 24% of cases, other relatives or guardians 22% and friends or neighbours 10% (Broadbent & Bentley 1997).

CHILDREN AND CRIME

Child offenders

In all States and Territories the criminal justice system differentiates between juvenile (or child) and adult offenders, and makes specific provision for the treatment of juveniles. Legislation specifies both the minimum age for criminal responsibility and the maximum age at which someone is deemed to be a juvenile. While a juvenile is generally defined as a person between the ages of 10 and 18, comparison among States and Territories is difficult because legislation is not consistent across all jurisdictions.

For juveniles convicted of offences, a number of sentencing options are available including good behaviour bonds, probation, community service orders and detention in a corrective institution. Detention is a last resort, and applied only when the courts consider that no other penalty is appropriate. At 30 June 1996, there were 716 persons—658 males and 58 females—aged 10–17 in juvenile corrective institutions (Mukherjee et al. 1997). In addition, there were 59 males and 2 females under 18 serving custodial sentences in adult prisons (ABS, *Prisoners in Australia, 1996: Results of the National Prisoner Census*).

Indigenous offenders

Data on the Indigenous origin of persons in juvenile corrective institutions has only been available since 1993. These data indicate that Indigenous juveniles are over-represented in corrective institutions, being detained at a rate approximately 20 times that of the non-Indigenous juvenile population (see Mukherjee et al. 1997).

Children as victims of crime

For most types of offences, children are less likely to be victimised than adults. There are, however, a number of offences for which children are disproportionately represented among victims in crime recorded by police. In 1997, children aged 0–17 comprised more than half of all known victims of kidnapping/abduction (58%) and sexual assault (56%), and around one in five victims of manslaughter (21%) and unarmed robbery (19%).

2.20 VICTIMS OF CRIME(a)—1997

Offence category	AGE GROUP (YEARS).....						Total.....	no.
	0-14	15-17	Total 0-17	18-24	25 and over	Total 18 and over		
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	
Murder	6.6	3.3	9.9	14.9	75.2	90.1	100.0	303
Attempted murder	5.4	3.6	9.0	23.7	67.4	91.0	100.0	279
Manslaughter	15.8	5.3	21.0	21.0	57.9	78.9	100.0	38
Assault	8.4	8.5	17.0	24.0	59.1	83.0	100.0	113 091
Sexual assault	42.2	14.3	56.5	17.8	25.7	43.5	100.0	13 340
Kidnapping/abduction	44.0	13.6	57.6	24.1	18.3	42.4	100.0	514
Armed robbery(b)	3.4	8.6	11.9	23.9	64.3	88.1	100.0	4 595
Unarmed robbery(b)	7.2	12.2	19.4	21.6	59.0	80.6	100.0	10 475
Blackmail/extortion(b)	2.4	4.4	6.8	16.0	77.2	93.2	100.0	250

(a) Comprises only those victims for whom both age and sex were known.

(b) Victims refer to individual persons.

Source: ABS, unpublished data, recorded crime collection.

The victimisation rate for assault was much lower for children aged 0–14 than for all persons. However, victimisation rates for sexual assault for both males and females aged 0–14 were around double those for all males and females, respectively. Among young people aged 15–17, the victimisation rate for assault was slightly lower than the rate for young people aged 18–24, but almost double that for all persons. The victimisation rate for sexual assault for males aged 15–17 was similar to that for males aged 0–14, whereas the corresponding rate for females aged 15–17 was almost double that for females aged 0–14 and more than three times higher than the rate for all females (see table 2.26).

LIVING APART FROM PARENTS**Children in non-private dwellings**

In the 1996 Census, 61,500 children aged 0–17 were counted in non-private dwellings such as hotels, boarding schools and hospitals. Among these children, 45% were reported as guests, patients, inmates or boarders for whom the accommodation was their usual residence, 44% were temporarily resident and 3% were family members of staff. Among usual residents, the majority (85%) were living in boarding schools or residential colleges. Among temporary residents, almost half (47%) were counted in hotels or motels, and 21% were counted in hospitals. In total, 1,100 persons aged 0–17 were counted as either usual or temporary residents of accommodation for the homeless.

Few children who were usual residents of non-private dwellings were aged under 12 years and 60% were aged 15–17. Temporary residents were more evenly distributed by age. Seven out of ten children temporarily resident in hospitals were aged 0–2.

2.21 TYPE OF NON-PRIVATE DWELLING—1996

Relationship in non-private dwelling and dwelling type	AGE GROUP (YEARS).....					Total
	0-2	3-4	5-11	12-14	15-17	
	no.	no.	no.	no.	no.	no.
Usual residents						
Hotel, motel	77	45	165	66	132	485
Boarding house, private hotel	32	24	95	247	409	807
Boarding school/residential college	141	72	535	7 974	14 848	23 570
Hospital (not psychiatric)	228	15	36	27	28	334
Hostel for homeless/refuge	93	55	81	79	262	570
Other welfare/corrective institution(a)	46	17	269	332	418	1 082
Other and not classifiable	61	22	111	122	438	754
Total(b)	681	253	1 299	8 850	16 539	27 622
Temporary residents						
Hotel, motel	1 403	889	3 607	1 435	1 728	9 062
Boarding house, private hotel	130	122	1 220	1 185	1 213	3 870
Boarding school/residential college	9	7	744	1 055	1 500	3 315
Hospital (not psychiatric)	4 079	247	611	336	528	5 801
Hostel for homeless/refuge	85	55	112	59	171	482
Other welfare/corrective institution(a)	98	25	271	348	569	1 311
Other and not classifiable	69	38	1 099	975	847	3 028
Total(b)	5 887	1 389	7 819	5 643	6 609	27 347
Staff/family of staff	179	68	333	182	931	1 693
Total(c)	7 588	2 038	10 606	15 452	25 802	61 486

(a) Comprises psychiatric hospitals, hostels for the disabled, nursing homes, accommodation for the retired or aged, child care institutions, corrective institutions for children, prisons/corrective/detention institutions for adults and other welfare institutions.

(b) Includes type of non-private dwelling 'not stated'.

(c) Includes relationship in non-private dwelling 'not stated'.

Source: ABS, unpublished data, 1996 Census of Population and Housing.

Young people aged 15-17

In 1996, there were 50,600 young people aged 15-17 who were living in private dwellings and apart from their parents. Of these, 14% were partners or parents themselves, 40% were living in family households with relatives, such as siblings and grandparents, and 46% were living alone or with unrelated persons. There were more females than males who lived apart from parents. Young females aged 15-17 were more likely to be partners or lone parents than their male counterparts, and less likely to live with other relatives. (See *Youth, Australia: A Social Report* (ABS Cat. no. 4111.0) for more information on the living arrangements of young people.)

2.22 YOUNG PEOPLE AGED 15–17, Living Apart from Parents(a)—1996

<i>Living arrangement</i>	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>	<i>Total</i>
	no.	no.	no.
Partner or parent			
Married			
In a registered marriage	150	519	669
In a de facto marriage	625	3 187	3 812
<i>Total</i>	775	3 706	4 481
Lone parent	495	1 977	2 472
<i>Total</i>	1 270	5 683	6 953
Living with relatives	10 669	9 454	20 123
Not living with relatives			
Unrelated person in family household	3 990	5 426	9 416
Lone person	2 168	2 264	4 432
Group household member	3 817	5 822	9 639
<i>Total</i>	9 975	13 512	23 487
Total	21 914	28 649	50 563

(a) Comprises young people living in private dwellings only.

Source: ABS, unpublished data, 1996 Census of Population and Housing.

ADDITIONAL TABLES

2.23 HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION—1996

	INDIGENOUS FAMILIES(a).....			ALL FAMILIES.....		
	<i>Couple families</i>	<i>One-parent families</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Couple families</i>	<i>One-parent families</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Living arrangements</i>	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000
FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN AGED 0–17						
In one-family households						
Parent(s) and children only	31.0	12.7	43.7	1 694.9	342.7	2 037.6
Parents, children and other relatives						
Grandparents(b)	1.0	1.1	2.1	36.2	15.7	51.9
Other relatives(c)	2.5	2.3	4.7	25.4	13.9	39.3
<i>Total</i>	3.4	3.4	6.8	61.5	29.7	91.2
Parents, children and non-relatives only	0.9	1.4	2.3	19.7	31.2	50.9
<i>Total</i>	35.3	17.5	52.8	1 776.2	403.6	2 179.8
In multifamily households	3.8	5.0	8.9	32.5	36.2	68.7
Total	39.1	22.6	61.7	1 808.6	439.8	2 248.5
CHILDREN AGED 0–17 LIVING WITH PARENTS						
In one-family households						
With parent(s) and siblings only	70.9	27.0	97.9	3 379.1	596.2	3 975.4
With parent(s), siblings and other relatives						
Grandparents(b)	2.4	2.2	4.6	68.4	23.7	92.1
Other relatives(c)	6.6	5.1	11.7	49.8	23.6	73.3
<i>Total</i>	9.0	7.3	16.3	118.1	47.3	165.4
With parents, children and non-relatives only	2.0	2.7	4.7	35.7	46.2	81.9
<i>Total</i>	81.8	37.0	118.9	3 533.0	689.7	4 222.7
In multifamily households	9.1	9.2	18.3	55.3	50.8	106.0
Total	90.9	46.2	137.2	3 588.3	740.4	4 328.7

(a) Families which contain at least one Indigenous parent—see Glossary.

(b) These families may also have other relatives and/or non-relatives usually resident in the household.

(c) These families may also have non-relatives usually resident in the household.

Source: ABS, unpublished data, 1996 Census of Population and Housing.

2.24 CHILDREN IN INDIGENOUS FAMILIES—1996

<i>Indigenous status of child</i>	<i>Couple families</i>	<i>One-parent families</i>	<i>Total</i>
	no.	no.	
<i>Indigenous children</i>			
<i>Age group (years)</i>			
0–2	15 462	8 231	23 693
3–4	16 647	9 307	25 954
5–11	29 385	15 968	45 353
12–14	12 610	6 981	19 591
15–17	7 978	3 871	11 849
<i>Total</i>	82 082	44 358	126 440
<i>Non-Indigenous children</i>	7 265	860	8 125
<i>Not stated</i>	1 600	1 022	2 622
Total	90 947	46 240	137 187

Source: ABS, unpublished data, 1996 Census of Population and Housing.

2.25 CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT, Victimization Rates(a)—1995–96

<i>Sex of child and type of abuse</i>	AGE GROUP (YEARS).....						<i>Total(b).....</i>	
	0	1–2	3–4	5–11	12–14	15–17	rate	no.
<i>Boys</i>								
Physical	2.3	1.7	1.8	2.1	2.3	0.6	1.8	4 379
Emotional	3.5	2.4	2.5	1.9	1.9	0.4	1.9	4 533
Sexual	0.1	0.2	0.7	0.8	0.5	0.2	0.5	1 245
Neglect	3.3	2.5	2.2	1.6	1.3	0.3	1.6	3 851
<i>Total</i>	9.2	6.7	7.1	6.4	5.9	1.4	5.8	14 008
<i>Girls</i>								
Physical	2.0	1.3	1.4	1.5	3.1	1.4	1.8	4 067
Emotional	3.7	2.5	2.5	1.8	2.6	0.8	2.1	4 691
Sexual	0.1	0.3	1.6	1.6	2.8	1.2	1.6	3 548
Neglect	3.3	2.5	2.0	1.4	1.3	0.4	1.5	3 432
<i>Total</i>	9.1	6.6	7.5	6.3	9.9	3.7	6.9	15 738
Total(b)	9.2	6.7	7.3	6.4	7.8	2.6	6.4	29 833

(a) Rate per 1,000.

(b) Figures may not add to totals because totals include cases of abuse where the child's age and/or sex was unknown.

Source: Broadbent & Bentley 1997.

2.26 VICTIMISATION RATES(a), Selected Offences—1997

Type of offence	AGED 0–14.....		AGED 15–17.....		ALL PERSONS...	
	Males rate	Females rate	Males rate	Females rate	Males rate	Females rate
Murder	0.70	0.31	1.75	0.79	2.21	1.26
Attempted murder	0.50	0.26	2.25	0.26	2.50	0.91
Manslaughter	0.20	0.10	0.50	—	0.30	0.11
Assault	300.51	183.76	1 422.21	1 042.91	771.12	522.73
Sexual assault	71.42	219.36	70.36	428.61	28.13	119.78
Kidnapping/abduction	4.38	7.22	4.51	13.72	2.05	3.74
Armed robbery	5.92	1.83	77.87	21.10	35.59	16.83
Unarmed robbery	30.71	7.12	256.15	67.52	69.82	46.68
Blackmail/extortion	0.30	—	1.50	1.32	2.04	0.84

(a) Rate per 100,000.

Source: ABS, unpublished data, recorded crime collection.

CHAPTER 3

ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

INTRODUCTION

Most children depend on their parents or family units for financial support, and their economic resources are largely determined by the resources of their family. Therefore, parents' employment, income and assets are the main determinants of a child's economic wellbeing.

This chapter presents information on the economic circumstances of both families with children, and children themselves. It examines factors which impact on economic wellbeing, such as labour force participation and income, and looks at the relative economic situations of families at different life stages. Information is also provided on the early stages of transition to economic independence for those young people aged 15–17 who have ceased full-time education or moved out of the parental home.

INCOME DISTRIBUTION

Income is defined as regular and recurring cash receipts, including those from wages or salaries, profit from own business or partnership, government pensions and allowances, and property or investment income. Because such receipts constitute the primary means through which most people finance their current consumption and make provision for the future, income is the most commonly used indicator of economic wellbeing.

While income is usually received by individuals, analyses of the level and distribution of income are traditionally based around the concept of the income unit, which may be either an individual or a group of related persons within a household whose income is assumed to be shared. For most children, the relevant income unit is analogous to the nuclear family unit, as income sharing is assumed to take place between partners in couple families and between parents and dependent children. Therefore, family income is used as an indicator of children's economic resources throughout this chapter.

It is possible to examine the relative economic wellbeing of different income units by dividing the population into five equal groups (quintiles) according to income. In the resulting distribution, the lowest quintile is formed by the 20% of the population with the lowest income and the highest quintile is formed by the 20% of the population with the highest income. Because families with dependent children constitute only a subset of all income units, they are not necessarily equally distributed across quintiles. Further, the final distribution is determined by the income measure chosen.

Gross income

Gross income provides the simplest income measure for comparison. In 1996–97, when families with dependent children were ranked by gross income only, both families with children, and children themselves, appeared to be relatively well off. More than 1.5 million families (65% of all families with dependants) were placed in the higher income quintiles (fourth and highest). The pattern for children was almost identical. Of all dependent children aged 0–17, 3 million (66%) lived in families who were in the higher income quintiles. Only 146,400 children (3%) lived in families in the lowest income quintile. (Gross income quintiles for all income units are shown in table 3.16.)

3.1 GROSS WEEKLY INCOME QUINTILES(a)—1996–97

GROSS INCOME QUINTILE OF FAMILY...							
Family type	Lowest	Second	Third	Fourth	Highest	Total.....	
	%	%	%	%	%	%	'000
FAMILIES WITH DEPENDENT CHILDREN AGED 0–17							
Couple families	2.7	6.1	15.7	31.4	44.1	100.0	1 913.2
One-parent families	6.0	49.2	26.5	14.9	*3.4	100.0	454.2
Total	3.3	14.4	17.8	28.2	36.3	100.0	2 367.5
DEPENDENT CHILDREN AGED 0–17							
In couple families	2.8	5.1	16.2	32.1	43.8	100.0	3 778.2
In one-parent families	5.1	43.3	32.8	15.2	3.5	100.0	775.4
Total	3.2	11.6	19.1	29.2	36.9	100.0	4 553.6

(a) Income quintiles have been calculated across all income units.

Source: ABS, unpublished data, 1996–97 Survey of Income and Housing Costs.

Comparing families on the basis of gross income alone does not take into consideration differences in family size and composition, and the associated variations in the cost of living. For example, because one-parent families have fewer members on average than couple families with dependent children, their costs of living are likely to be lower.

Equivalent income

Differences in family size and needs can be adjusted for by applying a set of ratios, called equivalence scales, to disposable (after tax) income. The resultant equivalent income can be used to compare the relative situations of different family types. Simple scales, such as that used by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), adjust only for the number of adults and children present in the family unit. Others, such as the Henderson scales which have been widely used in Australia, take into account additional factors such as age, sex, labour force status of adults, and housing costs. A simplified Henderson scale (applied to disposable income before housing and heating/power costs are deducted) is used for analysis in this chapter and in the Physical Environment chapter.

Different scales assume different costs associated with children and, as a result, provide different estimates of the distribution of families across income quintiles. When compared with the gross income distribution, both the OECD scale and the Henderson scale produce distributions which estimate fewer children living in families in the two higher quintiles and more children living in families at the lower end of the distribution. In 1996–97, the distribution based on the OECD scale showed an estimated 218,100 families (and an associated 327,200 children) in the highest quintile, and 539,700 families (1.2 million children) in the lowest quintile. In comparison, the distribution based on the Henderson scale showed more families and children in the highest quintile (285,000 families and 463,900 children) and less in the lowest quintile (451,400 families and 980,400 children).

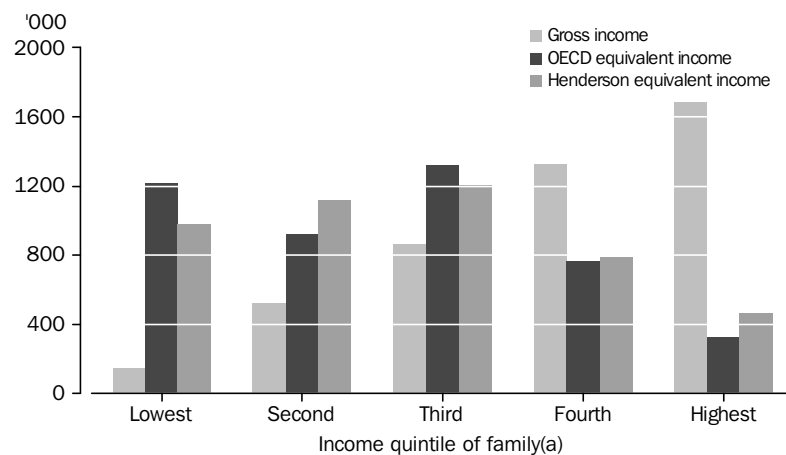
3.2 EQUIVALENT INCOME QUINTILES(a)—1996–97

EQUIVALENT INCOME QUINTILE OF FAMILY							
	Lowest	Second	Third	Fourth	Highest	Total.....	
<i>Equivalence scale and family type</i>	%	%	%	%	%	%	'000
FAMILIES WITH DEPENDENT CHILDREN AGED 0–17							
OECD equivalent income							
Couple families	18.8	17.8	30.7	22.0	10.8	100.0	1 913.2
One-parent families	39.8	26.8	21.8	9.0	*2.5	100.0	454.2
Total	22.8	19.6	28.9	19.5	9.2	100.0	2 367.5
Henderson equivalent income							
Couple families	15.7	20.7	27.8	21.3	14.5	100.0	1 913.2
One-parent families	33.4	32.6	21.3	11.0	*1.8	100.0	454.2
Total	19.1	23.0	26.6	19.3	12.0	100.0	2 367.5
DEPENDENT CHILDREN AGED 0–17							
OECD equivalent income							
In couple families	22.6	19.5	30.7	18.9	8.3	100.0	3 778.2
In one-parent families	47.2	23.9	20.8	6.5	1.6	100.0	775.4
Total	26.8	20.2	29.0	16.8	7.2	100.0	4 553.6
Henderson equivalent income							
In couple families	18.0	23.1	27.8	19.0	12.0	100.0	3 778.2
In one-parent families	38.8	31.5	19.7	8.7	1.3	100.0	775.4
Total	21.5	24.6	26.4	17.3	10.2	100.0	4 553.6

(a) Income quintiles have been calculated across all income units.

Source: ABS, unpublished data, 1996–97 Survey of Income and Housing Costs.

3.3 FAMILY INCOME QUINTILES, Distribution of Children—1996–97



(a) Income quintiles have been calculated across all income units.

Source: ABS, unpublished data, 1996–97 Survey of Income and Housing Costs.

LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION

Income from employment, as wages or salary or from their own business or partnership, is the main source of income for most Australian families (75% of families with dependent children aged 0–17—see table 3.17). There is generally a link between participation in paid employment and economic wellbeing. Earning capacity is affected by a number of factors, such as the field of employment and the type of work undertaken. For families, however, an important consideration is the number of parents in the family who earn an income.

Many couple families have greater earning capacity than one-parent families due to the possibility of dual incomes. Of all couple families with dependent children, those with two earners were more likely to be placed at the higher end of the income distribution (55% in the two highest quintiles). Conversely, half of all couple families with one earner, and 95% of couple families with no earner, were placed in the lower two income quintiles.

The pattern was similar for one-parent families where, for those with income from employment, one in three were placed in the higher (fourth and highest) quintiles. For those without income from employment, most families (93%) were placed at the lower end of the income distribution (lower two quintiles). Overall, one-parent families (66%) were more likely than couple families (36%) to be in the two lower quintiles.

3.4 FAMILY INCOME DISTRIBUTION, By Number of Earners in Family—1996–97

EQUIVALENT INCOME QUINTILE OF FAMILY(a)							
	Lowest	Second	Third	Fourth	Highest	Total.....	
Family type and number of earners in family	%	%	%	%	%	%	'000
Couple families(b)							
No earner	74.4	20.9	*4.2	—	**0.6	100.0	184.6
One earner	14.5	35.7	31.3	12.2	6.3	100.0	719.8
Two earners	5.8	10.0	29.7	31.7	22.9	100.0	1 008.8
Total	15.7	20.7	27.8	21.3	14.5	100.0	1 913.2
One-parent families(b)							
No earner	49.6	43.3	*6.4	**0.6	—	100.0	281.2
One earner	*6.9	15.1	45.3	28.0	*4.7	100.0	173.0
Total	33.4	32.6	21.3	11.0	*1.8	100.0	454.2
Total	19.1	23.0	26.6	19.3	12.0	100.0	2 367.5

(a) Henderson equivalent income quintiles. Income quintiles have been calculated across all income units.

(b) Comprises families with at least one dependent child aged 0–17.

Source: ABS, unpublished data, 1996–97 Survey of Income and Housing Costs.

The ability of individuals to participate in employment is at least partially dependent on the composition of the family unit. For example, the birth of children and the early years of child rearing are associated with the reduced labour force participation of parents, particularly mothers. As children grow older and commence school, more parents return to paid employment.

LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION *continued*

The 1997 Family Characteristics Survey found that 40% of couple families where the youngest child was aged 0–2 years had both parents employed. This rose to 67% of couple families where the youngest child was aged 15–17. Similarly, 22% of lone parents with the youngest child aged 0–2 were employed, rising to 71% where the youngest child was aged 15–17. Overall, however, 53% of lone parents were not employed.

3.5 PARENTS' EMPLOYMENT, By Age of Youngest Child—April 1997

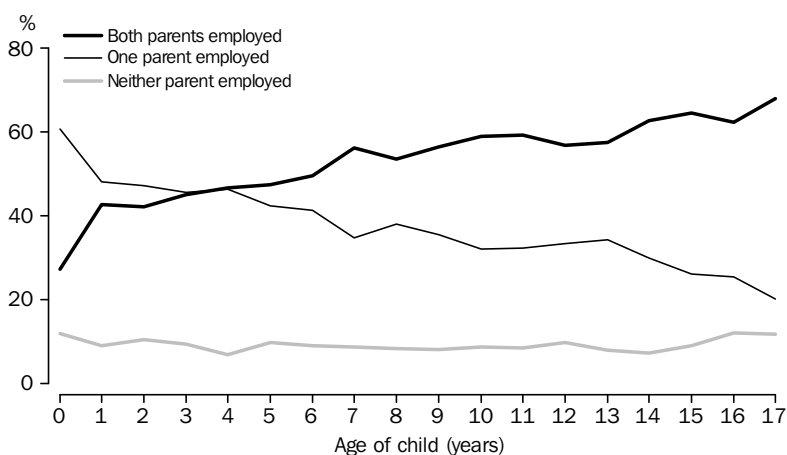
Family type(a) and employment status	AGE OF YOUNGEST CHILD (YEARS).....					Total
	0–2	3–4	5–11	12–14	15–17	
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Couple families						
Both parents employed	39.5	54.5	63.3	67.4	66.9	55.8
One parent employed	50.3	37.6	29.0	25.6	23.1	35.6
Neither parent employed	10.2	7.8	7.8	6.9	10.0	8.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
One-parent families						
Parent employed	22.3	37.4	53.1	58.3	70.5	47.3
Parent not employed	77.7	62.6	46.9	41.7	29.5	52.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000
Couple families	575.8	244.1	637.2	246.8	180.1	1 884.0
One parent families	104.3	63.2	194.2	71.4	57.5	490.5
Total	680.1	307.3	831.4	318.2	237.6	2 374.5

(a) Comprises families with at least one dependent child aged 0–17.

Source: ABS, unpublished data, 1997 Family Characteristics Survey.

More than half (54%) of all dependent children in couple families had both parents employed (see table 3.18). Older children were more likely to have both parents employed (66% of those aged 15–17, compared with 38% of those aged 0–2). This was similar for children in one-parent families, where 63% of those aged 15–17 lived with an employed parent, compared with 21% of those aged 0–2.

3.6 CHILDREN IN COUPLE FAMILIES(a), Employment Status of Parents—April 1997



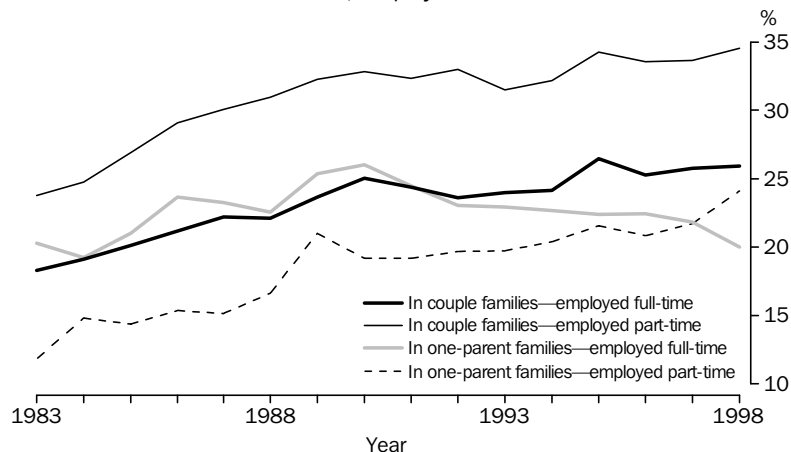
(a) Comprises dependent children only.

Source: ABS, unpublished data, 1997 Family Characteristics Survey.

A major change in the Australian labour force in recent decades has been the increased participation of women, although the growth rate has slowed over the past five years. The proportion of mothers with dependent children who were employed rose from 41% in 1983, to 54% in 1993 and 57% in 1998. This reflects overall growth in both full-time and part-time work. For all mothers in couple families, the proportion employed part-time increased from 24% in 1983, to 32% in 1993 and 35% in 1998. Similarly, the proportion of all mothers in couple families who were employed full-time increased from 18% in 1983, to 24% in 1993 and 26% in 1998. In couple families, the proportion of employed mothers who worked part-time has remained relatively constant over this 15-year period, fluctuating between 56% and 58%.

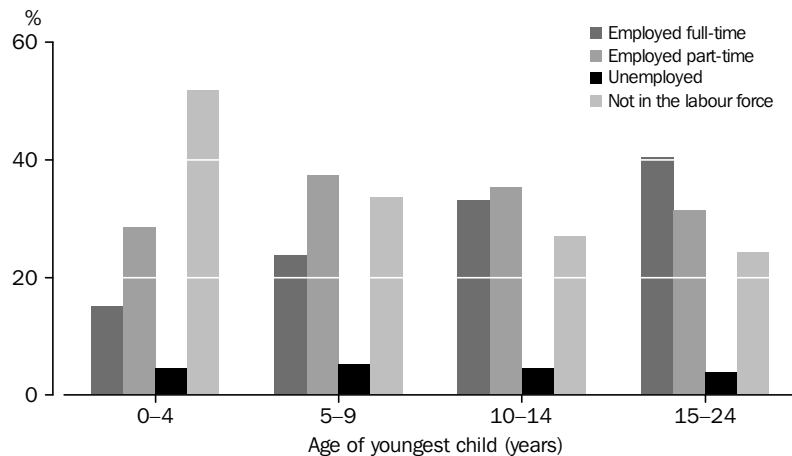
For mothers in one-parent families, the full-time employment rate was actually the same in 1998 as it was in 1983 (20%), although it reached a peak of 26% in 1990 before declining to current levels. However, the proportion of lone mothers who were employed part-time has grown steadily, from 12% in 1983, to 20% in 1993 and 24% in 1998. Consequently, there has been a shift in the balance between full-time and part-time workers. Whereas 37% of lone mothers who were employed in 1983 worked part-time, in 1998 this had grown to 55% (see table 3.19).

3.7 MOTHERS WITH DEPENDANTS, Employment Status



Source: *Labour Force Status and Other Characteristics of Families, Australia (various years)* (ABS Cat. no. 6224.0).

3.8 EMPLOYMENT STATUS OF MOTHERS, By Age of Youngest Dependent Child—1998



Source: *Labour Force Status and Other Characteristics of Families, Australia, 1998* (ABS Cat. no. 6224.0).

Hours worked

The number of hours worked by parents affects the number of hours available for family responsibilities, and therefore not only influences the level of family income, but also has implications for how family time is structured. In April 1997, employed parents in couple families averaged just over 56 working hours per week in total (i.e. the sum of both parents' working hours). Parents in couple families where the youngest dependant was aged 0–2 averaged 51 working hours, whereas those in families where the youngest dependant was aged 15–17 averaged 64 hours. This is consistent with the increased labour force participation of mothers as their children grow older, and a gradual shift from part-time to full-time work as this occurs (see table 3.20).

The working hours of lone parents follow a similar pattern. Overall, employed lone parents with dependants averaged 27 working hours per week, rising from 21 hours where the youngest child was aged 0–2, to 32 hours where the youngest dependant was aged 12–14, and 31 hours where the youngest dependant was aged 15–17 (see table 3.21).

OTHER SOURCES OF INCOME

Income support

In addition to earned income, many individuals and families receive cash assistance in the form of government benefits, such as Family Allowance, in recognition of the costs of dependent children. Government payments are allocated and adjusted on the basis of both the number and ages of children in the family, and the amount of family income received from other sources. Some of the benefits available in 1998 are summarised below:

- Family Allowance: Paid for children up to the age of 16, and for secondary students aged 16–18 who are unable to receive Youth Allowance or ABSTUDY, subject to an income and assets test.
- Family tax initiative: Paid to families with dependent children, in addition to any other family payments, either as a fortnightly payment (for low income families), or as reduced tax.

Income support *continued*

- Maternity Allowance: Families who qualify for Family Allowance also receive a one-off, tax-free, lump sum payment to help meet the cost of newborn babies. An additional lump sum payment—Maternity Immunisation Allowance—is paid to families when their child turns 18 months, provided the child is fully immunised.
- Parenting Payment: From March 1998, Parenting Allowance and Sole Parent Pension were amalgamated into Parenting Payment. This is paid to sole and partnered parents with dependent children aged less than 16. Parenting payment for sole parents is determined by assets and income. For couples, parenting payment is paid to one parent only, and is paid at either the basic rate (dependent on the claiming parent's income) or the additional rate (dependent on both parents' income and assets).
- Childcare Cash Rebate Scheme: Available to families who use child care as a result of working, looking for work, or studying or training. The amount paid is a percentage of the total work-related childcare fees, and is dependent on other income.

In 1996–97, most Australian families with dependants aged 0–17 reported receiving some income from government benefits, while some families relied on these benefits as their principal source of income. For 12% of all couple families with dependants and 65% of all one-parent families with dependants, government benefits constituted half, or more than half, of all family (gross) income.

3.9 RECEIPT OF GOVERNMENT BENEFITS, Families with Dependants—1996–97

Per cent contribution of government benefits to gross income	Couple families.....		One-parent families		Total.....	
	'000	%	'000	%	'000	%
Nil to less than 1	570.5	29.8	37.4	8.2	607.9	25.7
1 to less than 20	954.5	49.9	78.5	17.3	1 033.0	43.6
20 to less than 50	154.5	8.1	41.0	9.0	195.5	8.3
50 to less than 90	64.4	3.4	103.8	22.9	168.2	7.1
90 and over	156.3	8.2	192.0	42.3	348.3	14.7
Total(a)	1 913.2	100.0	454.2	100.0	2 367.4	100.0

(a) Includes a small number of 'not stated' responses.

Source: ABS, unpublished data, 1996–97 Survey of Income and Housing Costs.

Indirect government benefits

In addition to cash receipts, the economic wellbeing of families is affected by a range of indirect (non-cash) government benefits, including subsidised services and concessional allowances, and by taxes. Families with dependent children tend to receive higher levels of indirect benefits such as health services (due to larger household size) and education. Further, those families with lower incomes are likely to pay less in tax, as governments tend to impose more taxes on higher income households. The net effect of benefits (both cash and indirect benefits) and taxes has been shown to increase the average value of income for families in the lower quintiles and decrease the average value of income for those in the higher quintiles (see *Household Expenditure Survey, Australia: the Effects of Government Benefits and Taxes on Household Income, 1993–94* (ABS Cat. no. 6537.0)).

Child Support

Although most children (76%) live with both their natural parents, those living in one-parent, step or blended families may have a natural parent living outside their household. The 1997 Family Characteristics Survey identified 978,400 children aged 0–17, living in 597,500 families, who were in this position (see Social Environment chapter).

Child support requirements endeavour to ensure that both natural parents share the financial responsibility of raising their child, according to their capacity to pay. The laws aim to strike a balance between parental and government support for children affected by the relationship breakdown of their parents, while ensuring that the children are not economically disadvantaged. In 1997, of the 597,500 families who had at least one child aged 0–17 with a natural parent living outside the household, less than half (42%) reported receiving cash child support. Almost one-third of these families (31%) received \$100 or less per month per child (see *Family Characteristics, Australia, 1997* (ABS Cat. no. 4442.0)). More one-parent families (199,200) than couple families (53,700) received cash child support payments. These families represented 44% of one-parent families who had a child with a natural parent living elsewhere, and 37% of comparable couple families.

In addition to those families who received cash child support, a further 97,200 families received only in-kind child support such as assistance with clothing, pocket money, school fees or health insurance.

3.10 CHILD SUPPORT(a)—April 1997

Whether received child support in the last 12 months	Couple families.....		One-parent families		Total.....	
	'000	%	'000	%	'000	%
Received child support						
Cash payments only	36.8	25.1	117.4	26.1	154.2	25.8
Both cash and in-kind payments	16.9	11.5	81.8	18.2	98.7	16.5
In-kind payments only	16.0	10.9	81.2	18.0	97.2	16.3
Total	69.7	47.5	280.4	62.2	350.1	58.6
Did not receive child support	76.9	52.4	167.6	37.2	244.6	40.9
Total(b)	146.8	100.0	450.7	100.0	597.5	100.0

(a) For families with at least one child aged 0–17 who has a natural parent living outside their household.

(b) Includes a small number of 'not stated' responses.

Source: ABS, unpublished data, 1997 Family Characteristics Survey.

LOW INCOME FAMILIES

Although many low income families are able to meet their basic needs, they are likely to be constrained in terms of economic choice, and are in a position of relative disadvantage when compared with other families. Regular and adequate family income not only gives children access to necessities such as food and housing, but may also afford them the benefits associated with increased material wealth, together with greater opportunities to participate in many social and leisure activities.

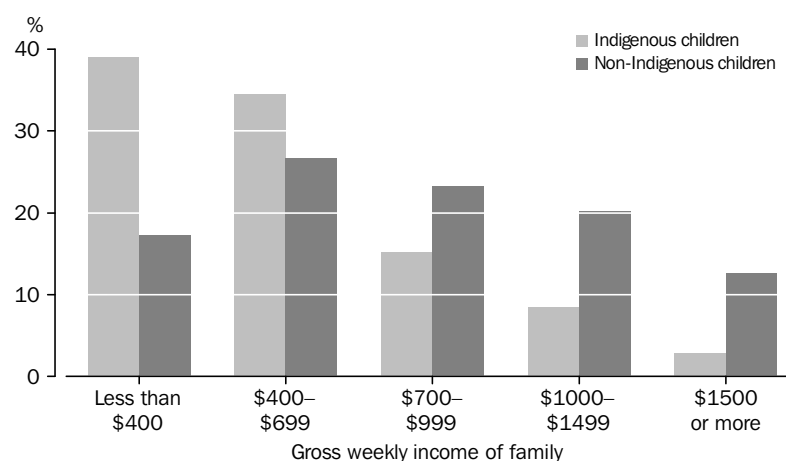
LOW INCOME FAMILIES *continued*

Overall, children were slightly more likely to live in families ranked at the lower end of the income distribution. In 1996–97, almost half (46%) of all children lived in lower income families (lowest and second Henderson equivalent income quintiles, or the bottom 40% of the distribution) (see table 3.2). Children in one-parent families were disproportionately represented among lower income families. Although children in one-parent families constituted only 17% of all children in families, they accounted for 31% of children whose families were in the lowest quintile and 22% of those whose families were in the second quintile. Overall, 70% of children in one-parent families were in the lower two quintiles. Children in couple families were less likely to be placed at the lower end of the distribution, with a total of 41% living in families in the lower two quintiles.

Families in the two lower income quintiles tended to share a number of characteristics. They were more likely than other families to have no earners in the family (44%), and to receive government benefits as their principal source of income (48%). The reliance on government benefits was particularly evident for families in the lowest income quintile. Almost two-thirds (64%) of these families reported government benefits as their principal source of income and, for more than 52% of families in the lowest quintile, government benefits constituted 90% or more of total family income. One-parent families in the lowest quintile were particularly likely to have no earners (92%). This is likely to reflect lone parents' reduced access to paid work due to caring responsibilities (see table 3.22).

INDIGENOUS CHILDREN

Data from the 1996 Census indicated that proportionally more Indigenous children than non-Indigenous children lived in families with lower incomes. Almost 40% of all Indigenous children lived in families with gross weekly income of less than \$400, compared with 17% of all non-Indigenous children.

3.11 CHILDREN(a)(b), Gross Weekly Income of Family(c)—1996

(a) Comprises children aged 0–17 living in families.

(b) Excludes children who were partners or lone parents. Also excludes children living in families for whom all or partial income was 'not stated'.

(c) Includes income of all family members.

Source: ABS, unpublished data, 1996 Census of Population and Housing.

Principal source of income

In 1994, just over one-third of all Indigenous children lived in families where income from employment was the main source of family income. For more than half of all Indigenous children (59%), families relied on government payments or allowances as the main source of family income. Consistent with the pattern for all Australian children, Indigenous children in one-parent families were more likely to rely on government payments as the main source of family income (84%) than Indigenous children in couple families (47%).

3.12 INDIGENOUS CHILDREN(a), Principal Source of Family Income—1994

PRINCIPAL SOURCE OF FAMILY INCOME(b)...

Family type	Nil income	Earned income —non CDEP(c)	Earned income —CDEP(c)	Government payments	Total.....	
	%	%	%	%	%	'000
In couple families	—	44.4	8.7	46.8	100.0	74.9
In one-parent families	1.6	12.0	2.6	83.8	100.0	34.6
Total	0.5	34.2	6.8	58.5	100.0	109.5

(a) Comprises children aged 0–17 who live in families with at least one dependent child.

(b) Excludes children living in families for whom principal source of income was either 'not applicable' or 'not stated'.

(c) Community Development Employment Project (CDEP)—see Glossary.

Source: ABS, unpublished data, 1994 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey.

NON-DEPENDENT YOUNG PEOPLE AGED 15–17

When young people cease full-time education or move out of the parental home, they are assumed to be no longer economically dependent on the family income unit. They form a separate one-person income unit. In April 1997, 144,400 young people aged 15–17 (19% of young people of this age) were classified in this way. Most of these (68%) still lived with their parents, 29% lived alone or in shared accommodation, and 3% had formed a family of their own.

3.13 NON-DEPENDENT YOUNG PEOPLE AGED 15–17, Living Arrangements—1997

<i>Living arrangements</i>	'000	%
Living with parents	98.1	67.9
Not living with parents(a)		
Lone parent	*1.5	1.0
Partner in a couple	*2.6	1.8
Other	42.2	29.2
<i>Total</i>	46.3	32.1
Total	144.4	100.0

(a) Excludes persons living in non-private dwellings.

Source: ABS, unpublished data, 1997 Family Characteristics Survey.

For many non-dependent young people, the transition to economic independence may occur gradually. In addition to earned income or government benefits, young people may continue to receive financial support from their parents, either in the form of cash transfers, the provision of goods, or the provision of free or subsidised board and lodging. Because each of these affect the amount of cash income required to maintain a designated standard of living, analysis of income distribution based on either gross or equivalent income alone may not necessarily provide an accurate representation of relative economic wellbeing.

The 1996–97 Survey of Income and Housing Costs found that the majority of non-dependent young people (118,700, or 78%) were in the lower two income quintiles. Of these, 22% were living apart from their parents and 27% lived with parents who were themselves in the lower two income quintiles. Just over half (51%) lived with parents who were in the third, fourth or highest income quintiles. Although no conclusions can be drawn about the sharing of income between parents and non-dependent children from this survey, previous findings suggest that some level of parental support does indeed continue during the early years of adulthood, both for non-dependent children who remain within the parental home and for those who have commenced independent living elsewhere (see *Focus on Families: Income and Housing* (ABS Cat. no. 4424.0)).

3.14 INCOME DISTRIBUTION, Non-dependent Young People Aged 15–17—1996–97

Living arrangements	INCOME QUINTILE OF CHILD(a)					
	Lowest and second quintiles		Third, fourth or highest quintiles		Total.....	
	'000	%	'000	%	'000	%
Living with parents						
Income quintile of parents						
Lowest or second	32.2	27.2	*6.5	*19.2	38.7	25.4
Third, fourth or highest	60.8	51.2	24.4	72.6	85.2	56.0
Total	93.0	78.4	30.9	91.9	123.9	81.4
Not living with parents(b)	25.7	21.6	**2.8	**8.1	28.4	18.6
Total	118.7	100.0	33.6	100.0	152.3	100.0

(a) Henderson equivalent income quintile. Income quintiles have been calculated across all income units.

(b) Includes those young persons in family income units (i.e. those who have partnered or who are lone parents).

Source: ABS, unpublished data, 1996–97 Survey of Income and Housing Costs.

Employment

The unemployment rate among young people is higher than that of the general population. In June 1998, there were 97,800 young people aged 15–17 (13% of young people of this age) who were not attending full-time education and were in the labour force. Of these, 52% were employed full-time, 20% employed part-time and 28% were unemployed.

In addition, many young people who participated in full-time education were also in the labour force, predominantly as part-time workers or job seekers. Of the 631,300 full-time students in 1998, 38% were in the labour force. Of these, 81% were employed part-time and a further 16% were unemployed and looking for part-time work. When all young people aged 15–17 were taken into consideration, just less than half (45%) participated in the labour force, of whom around one-in-five (21%) were unemployed. (For more information on youth unemployment see *Youth, Australia: A Social Report* (ABS Cat. no. 4111.0)).

3.15 LABOUR FORCE STATUS OF PERSONS AGED 15–17 YEARS—June 1998

Labour force status	NOT IN FULL-TIME EDUCATION				
	<i>In full-time education</i>	<i>Living with parents</i>	<i>Not living with parents</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Total</i>
	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000
In the labour force					
Employed					
Full-time	*1.2	44.8	5.9	50.7	51.9
Part-time	195.3	18.3	*1.6	19.9	215.2
<i>Total</i>	196.5	63.1	7.5	70.6	267.1
Unemployed					
Looking for full-time work	5.0	18.0	7.4	25.4	30.4
Looking for part-time work	38.3	*1.1	*0.7	*1.8	40.1
<i>Total</i>	43.2	19.1	8.1	27.2	70.5
<i>Total</i>	239.7	82.2	15.6	97.8	337.5
Not in the labour force	391.6	13.3	*3.5	16.8	408.4
Total	631.3	95.5	19.1	114.6	745.9
	%	%	%	%	%
Unemployment rate	18.0	23.3	51.9	27.8	20.9
Participation rate	38.0	86.1	81.6	85.4	45.3

Source: ABS, unpublished data, 1998 Labour Force Status and Other Characteristics of Families.

ADDITIONAL TABLES

3.16 WEEKLY INCOME QUINTILES, All Income Units—1996–97

Type of income unit	WEEKLY INCOME QUINTILE.....					
	Lowest '000	Second '000	Third '000	Fourth '000	Highest '000	Total '000
GROSS INCOME						
Couple						
With dependent children aged 0–17	51.3	117.2	300.1	601.0	843.7	1 913.2
Without dependent children aged 0–17						
Female partner aged < 45 years	*20.0	47.6	67.4	141.1	417.5	693.5
Female partner aged 45 and over	86.0	565.2	339.0	300.1	327.3	1 617.6
Total	106.1	612.7	406.4	441.2	744.7	2 311.1
Total	157.3	729.9	706.5	1 042.2	1 588.4	4 224.4
One-parent	29.9	230.4	123.8	73.9	*16.8	474.7
One-person						
Aged 15–17	101.8	38.7	*11.8	—	—	152.3
Aged 18–24	366.8	284.0	401.0	138.9	*14.7	1 205.3
Aged 25–64	648.2	258.1	522.8	544.1	186.2	2 159.4
Aged 65 and over	518.7	275.3	48.3	*14.2	*10.7	867.2
Total	1 635.4	856.1	983.9	697.2	211.5	4 384.2
Total	1 822.6	1 816.4	1 814.3	1 813.2	1 816.7	9 083.3
HENDERSON EQUIVALENT INCOME						
Couple						
With dependent children aged 0–17	299.9	396.4	532.0	408.1	276.8	1 913.2
Without dependent children aged 0–17						
Female partner aged < 45 years	54.9	61.2	81.1	183.7	312.6	693.5
Female partner aged 45 and over	181.3	480.0	365.6	266.9	323.8	1 617.6
Total	236.2	541.2	446.8	450.6	636.4	2 311.1
Total	536.1	937.6	978.8	858.7	913.2	4 224.4
One-parent	158.1	151.9	98.0	54.4	*12.3	474.7
One-person						
Aged 15–17	78.7	40.0	22.9	*9.7	**1.0	152.3
Aged 18–24	265.3	127.7	268.9	343.2	200.2	1 205.3
Aged 25–64	442.6	269.6	308.9	496.2	642.1	2 159.4
Aged 65 and over	338.0	288.0	146.1	49.7	45.3	867.2
Total	1 124.6	725.3	746.8	898.8	888.7	4 384.2
Total	1 818.8	1 814.7	1 823.5	1 812.0	1 814.2	9 083.3

Source: ABS, unpublished data, 1996–97 Survey of Income and Housing Costs.

3.17 INCOME DISTRIBUTION OF FAMILIES, Selected Characteristics(a)—1996–97

	INCOME QUINTILE OF FAMILY(b).....					
	Lowest	Second	Third	Fourth	Highest	Total
	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000
Family type						
Couple family	299.9	396.4	532.0	408.1	276.8	1 913.2
One-parent family	151.5	148.0	96.6	50.0	*8.1	454.2
<i>Total</i>	451.4	544.4	628.6	458.1	285.0	2 367.5
Principal source of income						
Wage or salary	87.2	299.7	524.1	419.4	248.4	1 578.7
Own business or partnership income	42.0	51.7	47.7	33.9	28.7	204.0
Government pensions and allowances	286.5	186.6	42.4	**2.8	—	518.3
<i>Total(c)(d)</i>	451.4	544.4	628.6	458.1	285.0	2 367.5
Per cent contribution of government pensions and allowances to gross income(d)						
Nil to less than 1	30.8	41.1	98.1	200.9	237.2	607.9
1 to less than 50	119.2	317.4	489.2	255.2	47.9	1 228.5
50 to less than 90	51.2	78.6	36.3	**2.2	—	168.2
90 and over	235.8	107.4	*5.1	—	—	348.3
<i>Total(d)</i>	451.4	544.4	628.6	458.1	285.0	2 367.5
Number of dependent children in family						
One	137.3	191.6	211.2	207.2	144.1	891.5
Two or more	314.1	352.8	417.3	250.8	140.8	1 475.9
<i>Total</i>	451.4	544.4	628.6	458.1	285.0	2 367.5

(a) Comprises families with at least one dependent child aged 0–17.

(b) Henderson equivalent income quintiles. Income quintiles have been calculated across all income units.

(c) Includes 'other private income' and a small number of 'not stated' responses.

(d) Includes a small number of 'not stated' responses.

Source: ABS, unpublished data, 1996–97 Survey of Income and Housing Costs.

3.18 DEPENDENT CHILDREN(a), Employment Status of Parents—April 1997

	AGE GROUP (YEARS).....					Total
	0–2	3–4	5–11	12–14	15–17	
Family type and employment status	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000
In couple families						
Both parents employed	246.5	198.2	818.1	391.3	329.6	1 983.7
One parent employed	339.5	198.0	532.1	190.2	126.9	1 386.6
Neither parent employed	69.9	36.1	129.5	48.4	42.1	326.0
<i>Total</i>	655.8	432.2	1 479.7	629.9	498.6	3 696.3
In one-parent families						
Parent employed	24.1	28.6	159.5	75.5	71.4	359.2
Parent not employed	88.7	62.1	193.9	74.5	41.9	461.0
<i>Total</i>	112.8	90.7	353.4	150.0	113.3	820.1
Total	768.7	522.9	1 833.1	779.9	611.9	4 516.4

(a) Comprises dependent children aged 0–17.

Source: ABS, unpublished data, 1997 Family Characteristics Survey.

3.19 FAMILIES WITH MOTHERS WHO WERE EMPLOYED(a)

Year	Employed full-time '000	Employed part-time '000	Total '000	All mothers with dependants '000
.....				
COUPLE FAMILIES				
1983	343.6	446.1	789.7	1 876.9
1984	360.4	466.3	826.7	1 882.1
1985	379.5	507.9	887.4	1 884.4
1986	396.8	545.2	942.0	1 873.9
1987	419.9	567.3	987.2	1 887.0
1988	427.7	598.6	1 026.4	1 934.2
1989	457.0	623.9	1 080.9	1 930.5
1990	494.6	649.1	1 143.7	1 976.2
1991	479.5	636.0	1 115.5	1 965.6
1992	470.8	658.1	1 128.8	1 992.3
1993	477.6	627.6	1 105.2	1 990.5
1994	473.8	630.5	1 104.3	1 960.0
1995	525.6	679.4	1 205.0	1 982.5
1996	496.7	658.6	1 155.4	1 963.0
1997	515.4	673.8	1 189.2	1 999.8
1998	519.9	692.1	1 212.0	2 002.2

ONE-PARENT FAMILIES(b)

1983	52.5	30.6	83.0	258.7
1984	52.8	40.6	93.4	274.2
1985	58.6	40.1	98.7	279.0
1986	66.2	43.1	109.3	279.6
1987	71.4	46.5	118.0	306.7
1988	67.7	50.0	117.7	300.0
1989	74.4	61.5	135.9	292.9
1990	82.0	60.3	142.3	314.7
1991	82.2	64.3	146.5	335.2
1992	83.9	71.7	155.6	363.6
1993	84.5	72.8	157.3	368.4
1994	83.7	75.2	158.9	368.7
1995	91.4	87.9	179.3	407.4
1996	91.3	84.7	176.0	406.6
1997	97.0	96.6	193.6	443.9
1998	97.8	117.7	215.5	488.0

(a) Comprises mothers with dependent children who were employed in June of the reference year (July for 1983 to 1985). Prior to 1986, dependants were defined as all family members aged under 15 years, or aged 15–20 and studying full-time. From 1986, dependants were defined as all family members aged under 15 years, or aged 15–24 and studying full-time.

(b) Prior to 1989, data includes both lone mothers and a small number of mothers who were reported as heads of 'other' families.

Source: *Labour Force Status and Other Characteristics of Families, Australia (various years)* (ABS Cat. no. 6224.0).

3.20 PARENTAL HOURS WORKED, Couple Families(a)—1997

TOTAL PARENTAL HOURS WORKED(b).....								
	0(c)	1-19	20-39	40-59	60-79	80 and over	Total	Average hours worked(d)
Age group (years)	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000	no.
.....								
COUPLE FAMILIES WITH DEPENDENT CHILDREN								
Age of youngest child in family								
0-2	32.2	26.7	124.2	185.7	95.2	53.1	517.1	50.7
3-4	11.4	9.5	45.0	73.0	49.4	36.5	224.9	55.3
5-11	31.1	30.4	101.8	170.8	148.2	105.2	587.6	57.2
12-14	14.5	5.9	41.8	59.7	55.6	52.2	229.7	61.8
15-17	7.4	6.6	19.7	43.5	43.6	41.3	162.1	64.3
Total	96.7	79.1	332.5	532.7	392.0	288.4	1 721.5	56.3
.....								
DEPENDENT CHILDREN IN COUPLE FAMILIES								
Age of child								
0-2	37.0	32.9	141.9	209.1	106.7	58.3	586.0	50.3
3-4	22.9	18.6	86.1	140.4	77.0	51.2	396.1	52.7
5-11	81.0	69.1	259.1	431.5	304.4	205.2	1 350.2	54.9
12-14	33.2	27.3	106.4	166.6	133.2	114.8	581.5	58.6
15-17	23.2	15.3	74.7	126.5	113.3	103.6	456.5	61.2
Total	197.2	163.2	668.2	1 074.1	734.6	533.0	3 370.2	55.3

(a) Comprises couple families with at least one parent employed, and at least one dependent child aged 0-17 years.

(b) Hours worked were calculated for those persons who were employed during the reference period. Total parental hours worked are the sum of the hours worked by each parent.

(c) Comprises those persons who were employed, but did not work during the reference period.

(d) Excludes persons who worked '0' hours.

Source: *Family Characteristics, Australia, 1997* (ABS Cat. no. 4442.0 and unpublished data).

3.21 PARENTAL HOURS WORKED, One-parent Families(a)—1997

PARENTAL HOURS WORKED.....							
	0(b)	1-14	15-34	35-39	40 and over	Total	Average hours worked(c)
Age group (years)	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000	no.
ONE-PARENT FAMILIES WITH DEPENDENT CHILDREN							
Age of youngest child in family							
0-2	*1.4	7.6	10.4	*1.9	*2.0	23.3	20.7
3-4	*1.7	6.8	11.2	*2.1	*1.9	23.6	23.0
5-11	9.5	26.8	35.8	11.4	19.6	103.1	26.8
12-14	5.6	6.0	15.2	5.6	9.2	41.6	31.6
15-17	*3.9	*4.2	17.0	5.9	9.6	40.6	30.7
Total	22.0	51.4	89.5	26.9	42.3	232.2	27.3
DEPENDENT CHILDREN IN ONE-PARENT FAMILIES							
Age of child							
0-2	*1.6	8.0	10.6	*1.9	*2.0	24.1	20.4
3-4	*1.7	9.6	12.7	*2.3	*2.3	28.6	22.3
5-11	15.5	48.3	53.5	15.9	26.4	159.5	24.9
12-14	9.2	13.9	27.1	10.2	15.1	75.5	29.8
15-17	8.0	11.3	27.1	8.9	16.1	71.4	29.4
Total	36.0	91.0	131.0	39.2	61.8	359.2	26.3

(a) Comprises families with at least one child aged 0-17 years, where the lone parent was employed.

(b) Comprises those persons who were employed, but did not work during the reference period.

(c) Excludes persons who worked '0' hours.

Source: *Family Characteristics, Australia, 1997* (ABS Cat. no. 4442.0 and unpublished data).

3.22 LOWER INCOME FAMILIES, Selected Characteristics—1996–97

	LOWEST INCOME QUINTILE(a).....		SECOND INCOME QUINTILE(a).....		TOTAL IN LOWER INCOME QUINTILES(a)	
	Families(b)	Children(c)	Families(b)	Children(c)	Families(b)	Children(c)
	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000
.....						
COUPLE FAMILIES						
Number of earners in family						
None	137.3	305.2	38.6	81.4	175.9	386.6
One	104.4	244.9	257.2	577.3	361.6	822.2
Two	58.2	129.3	100.6	215.4	158.8	344.7
Total	299.9	679.5	396.4	874.2	696.3	1 553.6
Principal source of income						
Wage or salary	85.9	203.9	282.2	636.3	368.1	840.2
Own business or partnership income	41.1	94.8	51.7	104.0	92.8	198.8
Other private income	*13.3	25.1	*5.7	*13.1	*19.0	38.2
Government pensions and allowances	146.9	329.0	56.8	120.7	203.7	449.7
Total(d)	299.9	679.5	396.4	874.2	696.3	1 553.6
Per cent contribution of government pensions and allowances to gross income						
Nil to less than 1	27.0	57.2	37.2	66.1	64.2	123.3
1 to less than 20	70.7	157.5	227.0	477.1	297.7	634.6
20 to less than 50	41.9	107.8	75.7	211.0	117.6	318.8
50 to less than 90	22.5	44.1	26.4	59.6	48.9	103.7
90 and over	124.9	286.0	30.1	60.4	155.0	346.4
Total(d)	299.9	679.5	396.4	874.2	696.3	1 553.6
Number of dependent children in family						
One	80.2	80.2	106.4	106.4	186.6	186.6
Two	106.9	213.7	163.3	326.6	270.2	540.3
Three or more	112.8	385.5	126.7	441.2	239.5	826.7
Total	299.9	679.5	396.4	874.2	696.3	1 553.6
.....						
ONE-PARENT FAMILIES						
Number of earners in family						
None	139.6	277.2	121.9	190.6	261.5	467.8
One	*11.9	23.7	26.1	53.8	38.0	77.5
Total	151.5	300.9	148.0	244.4	299.5	545.3
Principal source of income						
Wage, salary, own business or partnership	**2.2	**2.8	*17.5	37.2	*19.7	40.0
Other private income	*8.2	*11.1	**0.7	**0.7	*8.9	*11.8
Government pensions and allowances	139.6	285.1	129.8	206.5	269.4	491.6
Total(d)	151.5	300.9	148.0	244.4	299.5	545.3
Per cent contribution of government pensions and allowances to gross income						
Nil to less than 20	*4.7	*5.3	*11.6	22.9	*16.3	28.2
20 to less than 50	*5.7	*8.7	*6.9	15.3	*12.6	24.0
50 to less than 90	28.7	54.2	52.2	96.1	80.9	150.3
90 and over	110.9	230.9	77.3	110.1	188.2	341.0
Total(d)	151.5	300.9	148.0	244.4	299.5	545.3
Number of dependent children in family						
One	57.1	57.1	85.2	85.2	142.3	142.3
Two or more	94.4	243.9	62.8	159.2	157.2	403.1
Total	151.5	300.9	148.0	244.4	299.5	545.3

(a) Henderson equivalent income quintiles. Income quintiles have been calculated across all income units.

(b) Comprises families with at least one dependent child aged 0–17 only.

(c) Comprises dependent children aged 0–17 only.

(d) Includes a small number of 'not stated' responses.

Source: ABS, unpublished data, 1996–97 Survey of Income and Housing Costs.

CHAPTER 4

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

INTRODUCTION

The housing characteristics of children depend on the economic and social circumstances of their parents. Australian families generally enjoy a good standard of housing. The majority of children live in homes that are owned or being purchased, and which are regarded by their occupants as being in sound condition.

This chapter presents information on dwellings, tenure, housing costs, crowding and perceptions of dwelling condition. It examines where children live, their mobility and homelessness. While information is presented primarily about the housing of families with children, tables also provide data from the perspective of the children themselves.

DWELLING STRUCTURE

In 1996, the vast majority (88%) of families with children aged 0–17 lived in separate houses, 5% lived in semidetached dwellings and 5% lived in flats, units or apartments. Families with very young children only (eldest child aged 0–2) were less likely than families with older children to live in separate houses and more likely to live in medium and high density dwellings. One-parent families were more likely than couple families to live in medium or high density dwellings.

4.1 DWELLING STRUCTURE—1996

Selected characteristics	Separate house	Semidetached/ row or terrace house/town house	Flat/unit/ apartment	Other	Total(a).....	
	%	%	%	%	%	'000
FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN AGED 0–17						
Age of eldest child						
0–2	80.1	7.8	9.8	0.9	100.0	281.0
3–4	84.2	6.5	6.9	0.8	100.0	201.9
5–11	88.0	4.9	4.9	0.8	100.0	766.4
12–14	90.0	4.1	3.7	0.8	100.0	425.3
15 and over	91.5	3.6	2.9	0.6	100.0	574.0
Total	88.0	4.9	4.9	0.8	100.0	2 248.5
Family type						
Couple	90.7	3.5	3.6	0.7	100.0	1 808.6
One-parent	76.5	10.6	10.3	1.1	100.0	439.8
Total	88.0	4.9	4.9	0.8	100.0	2 248.5
CHILDREN AGED 0–17 IN FAMILIES						
Age						
0–2	85.7	5.8	6.3	0.8	100.0	708.9
3–4	88.4	4.9	4.5	0.8	100.0	497.6
5–11	90.7	3.8	3.3	0.7	100.0	1 736.6
12–14	91.6	3.5	2.8	0.7	100.0	739.2
15–17	91.7	3.5	2.8	0.6	100.0	646.4
Total	89.9	4.2	3.8	0.7	100.0	4 328.7
Family type						
Couple	92.0	3.1	2.8	0.7	100.0	3 588.3
One-parent	79.7	9.5	8.3	1.0	100.0	740.4
Total	89.9	4.2	3.8	0.7	100.0	4 328.7

(a) Includes a small number of 'not stated' responses.

Source: ABS, unpublished data, 1996 Census of Population and Housing.

TENURE

Home ownership represents security and stability to many families. As a result of government initiatives over many years which encouraged and assisted home ownership, the majority of Australian families own, or are in the process of purchasing, their home. In 1996, of all families with children aged 0–17, 28% lived in homes that were fully owned, 41% in homes that were being purchased, and 28% were in rented dwellings.

Family life-stage and composition are two factors that affect the type of tenure of families. Those families with young children only are more likely than families with older children to live in rented accommodation. As children grow older and the resources of the family increase over time, the proportion of families who own their home rises. In 1996, 37% of families with the eldest child aged 0–2 lived in houses which they rented compared with 20% of families with the eldest child aged 15 and over. The proportion of families who owned their home outright rose from 17% of families with the eldest child aged 0–2 to 39% of families with the eldest child aged 15 and over.

One-parent families were much less likely than couple families to live in houses which they owned or were purchasing and were more likely to be renting. In 1996, only 39% of one-parent families with children aged 0–17 owned or were purchasing the home in which they lived, compared with 76% of couple families. More than half (57%) of one-parent families lived in rented houses compared with less than one-quarter (21%) of couple families.

4.2 TENURE—1996

Selected characteristics	Owner	Owner	Rent from	Rent	Total	Other	Total(b).....	'000
	without a mortgage	with a mortgage	State/Territory Housing Authority	privately	renters(a)			
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	
FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN AGED 0–17								
Age of eldest child								
0–2	16.9	42.1	4.3	29.1	37.1	2.6	100.0	281.0
3–4	18.5	42.2	6.1	25.7	35.6	2.3	100.0	201.9
5–11	23.9	42.5	7.2	19.7	30.2	2.0	100.0	766.4
12–14	30.9	40.5	7.1	15.4	25.3	1.8	100.0	425.3
15 and over	38.5	38.8	5.7	12.1	19.9	1.6	100.0	574.0
Total	27.6	41.1	6.3	18.7	28.0	2.0	100.0	2 248.5
Family type								
Couple	30.2	45.5	3.4	14.8	21.0	2.0	100.0	1 808.6
One-parent	16.7	22.7	18.3	34.5	56.7	1.8	100.0	439.8
Total	27.6	41.1	6.3	18.7	28.0	2.0	100.0	2 248.5
CHILDREN AGED 0–17 IN FAMILIES								
Age								
0–2	17.9	43.2	6.2	24.9	35.0	2.5	100.0	708.9
3–4	20.1	43.4	7.2	21.7	32.8	2.3	100.0	497.6
5–11	25.8	43.1	7.2	17.2	27.7	2.0	100.0	1 736.6
12–14	32.3	41.1	6.6	14.0	23.3	1.8	100.0	739.2
15–17	38.4	38.9	5.6	12.0	19.8	1.6	100.0	646.4
Total	26.8	42.2	6.7	17.6	27.5	2.0	100.0	4 328.7
Family type								
Couple	29.2	46.2	3.9	14.3	21.3	2.1	100.0	3 588.3
One-parent	15.3	22.8	20.1	33.7	58.0	1.8	100.0	740.4
Total	26.8	42.2	6.7	17.6	27.5	2.0	100.0	4 328.7

(a) Includes persons who rent from community or cooperative housing groups or from their employers, and 'other' renters. Also includes a small number of 'not stated' responses.

(b) Includes a small number of 'not stated' responses.

Source: ABS, unpublished data, 1996 Census of Population and Housing.

INCOME AND HOUSING

Levels of income influence the dwelling type and type of tenure for families with children. Low income families are more likely than families on higher incomes to live in flats, units or apartments and to rent their dwelling. Of families with dependent children aged 0–17 in the lowest Henderson equivalent income quintile (see Glossary), 9% were living in flats, compared with 5% of all families. Similarly, 45% of families in the lowest income quintile were renting compared with 30% of families overall. Half of all families who lived in public housing were in the lowest income quintile (see tables 4.15 and 4.16).

4.3 FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN AGED 0–17, Tenure and Dwelling Structure—1996–97

EQUIVALENT INCOME QUINTILE(a).....						
<i>Tenure type and dwelling structure</i>	<i>Lowest</i>	<i>Second</i>	<i>Third</i>	<i>Fourth</i>	<i>Highest</i>	<i>Total</i>
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Dwelling structure						
Separate house	86.6	88.8	92.7	92.6	93.2	90.7
Semidetached/row or terrace house/townhouse	*4.4	3.9	3.5	5.4	*3.1	4.1
Flat/unit/apartment	8.6	6.5	*3.2	*1.9	*3.0	4.7
Total(b)	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Tenure type						
Owner without mortgage	21.6	25.8	22.9	22.3	33.3	24.5
Owner with mortgage	30.1	33.7	45.1	57.8	56.1	43.4
Renter						
Public	17.1	9.3	*3.2	*1.4	**0.2	6.5
Private	24.3	24.8	21.9	13.2	8.9	19.8
<i>Total(c)</i>	45.4	39.4	28.8	17.6	9.6	29.9
Total(d)	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000
Total	451.4	544.4	628.6	458.1	285.0	2 367.5

(a) Henderson equivalent income quintile. Income quintiles have been calculated across all income units.

(b) Includes a small number of 'other' dwelling structures and 'not stated' responses.

(c) Includes a small number of 'other' renters and 'not stated' responses.

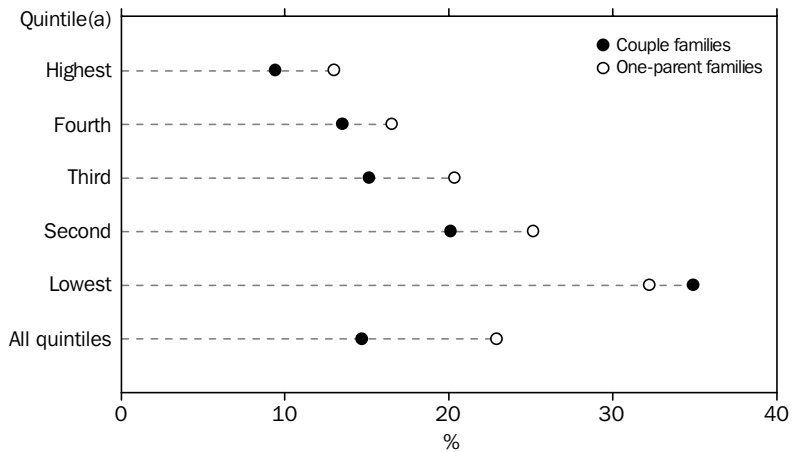
(d) Includes a small number of 'other' tenure types and 'not stated' responses.

Source: ABS, unpublished data, 1996–97 Survey of Income and Housing Costs.

Housing costs may absorb a substantial proportion of income for many families, especially low income families. While there is no single standard measure of housing affordability, one used in housing research is the ratio of housing costs to income. Under this measure, households are considered to have affordability problems if their income is relatively low (the bottom 40% of the household income distribution) and they spend more than 30% of their income on housing costs. In 1996–97 there were 214,100 couple families with children aged 0–17 (11%) and 124,800 one parent families (28%) who were experiencing affordability problems according to these criteria (see table 4.17).

Families in the lowest income quintile spent, on average, 34% of their total income on housing (\$106 per week) compared with 10% for families in the highest quintile (\$192 per week) and 15% for families overall (\$137 per week). On average, lone parents paid a greater proportion of their income (23%) than couples (15%) on housing costs.

4.4 MEAN HOUSING COST, Proportion of Total Income—1996–97



(a) Henderson equivalent income quintile.

Source: ABS, unpublished data, 1996–97 Survey of Income and Housing Costs.

DWELLING CONDITION AND SAFETY

Satisfaction with dwelling

Adequate housing is necessary for children's wellbeing. Poor quality housing and overcrowding can cause stress and be detrimental to health. Overall, Australian children live in dwellings that are satisfactory and in good condition. Of all households with children in 1994, 89% of parents were satisfied with the dwelling location, and 82% were satisfied with the dwelling itself.

4.5 SATISFACTION WITH DWELLING—1994

Level of satisfaction of householder	Households.....		Children.....	
	'000	%	'000	%
Satisfaction with dwelling location				
Satisfied	2 137.9	88.9	4 101.7	88.8
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	198.0	8.2	380.7	8.2
Dissatisfied	67.8	2.8	136.2	2.9
Total(a)	2 404.2	100.0	4 620.1	100.0
Overall satisfaction with dwelling				
Satisfied	1 968.6	81.9	3 743.7	81.0
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	346.5	14.4	689.9	14.9
Dissatisfied	89.2	3.7	186.4	4.0
Total(a)	2 404.2	100.0	4 620.1	100.0

(a) Includes a small number of 'not stated' responses.

Source: ABS, unpublished data, 1994 Australian Housing Survey.

The 1994 Australian Housing Survey also collected information about the occupants' perceptions of the physical condition of their dwellings, including the existence of holes or cracks in the wall, water penetration and structural problems. Results showed that 41% of children lived in dwellings that their parents regarded as having one or no problems, while 17% lived in dwellings with five or more problems. Children living in rented accommodation, particularly public housing, were much more likely to live in dwellings perceived to have problems than children in houses which were owned or being purchased.

Satisfaction with dwelling *continued*

A relatively small proportion of dwellings were likely to require essential or urgent repairs. Around 7% of all children lived in dwellings which were perceived as requiring essential or urgent outside repairs, and a similar proportion were in dwellings requiring essential or urgent repairs to the inside. Higher proportions of children in public housing lived in dwellings which required such repairs.

4.6 CHILDREN IN FAMILIES, Dwelling Condition—1994

TENURE TYPE OF FAMILY.....						
<i>Repairs and problems</i>	<i>Owner</i>	<i>Purchaser</i>	<i>Public renter</i>	<i>Private renter</i>	<i>Total renters(a)</i>	<i>Total(b)</i>
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Repairs required outside						
No need	66.7	62.1	48.9	59.0	56.3	61.6
Desirable/moderate	30.0	32.4	33.3	32.1	32.0	31.7
Essential/urgent	3.3	5.5	17.8	8.8	11.6	6.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Repairs required inside						
No need	67.2	61.6	36.9	49.1	45.8	58.5
Desirable/moderate	30.3	34.3	38.7	38.1	37.7	34.3
Essential/urgent	2.6	4.1	24.4	12.8	16.5	7.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number of problems						
None	23.6	19.3	7.1	16.1	12.9	18.5
One	26.9	23.7	8.8	18.5	14.8	22.0
Two	18.2	20.0	16.8	13.9	15.5	18.2
Three	13.7	13.7	16.8	12.1	13.6	13.7
Four	8.7	10.7	14.5	11.6	12.6	10.7
Five or more	9.0	12.7	36.0	27.8	30.6	16.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000
Total	1 204.6	2 063.7	399.0	751.6	1 274.1	4 620.1

(a) Includes a small number of 'other' renters and 'not stated' responses.

(b) Includes a small number of 'other' tenure types and 'not stated' responses.

Source: ABS, unpublished data, 1994 Australian Housing Survey.

Utilisation

An indicator of the adequacy of a dwelling is crowding and housing utilisation. There is no single standard for measuring crowding, but one model is the Canadian National Occupancy Standard (see Glossary). This model was considered by the National Housing Strategy and the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) to conform reasonably to social norms in Australia (AIHW 1995). It assesses the bedroom requirements of a household and is sensitive to household size and composition, and also makes provision for the need for additional privacy as children grow older. According to this standard, of the 2.4 million households with children aged 0–17 in 1994, 35% had an adequate number of bedrooms to meet the standard and a further 54% had more bedrooms than required. The remaining 11% required one or more additional bedrooms.

Utilisation *continued*

The adequacy of the number of bedrooms was related to the age of the eldest child in the household. Households with young children only (eldest child aged 0–4) had the highest incidence of having bedrooms to spare (77%). Households with older children were more likely to require additional bedrooms.

4.7 HOUSEHOLDS, Number of Bedrooms Required(a)—1994

	AGE OF ELDEST CHILD.....						
	0–4	5–9	10–14	15–17	Total.....		
<i>Bedroom utilisation</i>	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000	%	
One extra bedroom required	5.2	12.1	8.6	20.0	45.9	1.9	
Two extra bedrooms required	20.0	61.6	68.4	59.8	209.9	8.7	
Correct number of bedrooms	97.8	252.0	253.4	240.9	844.1	35.1	
One bedroom to spare	225.9	199.3	271.2	234.7	931.1	38.7	
Two or more bedrooms to spare	195.2	38.9	61.2	77.9	373.2	15.5	
Total	544.2	564.0	662.8	633.3	2 404.2	100.0	

(a) Based on the Canadian National Occupancy Standard model—see Glossary.

Source: ABS, unpublished data, 1994 Australian Housing Survey.

Safety in the home

Young children, especially those not attending school, spend a large part of their time at home. Ensuring safety in the home is therefore an important part of caring for children. There are no national data on the safety of children in their home, although data on household safety has been collected by different States. A survey of households in Sydney in 1992 found that 12% of children aged 0–4 had had an accident requiring medical attention in the previous year. Of these, just over two-thirds occurred in the home (*Household Safety, New South Wales, 1992* (ABS Cat. no. 4387.1)).

The installation of safety devices such as smoke detectors and child resistant cabinets for medicines and poisons can act to reduce the risk of injuries (and deaths) to children. Of the 337,200 households with children aged 0–4 in Queensland in 1996, 58% did not have smoke alarms/detectors (*Safety in the Home, Queensland, 1996* (ABS Cat. no. 4387.3)). A survey in Victoria in 1992 found that, of 178,300 households with young children, 85% did not have child resistant cabinets to store medicines, 78% did not have electrical safety switches, and 53% did not have smoke detectors (*Safety in the Home, Victoria, 1992* (ABS Cat. no. 4387.2)).

Location

An important factor in the suitability of housing for families with children is location, especially in terms of access to work and services. A large number of families with children live in newly developed suburbs located at the fringe of Australia's capital cities. These suburbs, popularly referred to as the 'mortgage belt', often contain high concentrations of young children, houses being purchased and mothers in the labour force. In contrast, the inner suburbs of the capital cities generally have low concentrations of families with children.

While high concentrations of couple families with children are found in outlying suburbs, one-parent families are generally found in suburbs where there is also a high concentration of public housing, unemployment and low income households. These areas may well be inner city suburbs (see *Complete Set of Social Atlases, 1996* (ABS Cat. no. 2030.0)).

MOBILITY

Many children move residence at some time in their lives. The effects of moving may depend on factors such as the circumstances surrounding the move and the resources available to the child. Frequently moving residence, however, can affect a child's stability, as each move requires adjustment to a new home and neighbourhood. In 1996, 17% of children aged 1–17 had changed address in the previous year while 43% of those aged 5–17 had moved at least once in the previous five years. Of children who had changed address in the previous year, 42% moved within the same Statistical Local Area (SLA), 42% moved from a different SLA but within the same State, 9% moved from another State, and 6% had moved from an overseas address.

4.8 CHILDREN(a), Usual Address One and Five Years Ago—1996

	1 year ago(b).....		5 years ago(c).....	
	'000	%	'000	%
Same address	3 415.8	79.6	1 730.2	52.9
Different address				
Same SLA	308.4	7.2	487.4	14.9
Same State	307.9	7.2	642.4	19.6
Different State	68.9	1.6	155.7	4.8
Overseas	44.1	1.0	113.8	3.5
<i>Total(d)</i>	733.7	17.1	1 409.2	43.1
Total(e)	4 292.6	100.0	3 271.9	100.0

(a) Comprises children living in private dwellings.

(b) Comprises children aged 1–17.

(c) Comprises children aged 5–17.

(d) Includes persons who indicated that they had moved, but did not state their previous address.

(e) Includes visitors from within Australia, persons in not classifiable households and 'not stated' responses.

Source: ABS, unpublished data, 1996 Census of Population and Housing.

MOBILITY *continued*

Families with young children only are more likely to move residence than those with older children. Since families with young children only are also more likely than families with older children to live in rented accommodation, their higher mobility may be associated with movement from one rental property to another or the transition from renting to home ownership.

Among children living with at least one parent in 1996, 23% of those aged 1–4 moved residence in the previous year compared with 11% of those aged 15–17. Children in one-parent families were more than twice as likely as those in couple families to have moved residence in the previous year (29% compared with 14%). As expected, the small minority of young people aged 15–17 who did not live with their parents were highly mobile, 62% having moved residence in the previous year.

4.9 MOBILITY OF CHILDREN(a), By Age and Living Arrangements—1996

Selected characteristics	ADDRESS 1 YEAR AGO(b).....				ADDRESS 5 YEARS AGO(c)....			
	Different address		Total(d).....		Different address		Total(d).....	
	'000	%	'000	%	'000	%	'000	%
Living with parents								
Age of child								
1–4	227.4	23.2	981.6	100.0	..	..	..	..
5–11	288.8	16.6	1,736.6	100.0	838.2	48.3	1,736.6	100.0
12–14	100.0	13.5	739.2	100.0	296.0	40.0	739.2	100.0
15–17	71.4	11.0	646.4	100.0	223.5	34.6	646.4	100.0
Total	687.5	16.8	4,103.9	100.0	1,357.7	43.5	3,122.3	100.0
Family type								
Couple family	480.7	14.2	3 390.0	100.0	1 034.8	40.5	2 558.0	100.0
One-parent family	206.9	29.0	713.9	100.0	322.9	57.2	564.3	100.0
Total	687.5	16.8	4 103.9	100.0	1,357.7	43.5	3 122.3	100.0
Not living with parents(e)	31.1	61.5	50.6	100.0	37.6	74.3	50.6	100.0
Total(f)	733.7	17.1	4 292.6	100.0	1 409.2	43.1	3 271.9	100.0

(a) Comprises children living in private dwellings.

(b) Comprises children aged 1–17.

(c) Comprises children aged 5–17.

(d) Includes 'not stated' responses.

(e) Comprises persons aged 15–17, excluding visitors from within Australia and persons in not classifiable households.

(f) Total includes visitors from within Australian and persons in not classifiable households.

Source: ABS, unpublished data, 1996 Census of Population and Housing.

HOMELESS CHILDREN

According to the 1989 *Report of the National Inquiry Into Homeless Children* (the Burdekin Report (Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission 1989)), child homelessness is a serious and continuing social problem. Homeless children include those who live on the streets, in refuges and shelters for the homeless, illegally in abandoned houses and other buildings, and those who move about between relatives and friends. There are also a growing number of children who are homeless because their families are homeless.

HOMELESS CHILDREN *continued*

There is no single source of data on homeless children in Australia. The Burdekin Report estimated that, in 1989, there were at least 20,000–25,000 homeless children and young persons across the country. More recently, the 1995 House of Representatives *Report on Aspects of Youth Homelessness* (the Morris Report) estimated that, in May 1994, there were 21,000 homeless children between the ages of 12–18. Information is available on those who are 'visibly' homeless, that is, those who either use accommodation and support services, or receive income support. Other homeless people are hidden because they live on the streets or temporarily with relatives or friends. For children, the problem of 'invisibility' is compounded by their dependence on adults.

Commonwealth, State and Territory governments provide assistance to people who are homeless or at imminent risk of homelessness through the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP). The SAAP National Data Collection Agency estimated that between July 1996 and June 1997 there were 62,500 children who received assistance from agencies funded through the program. Of these, 76% were accompanied by an adult (who was considered by the agency to be the main client) and 24% were on their own (see also table 4.18).

4.10 SAAP CHILD CLIENT ESTIMATES(a)(b)—July 1996–June 1997

<i>Selected characteristics</i>	<i>Clients</i>
	%
Sex	
Male	44.9
Female	55.1
Age (years)	
Less than 15	13.0
15	17.9
16	31.5
17	37.6
Indigenous Australian	11.7
Non-English speaking background	4.9
	no.
Total child client population	14 736

(a) Comprises child clients aged less than 18 years (i.e. excludes children accompanying adult clients).

(b) Proportions have been calculated only for those respondents for whom a data collection form was completed, and who gave consent for their information to be used. For the selected characteristics presented, this equated to approximately 63% of the total child client population shown in the table.

Source: AIHW, unpublished data, SAAP National Data Collection Agency 1996–97.

YOUNG PEOPLE NOT LIVING WITH PARENTS

A small number of young people aged 15–17 (less than 1% of those living in private dwellings) have begun the transition to independent living and do not live with their parents (see Social Environment chapter). Their housing choices may be affected by low incomes and lack of accumulated wealth, as well as lifestyle priorities. In 1996, 20% of young people aged 15–17 who were partners or parents and a similar proportion who were not living with family members (for example, those living in group households) were living in flats, units or apartments. The proportion who were renting was very high, peaking at 71% for partners and parents aged 15–17, the majority of whom were renting privately.

4.11 HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS OF YOUNG PEOPLE AGED 15–17(a)—1996

Dwelling structure and tenure type	LIVING ARRANGEMENTS.....			Total
	Partner or parent	Living with family members	Not living with family members	
YOUNG PEOPLE AGED 15–17				
	%	%	%	%
Dwelling structure				
Separate house	62.5	77.1	65.2	69.6
Semidetached/row or terrace house/townhouse	11.4	7.7	9.8	9.2
Flat/unit/apartment	20.2	11.7	20.0	16.7
Other	4.3	1.6	3.2	2.8
Total(b)	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Tenure type				
Owner without mortgage	11.4	31.9	15.8	21.6
Owner with mortgage	11.2	16.3	15.7	15.3
Renter				
State/Territory Housing Authority	12.3	10.0	6.5	8.7
Private	50.5	27.9	48.8	40.7
Total(c)	70.8	45.0	61.1	56.0
Other	2.4	3.1	3.1	3.0
Total(b)	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
	'000	'000	'000	'000
Total	7.0	20.1	23.5	50.6

(a) Comprises those persons aged 15–17 who live in private dwellings, but do not live with parents.

(b) Includes a small number of 'not stated' responses.

(c) Includes persons who rent from community or co-operative housing groups or from their employers, and 'other' renters. Also includes a small number of 'not stated' responses.

Source: ABS, unpublished data, 1996 Census of Population and Housing.

INDIGENOUS CHILDREN

The housing characteristics of Indigenous families and children, particularly the low rates of home ownership, reflect their generally lower income when compared to all Australian families. In addition, the high proportion of one-parent families among Indigenous families with children (37% compared with 20% of families with children overall) contributes to low rates of home ownership, since over 80% of these families live in rented accommodation (see table 4.13).

Dwelling structure

The types of dwellings in which Indigenous families live broadly correspond to the pattern for all families. In 1996, the vast majority (85%) of Indigenous families with children were living in separate houses, 5% lived in semidetached dwellings and 5% lived in flats, units or apartments. Consistent with the pattern for all families, Indigenous one-parent families were more likely than Indigenous couple families to live in medium and high density dwellings and less likely to live in separate houses.

A higher proportion of Indigenous families with children in urban areas were living in medium and high density dwellings than the corresponding families in rural areas. This may reflect the available housing stock in each location rather than the preferences or needs for types of accommodation. In rural areas, 8% of Indigenous families with children (representing 3,000 children aged 0–17) were classified as living in improvised dwellings, tents or as sleepers out.

4.12 DWELLING STRUCTURE, Indigenous Families and Children—1996

Selected characteristics	Separate house	Semidetached/ row or terrace house/town house	Flat/unit/ apartment	Improvised home, tent, sleepers out	Other	Total(a).....	'000
	%	%	%	%	%	%	
INDIGENOUS FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN AGED 0–17							
Family type							
Couple	87.8	3.8	2.9	2.3	1.0	100.0	39.1
One-parent	79.0	8.1	7.3	2.0	1.1	100.0	22.6
Total	84.6	5.4	4.5	2.2	1.0	100.0	61.7
Section of State							
Major urban	80.6	10.3	6.6	—	0.8	100.0	18.8
Other urban	86.7	4.7	5.2	0.5	0.9	100.0	27.2
Rural	85.7	0.7	0.7	7.7	1.4	100.0	15.6
Total	84.6	5.4	4.5	2.2	1.0	100.0	61.7
CHILDREN AGED 0–17 IN INDIGENOUS FAMILIES							
Family type							
Couple	89.0	3.2	2.0	2.6	0.8	100.0	90.9
One-parent	81.8	7.1	5.5	2.1	0.9	100.0	46.2
Total	86.6	4.5	3.2	2.4	0.9	100.0	137.2
Section of State							
Major urban	83.3	9.4	4.8	—	0.7	100.0	39.0
Other urban	89.2	3.8	3.7	0.6	0.8	100.0	61.1
Rural	85.7	0.7	0.6	8.1	1.2	100.0	37.1
Total	86.6	4.5	3.2	2.4	0.9	100.0	137.2

(a) Includes a small number of 'not stated' responses.

Source: ABS, unpublished data, 1996 Census of Population and Housing.

Tenure type

The level of home ownership of Indigenous families with children is relatively low and the proportion who are renting, particularly from government housing authorities and community or cooperative housing groups, is high. In 1996, 26% of all Indigenous families with children owned or were purchasing the house in which they lived, compared with 69% of all families with children. Correspondingly, 66% of Indigenous families with children were renting compared with 28% of all families with children. In rural areas, 33% of Indigenous families were renting their house from a community or cooperative housing authority.

4.13 TENURE, Indigenous Families and Children—1996

Selected characteristics	Owner without a mortgage	Owner with a mortgage	Rent from State/Territory Housing Authority	Rent from community or cooperative housing group	Private renter	Total renters(a)	Other	Total(b).....	'000
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	
INDIGENOUS FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN AGED 0–17									
Family type									
Couple	10.1	25.1	19.1	12.8	19.8	57.0	3.5	100.0	39.1
One-parent	4.1	6.6	39.3	16.1	21.3	81.2	2.6	100.0	22.6
Total	7.9	18.3	26.5	14.0	20.4	65.8	3.1	100.0	61.7
Section of State									
Major urban	8.2	24.2	33.0	2.4	26.4	64.5	1.1	100.0	18.8
Other urban	6.4	17.1	33.0	11.0	21.8	71.5	1.9	100.0	27.2
Rural	10.3	13.3	7.2	33.3	10.7	57.6	7.7	100.0	15.6
Total	7.9	18.3	26.5	14.0	20.4	65.8	3.1	100.0	61.7
CHILDREN AGED 0–17 IN INDIGENOUS FAMILIES(c)									
Family type									
Couple	8.8	23.0	21.2	15.1	17.9	59.6	3.7	100.0	90.9
One-parent	3.6	5.8	41.1	17.2	19.3	81.9	2.9	100.0	46.2
Total	7.0	17.2	27.9	15.8	18.4	67.1	3.4	100.0	137.2
Section of State									
Major urban	7.4	23.3	36.5	2.7	24.1	66.1	1.0	100.0	39.0
Other urban	5.5	16.0	34.7	12.6	20.0	73.1	2.0	100.0	61.1
Rural	9.1	12.6	7.6	35.0	9.8	58.5	8.3	100.0	37.1
Total	7.0	17.2	27.9	15.8	18.4	67.1	3.4	100.0	137.2

(a) Includes respondents who rent from their employer, 'other' renters and a small number of not stated responses.

(b) Includes a small number of 'not stated' responses.

(c) Includes non-Indigenous children living in Indigenous families. See Glossary—'Indigenous family'.

Source: ABS, unpublished data, 1996 Census of Population and Housing.

Utilisation

Indigenous households often include extended family members and on average are larger than Australian households overall. Results from the 1996 Census showed that 24% of Indigenous households with children, compared with 9% of all households with children, contained six or more persons.

In 1996, over half (57%) of children living in Indigenous households lived in dwellings with three bedrooms, consistent with the pattern for all children (51%). Ratios between the number of persons usually resident in the household and the number of bedrooms were generally higher for Indigenous than for all households with children. This indicates that children in Indigenous households were more likely than children overall to live in dwellings which were crowded and less likely to live in dwellings which had bedrooms to spare.

4.14 NUMBER OF BEDROOMS—1996

NUMBER OF PERSONS IN HOUSEHOLD(a)							
	2	3	4	5	6 or more	Total.....	
<i>Number of bedrooms</i>	%	%	%	%	%	%	'000
DWELLINGS							
Indigenous households(b)							
None or one	22.6	31.2	21.6	12.5	12.1	100.0	0.9
Two	20.1	34.8	21.4	10.8	12.9	100.0	7.7
Three	6.9	24.4	30.1	19.1	19.5	100.0	34.5
Four or more	2.2	12.1	23.1	25.0	37.6	100.0	13.0
Total(c)	7.8	22.8	26.8	19.1	23.5	100.0	58.4
All households(d)							
None or one	26.5	44.1	19.4	6.8	3.1	100.0	14.0
Two	23.6	41.9	25.2	6.9	2.4	100.0	239.6
Three	6.6	30.3	41.3	16.0	5.8	100.0	1 190.3
Four or more	2.2	16.5	36.8	28.8	15.7	100.0	772.3
Total(c)	7.1	26.8	37.8	19.4	8.9	100.0	2 234.9
CHILDREN AGED 0–17							
Children in Indigenous households(e)							
None or one	12.4	20.1	23.8	18.8	24.9	100.0	1.6
Two	10.9	23.3	22.5	15.5	27.8	100.0	14.2
Three	3.0	14.1	26.3	22.8	33.9	100.0	79.0
Four or more	0.8	5.3	15.8	23.8	54.3	100.0	36.5
Total(c)	3.3	12.4	22.4	21.8	40.0	100.0	137.9
All children							
None or one	18.2	34.6	26.2	13.0	8.0	100.0	20.5
Two	16.0	33.1	32.9	12.3	5.8	100.0	353.3
Three	3.5	20.2	42.2	23.0	11.1	100.0	2 225.6
Four or more	1.0	9.0	31.1	33.7	25.2	100.0	1 691.5
Total(c)	3.7	16.9	36.9	26.2	16.3	100.0	4 328.7

(a) Comprises persons counted at home only.

(b) Comprises households containing an Indigenous family (see Glossary), and with at least one child aged 0–17.

(c) Totals include a small number of 'not stated' responses.

(d) Comprises households with at least one child aged 0–17.

(e) May include non-Indigenous children living in Indigenous households. See Glossary—'Indigenous household'.

Source: ABS, unpublished data, 1996 Census of Population and Housing.

ADDITIONAL TABLES

4.15 SELECTED HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS, Family Income Units(a)—1996–97

EQUIVALENT INCOME QUINTILE(b).....						
<i>Selected characteristics</i>	<i>Lowest</i>	<i>Second</i>	<i>Third</i>	<i>Fourth</i>	<i>Highest</i>	<i>Total</i>
NUMBER OF FAMILIES ('000)						
Dwelling structure						
Separate house	391.0	483.5	582.8	424.1	265.6	2 147.0
Semidetached/row or terrace house/townhouse	*19.9	21.3	22.0	24.6	*8.7	96.5
Flat/unit/apartment	38.7	35.2	*20.1	*8.9	*8.5	111.5
Total(c)	451.4	544.4	628.6	458.1	285.0	2 367.5
Tenure type						
Owner						
Without mortgage	97.6	140.4	144.0	102.3	94.8	579.1
With mortgage	135.8	183.2	283.7	264.9	160.0	1 027.6
Renter						
Public	77.3	50.4	*20.0	*6.3	**0.7	154.6
Private	109.7	135.0	137.8	60.4	25.4	468.2
Total(d)	204.9	214.5	180.9	80.8	27.4	708.5
Total(e)	451.4	544.4	628.6	458.1	285.0	2 367.5
MEAN HOUSING COST (\$)						
Family type						
Couple	115.9	125.4	135.7	168.2	192.4	145.6
Lone parent	87.5	87.8	107.7	128.7	192.5	98.3
Total	106.4	115.2	131.4	163.8	192.4	136.5
MEAN HOUSING COST AS A PROPORTION OF INCOME (%)						
Family type						
Couple	34.9	20.1	15.1	13.5	9.4	14.7
Lone parent	32.2	25.1	20.3	16.5	13.0	22.9
Total	34.1	21.0	15.6	13.7	9.5	15.4

(a) Family income units with dependent children aged 0–17.

(b) Henderson equivalent income quintiles. Income quintiles have been calculated across all income units.

(c) Includes a small number of 'other' dwelling structures.

(d) Includes a small number of 'other' renters.

(e) Includes a small number of 'other' tenure types.

Source: ABS, unpublished data, 1996–97 Survey of Income and Housing Costs.

4.16 SELECTED HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS, Children in Families(a)—1996–97

Selected characteristics	EQUIVALENT INCOME QUINTILE OF FAMILY(b)					Total
	Lowest	Second	Third	Fourth	Highest	
NUMBER OF CHILDREN ('000)						
Dwelling structure						
Separate house	879.1	1 039.1	1 132.4	739.9	436.0	4 226.5
Semidetached/row or terrace house/townhouse	39.0	30.3	39.1	34.9	11.7	155.1
Flat/unit/apartment	60.3	42.7	26.3	12.2	10.5	152.0
Other	2.0	6.4	5.5	0.5	5.8	20.1
Total	980.4	1 118.6	1 203.3	787.4	463.9	4 553.6
Tenure type of family						
Owner						
Without mortgage	198.0	293.5	270.5	169.4	155.0	1 086.5
With mortgage	298.9	415.0	575.5	474.3	267.6	2 031.3
Renter						
Public	181.0	98.8	33.8	8.8	0.7	323.0
Private	236.6	251.8	235.0	94.1	33.1	850.6
Total(c)	451.9	400.9	313.7	125.9	37.7	1 330.1
Other	31.5	9.1	43.6	17.8	3.6	105.7
Total	980.4	1 118.6	1 203.3	787.4	463.9	4 553.6

(a) Comprises dependent children aged 0–17 only.

(b) Henderson equivalent income quintiles. Income quintiles have been calculated across all income units.

(c) Includes a small number of 'other' renters.

Source: ABS, unpublished data, 1996–97 Survey of Income and Housing Costs.

4.17 PROPORTION OF INCOME SPENT ON HOUSING(a)—1996–97

Proportion of income spent on housing	EQUIVALENT INCOME QUINTILE(b).....					Total
	Lowest(c)	Second	Third	Fourth	Highest	
	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000
COUPLE FAMILIES						
30% or less	155.8	313.4	467.9	383.9	272.5	1 593.6
>30%	131.1	83.0	64.1	24.1	*4.3	306.7
Total	287.0	396.4	532.0	408.1	276.8	1 900.3
ONE-PARENT FAMILIES						
30% or less	85.0	88.2	73.1	46.1	*7.5	300.0
>30%	65.0	59.8	23.4	**3.9	**0.6	152.7
Total	150.0	148.0	96.6	50.0	*8.1	452.7

(a) Comprises families with at least one dependent child aged 0–17.

(b) Henderson equivalent income quintiles. Income quintiles have been calculated across all income units.

(c) Lowest quintile excludes families with nil or negative income.

Source: ABS, unpublished data, 1996–97 Survey of Income and Housing Costs.

4.18 MAIN REASON FOR SEEKING SUPPORT(a)(b)—1996–97

Reasons	AGE OF CHILD.....		
	Less than 15	15–17	Total
PROPORTION OF CHILDREN(c) (%)			
Relationship/family breakdown	33.1	33.7	33.7
Time out from family situation	17.6	7.8	9.1
Interpersonal conflict	8.7	6.0	6.4
Long-term homeless (>12 months)	2.2	7.1	6.4
Eviction	4.7	6.7	6.4
Physical/emotional abuse	6.4	4.5	4.8
Financial difficulty	1.1	5.1	4.5
Itinerant	2.6	4.5	4.2
At imminent risk but not homeless	4.4	4.2	4.2
Domestic violence	5.0	3.8	3.9
Emergency accommodation ended	1.8	2.4	2.4
Arrival from interstate, no means of support	0.6	2.2	2.0
Sexual abuse	2.6	1.6	1.7
Recently left institution	1.5	1.4	1.4
Substance abuse	1.3	1.3	1.3
Psychiatric illness	0.1	0.4	0.4
Other	6.4	7.3	7.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
NUMBER OF CHILDREN			
Total child client population	1 923	12 813	14 736

(a) Refers to support sought from SAAP, and comprises child clients aged less than 18 years (i.e. excludes children accompanying adult clients).

(b) Where clients obtained support on more than one occasion during the twelve months, their reason for seeking assistance on the first occasion is shown.

(c) Proportions have been calculated only for those respondents for whom a data collection form was completed, and who gave consent for their information to be used. For the selected characteristic presented, this equated to approximately 54% of the total child client population shown in the table.

Source: AIHW, unpublished data, SAAP National Data Collection Agency.

CHAPTER 5

HEALTH

INTRODUCTION

Children's health is influenced by a range of economic, physical and social factors which affect their family, community and access to services. Most Australian children can expect to enjoy good health. As a result of continuing advances in medicine, many childhood diseases can now be successfully treated. Further, because health in childhood lays the foundation for health in later life, recent health policy has focused on prevention of diseases and promotion of a healthy lifestyle.

This chapter presents trends in child mortality and information on health status, risk factors such as breastfeeding and nutrition, and preventative health measures including immunisation.

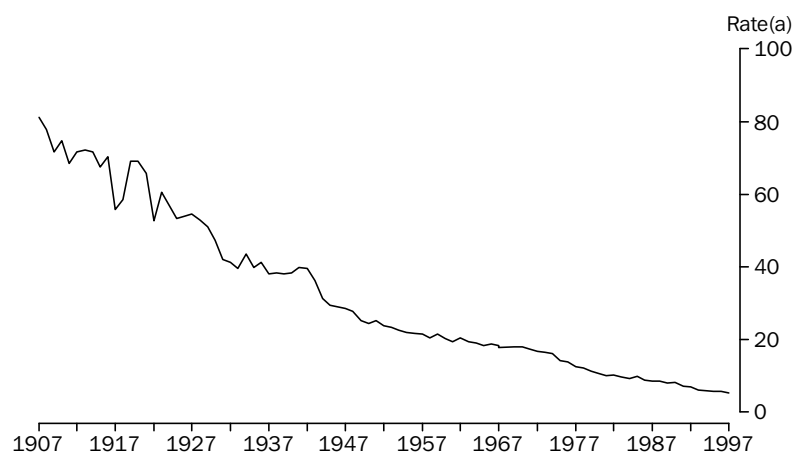
MORTALITY

Infant mortality

Infant mortality, defined as deaths of children aged under one year, has been traditionally viewed as an indicator of the general level of mortality, health and wellbeing of a population and as such has received special attention in public health policy.

Since 1993, Australia has recorded an annual infant mortality rate of around 6 deaths per 1,000 live births. This rate has shown a continuing and appreciable decline over the last 90 years, decreasing from 81 per 1,000 live births in 1907 to 17 in 1972 and 5.3 in 1997. This decline has been linked to improvements in medical science, obstetric care, nutrition and living conditions, together with greater public health awareness. Developments in neonatal intensive care in the 1970s have also played a major role in the decline in infant mortality over the past 20 years.

5.1 INFANT MORTALITY RATES—1907–1997



(a) Rate per 1,000 live births.

Source: *Deaths, Australia (various issues)* (ABS Cat. no. 3302.0).

Australia's infant mortality rate compares well with the rate in the United States of America (7.5), Canada (6.3), the United Kingdom (6.1) and New Zealand (6.7), but is above that of Japan (4.3), Singapore (3.8) and Sweden (3.5) (see table 5.21).

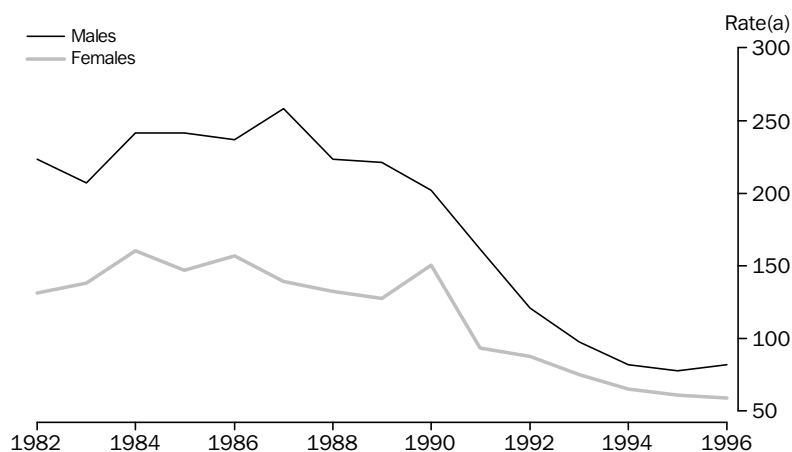
Causes of infant deaths

During 1992–96 there were, on average, 1,571 infant deaths annually. The number of deaths decreased significantly as the age of infants increased. Of all infant deaths, 38% occurred on the day of birth, 27% in the remainder of the neonatal period (the first 28 days after birth) and 35% in the postneonatal period (from 28 days until the end of the first year).

The leading causes of neonatal death differ from those of postneonatal death. Deaths linked to factors such as the development of the fetus and pregnancy are significant in the first few weeks after birth. Over the 15-year period 1982–96, two major groups of causes accounted for 95% of all neonatal deaths. These were perinatal conditions, such as those resulting from short gestation and low birthweight (62%) and congenital anomalies (33%). In the later stages of infancy, diseases and conditions which are influenced by environmental and socioeconomic factors were more significant. Three causes, accounting for 76% of all postneonatal deaths over the same period, were Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) (49%), congenital anomalies (18%) and perinatal conditions (9%). The number of infant deaths is consistently higher for boys than girls. Over the period 1982–96 there were on average 134 male deaths per 100 female deaths (see *Causes of Infant and Child Deaths, Australia, 1982 to 1996* (ABS Cat. no. 4398.0)).

Between 1982 and 1996 the death rate per 100,000 live births from SIDS reached a peak of 202 in 1984 before falling to 70 in 1995 and 71 in 1996. Throughout the period the male death rate remained higher and fluctuated more widely than the female rate. During the 1990s the gap between male and female death rates narrowed. The fall in death rates could reflect the success of the national health education campaign which was launched in 1990. This campaign highlighted the risk factors associated with SIDS such as sleeping posture, feeding practices and passive smoking.

5.2 POSTNEONATAL DEATH RATES FROM SIDS



(a) Rate per 100,000 live births.

Source: *Causes of Infant and Child Deaths, Australia, 1982 to 1996* (ABS Cat. no. 4398.0).

Childhood mortality

In 1997 there were 1,106 deaths of children aged 1–17, a rate of 25 deaths per 100,000 children. The number of childhood deaths was considerably higher for boys than for girls, with 170 male deaths per 100 female deaths.

Accidents, poisoning and violence were the leading cause of death in all age groups, accounting for almost half (48%) of all child deaths. Of the 534 children who suffered accidental death in 1997, 72% were males. The type of accident changed with age. For young children aged 1–4 drowning was the leading cause of accidental death, followed by motor vehicle accidents. For children aged 5 and over, motor vehicle accidents were the leading cause of accidental death. Suicide and self-inflicted injury accounted for 19% of male deaths and 12% of female deaths among those aged 15–17.

Neoplasms, such as leukemia and brain cancers, were also main causes of death for children in all age groups. Other main causes were congenital anomalies (for children aged 1–14) and diseases of the nervous system and sense organs (for children aged 1–11) (see also table 5.22).

5.3 CHILDREN, Main Causes of Death—1997

Cause of death	AGE GROUP (YEARS).....							
	1-4.....		5-11.....		12-14.....		15-17.....	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Accidents, poisonings and violence								
Motor vehicle	12.6	9.9	16.7	14.2	22.3	13.0	29.8	21.3
Submersion, suffocation and foreign bodies	21.4	17.4	10.1	5.3	n.p.	n.p.	4.7	n.p.
Accidental drowning and submersion	17.5	16.5	8.7	3.5	n.p.	—	4.3	n.p.
Other accidents	13.1	11.6	8.0	5.3	19.1	n.p.	10.9	5.7
Suicide and self-inflicted injury	—	—	n.p.	—	6.4	13.0	18.6	12.3
Total(a)	49.5	39.7	41.3	26.5	52.1	38.9	67.4	43.4
Neoplasms	14.1	7.4	22.5	31.9	16.0	18.5	8.5	14.8
Diseases of the nervous system and sense organs	7.8	8.3	10.1	10.6	5.3	5.6	5.4	6.6
Congenital anomalies	11.7	11.6	9.4	8.0	7.4	14.8	4.3	5.7
All other causes	17.0	33.1	16.7	23.0	19.1	22.2	14.3	29.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
	no.	no.	no.	no.	no.	no.	no.	no.
Total	206	121	138	113	94	54	258	122

(a) Includes all other external causes.

Source: ABS, unpublished data, vital statistics collection.

HEALTH STATUS

Recent illness and health related actions

Most Australian children are healthy and overall they are the healthiest group in the population. While the 1995 National Health Survey found that, in the two weeks preceding the survey, 56% of all children aged 0–17 had experienced one or more incidents of ill-health, many of these were minor ailments only. Overall, slightly more girls (58%) than boys (55%) reported a recent illness. Of the adult population aged 18 years and over, almost three-quarters (74%) reported a recent illness (see table 5.24). Respiratory conditions were predominant among the most commonly reported illnesses for all children, which were colds (9%), asthma (9%), dental problems (6%), headaches (6%), and coughs or sore throats (5%).

5.4 CHILDREN, Recent Illness(a)—1995

Type of condition	Males	Females	All children
	%	%	%
Common cold	8.9	9.8	9.3
Asthma	9.2	8.0	8.6
Dental problems	5.7	7.2	6.4
Headache	5.4	7.3	6.3
Cough or sore throat	4.4	4.8	4.6
Eczema, dermatitis	2.7	3.3	3.0
Influenza	2.7	3.2	2.9
Otitis media	2.1	1.7	1.9
Pyrexia	1.9	1.8	1.9
Hayfever	1.6	1.6	1.6
Children who reported a recent illness condition(b)	55.3	57.5	56.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
	'000	'000	'000
Total	2 403.2	2 268.0	4 671.2

(a) Illness or injury experienced in the two weeks prior to the survey.

(b) Only the most commonly reported conditions are shown. Persons may have reported more than one type of recent condition, therefore components may not add to the totals shown.

Source: ABS, unpublished data, 1995 National Health Survey.

The prevalence of certain illnesses varied with age. Colds were the most common recent illness for children under 5 and asthma for children aged 5–11. Headaches were the most common illness for children aged 12 and over (see table 5.23).

In 1995, 62% of children had taken one or more health related actions in the two weeks prior to the survey. In particular, 52% of all children had recently used medication and 18% had visited a doctor. Children aged under 5 were twice as likely as other children to have visited a doctor. Dental consultations were relatively uncommon for children under 5, but 9% of children aged 5–17 had visited a dentist recently.

Recent illness and health related actions *continued*

Of those aged 5–17, 15% had taken one or more days off school (or work) for health related reasons in the past fortnight. This proportion is significantly lower than the proportion of children aged 5–17 who had experienced a recent illness (56%), and is indicative of the relatively minor nature of many of the ailments reported (see table 5.24).

Long-term conditions

In 1995, 46% of those aged 0–17 (2.2 million children) reported a medical condition which had lasted, or was expected to last, six months or more. This was significantly lower than the proportion of the adult population reporting a long-term condition (84%). However, more than half of all adults reported a sight disorder able to be corrected by wearing glasses. Among children, the reporting of long-term conditions increased with age, from 31% of those aged less than 5 to 59% of those aged 15–17 (see table 5.25).

The most frequently reported long-term conditions experienced by children were respiratory disorders, including asthma (16%), hayfever (8%), sinusitis (4%) and bronchitis or emphysema (3%). Sight and hearing disorders were also represented. Respiratory conditions were more common for boys. Sight disorders were more common for girls.

5.5 CHILDREN, Long-term Conditions—1995

<i>Type of condition</i>	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>	<i>All children</i>
	%	%	%
Asthma	17.6	14.5	16.1
Hayfever	8.3	7.7	8.0
Allergy	5.3	5.6	5.5
Myopia/short-sighted	3.4	5.6	4.4
Sinusitis	4.5	4.0	4.3
Hypermetropia/far-sighted	3.2	4.9	4.0
Eczema, dermatitis	3.1	3.3	3.2
Bronchitis/emphysema	2.4	2.6	2.5
Mental retardation, specific delays in development	2.5	1.2	1.9
Astigmatism	1.3	2.0	1.7
Speech impediment, n.e.c.	2.0	0.8	1.4
Deafness (complete/partial)	1.6	1.2	1.4
Emotional problems, n.e.c.	1.2	0.6	0.9
Otitis media	0.6	0.7	0.6
Strabismus	0.6	0.6	0.6
Children who reported a long-term medical condition(a)	46.7	45.4	46.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
	'000	'000	'000
Total	2 403.2	2 268.0	4 671.2

(a) Only the most commonly reported conditions are shown. Persons may have reported more than one type of recent condition; therefore components do not add to the totals shown.

Source: ABS, unpublished data, 1995 National Health Survey.

Asthma

Asthma is a long-term condition of an episodic nature which affects Australians of all ages. The 1995 National Health Survey found that 762,000 children (16% of all children) were affected by asthma as either a recent illness, a long-term condition, or both. Almost all children who had experienced a recent incident of asthma also had a long-term history of the condition. Similarly, around 53% of all children with the condition had experienced an incident in the past two weeks.

Overall, a higher proportion of males (18%) than females (15%) aged under 18 were reported as having asthma.

5.6 CHILDREN WITH ASTHMA, Whether Recent or Long-term—1995

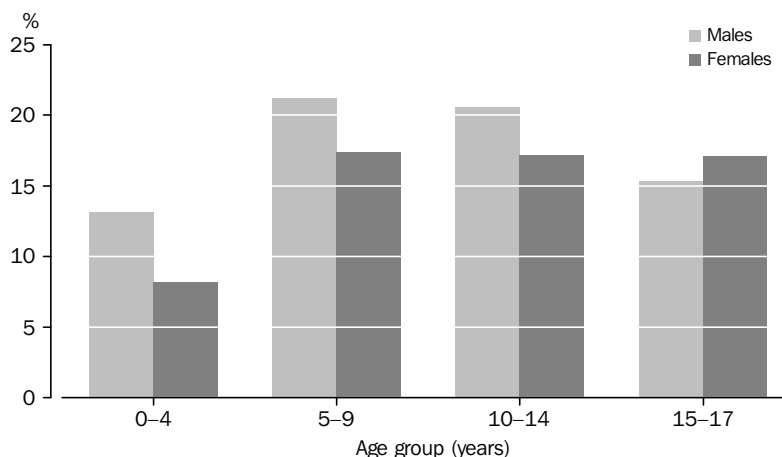
Type of condition	Males.....		Females.....		All children.....	
	'000	%	'000	%	'000	%
Recent only	4.4	0.2	5.5	0.2	9.9	0.2
Long-term only	206.0	8.6	152.9	6.7	358.8	7.7
Recent and long-term	217.2	9.0	176.0	7.8	393.2	8.4
Total	427.5	17.8	334.4	14.7	761.9	16.3

Source: ABS, unpublished data, 1995 National Health Survey.

Asthma was most commonly reported in children aged 5–14 years with almost one in five (19%) having this as a long-term condition. This compares with one in ten children aged under 5 years having asthma as a long-term condition (see table 5.25). From age 10–14 to age 15–17 the reporting of asthma fell for males but not for females.

Asthma can be fatal, although the number of deaths is relatively small. In 1995, there were 23 deaths due to asthma among children aged 1–17 (2% of all deaths in this age group). Just over half of these deaths occurred among children aged 12–17 (ABS, unpublished data, mortality statistics collection).

5.7 CHILDREN WITH ASTHMA, Age and Sex(a)—1995



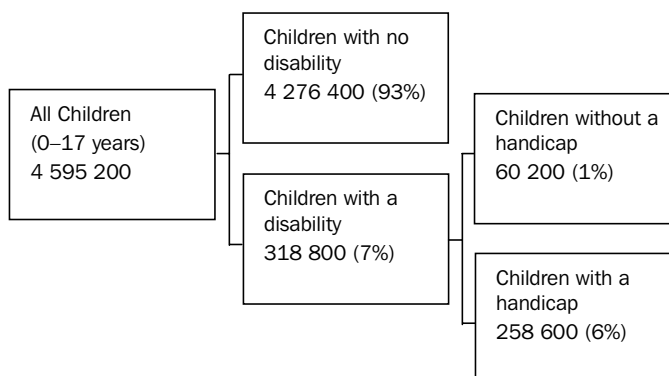
(a) As a proportion of all children of same age and sex.

Source: ABS, unpublished data, 1995 National Health Survey.

Disability

The 1993 Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers found that there were 318,800 children (7% of all children) who had a disability as a result of a health condition or impairment. This represented a disability rate of 69 children per 1,000 population aged 0–17. The vast majority of these children (81%) also had a restriction (described as handicap in the survey) which limited their ability to perform tasks associated with daily living. Of all children with disabilities, 59% were male.

5.8 CHILDREN WITH A DISABILITY—1993



Source: ABS, unpublished data, 1993 Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers.

Main disabling condition

For approximately three-quarters (76%) of children with a disability their main disabling condition was physical in origin, while for the remaining one-quarter (24%) it was a mental disorder. Respiratory diseases, including asthma, accounted for 34% of all physical conditions. Boys had a higher rate of disability (81 per 1,000 boys) than girls (58 per 1,000 girls). This difference was particularly evident for mental disorders and speech impediments.

5.9 CHILDREN, Main Disabling Condition—1993

Main disabling condition	Males.....		Females.....		All children.....	
	'000	Rate(a)	'000	Rate(a)	'000	Rate(a)
Mental disorders	51.5	21.9	25.4	11.3	76.8	16.7
Physical conditions						
Respiratory diseases	44.4	18.9	38.7	17.3	83.1	18.1
Disorders of the ear and mastoid process	17.7	7.5	16.6	7.4	34.3	7.5
Nervous system diseases	11.2	4.8	12.1	5.4	23.3	5.1
Speech impediment or loss	18.5	7.9	4.1	1.8	22.6	4.9
Other	46.3	19.7	32.4	14.5	78.7	17.1
Total	138.0	58.6	103.9	46.4	242.0	52.7
Total	189.5	80.5	129.3	57.7	318.8	69.4

(a) Rate per 1,000.

Source: ABS, unpublished data, 1993 Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers.

RISK FACTORS

Low birthweight

Low birthweight is a key indicator of the likely health outcome of babies. Infants of low birthweight (defined as those less than 2,500 grams) usually require a longer period of hospitalisation after birth than other babies and are at greater risk of developing significant disabilities or dying. In 1995, low birthweight infants accounted for only 6% of births. Girls were slightly more likely than boys to be born with low birthweight, which affected 6.9% of all female births compared with 5.9% of all male births (see table 5.26).

5.10 LOW BIRTHWEIGHT BABIES—1995

<i>Birthweight group(a)</i>	<i>All births.....</i>		<i>Indigenous births.....</i>	
	<i>no.</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>no.</i>	<i>%</i>
Extremely low birthweight (less than 1,000g)	1 939	0.7	120	1.5
Very low birthweight (less than 1,500g)	3 514	1.4	198	2.5
Low birthweight (less than 2,500g)	16 571	6.4	926	11.8
All birthweight groups	260 044	100.0	7 846	100.0

(a) Birthweight groups are not mutually exclusive.

Source: Day et al. 1997.

Low birthweight is related to maternal characteristics such as age, the number of children already born and Indigenous status. The likelihood of a child being born with low birthweight is greater when the mother:

- is aged under 20 or over 40;
- has previously had no children or more than four children;
- is of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin.

Low birthweight is also more common in multiple births. Whereas only 5% of single babies were of low birthweight, this increased to 51% of twins, 94% of triplets and 100% of other multiple births (Day et al. 1997).

Breastfeeding

Breastfeeding has nutritional and immunological advantages for the developing child, and is associated with reduced infant and child mortality. While most Australian mothers are likely to breastfeed their children immediately following birth, the duration of breastfeeding varies considerably. National targets for the year 2000 aim at extending the duration of breastfeeding. These include increasing to 90% the number of babies who are breastfed at discharge from hospital, to 50% the number of babies up to six months of age who are fully breastfed and to 80% the number of babies up to six months who are partially breastfed (National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC), 1995).

Breastfeeding *continued*

In 1995, although 87% of mothers initially breastfed their child, only 69% continued to do so for 8 weeks or more. By 26 weeks, only 47% of mothers were still breastfeeding. Mothers discontinued breastfeeding for a variety of reasons, most commonly because they were not producing enough milk (32%), or they felt it was time to give up (22%) (ABS, unpublished data, 1995 National Health Survey).

5.11 DURATION OF BREASTFEEDING—1995

<i>Whether breastfed</i>	<i>Children aged 1 year to less than 2 years</i>
	%
Were breastfed	
Less than 1 week	2.0
1 week to < 8 weeks	15.3
8 weeks to < 26 weeks	22.3
26 weeks to < 53 weeks	32.0
53 weeks or more	15.1
Unknown duration	*0.7
<i>Total</i>	87.4
Were never breastfed	12.6
Total	100.0
	'000
Total	263.9

Source: ABS, unpublished data, 1995 National Health Survey.

National Health Survey data has indicated that the duration of breastfeeding is related to a number of maternal characteristics. The survey showed that older mothers tended to breastfeed for longer periods than younger mothers. Whereas the mean duration of breastfeeding for mothers aged 18–24 was 6 months for first children and 7 months for second children, it increased to 8–9 months for mothers aged 25–34, and almost 11 months for those aged 35 and over.

The duration of breastfeeding was also related to educational attainment. Mothers who had a bachelor degree or higher qualification breastfed both their first and second child for in excess of 11 months on average. This compares with 9 months for those with a certificate or diploma, 8 months for those mothers with no post-school qualifications, and 7 months for those with trade qualifications (Jain 1996 (ABS Cat. no. 4394.0)).

Nutrition

Good nutrition, particularly in the early stages of life, is essential for healthy growth and development, and in building the capacity to fight disease. Although all Australians need the same range of nutrients, the quantities required depend on age, sex, physical size, state of health and activity levels. Therefore, nutritional requirements vary greatly throughout childhood and adolescence, and into adulthood.

Nutrition *continued*

The 1995 National Nutrition Survey found that mean daily nutrient intakes for children in each age group generally met or exceeded the recommended dietary intakes (RDIs) specified by the NHMRC. Nevertheless, mean intake was less than the RDI in:

- calcium for boys aged 12–15 (the mean intake constituted 91% of RDI) and for girls aged 4–15 (78–88% of RDI depending on age);
- zinc for girls aged 8 and over (77–96% of RDI depending on age); and
- magnesium for girls aged 16–18 years (95% of RDI).

Energy intake increased with the age of the child and, across all ages, was higher for males than females. For both boys and girls, energy intake peaked at age 16–18 (a peak time for both growth and activity), although boys of this age consumed more than one-and-a-half times as many kilojoules as girls on average (13,526 kJ compared with 8,690 kJ).

5.12 MEAN DAILY ENERGY INTAKE—1995

Selected characteristics	AGE GROUP (YEARS).....					
	2–3	4–7	8–11	12–15	16–18	19 and over
ENERGY INTAKE (kJ)						
Males	6 606.1	7 847.1	9 661.6	11 589.4	13 525.5	11 049.5
Females	6 079.3	7 014.3	8 305.4	8 533.6	8 690.4	7 480.9
All persons	6 349.5	7 441.5	9 000.4	10 104.0	11 175.0	9 237.9
MEAN CONTRIBUTION TO ENERGY INTAKE (%)						
Protein	14.2	13.9	14.3	15.0	15.7	17.1
Fat						
Saturated fat	15.6	14.5	14.3	14.3	13.6	12.7
Monounsaturated fat	11.0	11.3	11.8	11.8	11.7	11.8
Polyunsaturated fat	4.0	4.3	4.7	4.6	4.5	5.0
Total(a)	33.1	32.6	33.4	33.3	32.5	32.5
Carbohydrate						
Total sugar	29.4	27.8	25.2	25.1	24.3	20.2
Total starch	22.5	25.0	26.5	25.9	25.6	25.8
Total	51.9	52.8	51.7	51.0	49.9	46.0
Alcohol	—	—	—	0.1	1.3	3.7
Total energy(b)	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
NUMBER ('000)						
Total persons	517.5	1 034.6	1 032.7	1 019.9	758.0	13 205.2

(a) Total fat also includes a contribution from non fatty acids; therefore components shown do not add to total.

(b) Due to the methodology used, the sum of energy values from protein, fats, carbohydrates and alcohol do not add to total energy. See p. 59 of *National Nutrition Survey: Selected Highlights, Australia, 1995* (ABS Cat. no. 4802.0) for further explanation.

Source: *National Nutrition Survey: Selected Highlights, Australia, 1995* (ABS Cat. no. 4802.0).

Nutrition *continued*

The relative contribution of the main nutrient groups to total energy intake was similar for children of all ages. Between 50–53% of energy was obtained from carbohydrates, 32–33% from fats, and 14–16% from protein sources. As the age of children increased, the contribution of saturated fats and sugars declined, while the percentage of monounsaturated fats, polyunsaturated fats and starches increased up until ages 8–11, before levelling off. These consumption patterns are consistent with NHMRC recommendations. However, children over 4 years of age consumed slightly higher proportions of saturated fat than the 10% recommended by the NHMRC. Of greater concern were the proportions of children who had not consumed vegetables or fruit. Almost 60% of those aged 16–18, 46% of those aged 12–15, and almost one-third of those aged 4–11, had not eaten fruit or fruit products on the day prior to interview. Further, more than 20% of children aged under 12 had not eaten vegetables or vegetable products (see tables 5.27 and 5.28).

Almost all children had eaten some food at home on the day prior to interview. Foods consumed at home provided 75% of energy intake for children aged 2–3 years, decreasing to 60% for those aged 16–18. As children reached school age they were more likely to eat food away from home that they had brought from home, a trend which reversed after the child reached age 12–15. Older children were more likely to eat food away from home which had not been brought from home (69% of those aged 16–18, compared with 58% of those aged 12–15 and 55% of those aged 2–3). Generally, food and beverages obtained and eaten away from home had a higher relative fat content than those brought from home (see *National Nutrition Survey: Selected Highlights, Australia, 1995*, pp. 9 and 29 (ABS Cat. no. 4802.0)).

5.13 WHERE FOOD AND BEVERAGES CONSUMED—1995

Place of consumption	AGE GROUP (YEARS).....					
	2-3	4-7	8-11	12-15	16-18	19 and over
PROPORTION OF TOTAL ENERGY INTAKE (%)						
Consumed at home	75.1	68.5	66.5	68.3	59.9	69.2
Consumed away from home						
Obtained from home	7.1	14.5	14.3	11.9	6.4	6.0
Not obtained from home	17.1	16.6	18.9	19.5	33.2	24.4
Total(a)	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
PROPORTION OF PERSONS (%)						
Consumed at home	99.3	99.6	98.0	98.8	96.3	97.8
Consumed away from home						
Obtained from home	34.1	55.3	62.2	53.0	32.2	25.2
Not obtained from home	54.7	56.8	54.8	58.2	69.3	60.3
NUMBER OF PERSONS ('000)						
Total	517.5	1 034.6	1 032.7	1 019.9	758.0	13 205.2

(a) Totals include not answered/don't know category.

Source: *National Nutrition Survey, Selected Highlights, Australia, 1995* (ABS Cat. no. 4802.0).

Obesity

Obesity is the most common nutrition-related disorder in Australia and contributes to diseases such as cardiovascular disease, hypertension and diabetes mellitus. In general, excess weight is the outcome of a long-term imbalance between energy intake through food consumption and energy expenditure. Although there are some medical conditions which may cause obesity these are comparatively rare in both adults and children.

Indicators of the balance between height and weight vary with age. While measures of weight for age and weight for height are used for children of any age, they are generally recommended for children aged 2–8. An alternative measure, the Body Mass Index (BMI) for age, is recommended for older children and young adults aged 9–24 (see Glossary).

The 1995 National Nutrition Survey found that 9% of children aged 2–8 had a high weight for their age and 5% had a high weight for their height. Of children aged 9–18, 7% had a BMI for age which showed them to be overweight and a further 15% had a BMI for age which placed them at risk of being overweight (see table 5.29).

Sun protection

Skin cancer is the most common form of cancer in Australia, where some of the highest incidence rates in the world are recorded. The major risk factor associated with skin cancer is exposure to the ultraviolet component of sunlight.

Sun protection in childhood is an important factor in reducing the incidence of skin cancer in later life. State and Territory anti-cancer organisations, government agencies and industry have all taken steps in recent years to promote the prevention and early detection of skin cancer. Strategies which have been used to reduce exposure of children to ultraviolet radiation include the provision of shade at child care centres, swimming pools and playgrounds and policies encouraging schoolchildren to wear hats in the playground (National Health Strategy 1993).

The 1995 National Health Survey identified the sun protection measures taken by children or parents on behalf of their children. Overall, 86% of those aged 0–17 had used some form of sun protection in the month prior to interview. The three most common forms of sun protection for children were wearing a hat (75%), using sunscreen (61%) and wearing protective clothing (48%). Very young children were more likely to have avoided the sun (34%), and older children (aged 15–17) to have worn sunglasses (41%). Around 53% of children aged 0–17 were always deliberately protected against the sun, and a further 29% were usually protected. Only 5% of children were seldom or never deliberately protected against the sun (see also table 5.30).

5.14 CHILDREN, Sun Protection Measures Taken—1995

Type of sun protection measure taken	AGE GROUP (YEARS).....				Total
	0-4	5-9	10-14	15-17	
	%	%	%	%	%
No sun protection measures taken	15.7	9.7	13.5	19.3	14.1
Sun protection measures taken					
Hat	75.8	86.7	75.9	51.1	74.6
Sunscreen	60.8	66.7	63.0	50.1	61.2
Clothing	52.4	51.3	44.1	42.3	48.1
Avoided sun	34.3	22.9	16.9	17.5	23.5
Sunglasses	16.4	19.9	23.1	41.0	23.4
Other	8.7	4.4	2.8	1.8	4.7
Total(a)	84.3	90.3	86.5	80.7	85.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000
Total	1 295.3	1 289.2	1 288.2	798.5	4 671.2

(a) More than one type of sun protection measure may have been taken, therefore components do not add to total.

Source: ABS, unpublished data, 1995 National Health Survey.

PREVENTATIVE HEALTH MEASURES

Immunisation

Immunisation programs are a major preventative health measure, designed to ensure children are protected from serious, preventable illnesses and to help stop the spread of such diseases through the wider community. Goals for the year 2000 include:

- the achievement of greater than 90% coverage of children at two years of age for all diseases specified in the Childhood Vaccination Schedule;
- near universal coverage of children of school entry age for diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis (whooping cough), poliomyelitis (polio), measles, mumps and rubella; and
- near universal coverage of girls and boys under 17 years of age for measles, mumps and rubella (NHMRC, 1993).

In 1995, the level of immunisation among children appeared to be low, with only one-third of children aged three months to six years classified as fully immunised (appropriate to their age) against all diseases. However, changes in the NHMRC's recommended Childhood Vaccination Schedule, particularly the introduction of the Hib vaccine in 1993, were major factors contributing to this result. When measured against the NHMRC's previous (1991) Schedule, the proportion of children fully immunised rose to just over one-half (52%). Rates of immunisation against particular diseases were much higher, with the highest proportions of children being fully immunised against measles (92%), mumps (90%) and polio (83%) (see table 5.15). For each disease, children in couple families were more likely than those in one-parent families to be fully immunised (see table 5.31).

5.15 FULLY IMMUNISED CHILDREN AGED 3 MONTHS TO 6 YEARS—1995

Condition immunised against	1994	1991
	Schedule(a)	Schedule(a)
	%	%
Measles(b)	91.6	91.6
Mumps(b)	89.6	89.6
Polio	82.6	82.6
Rubella(b)	75.5	75.5
Diphtheria/tetanus	68.6	68.6
Pertussis	59.9	66.8
Hib	50.2	. .
All above	33.1	52.1
	'000	'000
Total	1 735.3	1 735.3

(a) NHMRC's recommended Childhood Vaccination Schedule.

(b) Children aged one year or less have been excluded from estimates for measles, mumps and rubella.

Source: Children's Immunisation Survey, Australia, 1995 (ABS Cat. no. 4352.0).

For each child not fully immunised against a particular disease, parents or guardians were asked their main reason for not having the child vaccinated. The most common reasons given (with the exception of Hib and rubella) were that the child was too young (32% of those not immunised against polio, 30% against measles, and 30% against mumps) or that parents simply had not got around to immunising their children (measles 26%, mumps 24%, and polio 20%). The most common reason why children were not immunised against Hib was because the parent/guardian had not heard of the vaccine (38%); and for almost one-third (32%) of those not immunised against rubella, the most common reason was that immunisation was only necessary for girls. Some parents stated they were opposed to immunisation. This was the case for 18% of children not immunised against diphtheria/tetanus or pertussis, 17% of those not immunised against polio, and less than 6% of those not immunised against each of the other vaccine preventable diseases (see table 5.32).

Health screening

Health screening, comprising sight and hearing tests, dental consultations and attendance at baby health clinics, is an important aspect of preventative health. Prompt detection of a condition through health screening can facilitate early intervention to stop, slow or alter its development and therefore minimise its effects.

SIGHT AND HEARING TESTS

Both sight and hearing disorders are among the most frequently reported health conditions affecting children, highlighting the need for an effective screening process. In 1995, the Children's Health Screening Survey found that, of all children aged 0–14, 63% had received an eyesight test and 66% had been tested for their hearing at some stage during their lives. Not surprisingly, the likelihood of having been tested generally increased with the age of the child. For those children aged 10–14, 79% had received an eyesight test and 71% had been tested for their hearing.

5.16 CHILDREN AGED 0–14, Sight and Hearing Tests—1995

Whether testing had occurred	AGE GROUP (YEARS).....				Total
	0–1	2–4	5–9	10–14	
	%	%	%	%	%
Sight had been tested	33.3	38.4	72.2	79.3	62.6
Hearing had been tested	45.7	56.3	75.1	70.6	65.9
Neither sight nor hearing had been tested	48.7	38.2	14.9	11.8	23.1
	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000
Total(a)	510.6	774.3	1 279.6	1 282.5	3 846.9

(a) Includes not known if tested and type of test 'not stated'.

Source: *Children's Health Screening, 1995* (ABS Cat. no. 4337.0).

While the majority of children attended screening tests for a check-up, some attended for known or suspected problems. Overall, only 23% of most recent sight tests and 18% of most recent hearing tests were conducted for known or suspected problems (see table 5.33).

DENTAL VISITS

In 1995, 75% of all children aged 2–14 had visited a dentist or dental professional at least once in their lives, ranging from less than one-quarter (23%) of those aged 2–4 to nearly all (97%) of those aged 10–14. Of all children who had visited a dental professional, 45% had done so in the last six months and a further 34% had done so in the last year. As with other types of screening tests, the majority (73%) of children attended for a check-up rather than for a dental problem or dental treatment. While 87% of children attending school were reported as having access to school dental services, only 47% had actually used these services. Of those children who had not used school dental services, just over one-half (55%) used a private family dentist (see *Children's Health Screening, 1995* (ABS Cat. no. 4337.0)).

5.17 CHILDREN AGED 2–14, Dental Visits—1995

Whether ever visited a dentist and reason for last visit	AGE GROUP (YEARS).....			
	2–4	5–9	10–14	Total
	%	%	%	%
Had visited a dental professional	22.5	85.1	96.6	75.0
Had never visited a dental professional	77.3	14.7	3.3	24.8
Reason for last dental visit				
Check-up	74.3	75.5	70.2	72.8
Dental problem	20.2	17.0	14.3	15.9
Preventative treatment	2.4	4.9	4.1	4.3
Orthodontic treatment	*0.4	2.4	11.1	6.6
	'000	'000	'000	'000
Total	774.3	1 279.6	1 282.5	3 336.3

Source: *Children's Health Screening, 1995* (ABS Cat. no. 4337.0).

BABY HEALTH CLINICS

In 1995, 89% of children aged under 4 years had visited a baby health clinic at least once. Of these, 63% visited the clinics regularly (that is, they received checks in accordance with NHMRC recommendations). The likelihood of regular clinic attendance was greatest when the child was still very young (62% of all children aged 3–5 months, compared with 47% of those aged 12–18 months). Among parents who had attended a clinic, 90% said that the reason they went was to obtain a check-up for their child. Conversely, the most common reasons given for not attending a clinic were that there was no perceived need (39%) or that alternative services had been used (30%) (see *Children's Health Screening, 1995* (ABS Cat. no. 4337.0)).

INDIGENOUS HEALTH

Infant and child mortality

While Australia generally has a low infant mortality rate, available data indicate that the rate for Indigenous children is around two to three times higher than for the total Australian population. Data relating to Indigenous deaths should, however, be interpreted with caution as only South Australia, Western Australia and the Northern Territory collect data considered reliable enough to be published. Although New South Wales, Victoria and Tasmania have provision for identification of Indigenous deaths, they remain significantly under-recorded in these States. Queensland has recently begun to identify Indigenous deaths in its registration process. The Australian Capital Territory has too few Indigenous persons to calculate reliable rates (see *Deaths, Australia, 1995* (ABS Cat. no. 3302.0)).

In each of the States with reliable data in 1997, the Indigenous infant mortality rate was well above the corresponding rate for all infants. In the Northern Territory, the high mortality rate among Indigenous infants of 29.4 deaths per 1,000 Indigenous live births contributed to an overall infant mortality rate of 12.5 deaths per 1,000 live births; compared with the national rate of 5.3.

5.18 INDIGENOUS INFANT MORTALITY RATES—1997

	SA	WA	NT	Total
<i>Population</i>	rate	rate	rate	rate
Indigenous infants(a)	8.5	13.6	29.4	n.a.
All infants(b)	4.7	5.3	12.5	5.3

(a) Rate per 1,000 Indigenous live births.

(b) Rate per 1,000 live births.

Source: *Deaths, Australia, 1997* (ABS Cat. no. 3302.0).

The child death rate (for children aged 1–4) is also higher among the Indigenous population. During 1994–96, the estimated child death rate for Indigenous children was around 4.5 times higher than that of non-Indigenous children (131 deaths per 100,000 children, compared with 29, respectively). This difference may reflect the poor socioeconomic environment in which many Indigenous children live (see *Causes of Infant and Child Deaths, Australia, 1982 to 1996* (ABS Cat. no. 4398.0)).

Life expectancy

In 1996, children made up 46% of the Indigenous population, compared with 26% of the total Australian population (see Population chapter). This difference occurred despite higher Indigenous infant and child mortality, and reflects greater fertility and shorter life expectancy among the Indigenous population. Experimental life tables of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population, produced for the whole of Australia for the 1991–96 period, indicated that life expectancy for an Indigenous male at birth was 57 years, 18 years less than the expected 75 years for males in the total population. A similar discrepancy was evident for the life expectancy of females at birth, and for both males and females at age 18.

5.19 LIFE EXPECTANCY(a)

<i>Population</i>	AT BIRTH.....		AT 18TH BIRTHDAY....	
	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>
	years	years	years	years
Indigenous(b)	57	66	41	50
Total population(c)	75	81	58	64

(a) Average remaining lifetime (in years).

(b) Experimental life table 1991–96.

(c) Life table 1994–96.

Source: *Deaths, Australia, 1996* (ABS Cat. no. 3302.0).

Health status

In the 1994 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey, 37% of Indigenous children aged 0–17 were reported as having experienced a recent illness. Younger children were most likely to have been ill (42% of those aged 0–4 compared with 34% of those aged 5–14). Respiratory disease was the most frequently reported condition for all Indigenous children, accounting for half of all reported illness for those aged 0–4 and more than 40% of illness for those aged 5–17.

5.20 INDIGENOUS PERSONS, Recent Illness—1994

Type of condition	AGE GROUP (YEARS).....					
	0–4	5–14	15–17	Total 0–17	18 and over	Total
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Diseases of the respiratory system	21.1	14.1	14.8	16.4	12.4	14.2
Diseases of the nervous system and sense organs	5.9	4.6	*1.8	4.6	3.5	4.0
Diseases of the skin and subcutaneous tissue	6.7	3.7	3.1	4.6	2.8	3.6
Injury and poisoning	3.3	4.4	5.7	4.2	5.6	5.0
Diseases of the digestive system	5.5	2.1	*1.6	3.1	2.4	2.7
Infectious and parasitic diseases	2.2	2.1	*1.9	2.1	0.7	1.3
Persons who reported a recent illness(a)	42.0	33.5	36.8	36.7	44.9	41.2
	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000
Total Indigenous population	44.5	74.1	20.8	139.4	163.8	303.3

(a) Only the most commonly reported conditions are shown. Persons may have reported more than one type of condition; therefore components do not add to the totals shown.

Source: ABS, unpublished data, 1994 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey.

Approximately 40% of children aged 0–17 had taken some health related action in the two weeks prior to the survey. The use of medication (including bush medicines) was the most commonly reported health related action (29% of those aged 0–17), followed by consultation with a doctor (17%) (see table 5.34).

People may have different health expectations and standards, and therefore perceive problems differently and express different levels of concern. It would be inappropriate, therefore, to conclude that the lower overall reporting of illness among Indigenous children compared with all children (as identified in the 1995 National Health Survey) is indicative of lower levels of illness among Indigenous children.

Health status *continued*

Similarly, people respond to illness in different ways. Some of the many factors which affect the likelihood of an Indigenous person attending a health facility or using a health service include:

- distance from the service;
- the degree of Indigenous involvement in the facility and whether Indigenous staff are available; and
- the frequency with which health professionals visit (in areas without permanent services) (see *The Health and Welfare of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples* (ABS Cat. no. 4704.0)).

ADDITIONAL TABLES

5.21 INFANT MORTALITY RATES, International Comparison

Country	Reference date	Infant mortality
	year	rate(a)
Sweden	1996	3.5p
Singapore	1996	3.8p
Japan	1995	4.3
Hong Kong	1995	4.6
France	1996	4.9p
Australia	1995	5.7
United Kingdom	1996	6.1p
Italy	1995	6.1
Canada	1994	6.3
New Zealand	1995	6.7
United States of America	1995	7.5
Greece	1996	8.1p
Korea (Republic of)	1990–95	11.0
Malaysia	1990–95	13.0
Viet Nam	1990–95	42.0
China	1990–95	44.0
Indonesia	1990–95	58.0
Papua New Guinea	1990–95	68.0

(a) Per 1,000 live births.

Source: United Nations 1998b.

5.22 CHILDREN AGED 1–17 YEARS, Main Causes of Death—1997

Cause of death	AGE GROUP (YEARS).....							
	1–4.....		5–11.....		12–14.....		15–17.....	
	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%
Accidents, poisoning and violence	150	45.9	87	34.7	70	47.3	227	59.7
Neoplasms	38	11.6	67	26.7	25	16.9	40	10.5
Diseases of the nervous system and sense organs	26	8.0	26	10.4	8	5.4	22	5.8
Diseases of the circulatory system	7	2.1	4	1.6	7	4.7	13	3.4
Diseases of the respiratory system	24	7.3	11	4.4	6	4.1	15	3.9
Congenital anomalies	38	11.6	22	8.8	15	10.1	18	4.7
All other causes	44	13.5	34	13.5	17	11.5	45	11.8
All causes	327	100.0	251	100.0	148	100.0	380	100.0

Source: ABS, unpublished data, cause of death collection.

5.23 CHILDREN, Recent Illness(a) by Age—1995

Type of condition	AGE GROUP (YEARS).....				
	0-4	5-11	12-14	15-17	Total
	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000
Common cold	178.9	152.0	48.0	56.7	435.7
Asthma	72.6	184.7	75.6	70.1	403.1
Dental problems	111.4	79.2	59.6	49.9	300.1
Headache	11.3	84.6	82.8	115.4	294.1
Cough or sore throat	80.9	77.1	27.7	30.1	215.8
Eczema, dermatitis	70.0	41.3	12.5	15.2	139.0
Influenza	33.6	55.7	20.0	28.2	137.5
Otitis media	47.0	31.2	6.5	5.6	90.3
Pyrexia	47.8	31.9	3.2	4.0	87.0
Hayfever	4.4	27.3	19.6	25.6	76.8
Children who reported a recent illness condition(b)	752.6	961.9	432.9	486.4	2 633.7
All children	1 295.3	1 810.0	767.4	798.5	4 671.2

(a) Illness or injury experienced in the two weeks prior to the survey.

(b) Only the most commonly reported conditions are shown. Persons may have reported more than one type of recent condition; therefore components do not add to the totals shown.

Source: ABS, unpublished data, 1995 National Health Survey.

5.24 HEALTH STATUS AND HEALTH RELATED ACTIONS, All Persons—1995

Type of condition and health actions taken	AGE GROUP (YEARS).....					
	0-4	5-17	Total 0-17	18-59	60 and over	Total
	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000
Recent illness						
Illness reported	752.6	1 881.2	2 633.7	7 347.1	2 517.9	12 498.7
No illness reported	542.7	1 494.7	2 037.5	3 186.7	338.2	5 562.4
Long-term condition						
Condition reported	397.5	1 754.1	2 151.8	8 473.8	2 835.0	13 460.5
No condition reported	897.8	1 621.8	2 519.4	2 060.0	21.1	4 600.6
Recent health actions						
Doctor consultation	375.7	471.0	846.7	2 322.0	1 037.9	4 206.6
Dental consultation	15.1	301.2	316.3	531.1	158.7	1 006.1
Used medication (includes natural/herbal medications)	696.6	1 723.8	2 420.3	7 450.8	2 546.4	12 417.6
Hospital inpatient	10.4	10.7	21.1	69.7	47.7	138.5
Days away from work/school	31.8	501.5	533.2	802.5	23.0	1 358.8
All persons who took action(a)	830.2	2 077.5	2 907.7	8 075.1	2 615.0	13 597.8
All persons who took no action	465.1	1 298.4	1 763.5	2 458.7	241.1	4 463.3
Total	1 295.3	3 375.9	4 671.2	10 533.8	2 856.1	18 061.1

(a) Only selected health actions are shown. Persons may have reported more than one health action; therefore components do not add to the total shown.

Source: ABS, unpublished data, 1995 National Health Survey.

5.25 CHILDREN, Long-term Conditions by Age—1995

Type of condition	AGE GROUP (YEARS).....				
	0-4	5-11	12-14	15-17	Total
	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000
Asthma	136.0	349.3	138.7	128.0	752.0
Hayfever	24.3	135.3	90.2	124.0	373.7
Allergy	47.0	115.2	44.8	49.4	256.3
Myopia/short-sighted	2.3	54.1	62.4	88.9	207.7
Sinusitis	12.9	76.8	46.1	63.4	199.2
Hypermetropia/far-sighted	3.2	73.7	54.5	56.2	187.6
Bronchitis/emphysema	33.0	51.9	14.8	18.7	118.4
Eczema, dermatitis	58.2	60.4	15.6	15.1	149.2
Mental retardation, specific delays in development	9.1	47.2	19.4	13.0	88.6
Astigmatism	5.3	25.8	20.2	26.2	77.6
Speech impediment, n.e.c.	18.3	36.0	8.1	4.5	66.8
Deafness (complete/partial)	9.8	34.5	8.8	13.3	66.3
Emotional problems, n.e.c.	4.7	27.1	7.9	2.9	42.5
Otitis media	10.1	12.8	4.5	*0.9	28.4
Strabismus	7.6	13.8	3.8	2.8	28.0
Children who reported a long-term medical condition(a)	397.5	870.5	412.3	471.3	2 151.8
All children	1 295.3	1 810.0	767.4	798.5	4 671.2

(a) Only the most commonly reported conditions are shown. Persons may have reported more than one type of long-term condition; therefore components do not add to the totals shown.

Source: ABS, unpublished data, 1995 National Health Survey.

5.26 BIRTHWEIGHT AT DELIVERY—1995

Birthweight (grams)	Males.....		Females.....	
	no.	%	no.	%
Less than 1 000	999	0.7	913	0.7
1 000-1 499	776	0.6	796	0.6
1 500-1 999	1 548	1.2	1 632	1.3
2 000-2 499	4 505	3.4	5 363	4.3
2 500-2 999	17 297	12.9	22 441	17.8
3 000-3 499	45 354	33.9	48 705	38.6
3 500 and over	63 146	47.3	46 324	36.7
Total(a)	133 708	100.0	126 257	100.0

(a) Total includes birthweight 'not stated'.

Source: Day et al. 1997

5.27 CONSUMPTION FROM MAJOR FOOD GROUPS, Males—1995

Food group	AGE GROUP (YEARS).....					
	2-3	4-7	8-11	12-15	16-18	19 and over
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Cereals and cereal-based products						
Cereals and cereal products	99.4	98.7	98.7	98.1	93.9	93.9
Cereal-based products and dishes	80.4	81.3	80.0	73.6	64.7	69.0
Fruit products and dishes	77.6	65.6	56.4	49.9	39.9	51.4
Vegetables and legumes						
Vegetable products and dishes	68.1	72.7	77.0	78.8	83.1	88.3
Legume and pulse products and dishes	8.6	6.7	3.7	7.1	5.8	7.7
Milk products and dishes	98.2	95.5	90.9	92.8	94.2	92.5
Meat, poultry and game products and dishes	76.7	72.4	77.0	78.8	80.9	85.4
Fish and seafood products and dishes	9.6	10.6	11.8	12.8	8.8	18.3
Egg products and dishes	12.6	11.1	14.0	12.3	18.1	18.3
Snack foods, sugar, confectionary						
Snack foods	23.7	34.1	32.7	28.7	24.4	8.3
Sugar products and dishes	68.4	69.7	67.3	58.1	56.8	72.7
Confectionary	44.8	53.3	53.4	46.7	37.2	19.6
Other foods						
Seeds and nut products and dishes	18.2	20.7	15.1	10.9	7.7	12.5
Fats and oils	84.2	81.3	80.8	76.5	65.7	76.8
Soup	4.3	6.9	9.4	5.7	3.6	11.0
Savoury sauces and condiments	42.2	42.4	51.7	56.9	61.8	56.8
Beverages						
Non-alcoholic	98.5	100.0	99.8	99.6	99.7	99.7
Alcoholic	0.4	0.2	—	0.5	16.0	41.9
	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000
Total	265.4	530.6	529.2	524.1	389.5	6 501.6

Source: National Nutrition Survey: Selected Highlights, Australia, 1995 (ABS Cat. no. 4802.0).

5.28 CONSUMPTION FROM MAJOR FOOD GROUPS, Females—1995

Food group	AGE GROUP (YEARS).....					
	2-3	4-7	8-11	12-15	16-18	19 and over
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Cereals and cereal-based products						
Cereals and cereal products	98.8	98.9	97.0	95.1	93.0	95.1
Cereal-based products and dishes	71.5	79.8	77.7	70.0	71.2	69.1
Fruit products and dishes	75.4	72.8	62.5	58.0	41.1	61.1
Vegetables and legumes						
Vegetable products and dishes	79.2	79.7	77.0	85.9	85.8	89.3
Legume and pulse products and dishes	4.0	4.1	2.8	5.8	8.3	6.9
Milk products and dishes	98.1	96.0	93.3	90.8	87.3	94.1
Meat, poultry and game products and dishes	71.7	73.6	78.3	80.2	74.5	77.2
Fish and seafood products and dishes	13.3	16.8	11.5	11.2	16.7	18.2
Egg products and dishes	13.9	12.2	10.7	8.7	8.5	15.2
Snack foods, sugar, confectionary						
Snack foods	21.5	29.7	36.5	38.4	24.1	8.0
Sugar products and dishes	56.2	63.8	56.4	53.2	44.9	62.3
Confectionary	52.2	56.3	55.0	51.3	39.9	22.0
Other foods						
Seeds and nut products and dishes	19.5	20.4	14.4	8.3	9.8	12.3
Fats and oils	82.2	83.4	81.7	73.2	66.9	73.9
Soup	5.0	6.0	4.9	5.8	4.5	14.4
Savoury sauces and condiments	41.8	44.5	52.2	52.8	63.0	51.4
Beverages						
Non-alcoholic	99.0	99.0	99.7	100.0	100.0	100.0
Alcoholic	1.9	0.1	0.4	1.3	12.0	24.4
Total	252.1	504.0	503.5	495.8	368.5	6 703.6

Source: National Nutrition Survey: Selected Highlights, Australia, 1995 (ABS Cat. no. 4802.0).

5.29 CHILDREN, Weight Indicators—1995

<i>Indicator</i>	'000	%
CHILDREN AGED 2–8 YEARS		
Weight for age		
Low	*13.3	*0.7
Normal	1 613.9	89.2
High	159.9	8.8
<i>Total(a)</i>	1 809.1	100.0
Weight for height		
Low	*19.2	1.1
Normal	1 621.4	89.6
High	96.8	5.4
<i>Total(a)</i>	1 809.1	100.0
CHILDREN AGED 9–18 YEARS		
Body mass index		
Low for age	57.9	2.3
Acceptable for age	1 908.4	74.7
At risk of overweight	387.3	15.2
Overweight	185.5	7.3
<i>Total(a)</i>	2 553.6	100.0

(a) Totals include 'not applicable' and 'not stated' responses, and children who were not measured.

Source: ABS, unpublished data, 1995 National Nutrition Survey.

5.30 CHILDREN, Sun Protection Measures—1995

<i>Frequency sun protection measures taken</i>	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>	<i>All children</i>
	%	%	%
Always	52.0	53.9	52.9
Usually	28.8	28.4	28.6
Sometimes	11.2	10.7	11.0
Seldom	3.0	2.6	2.8
Never	3.0	2.1	2.6
Don't go out in the sun	2.1	2.3	2.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
	'000	'000	'000
Total	2 403.2	2 268.0	4 671.2

Source: ABS, unpublished data, 1995 National Health Survey.

5.31 CHILDREN(a), Proportion Fully Immunised by Family Type—1995

Family type	Diphtheria/ tetanus	Polio	Measles(b)	Mumps(b)	Rubella(b)	Pertussis	Hib
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Couple families	71.2	84.9	92.4	90.5	76.7	62.3	52.7
One-parent families	54.2	69.2	87.5	84.5	69.0	46.3	35.9
	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000
Total children	1 735.3	1 735.3	1 521.4	1 521.4	1 521.4	1 735.3	1 735.3

(a) Comprises children aged 3 months to 6 years.

(b) Children aged one year or less were excluded from estimates for measles, mumps and rubella.

Source: Children's Immunisation Survey, Australia, 1995 (ABS Cat. no. 4352.0).

5.32 CHILDREN(a), Reasons Not Immunised—1995

Reason not immunised	Diphtheria/ Tetanus or Pertussis	Polio	Measles(b)	Mumps(b)	Rubella(b)	Hib
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Advised against it	*8.3	*5.6	*2.3	*1.8	1.1	3.4
Concerned about side effects	*6.6	*3.3	6.5	5.6	2.2	3.2
Hadn't heard of it	10.1	*6.7	6.6	10.6	5.3	37.8
Hadn't got around to it	14.5	19.7	26.2	24.4	14.0	11.3
Opposed to immunisation	18.4	16.7	5.7	4.7	1.9	1.8
Sick when due for immunisation	*7.4	*6.7	9.8	8.0	3.3	1.5
Too expensive	..	..	**0.4	**0.3	*0.3	3.0
Too young	25.4	31.6	30.0	29.7	28.9	7.8
Vaccine not available/given	**0.9	*2.2	3.1	3.5	5.7	7.8
Boy (rubella injection for girls only)	..	..	..	..	32.3	..
Hib—too old/out of danger age	..	..	..	..	..	16.8
Other	*7.4	*7.4	9.3	11.4	5.1	5.7
	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000
Total(c)	22.8	26.9	94.2	115.5	299.4	544.1

(a) Comprises children aged 3 months to 6 years.

(b) Children aged one year or less have been excluded from estimates for measles, mumps and rubella.

(c) Total children not fully immunised.

Source: Children's Immunisation Survey, Australia, 1995 (ABS Cat. no. 4352.0).

5.33 REASON FOR LAST SCREENING TEST—1995

Reason for last test	AGE GROUP (YEARS).....			
	0-4	5-9	10-14	All children aged 0-14
	%	%	%	%
Sight tests				
Known/suspected problems	11.2	20.0	30.1	22.6
Check-up	86.6	76.9	65.2	73.8
Other/not stated	2.2	3.1	4.7	3.6
Hearing tests				
Known/suspected problems	8.7	14.0	13.0	12.2
Other medical ear problems	4.2	5.7	5.9	5.4
Check up	85.3	78.2	78.9	80.3
Other/not known	1.8	2.0	2.2	2.0
	'000	'000	'000	'000
Total	1 284.9	1 279.6	1 282.5	3 846.9

Source: Children's Health Screening, 1995 (ABS Cat. no. 4337.0).

5.34 INDIGENOUS PERSONS, Health Related Actions—1994

Type of health related actions	AGE GROUP (YEARS).....					
	0-4	5-14	15-17	Total 0-17	18 and over	Total
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Used medication	33.9	22.5	27.0	26.8	36.6	32.1
Consulted doctor	24.4	13.1	15.6	17.1	20.2	18.8
Reduced daily activities	7.7	14.8	15.8	12.7	12.5	12.6
Visited emergency/outpatients clinic	8.1	6.1	6.7	6.8	8.7	7.8
Consulted Aboriginal health worker	8.0	4.9	3.0	5.6	6.2	6.0
Consulted nurse	8.0	3.8	5.4	5.4	5.2	5.3
Used bush medicine	2.4	2.3	2.8	2.4	4.8	3.7
Admitted to hospital	3.0	1.6	*1.5	2.0	2.9	2.5
All persons who took action(a)	47.2	35.2	39.5	39.7	48.4	44.4
	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000
Total Indigenous population	44.5	74.1	20.8	139.4	163.8	303.3

(a) Only the most commonly reported actions are shown. Persons may have reported more than one health action; therefore components do not add to the totals shown.

Source: ABS, unpublished data, 1994 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey.

CHAPTER 6

EDUCATION

INTRODUCTION

In Australia, schooling is compulsory for all children from age 6 to age 15 (age 16 in Tasmania). However, in most States and the Territories, schooling is available to children from around the age of 5 years when they can attend a pre-primary class for a year. In August 1997 there were 3.2 million full-time school students, of whom almost 99% were aged 17 or under, who attended 9,600 schools.

This chapter examines the attendance of children at preschool, primary and secondary school, the factors which influence attendance at different types of schools and the support which parents give their children with schooling.

STATES AND TERRITORIES

State and Territory governments have the major responsibility for providing educational programs and each has developed its own philosophy and approach towards educating children. While all States and Territories provide children with the opportunity to attend preschool and 12 or 13 years of regular schooling prior to tertiary education, there are differences in the structure of pre-primary education and the transition from primary to secondary school. Outcomes, curricula, teaching styles and the conditions under which children receive their education can all differ among States and Territories.

6.1 SCHOOLING STRUCTURE, States and Territories

SCHOOL YEAR	NSW, VIC, TAS, ACT	SA, NT	QLD, WA
Twelve	Secondary School	Secondary School	
Eleven			
Ten			
Nine			
Eight			
Seven			
Six	Primary School	Primary School	Primary School
Five			
Four			
Three			
Two			
One			
Pre year 1			Not applicable
Preschool	Not compulsory and outside of school system(a)		

(a) Pre-primary in Western Australia is conducted on school premises; however it is not a compulsory year.

Source: *Schools, Australia, 1997* (ABS Cat. no. 4221.0); Senate Employment, Education and Training References Committee 1996.

PRESCHOOL

Preschools are administered by each State and Territory government, although they are not considered to be part of the formal school system. The 1996 Census of Population and Housing identified 258,400 children, one-third of all children aged 3–5, who were attending preschool. This may include children who attended preschool sessions within Long Day Care centres. There were considerable differences in preschool attendance among the States and Territories, reflecting the differences in preschool and primary school entry level ages (see table 6.24).

6.2 CHILDREN AGED 3–5 YEARS ATTENDING PRESCHOOL—1996

State or Territory	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds	Total
	%	%	%	%
New South Wales	34.0	57.0	16.3	35.7
Victoria	15.4	50.6	27.8	31.3
Queensland	8.3	37.3	52.0	32.6
South Australia	15.1	65.3	6.9	29.2
Western Australia	13.1	49.5	48.2	37.1
Tasmania	7.7	28.4	25.7	20.7
Northern Territory	6.9	58.6	14.5	26.6
Australian Capital Territory	9.2	63.5	25.3	32.8
Australia(a)	19.7	51.0	28.6	33.1
	'000	'000	'000	'000
Total attending preschool	50.9	132.6	74.9	258.4

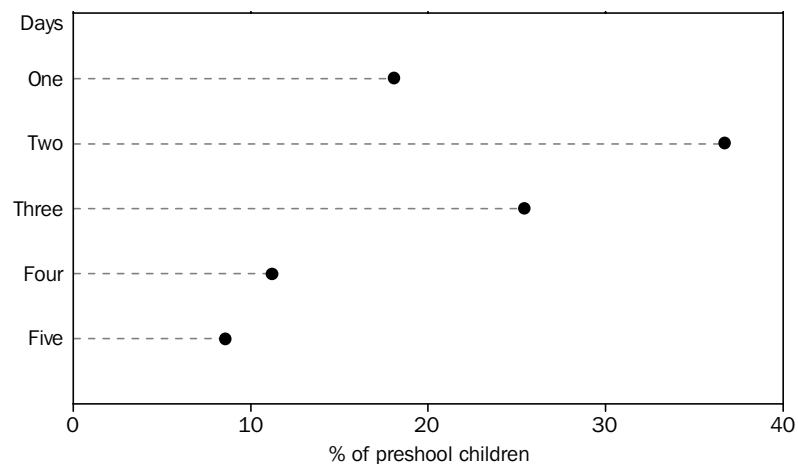
(a) Includes 'Other Territories'.

Source: ABS, unpublished data, 1996 Census of Population and Housing.

Because each State and Territory offers a one-year preschool program immediately prior to primary school, the entry level age for primary school directly affects the age at which children are most likely to attend preschool. For example, preschool attendance among 3 year-olds was highest in New South Wales (34%), which also has the lowest primary school entry age. Similarly, 5 year-olds were most likely to be attending preschool in Queensland (52%) and Western Australia (48%), which have older primary school entry ages. Despite this variation, many children commence primary school in the year they turn 5 and this was reflected in the peak age for preschool attendance which, for all States and Territories except Queensland, was 4 years.

Preschool usually provides a limited number of sessions per week for part of the day for each child who attends. Results from the 1996 Child Care Survey showed that 37% of preschool children attended for two days per week and 25% attended for three days per week. On average, children attended for about 10 hours per week. While individual sessions tended to last for around three to four hours, patterns varied among States and Territories, with preschool children in New South Wales more likely to attend longer sessions on fewer days per week (see table 6.25).

6.3 NUMBER OF DAYS PER WEEK SPENT AT PRESCHOOL—1996



Source: *Child Care, Australia, 1996* (ABS Cat. no. 4402.0).

PRIMARY EDUCATION

Attendance at primary school

Primary schooling provides a general elementary program, lasting 7 or 8 years, with the major emphasis on basic language, literacy and numeracy skills, moral and social education, health training and some creative activities. In 1997, almost 1.9 million children were attending primary school in Australia.

Because of the variation in the age of entry for primary schools among the States and Territories, children at age 5 may be attending preschool, primary school or not attending any educational program. In 1996, 86% of children aged 5 in South Australia were attending school. This compares with Queensland (34%) and Western Australia (43%), which are the only two States without a compulsory pre Year 1 level of primary school. The Northern Territory had the highest proportion of children aged 5 who were neither at school nor preschool (13%), followed by Victoria (11%).

6.4 SCHOOL ATTENDANCE, Children Aged 5 Years—1996

State or Territory	Does not attend			Total(b).....	'000
	Attends preschool	Attends primary school	preschool or primary school(a)		
	%	%	%	%	
New South Wales	16.3	71.3	8.3	100.0	88.1
Victoria	27.8	57.9	10.6	100.0	63.6
Queensland	52.0	34.4	10.2	100.0	49.2
South Australia	6.9	86.1	3.1	100.0	19.6
Western Australia	48.2	43.0	5.0	100.0	25.9
Tasmania	25.7	66.2	3.9	100.0	7.0
Northern Territory	14.5	66.1	12.8	100.0	3.7
Australian Capital Territory	25.3	67.1	4.3	100.0	4.6
Australia(c)	28.6	59.1	8.4	100.0	261.6

(a) Includes a small number of children attending 'other' types of education.

(b) Includes a small number of 'not stated' responses.

(c) Includes 'Other Territories'.

Source: ABS, unpublished data, 1996 Census of Population and Housing.

Government and non-government schools

In most parts of the country children and their families can choose either government or non-government (independent) schooling. Non-government schools may be either Catholic, affiliated with another religion, or not affiliated with any religion.

In 1997, 74% of all primary school children attended government schools. Although the number of students attending non-government schools rose steadily between 1987 and 1997, the overall proportion of primary students enrolled in such schools remained relatively stable, rising by less than two percentage points.

6.5 PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENTS, Category of School Attended

Category of school	1987.....		1997.....	
	'000	%	'000	%
Government	1 274.4	75.5	1 367.0	73.7
Non-government				
Anglican	21.2	1.3	31.7	1.7
Catholic	331.1	19.6	351.4	18.9
Other	60.7	3.6	105.7	5.7
Total	413.0	24.5	488.8	26.3
Total	1 687.4	100.0	1 855.8	100.0

Source: *Schools, Australia, 1997* (ABS Cat. no. 4221.0).

Catholic schools provide the largest single alternative to government schools. In 1997, almost three-quarters (72%) of those children attending non-government primary schools were enrolled in Catholic schools. Although Catholic schools do not only cater for students whose religion is Catholic, there are links between the religious affiliation of these schools and their students. Census data for 1996 showed that 83% of Catholic primary school students belonged to the Catholic faith, and 53% of primary school children whose religion was Catholic attended a Catholic school (see table 6.27).

SECONDARY EDUCATION

Attendance at secondary school

Secondary schooling generally consists of a program of core subjects together with optional subjects selected by the students themselves. In senior secondary years, a wider range of options is available in the larger schools and there is a trend towards encouraging individual schools to develop courses suited to the needs and interests of their students. In 1997, just over 1.3 million children were attending secondary school in Australia.

While all children have access to 12 or 13 years of schooling, the point at which they make the transition from primary to secondary education can differ. For children in New South Wales, Victoria, Tasmania and the Australian Capital Territory, secondary school commences in Year 7 at around the age of 12 years. In the other States and the Northern Territory, students do not proceed to secondary school until they have completed Year 7, at around the age of 13 years. In August 1997, 60% of all children aged 12 had commenced secondary school (*Schools, Australia, 1997* (ABS Cat. no. 4221.0)).

Government and non-government schools

In 1997, 66% of all secondary school students attended government schools. The proportion attending non-government schools rose from 30% in 1987 to 34% in 1997. Proportionally, more secondary students than primary students attend non-government schools, a difference which is most pronounced in the final years of secondary school. In 1997, the proportion of secondary school students attending non-government schools was 34% in Years 8–10, 35% in Year 11 and 38% in Year 12. This pattern may reflect students moving from the government to the non-government sector for their final years of school (*Schools, Australia, 1997* (ABS Cat. no. 4221.0)).

6.6 SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS, Category of School Attended

Category of school	1987.....		1997.....	
	'000	%	'000	%
Government	903.1	69.7	863.0	65.6
Non-government				
Anglican	53.1	4.1	63.4	4.8
Catholic	253.5	19.6	271.6	20.6
Other	85.7	6.6	117.8	9.0
Total	392.3	30.3	452.8	34.4
Total	1 295.3	100.0	1 315.8	100.0

Source: *Schools, Australia, 1997* (ABS Cat. no. 4221.0).

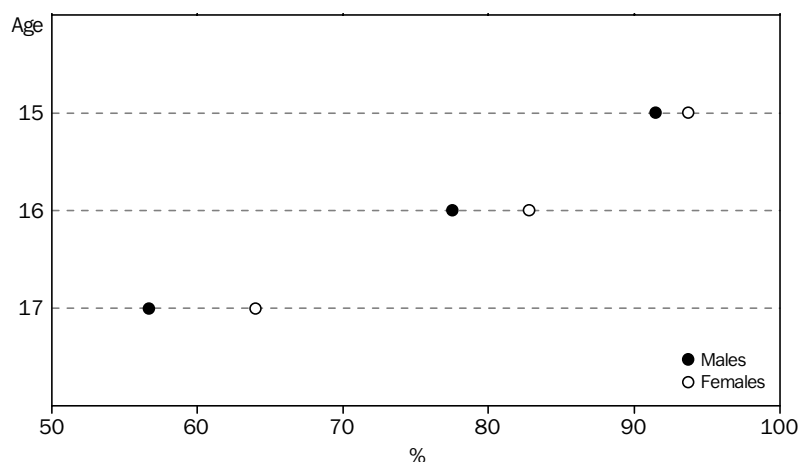
Catholic schools constituted the largest component of the non-government sector, with 60% of non-government secondary students. This was lower than the corresponding proportion (72%) among non-government primary schools. As with primary school students, 53% of secondary students whose religion was Catholic attended Catholic schools in 1996. However, the proportion of Catholic secondary school students who were non-Catholic students (22%) was larger than for primary school students (17%) (see table 6.27).

POST COMPULSORY SCHOOLING

Age participation rates

Participation in schooling beyond the compulsory attendance age of 15 years (16 years in Tasmania) has increased steadily since the late 1980s. However, participation rates (the proportion of children of a given age who are attending school full-time) decline quite markedly between the ages of 15 and 17. Whereas almost 93% of children aged 15 were still attending school in 1997, this decreased to 80% of those aged 16 and to 60% of those aged 17. For all ages from 15 to 17, the participation rates were higher for girls than boys.

6.7 AGE PARTICIPATION RATES, School Students Aged 15–17 Years—1997



Source: *Schools, Australia, 1997* (ABS Cat. no. 4221.0).

Participation rates varied considerably among the States and Territories (see table 6.28). The age participation rate may be affected by the availability of employment, government benefits and suitable tertiary education for people in these age groups. For example, in 1996, while only 59% of young people aged 17 were attending secondary school, a further 11% had commenced post-secondary education, mainly Technical and Further Education (TAFE). Overall, the combined participation rates for young people aged 15–17 in secondary school and TAFE were 83% for boys and 86% for girls (see *Australian Social Trends, 1998* (ABS Cat. no. 4102.0)).

6.8 ATTENDANCE AT EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS—1996

Age of child	Government secondary school	Non-government secondary school	Technical or further educational institution	University or other tertiary institution	Not attending educational institution	Total(a).....	'000
15	57.0	29.7	0.8	0.1	5.2	100.0	254.3
16	48.3	27.1	4.1	0.2	13.8	100.0	249.1
17	36.6	22.3	7.4	3.3	24.3	100.0	247.7

(a) Includes a small number of people attending 'other' types of education, and a small number of 'not stated' responses.

Source: ABS, unpublished data, 1996 Census of Population and Housing.

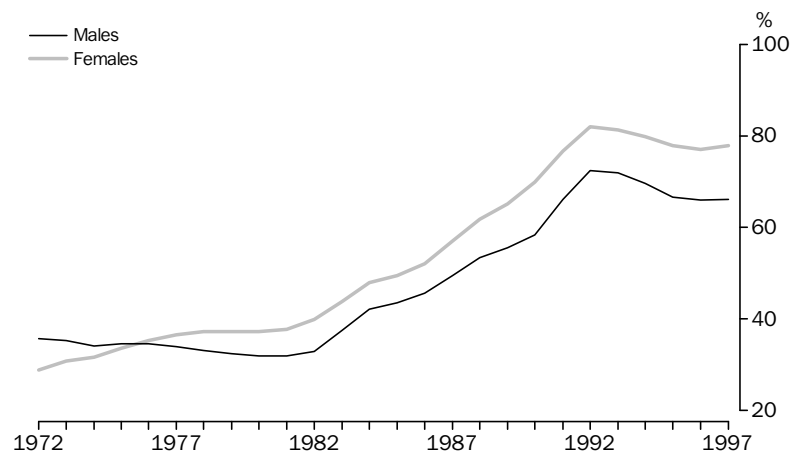
Apparent retention rates

Apparent retention rates show the proportion of students from their respective cohort groups at the commencement of secondary education (i.e. Year 7 in New South Wales, Victoria, Tasmania and the Australian Capital Territory and Year 8 in the other States) who continue on to the senior levels of secondary school.

Apparent retention rates *continued*

The Year 12 apparent retention rate rose strongly during the 1980s, from 35% in 1981 to peak at 77% in 1992. Since then the rate has leveled out at around 71–72%. From 1976 onward, females have consistently had higher retention rates than males. (Apparent retention rates are discussed in more detail in *Youth, Australia: A Social Report, 1997* (ABS Cat. no. 4111.0).)

6.9 YEAR 12 APPARENT RETENTION RATES



Source: *Schools, Australia (various issues)* (ABS Cat. no. 4221.0).

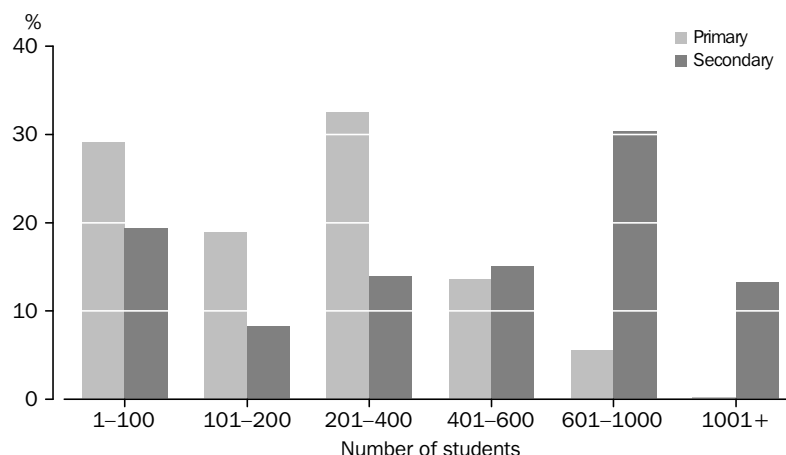
SCHOOL SETTINGS

Children obtain their education in a diversity of settings. Schools vary in size and structure. Boarding schools and special schools cater for students with particular needs and in some cases, where regular schooling is unavailable, children undertake educational programs using communication technology.

School size

Schools range in size from less than 20 enrolments to more than 1,500 enrolments. Of the 9,200 schools (not including special schools) in Australia in 1997, 73% had primary enrolments only, 16% had secondary enrolments only, and the remainder were combined schools with both primary and secondary enrolments. Most primary students attended relatively small schools, with 29% of all primary schools having 100 students or less and a further 50% having between 101–400 students. Secondary schools tended to be larger, with only 20% having 400 students or less while 19% had in excess of 1,000 students. Most combination schools (90%) had a maximum of 400 primary enrolments, and three-quarters (75%) had a maximum of 400 secondary enrolments.

6.10 PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL SIZES(a)(b)—1997



(a) Excluding special schools.

(b) For combination schools, primary and secondary enrolments have been considered separately.

Source: *Schools, Australia, 1997* (ABS Cat. no. 4221.0).

Boarding schools

There were 24,400 primary and secondary students aged 4–17 who resided in boarding schools or residential colleges in 1996, representing 0.8% of the school population aged 4–17 years. The majority (93%) attended secondary school. Western Australia, Queensland and the Northern Territory had the highest proportion of their school population attending boarding school.

While boarding schools may provide an educational service for children whose families live in remote areas, the schools themselves are more likely to be located in urban than rural areas. In 1996, 48% of children residing in boarding schools were in large cities, 33% were in smaller cities and towns and 19% were in rural areas.

6.11 BOARDING SCHOOL RESIDENTS, School Students Aged 4–17 Years—1996

School level and location	Attend boarding school or residential college(a).....		Total.....	
	'000	%	'000	%
School level				
Primary	1.7	0.1	1 737.6	100.0
Secondary	22.7	2.0	1 147.4	100.0
Total	24.4	0.8	2 885.0	100.0
State or Territory				
New South Wales	7.9	0.8	975.6	100.0
Victoria	3.1	0.4	706.5	100.0
Queensland	7.3	1.4	527.9	100.0
South Australia	1.0	0.4	227.9	100.0
Western Australia	4.0	1.4	282.6	100.0
Tasmania	0.4	0.5	78.2	100.0
Northern Territory	0.5	1.5	31.3	100.0
Australian Capital Territory	0.3	0.5	54.3	100.0
Australia(b)	24.4	0.8	2 885.0	100.0
Section of State				
Major urban	11.7	0.7	1 705.5	100.0
Other urban	8.1	1.1	707.5	100.0
Rural	4.6	1.0	471.9	100.0
Total(c)	24.4	0.8	2 885.0	100.0

(a) Excludes a small number of children aged 4–17 who reside in boarding schools as relatives of staff.

(b) Includes 'Other Territories'.

(c) Includes migratory population.

Source: ABS, unpublished data, 1996 Census of Population and Housing.

Distance Education

Schools of the Air, Distance Education Centres and Open Learning Support Units have been set up across Australia to help overcome the problems of access to education experienced by children living in remote areas. Distance Education Centres are frequently integrated into local schools and aim to support isolated students by preparing and distributing print, audio and video material as well as making use of communications technology to keep in touch with students. These centres also give children in small schools the opportunity to study a broader curriculum than may be available in their local school. Approximately 6,900 children across Australia took part in distance education in 1997 with the majority living in Queensland and New South Wales.

6.12 ENROLMENTS IN GOVERNMENT PROVIDED DISTANCE EDUCATION(a)—1997

State or Territory	Primary	Secondary	Total
	no.	no.	no.
New South Wales(b)	760	1 182	1 942
Victoria	43	31	74
Queensland	1 807	1 014	2 821
South Australia	140	51	191
Western Australia(c)	533	337	870
Northern Territory	388	580	968
Total	3 671	3 195	6 866

(a) May include students aged 18 years and over.

(b) Full-time equivalent numbers.

(c) 1996 data.

Source: NSW Department of Education and Training, unpublished data; Distance Education Centre, Vic., unpublished data; Department of Education, Qld, unpublished data; Open Access College, SA, unpublished data; NT Department of Education, unpublished data; WA Department of Education, unpublished data.

Students with disabilities

Special schools provide education for students with physical and/or mental disabilities or impairments, and children with other special learning needs. In 1997, 4% of all Australian schools were special schools, compared with 5% in 1987 (*Schools, Australia, 1997* (ABS Cat. no. 4221.0)). The gradual reduction in the number and proportion of special schools may reflect education policies which support the integration of students with special needs into mainstream schools.

While most schools encourage the integration of students with disabilities into regular classes wherever possible, schools may also provide a range of special classes where students with disabilities, as well as other children experiencing difficulties, can receive more personalised tuition. Students may attend these classes for some, or all, of their learning.

In 1993, 8% of children aged 5–17 were identified as having a disability according to ABS definitions (see Health chapter). Most children (94%) in special schools, and about one-third in special classes, had a severe or profound handicap as well as a disability. However, of all children with a severe or profound handicap who attended school, 46% attended regular classes only.

6.13 CHILDREN WITH A DISABILITY(a), School Attendance—1993

<i>Type of school/class attended</i>	<i>Total children with a disability</i>	<i>Proportion with severe/profound handicap</i>
	'000	%
Government school		
No special classes	131.4	19.8
Special classes	44.9	36.7
Special school	9.4	93.2
Non-government school		
No special classes	38.3	17.1
Special classes	11.7	17.6
Special school	1.5	100.0
Type of school unknown	0.8	80.0
Not at school		
Because of disability(b)	4.8	84.7
Other reason(b)	1.4	—
Reason not ascertained(c)	16.1	22.5
School information unavailable—child lives in a health establishment	2.2	63.9
Total	262.4	27.1

(a) Comprises children aged 5–17 only.

(b) Reason for not attending school was only collected for children aged 5–14.

(c) Comprises children aged 15–17 only.

Source: ABS, unpublished data, 1993 Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers.

SCHOOL CURRICULUM AND COMPETENCE

Literacy and numeracy

Goals for schooling in Australia, as stated in the 1994 National Strategy for Equity in Schooling, include the development of skills in English literacy and in numeracy for every student.

A National School English Literacy Survey of students in Year 3 and Year 5 was conducted in 1996. This included tests which covered key aspects of literacy such as reading, writing, speaking, listening and viewing. The conclusions from this national survey were that:

- almost three-quarters of the students met the benchmark which had been set;
- girls performed better than boys in both year levels and for all aspects of literacy tested;
- children from a higher socio-economic background (inferred from parents' occupational status) were more likely than those from a lower socio-economic background to meet the literacy standard; and
- for children from a non-English-speaking background, the number of years spent in Australia and the frequency with which English was spoken at home were both positively associated with achievements in literacy (Masters & Forster 1997).

6.14 LITERACY, Year 3 and Year 5 Students—1996

Selected characteristics	YEAR 3...	YEAR 5...
	<i>Proportion meeting the standard</i>	<i>Proportion meeting the standard</i>
	%	%
Main sample (total)	73	71
Male	66	65
Female	77	76
English-speaking background	73	72
Other than English-speaking background	62	56
High socioeconomic status	88	87
Medium socioeconomic status	72	71
Low socioeconomic status	62	47
Special Indigenous sample	19	23

Source: Masters & Forster 1997.

Australia also takes part in an International Mathematics and Science study which investigates the achievements of students in 45 countries at three stages of schooling. Australian students have performed creditably (in the upper middle range) when compared with other countries (Lokan et al. 1997; Lokan et al. 1996).

English as a Second Language (ESL) Programs

Language development is important in facilitating both educational development and social integration. School-age children who are not proficient in English may require additional assistance to acquire or enhance English-language skills. English as a second language (ESL) classes are provided in all States and Territories to assist these children in developing their English skills. In 1995, there were 262,000 students (8% of the total school population) who attended ESL programs.

6.15 STUDENTS ATTENDING ESL CLASSES(a)—1995

State or Territory	<i>Proportion attending ESL classes(b)</i>	<i>Total students(c)</i>
	%	'000
New South Wales	12.8	1 055.9
Victoria	10.8	770.3
Queensland	2.0	556.1
South Australia	5.6	244.8
Western Australia	3.2	301.7
Tasmania	0.7	84.7
Northern Territory	10.2	34.8
Australian Capital Territory	8.1	61.1
Australia	8.4	3 109.3

(a) May include students aged 18 years and over.

(b) DEETYA, unpublished data, 1995.

(c) Irrespective of type of classes attended. *Schools, Australia, 1995* (ABS Cat. no. 4221.0).

MOBILITY

The variation in starting ages and school structures can be disruptive for children whose parents move interstate or from overseas during the years that their children are at school. The 1996 Census showed that across Australia there were 443,300 school students aged 4–17 (15% of school children in this age group) who had moved residence in the twelve months prior to August 1996. Of these, 29,600 had arrived from overseas and a similar number (29,700) had moved to a State with a different educational structure from the one in which they had been living.

6.16 MOBILITY OF SCHOOL CHILDREN AGED 4–17 YEARS—1995–96

<i>Mobility in the 12 months prior to August 1996</i>	'000	%
Moved within the State or Territory	369.8	12.8
Moved from another State or Territory		
Same school structure	11.4	0.4
Different school structure	29.7	1.0
Moved from overseas	29.6	1.0
<i>Total(a)</i>	443.3	15.4
Did not move	2 426.8	84.1
Total(a)	2 885.0	100.0

(a) Totals include a small number of 'not stated' responses.

Source: ABS, unpublished data, 1996 Census of Population and Housing.

PARENTAL SUPPORT

Voluntary work

Some parents support their children's education by contributing their time to help with school and/or preschool activities. Results from the 1995 Survey of Voluntary Work showed that, of all parents with children aged under 15, 11% had participated in voluntary work at school or preschool in the preceding twelve months. The volunteer rate among parents with children aged 5–14 is likely to be higher, but it was not possible to exclude those parents who had only children aged under 5.

In couple families, female parents were three times more likely than males to volunteer, and they also contributed substantially more of their time. Just over 47% of female parents gave more than 4 hours per month of their time, while over half (57%) of male parents volunteered for 2 hours or less per month. Of lone parents who participated in voluntary work at school or preschool, 44% contributed more than 4 hours per month.

6.17 PARENTS WHO VOLUNTEERED FOR EDUCATION ACTIVITIES—1995

COUPLE FAMILIES				
<i>Hours contributed per month</i>	<i>Husband</i>	<i>Wife</i>	<i>Lone parents</i>	<i>Total</i>
	%	%	%	%
1 hour or less	36.5	15.5	20.9	20.7
>1–2 hours	20.5	15.2	16.3	16.5
>2–3 hours	8.7	9.5	6.6	9.1
>3–4 hours	10.5	12.4	11.9	11.9
>4 hours	23.8	47.3	44.3	41.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
	'000	'000	'000	'000
Total who volunteered	94.9	292.5	34.5	421.9

Source: ABS, unpublished data, 1995 Survey of Voluntary Work.

Types of voluntary work undertaken

The most common education-related activity undertaken by parents was fundraising, involving 62% of those who volunteered. Mothers in couple families and lone parents were also likely to provide assistance with food preparation and teaching, whereas fathers in couple families commonly contributed to maintenance and committee work.

6.18 EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN BY PARENTAL VOLUNTEERS—1995

COUPLE FAMILIES				
<i>Selected voluntary work activities(a)</i>	<i>Husband</i>	<i>Wife</i>	<i>Lone parents</i>	<i>Total</i>
	%	%	%	%
Fundraising	55.1	65.3	55.0	62.1
Committee work	50.0	43.3	29.7	43.7
Organising	21.8	27.7	23.6	26.1
Preparing food	16.2	57.7	58.6	48.4
Administrative/clerical	20.0	21.3	19.6	20.8
Teaching	25.5	51.1	54.3	45.6
Transport	20.5	21.7	20.4	21.3
Maintenance	57.8	14.2	13.5	24.0
Providing information	17.8	14.2	15.8	15.1
Guiding tours	3.0	6.4	8.6	5.8
	'000	'000	'000	'000
Total who volunteered	94.9	292.5	34.5	421.9

(a) Components do not add to 100% as more than one voluntary activity may be undertaken.

Source: ABS, unpublished data, 1995 Survey of Voluntary Work.

Time spent teaching children

Parents may actively encourage their children to take part in educational activities at home by teaching or helping them with various tasks, by supervising homework, or through other means. The 1997 Time Use Survey found that parents who spent time teaching their children averaged 45 minutes per day on this activity. This was an increase from the 41 minutes per day spent in 1992; however, the proportion of parents who participated in this activity declined from 22% to 14% over the same period. In 1997, as in 1992, more mothers than fathers reported teaching their children, and mothers also averaged more time overall on this activity.

6.19 PARENTS WHO SPENT TIME TEACHING THEIR CHILDREN AT HOME(a)

Year	WEEKDAYS.....		WEEKENDS.....		ALL DAYS	PARTICIPATION RATE...		
	<i>Fathers</i>	<i>Mothers</i>	<i>Fathers</i>	<i>Mothers</i>	<i>Persons</i>	<i>Fathers</i>	<i>Mothers</i>	<i>Total</i>
	minutes per day	minutes per day	minutes per day	minutes per day	minutes per day	%	%	%
1992	38	40	42	50	41	21.4	23.3	22.4
1997	44	46	39	47	45	13.3	15.2	14.3

(a) Parents with at least one child aged 5–14.

Source: ABS, unpublished data, 1992 and 1997 Time Use Surveys .

EDUCATION FOR INDIGENOUS CHILDREN

Attendance at school

In 1997, there were 96,800 Indigenous students attending schools in Australia. Of these, 67,100 attended primary school and 29,700 attended secondary school. At both the primary and secondary level, Indigenous students were less likely than their non-Indigenous counterparts to attend non-government schools. Only 11% of Indigenous primary students attended non-government schools compared with 27% of non-Indigenous primary students. At the secondary level, 16% of Indigenous students compared with 35% of non-Indigenous students attended non-government schools. (*Schools, Australia, 1997* (ABS Cat. no. 4221.0)).

6.20 SCHOOL ATTENDANCE, Indigenous Students(a)—1997

	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>School level and category</i>	'000	'000	'000
.....			
Primary school			
Government	30.7	29.3	59.9
Non-government	3.5	3.6	7.2
<i>Total</i>	34.2	32.9	67.1
Secondary school			
Government	12.4	12.5	24.9
Non-government	2.3	2.4	4.8
<i>Total</i>	14.8	14.9	29.7
All school students			
Government	43.1	41.8	84.9
Non-government	5.9	6.1	12.0
<i>Total</i>	49.0	47.8	96.8

(a) May include students aged 18 years and over.

Source: *Schools, Australia, 1997* (ABS Cat. no. 4221.0).

Age participation rates

The age participation rates for Indigenous secondary school students were lower than those for non-Indigenous students. The 1996 Census showed that, at age 17, 28% of Indigenous young people were attending secondary school compared with 61% of non-Indigenous young people. A further 10% of Indigenous 17 year-olds were attending some other type of educational institution. For Indigenous students aged 17, those living in large cities were most likely to be attending school or other educational institutions (46%) followed by those in smaller cities and towns (39%) and rural areas (25%) (see table 6.30).

6.21 AGE PARTICIPATION RATES(a), Secondary Students—1996

	<i>Attending secondary school</i>	<i>Participation rate</i>
<i>Age and Indigenous status</i>	'000	%
.....		
Aged 15 years		
Indigenous	5.0	65.7
Non-Indigenous	214.1	88.9
<i>Total(b)</i>	220.5	86.7
Aged 16 years		
Indigenous	3.2	45.3
Non-Indigenous	183.5	77.8
<i>Total(b)</i>	187.8	75.4
Aged 17 years		
Indigenous	1.9	27.8
Non-Indigenous	143.3	61.0
<i>Total(b)</i>	146.0	59.0

(a) Age participation rate—see Glossary.

(b) Total includes a small number of 'not stated' responses.

Source: ABS, unpublished data, 1996 Census of Population and Housing.

Indigenous languages and culture

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages are a significant symbol of identity to Indigenous people. The 1994 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey (NATSIS) found that 18% of Indigenous school students were taught an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander language at school. More than half (52%) of all Indigenous school students were taught about Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander cultures. Indigenous children who attended an Aboriginal Independent school were more likely than other students to be taught an Indigenous language (74%), or about Indigenous cultures (89%). However, only 2% of Indigenous students attended this type of school.

6.22 INDIGENOUS STUDENTS, Whether Taught Indigenous Language/Culture—1994

<i>Category of school</i>	<i>Taught an Indigenous language</i>	<i>Taught about Indigenous culture</i>	<i>All Indigenous school students</i>
	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>'000</i>
Government	16.9	51.1	71.9
Aboriginal Independent	74.4	88.5	2.0
Catholic	17.4	55.6	6.8
Other non-government	**9.0	**33.7	0.9
Total(a)(b)	18.4	52.2	82.7

(a) Includes category of school 'not stated'.

(b) May include students aged 18 years and over.

Source: *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey: Detailed Findings, 1994* (ABS Cat. no. 4190.0).

Proficiency in English

Indigenous children who do not speak English at home may experience English language difficulties at school. The 1996 Census identified 12,600 Indigenous school students aged 4–17 who spoke a language other than English at home, of whom one in four were not proficient in English.

6.23 PROFICIENCY IN ENGLISH, Indigenous Children Aged 4–17 Years—1996

<i>Level of proficiency</i>	<i>'000</i>	<i>%</i>
Speak English at home	73.2	83.9
Do not speak English at home		
Proficient in English	9.1	10.4
Not proficient in English	3.2	3.6
<i>Total(a)</i>	<i>12.6</i>	<i>14.5</i>
Total(a)	87.2	100.0

(a) Includes a small number of 'not stated' responses.

Source: ABS, unpublished data, 1996 Census of Population and Housing.

ADDITIONAL TABLES

6.24 PRESCHOOL AND PRIMARY SCHOOL ENTRY LEVEL AGES

<i>State or Territory</i>	<i>Preschool program name</i>	<i>Age of entry for preschool</i>	<i>Name given to first year of primary school</i>	<i>Age of entry for primary school</i>
NSW	Preschool	Various	Kindergarten	Age 5 by 31 Jul in year of entry
Vic.	Preschool	Age 4 by 30 Apr in year of entry	Prep	Age 5 by 30 Apr in year of entry
Qld	Preschool	Age 5 by 31 Dec in year of entry	Year 1	Age 6 by 31 Dec in year of entry
SA	Preschool or kindergarten	After 4th birthday, determined by starting date for school	Reception	Continuous entry after turning 5
WA	Pre-primary or 'P'	Age 5 by 31 Dec in year of entry	Year 1	Age 6 by 31 Dec in year of entry
Tas.	Kindergarten	Age 4 by 1 Jan in year of entry	Preparatory	Age 5 by 1 Jan in year of entry
NT	Preschool	After 4th birthday	Transition	Age 5 by 30 Jun in year of entry, but students may enter after turning 5
ACT	Preschool	Age 4 by 30 Apr in year of entry	Kindergarten	Age 4 by 30 Apr in year of entry

Source: Senate Employment, Education and Training References Committee 1996.

6.25 PRESCHOOL, Median Weekly Attendance—1996

<i>State or Territory</i>	<i>Median days</i> no.	<i>Median hours</i> no.
New South Wales	1.5	11.4
Victoria	2.1	8.2
Queensland	2.4	11.5
South Australia	2.5	9.0
Western Australia	1.7	5.4
Tasmania	*2.2	*8.1
Northern Territory	**3.9	**9.3
Australian Capital Territory	*3.2	*9.4
Australia	1.9	9.5

Source: ABS, unpublished data, 1996 Child Care Survey.

6.26 SCHOOL ATTENDANCE, By Category of School

	PRIMARY.....			SECONDARY.....		
	Government	Non-government	Total	Government	Non-government	Total
	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000
1988(a)	1 283.1	421.8	1 704.9	896.4	400.2	1 296.6
1989(a)	1 302.4	432.1	1 734.6	874.4	402.6	1 277.0
1990	1 322.5	441.0	1 763.5	870.8	407.4	1 278.2
1991	1 338.6	447.9	1 786.5	878.6	410.0	1 288.6
1992	1 351.7	452.7	1 804.4	882.4	412.2	1 294.6
1993	1 359.4	456.6	1 816.1	868.6	413.7	1 282.3
1994	1 360.8	465.0	1 825.7	854.2	419.5	1 273.6
1995	1 361.3	472.4	1 833.7	846.6	429.1	1 275.7
1996	1 367.4	480.8	1 848.2	854.2	440.7	1 294.8
1997	1 367.0	488.8	1 855.8	863.0	452.8	1 315.8

(a) Data for 1988 and 1989 exclude students attending special schools, except those in Victoria and Western Australia who attend special schools administered by government authorities other than the State Departments of Education. From 1990, students attending special schools were not separately identified and have been allocated to either primary or secondary education.

Source: *Schools, Australia (various issues)* (ABS Cat. no. 4221.0).

6.27 CATEGORY OF SCHOOL ATTENDED, By Religious Affiliation of Student(a)—1996

Religion of student	CATEGORY OF SCHOOL.....			
	Government	Catholic	Other non-government	Total
	'000	'000	'000	'000
PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENTS				
Catholic	232.9	276.3	13.4	522.6
Other religion or denomination	626.2	35.9	88.8	750.9
No religion	309.9	11.7	16.4	338.0
Not stated	107.2	8.6	10.4	126.1
Total	1 276.2	332.5	128.9	1 737.6
SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS				
Catholic	146.3	187.0	18.0	351.2
Other religion or denomination	380.1	36.0	106.2	522.3
No religion	159.2	10.8	26.1	196.1
Not stated	59.6	6.6	11.5	77.8
Total	745.2	240.4	161.8	1 147.4
ALL SCHOOL STUDENTS				
Catholic	379.1	463.3	31.3	873.8
Other religion or denomination	1 006.3	71.9	195.0	1 273.2
No religion	469.2	22.5	42.4	534.1
Not stated	166.9	15.2	21.9	203.9
Total	2 021.4	572.9	290.7	2 885.0

(a) Comprises school students aged 4–17 years.

Source: ABS, unpublished data, 1996 Census of Population and Housing.

6.28 POST-COMPULSORY SCHOOLING, Age Participation Rates(a)—1997

	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT(b)	Aust.
Age (years)	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
MALES									
15	91.8	93.8	87.7	91.3	90.6	96.5	80.3	105.8	91.5
16	75.6	83.8	75.5	79.4	71.0	71.9	63.4	97.7	77.5
17	60.6	67.7	46.7	50.1	37.9	52.5	36.8	88.3	56.7
FEMALES									
15	93.3	95.8	91.6	93.4	92.2	98.2	80.1	105.1	93.7
16	80.1	88.9	82.0	83.5	77.4	76.6	73.3	99.3	82.8
17	69.6	79.6	48.7	55.3	42.0	59.0	42.2	88.8	64.0
PERSONS									
15	92.5	94.8	89.6	92.3	91.4	97.3	80.2	105.5	92.6
16	77.8	86.3	78.6	81.4	74.1	74.3	68.1	98.5	80.1
17	65.0	73.5	47.7	52.6	39.9	55.7	39.4	88.5	60.2

(a) Age participation rate—see Glossary.

(b) Participation rates in the ACT may exceed 100% due to the enrolment in ACT secondary schools of students who are not residents of the ACT, but who live in the surrounding NSW areas.

Source: *Schools, Australia, 1997* (ABS Cat. no. 4221.0).

6.29 PROFICIENCY IN ENGLISH, School Children Aged 4–17 Years—1996

Birthplace of child	CHILDREN WHO SPEAK A LANGUAGE OTHER THAN ENGLISH AT HOME.....		
	Speak English well	Do not speak English well	Total(a)
	'000	'000	'000
Child born in Australia			
At least one parent born overseas			
At least one parent born in OMESC(b)	185.7	5.8	195.4
Both parents born in MESC(c)(d)	2.5	0.1	3.7
Total	188.2	5.9	199.1
Both parents born in Australia	26.5	4.2	35.8
Total	214.7	10.1	234.9
Child born overseas			
In OMESC(b)	122.4	12.8	137.2
In MESC(c)	7.3	0.3	8.1
Total(a)	135.3	13.5	154.6
Total(a)	350.8	23.7	391.2

(a) Totals include a small number of 'not stated' responses.

(b) Other than Main English-Speaking Country.

(c) Main English-Speaking Country.

(d) Includes one parent born in Australia and the other parent born in another English-speaking country.

Source: ABS, unpublished data, 1996 Census of Population and Housing.

6.30 EDUCATION ATTENDANCE, Students Aged 17 Years—1996

Section of State	At school	At other educational institution	Not attending any educational institution	Total(a).....	
	%	%	%	%	'000
INDIGENOUS					
Major urban	33.6	12.7	47.9	100.0	2.0
Other urban	28.9	10.2	55.9	100.0	2.9
Rural	19.7	5.1	67.2	100.0	1.8
<i>Total(b)</i>	<i>27.8</i>	<i>9.6</i>	<i>56.6</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>6.8</i>
NON-INDIGENOUS					
Major urban	64.1	12.3	20.1	100.0	149.5
Other urban	54.1	11.1	31.6	100.0	53.5
Rural	58.4	10.6	27.9	100.0	31.7
<i>Total(b)</i>	<i>61.0</i>	<i>11.8</i>	<i>23.8</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>234.8</i>
TOTAL(a)					
Major urban	62.5	12.1	20.1	100.0	155.3
Other urban	51.8	10.9	32.4	100.0	57.8
Rural	55.0	10.1	29.5	100.0	34.4
<i>Total(b)</i>	<i>59.0</i>	<i>11.5</i>	<i>24.3</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>247.7</i>

(a) Includes a small proportion of 'not stated' responses.

(b) Includes migratory population.

Source: ABS, unpublished data, 1996 Census of Population and Housing.

GLOSSARY

- Adoption** The legal process in which a child ceases to be the child of his or her biological parents and becomes the child of another person(s).
- Age participation rate** The number of full-time students of a particular age and sex expressed as a proportion of the estimated resident population of the same age and sex. It indicates the proportion of the population who are still at school.
- Body mass index (BMI)** Based on height and weight as reported by the respondent. Persons were categorised into four groups according to their body mass, derived using the formula weight (kg) divided by the square of height (m²). The groups used, as shown below, are consistent with recommendations of the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC).
-
- Body Mass Index
-
- | | |
|-------------------|--------------------|
| Underweight | Less than 20 |
| Acceptable weight | 20–25 |
| Overweight | Greater than 25–30 |
| Obese | Greater than 30 |
-
- Blended family** A couple family containing two or more children, of whom at least one is the natural child of both members of the couple, and at least one is the stepchild of either member of the couple.
- Canadian National Occupancy Standard** A measure which assesses the bedroom requirements of a household by specifying that:
- there should be no more than two persons per bedroom;
 - children of opposite sex under 5 years of age may share a bedroom;
 - children of opposite sex aged 5 years or older should not share a bedroom;
 - children of the same sex aged less than 18 years may share a bedroom;
 - household members aged 18 years or over should have a separate bedroom, as should parents or couples (AIHW 1997b).
- Category jumping** The term used to describe changes in travel intentions from short-term to permanent/long-term or vice versa.
- Community Development Employment Project(CDEP)** Operated through grants from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission to Indigenous community organisations to enable individuals to undertake community managed activities in return for wages.
- Children** Consistent with the definition used in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1990), children are defined in this report as persons aged 0–17 (that is, all persons under the age of majority in Australia). Children living in private dwellings can be separated into two broad groups: the vast majority who live with at least one parent (irrespective of the child's dependency status but excluding those who are classified as husbands, wives or lone parents); and the small minority of young people aged 15–17 who are not living with parents.

Child support	Cash or in-kind payments towards the financial wellbeing of children. These payments are made to the parent who has care of the children by the parent who lives outside the household.
Couple family	A family based on two persons who are in a registered or de facto marriage and who are usually resident in the same household. A couple family without children may have other relatives, such as ancestors, present. A couple family with children may have adult children and/or other relatives present.
De facto marriage	The relationship between a male and female partner who live together in a consensual union and who are not registered as married to each other.
Dependent children	All family members under 15 years of age; family members aged 15–19 years attending school or aged 15–24 years attending a tertiary educational institution full-time (except those classified as husbands, wives or lone parents).
Dependent students	In couple or one-parent families, sons or daughters aged 15–19 years attending school or aged 15–24 years attending a tertiary educational institution full-time (except those classified as husbands, wives or lone parents).
Employed	Persons aged 15 years and over who worked during the reference week for pay, profit, commission, payment in-kind or without pay in a family business, or who had a job but were not at work. Workers may be classified as either: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ full-time—employed persons who usually worked 35 hours or more a week and others who, although usually working less than 35 hours a week, worked 35 hours or more during the reference week; or ▪ part-time—employed persons who usually worked less than 35 hours a week.
Equivalence scale	A set of ratios which are applied to income to adjust for differences in income unit size and composition.
Estimated Resident Population	The official ABS estimate of the Australian population according to where people usually live. Estimated Resident Population (ERP) is based on results from the latest population census, adjusted for under-enumeration and Australian residents temporarily overseas at the time of the census. Population estimates are then updated quarterly for subsequent births, deaths and overseas and interstate migration. Population estimates for reference periods close to the Census date differ from the census count of persons.
Family	Two or more persons, one of whom is at least 15 years of age, who are related by blood, marriage (registered or de facto), adoption, step or fostering, and who are usually resident in the same household. The basis of a family is formed by identifying the presence of a couple relationship, lone parent-child relationship or other blood relationship. Some households will, therefore, contain more than one family.
Family type	The differentiation of families based on the presence or absence of couple relationships, parent-child relationships, child dependency relationships or other blood relationships, in that order of preference.
Group household	A household consisting of two or more unrelated people where all persons are aged 15 years and over. There are no reported couple relationships, parent-child relationships or other blood relationships in these households.

Henderson equivalent income	Disposable (after tax) income adjusted using the simplified equivalence scale developed by Professor Henderson and his associates for use in Australia. More information on the Henderson equivalence scales is available in <i>Income Distribution, Australia, 1996–97</i> (ABS Cat. no. 6523.0).
Hours worked	Hours worked was only calculated for people who were <i>employed</i> during the reference period. It refers to the number of hours actually worked during the reference period and may not necessarily reflect usual hours worked. Total parental hours worked are the sum of the hours worked by each parent in a couple family or by the lone parent in a one-parent family, including those parents who were employed.
Household	A group of two or more related or unrelated people who usually reside in the same dwelling and who make common provision for food or other essentials for living; or a person living in a dwelling who makes provision for his or her own food and other essentials for living without combining with any other person.
Housing costs	Housing costs comprise the following for the tenure type categories: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ owner without a mortgage—rates payments (general and water); ▪ owner with a mortgage—rates payments plus mortgage payments if the purpose of the mortgage was to buy, build, add to or alter the dwelling; and ▪ renter—rent payments.
Improvised dwelling	Non-standard accommodation, examples of which include sheds, tents not located in caravan parks and humpies. Also includes persons sleeping on park benches or in other 'rough' accommodation.
Income unit	One person or a group of related persons within a household, whose command over income is assumed to be shared. Income sharing is assumed to take place within married (registered or de facto) couples, and between parents and dependent children.
Indigenous child	A person aged 0–17 who was reported as being of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin.
Indigenous family	A family with a child aged 0–17 where at least one of the parents was reported as being of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin. Not all children in Indigenous families are Indigenous children. As a result, the number of children in Indigenous families differs from the number of Indigenous children.
Indigenous household	A household containing an Indigenous family. Where Indigenous households comprise more than one family, they may contain a non-Indigenous family. As a result, the number of children in Indigenous households differs from the number of children in Indigenous families.
Intact family	A couple family containing at least one child who is the natural child of both members of the couple, and no child who is the stepchild of either member of the couple.
Labour force	The civilian population aged 15 and over who are employed or unemployed.
Labour force participation rate	The labour force expressed as a percentage of the civilian population aged 15 and over in the same group.

Lone parent	A person who has no spouse or partner present in the household but who forms a parent-child relationship with at least one child usually resident in the household.
Lone person	A person who makes provision for his or her food and other essentials for living, without combining with any other person to form part of a multi-person household. He or she may live in a dwelling on their own or share a dwelling with another individual or family.
Marital status	A person's social marital status refers to their current living arrangements, that is whether or not they are living with another person in a couple relationship. A person's registered marital status refers to their status in relation to a legally registered marriage as either never married, currently married, separated, divorced or widowed. Some persons who are not living with their partner may still be currently registered married rather than separated.
Mean gross weekly income	The total income received by a group of income units divided by the number of units in the group.
Mean housing cost	The total weekly housing cost paid by a group of households (e.g. couple only households) divided by the number of households in that group.
Median gross weekly income	The level of income which divides the income units in a group into two equal parts, one half having incomes above the median and the other half having incomes below the median.
Multifamily households	Households which consist of more than one family. For the 1996 Census, up to three families were able to be coded in one household.
Natural parent living elsewhere	One of a child's natural parents who is not usually resident in the same household.
Never married	A person who has never been a partner in a registered marriage.
Non-dependent child	In couple or one-parent families, a son or daughter who is aged over 15 years and who is not a full-time student aged 15–24 years (except those classified as husbands, wives or lone parents).
Not in the labour force	Persons who, during the survey reference week, were neither employed nor looking for work. They include persons who were keeping house (unpaid), retired, voluntarily inactive, permanently unable to work, persons in institutions, trainee teachers, members of contemplative religious orders, and persons whose only activity during the reference week was jury service or unpaid voluntary work for a charitable organisation.
One-parent family	A family consisting of a lone parent with at least one dependent or non-dependent child (regardless of age) who is also usually resident in the household. The family may also include any number of other dependent children, non-dependent children and other related individuals. One-parent families may be further classified as either lone mother families or lone father families.
Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) equivalent income	Disposable (after tax) income adjusted using the equivalence scale recommended by the OECD for use by its member countries to facilitate international comparisons. More information on the OECD equivalence scale is available in <i>Income Distribution, Australia, 1996–97</i> (ABS Cat. no. 6523.0).

Other renter	A person who rented from an owner/manager of a caravan park, a government authority employer, another employer, a housing cooperative/community/church group or another type of landlord.
Other family	A family of related individuals residing in the same household. These individuals do not form a couple or parent-child relationship with any other person in the household and are not attached to a couple or one-parent family in the household. For example, a household consisting of a brother and sister only.
Principal carer	A person aged 15 years or more providing the most informal care for the activities of self-care (for example, showering/bathing, dressing, eating/feeding, toileting), mobility or verbal communication.
Private renter	A person who rented from a real estate agent or another person not in the same household.
Public renter	A person who rented from a State or Territory housing authority. Government employer provided housing such as defence force housing is excluded.
Section of State	Section of State within each State and Territory comprises: Major urban—all urban centres with a population of 100,000 and over; Other urban—all urban centres with a population of 1,000 to 99,999; Locality—a population cluster of 200 to 999 people; Rural balance—the rural remainder of the State or Territory.
Spouse	A marital or de facto partner.
Stepchild	In a couple family, a child who is the natural child of one partner but not of the other. As a consequence of relationship breakdown, some one-parent families may also have stepchildren present.
Step-family	A couple family containing one or more children, at least one of whom is the stepchild of either member of the couple and none of whom is the natural or foster child of both members of the couple.
Substantiated notification/ substantiation	In cases of child abuse, a finalised investigation is classified as 'substantiated' or classified as a 'substantiation' where there is reasonable cause to believe that the child has been or is being abused or neglected. Substantiation does not necessarily require sufficient evidence for a successful prosecution and does not imply that treatment or case management was, or is to be, provided (Broadbent & Bentley 1997).
Tenure type	Tenure is the source of the legal right of a household to occupy a dwelling. For the purpose of this publication, households belong to one of four occupancy categories: owner without a mortgage, owner with a mortgage (also referred to as purchaser), renter or 'other'.
Unemployed	Persons aged 15 years and over who were not employed during the reference week, but who had actively looked for work and were available to start work.
Unemployment rate	For any group, the number of unemployed persons expressed as a percentage of the labour force in the same group.
Visiting arrangement	An arrangement concerning the frequency and duration of a child's contact with a natural parent who is not usually resident in the same household.

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Darwin	08 8943 2111	08 8981 1218

POST Client Services, ABS, PO Box 10, Belconnen ACT 2616

EMAIL client.services@abs.gov.au