

Chapter

1

Australia's people

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1 Australia's people

At a glance

Who we are

- Around 23 million people lived in Australia in April 2013.
- In 2012, the majority (70%) of the population lived in *Major cities*, and 2% lived in *Remote and very remote* areas. Almost 1 in 3 Australians (32%) lived in New South Wales, and 1 in 4 (25%) in Victoria.
- The Australian population is ageing. People aged 65 and over comprised 8% of the population in 1972 compared with 14% in 2012. Over the same period, the proportion aged under 25 fell from almost half (46%) to one-third (32%) of the population.
- In June 2011, an estimated 3% of the total population were Indigenous Australians. Indigenous people have a notably younger age structure than the Australian population: more than half (56%) were aged under 25 and 3% were aged 65 and over.
- The proportion of the population born overseas has grown steadily from 1 in 10 (10%) in 1947 to more than 1 in 4 (27%) in 2011.

Births and deaths

- In 2011, 301,600 births were registered in Australia—22% more than in 2001. In 2011, Australia's total fertility rate was 1.9 births per woman; this is below the replacement rate of 2.1 births per woman but higher than the historical low of 1.7 in 2001.
- Around 146,900 deaths were registered in Australia in 2011—14% more than in 2001.

Our families

- In 2011, there were 7.8 million households in Australia, of which almost three-quarters (72%) were family households, one-quarter (24%) lone-person households and 4% group households. Of all families, almost half (47%) comprised a parent, or parents, with one or more dependent children.
- Among one-family households, Indigenous households were more than twice as likely than other households to be one-parent families (36% and 15% respectively) and about half as likely to be a couple family with no children (20% and 38%).
- In 2011, 2.2 divorces were granted per 1,000 people. Almost half (48%) of all divorces in 2011 were between couples with children aged under 18, a decrease from 54% in 1991.

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1.1 Introduction

The demand for various types of welfare services is influenced by a range of factors, including age structure, population health and disability status, social and economic participation, access to appropriate housing, and availability of informal support networks. In addition, population diversity and geographical distribution are important considerations for planning, and providing appropriate and sufficient services in the locations where they are needed.

A number of key demographic factors of relevance to the demand for, and delivery of, welfare services in Australia are described in this chapter, with a particular focus on trends and differences between population groups. Trends in education, employment and access to economic resources are discussed in Chapter 2, while Chapter 3 presents information about housing in Australia.

1.2 Population size and structure

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), there were an estimated 23 million people in Australia in April 2013—which is 4 times the population of 90 years ago (around 5.7 million in June 1923) (ABS 2008b, 2013c).

While detailed data about the population in April 2013 were not available at the time of writing, available data indicate that Australia's population grew by almost 360,000 people between June 2011 and June 2012—increasing from 22.3 million to 22.7 million (ABS 2012f).

One-third (32%, or 7.4 million people) of the population in June 2012 were aged under 25. Of those in this age group:

- 1.5 million were in infancy or early childhood (aged 0–4)
- 2.2 million were primary school-aged children (aged 5–12)
- 1.4 million were adolescents (aged 13–17)
- 2.2 million were young adults (aged 18–24).

Children and young people are the focus of Chapter 4.

Around 1 in 7 (14%, or 3.2 million people) of the population were aged 65 and over. Of those:

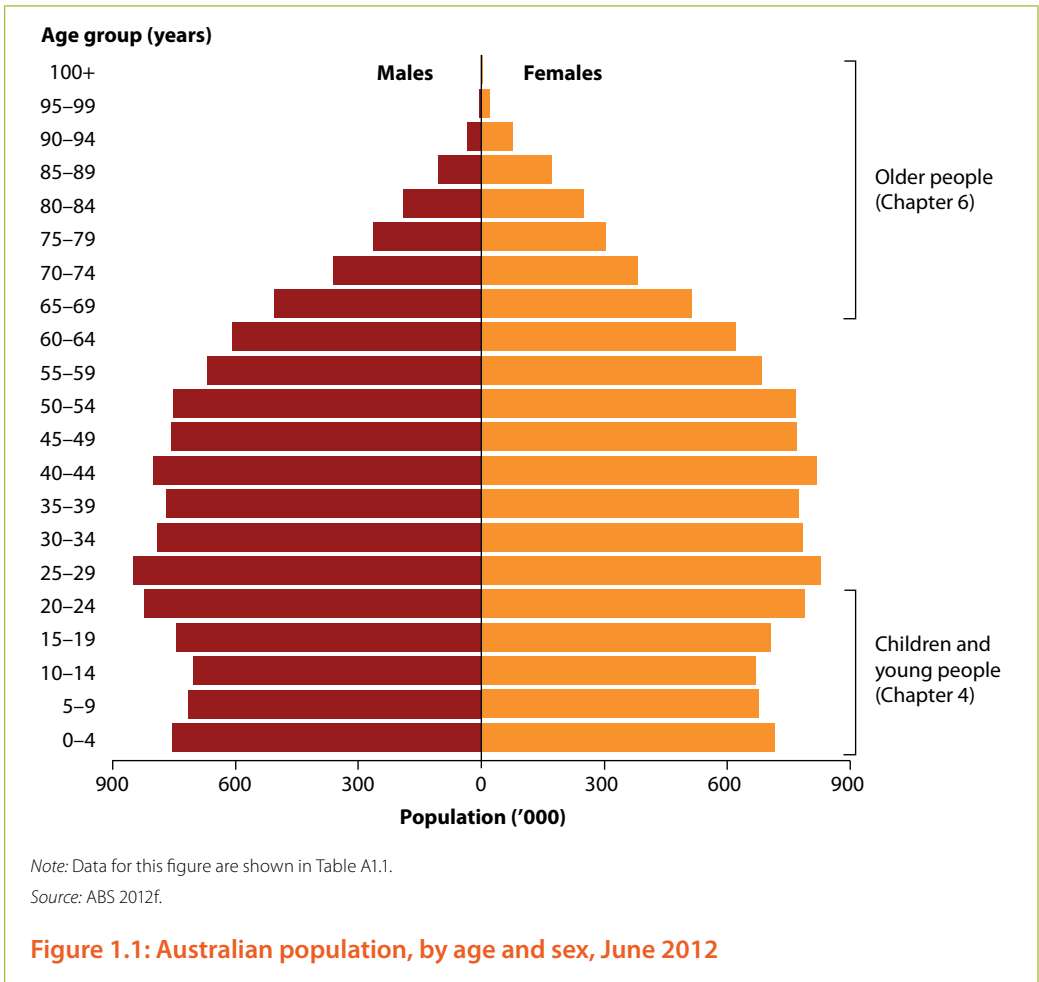
- 2.8 million were aged 65–84
- 423,700 were aged 85 and over (including 3,500 aged 100 and over).

Detailed information about older people is in Chapter 6.

There were slightly more males than females at all ages up to and including the 30–34 age group—51% for all age groups to age 25–29 and just over 50% for those aged 30–34 (Figure 1.1). From the 35–39 age group onwards, there were fewer males than females. Initially the difference is slight, with males comprising around 49% of all age groups between 35–39 and 70–74. After this, the difference is more marked, especially at more advanced ages: 47% of those aged 75–79 were male, compared with a third (35%) of those aged 85 and over. Differences in mortality rates between males and females that contribute to this pattern are discussed in Section 1.4.

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Indigenous population

Preliminary estimates produced by the ABS suggest that the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population of Australia was 669,700 people, or 3.0% of the total Australian population at 30 June 2011 (ABS 2012g). Note that these numbers may differ to some degree from the final estimates due for release by the ABS in August 2013.

The ABS's preliminary estimates are based on the 2011 Census of Population and Housing (referred to as the 2011 Census in this report), adjusted for net undercount (for example, taking into account people who were missed and those whose Indigenous status was not stated). According to the actual (unadjusted) 2011 Census count, 548,370 people identified and were counted as being of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander origin, representing 2.5% of the 2011 Census count. This is up from 2.3% in 2006 (ABS 2012j).

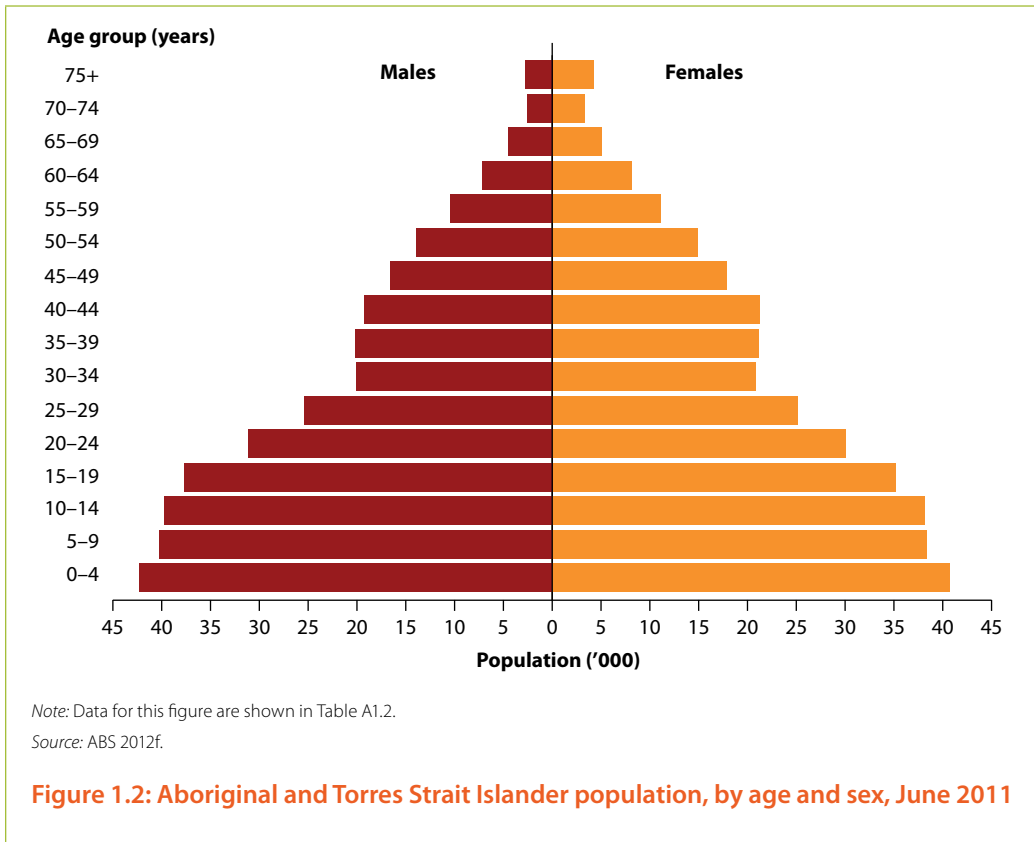
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The age profile of the Indigenous population is considerably younger than the Australian population (Figure 1.2). While data for 2012 were not yet available at the time of writing, data for June 2011 indicate that more than half (56%) of Indigenous people were aged under 25 (compared with 32% of the total population), and 3.4% were aged 65 and over (compared with 14% of the total population).

As in the wider Australian population, there were more Indigenous women than men at older ages. Women accounted for 52% of Indigenous people aged 50 to 74, and 60% of those aged 75 and over.

The differences between the Indigenous and non-Indigenous population age structures are due to both higher fertility rates and earlier mortality among Indigenous people (see Section 1.4).



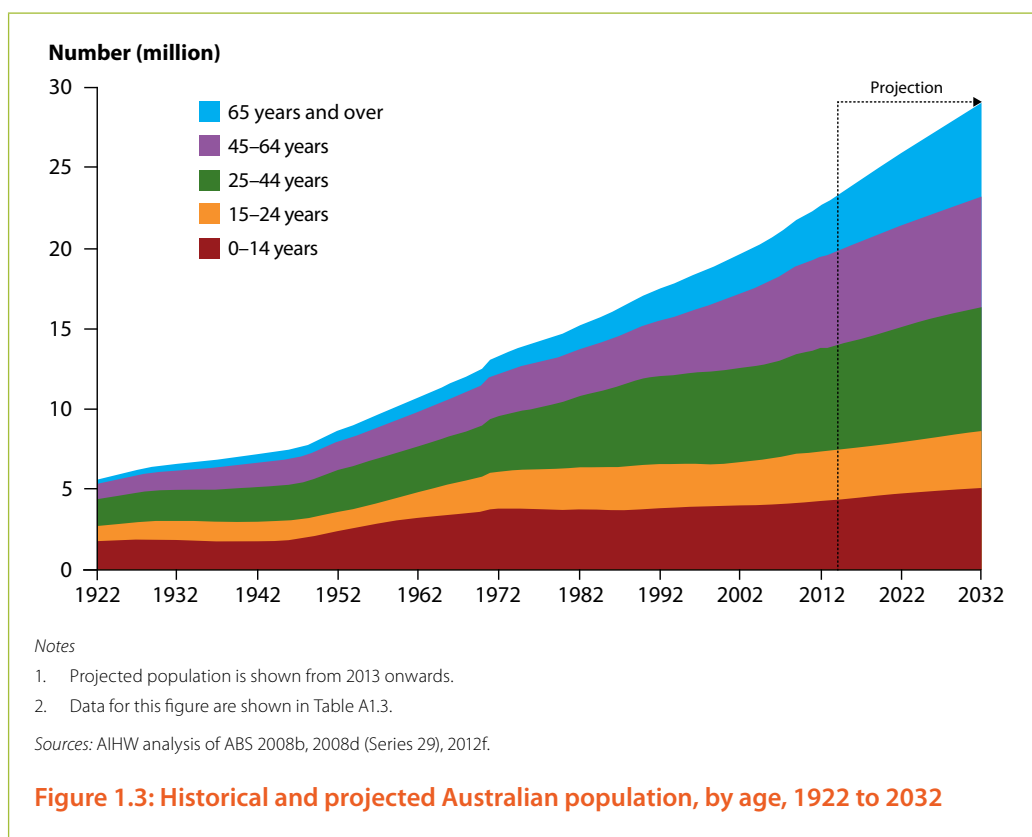
1.3 Australia’s population is ageing

Population ageing has social and economic consequences that affect the demand for various types of services (including welfare and other services), the ability of governments to meet this demand with sufficient and appropriate services, and the broader economy.

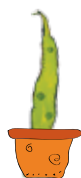


Long-term trends and projections

The size of Australia's population has been increasing steadily over time, but such growth has not been consistent across all age groups (Figure 1.3). Instead, over recent decades, population growth has been strongest among older age groups. For example, between 1972 and 2012, the number of people aged 65 and over nearly tripled (from 1.1 million to 3.2 million). Over the same period, there was a sixfold increase in the population aged 85 and over—from 69,800 to 423,700 people. Meanwhile, the number of children and young people (aged under 25) rose by only 21% (from 6.1 million to 7.4 million). Similar population ageing trends are seen in other regions of the world (see Box 1.1 for more detail).



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As a consequence of these changes, older Australians account for an increasing share of the population. People aged 65 and over comprised 8% of the population in 1972 compared with 14% in 2012. Over the same four-decade period, the proportion of the population aged 85 and over increased from 0.5% to 1.9%. Meanwhile, the share of the population that was aged under 25 dropped from almost half (46%) in 1972 to a third (32%) in 2012 (Figure 1.4).



Box 1.1: Global population is ageing

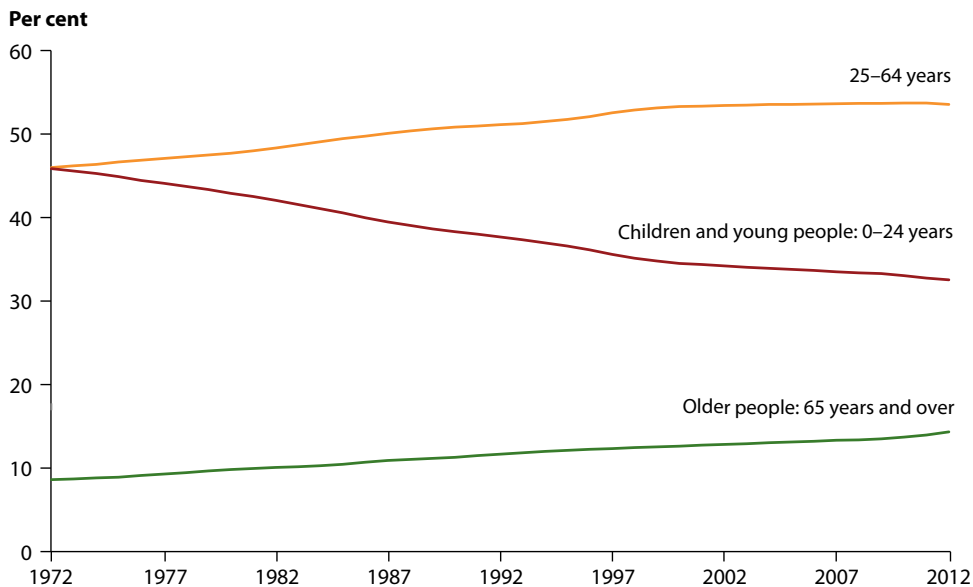


In 2010, the median age of the world population was estimated to be 29, with 7.6% of the population aged 65 and over (UN 2011b). As in Australia, the world population is ageing—the median age has risen from 24 in 1950 and is projected to reach 38 by 2050 (Table A1.4).

Median ages differ markedly between more and less developed regions of the world. In more developed regions, the median age was 40 in 2010, an increase of 11 years since 1950. By comparison, in less developed regions, the median age was 27 in 2010, an increase of 5 years since 1950.

The proportion of the population that older people comprise also differs between regions. In 2010, the proportion aged 65 and over in less developed regions was 5.8%, having increased from 3.9% in 1950. In more developed regions, the proportion in 2010 was 15.9, double the proportion of 7.9% in 1950 (UN 2011a).

Compared with other more developed countries, Australia has a relatively young population, ranking 25th out of 34 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) member countries in 2010 in median age (36.9) (UN 2011a). Among member countries, Japan had the highest median age (44.7), while Mexico had the lowest (26.6) (UN 2011b).



Note: Data for this figure are shown in Table A1.5.

Sources: AIHW analysis of ABS 2008b, 2012f.

Figure 1.4: Share of the population attributed to broad age groups, 1972 to 2012

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Based on the ABS's medium-level growth assumptions, the population is projected to grow to 29.1 million people by 2032—an increase of 28% from 2012 (Table A1.3). Meanwhile, the number of people aged 65 and over is projected to increase by 82% between 2012 and 2032. Among people aged 85 and over, the projected increase between 2012 and 2032 is more than 100%. Growth in the population aged 85 and over is particularly significant for aged care service planning, as this group is most likely to require such services, including residential care (see Chapter 6).

Dependency ratios

Children and many older people are dependent on other people for financial and physical support, whether through direct personal assistance or income support provided through the taxation system. Dependency ratios provide an indication of the number of people who are likely to be 'dependent' on others due to not being in the labour force, compared with the number of people who are in the labour force and therefore potentially able to provide support. Three dependency measures are commonly used; see Box 1.2 for a description of these measures and how to interpret them.

Box 1.2: Dependency ratios

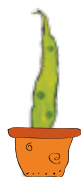
The three commonly used dependency ratios are:

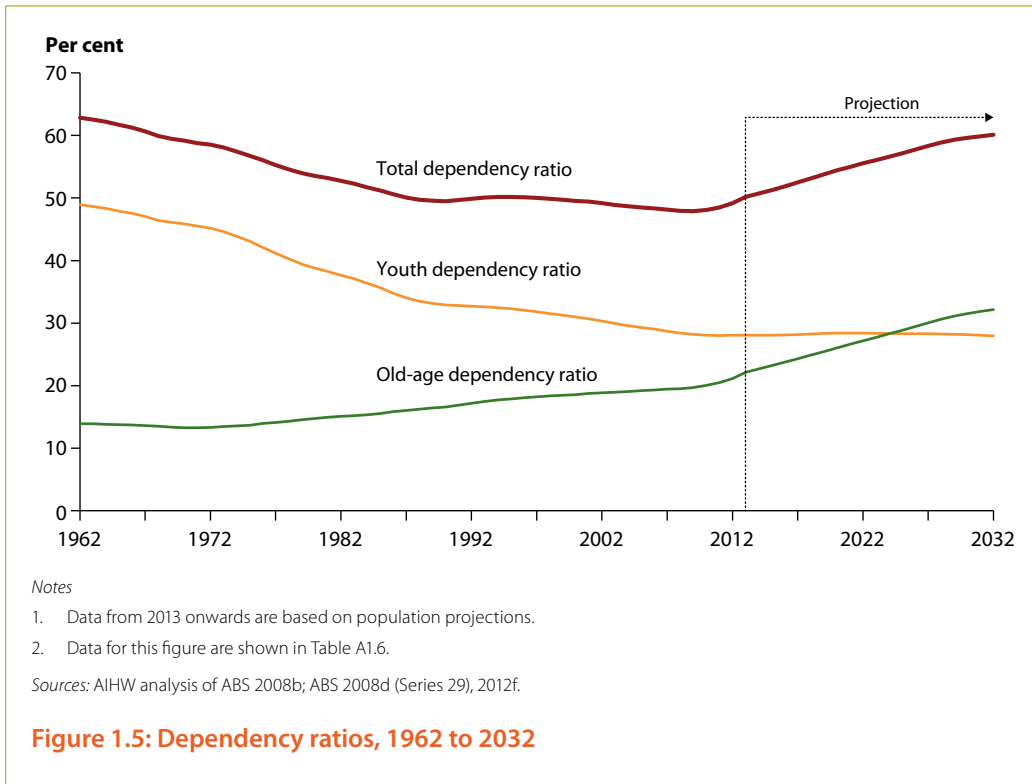
- **Youth dependency ratio:** the number of children aged 0 to 14 compared with the number of people aged 15 to 64 (that is, people of 'traditional working age')
- **Old-age dependency ratio:** the number of people aged 65 and over compared with the number aged 15 to 64
- **Total dependency ratio:** the sum of the number of children aged 0 to 14 and people aged 65 and over compared with the number aged 15 to 64.

Dependency ratios are expressed as a percentage, with a higher number suggesting less support available to meet the needs of dependent people. A dependency ratio of more than 100 implies that there are more dependants than supporting people in the population.

Australia's youth dependency ratio has fallen considerably, from 49% in 1962 to 28% in 2012 (Figure 1.5). An increase in the old-age dependency ratio, which rose by 7 percentage points from 14% to 21% over the same period, has partially offset this trend. As a result, Australia's total dependency ratio has decreased over the past five decades from 63% in 1962 to 49% in 2012, implying slightly more 'supporters' per 'dependant' than in the past (that is, 1.6 and 2.0 adults of traditional working age for each person of 'dependent' age). However, in recent years this trend has slowed. Given current population projections, it is predicted that a stabilisation in the youth dependency ratio coupled with a rise in the old-age dependency ratio will lead to the total dependency ratio rising over the upcoming decades, reaching 60% by 2032—or 1.7 adults of traditional working age for each person of 'dependent' age.

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Note that these measures are broadly indicative of population trends rather than providing a definitive classification of ‘dependants’ and ‘supporters’. For example, the dependency ratios cited here do not account for changes in the proportion of people of ‘traditional working age’ who are not in the labour force due to study, ill health or disability, caring responsibilities, retirement or other reasons. They also do not differentiate between people aged 65 and over who are completely financially dependent on government pensions and other benefits, and those whose retirement is partly or wholly self-funded. Further, total dependency ratios do not fully reflect differences in the costs of caring for children and older people.

Current patterns of labour force participation suggest that the concepts of ‘working age’ and ‘retirement age’ are more fluid than in the past. Extended engagement in formal education has resulted in delayed entry into the labour force for many young people while, at the other end of the age spectrum, a considerable number of people retire before the age of 65. At the same time, an increasing proportion of older Australians remain engaged in paid employment beyond the traditional retirement age. These trends are discussed in more detail in chapters 2, 4 and 6.

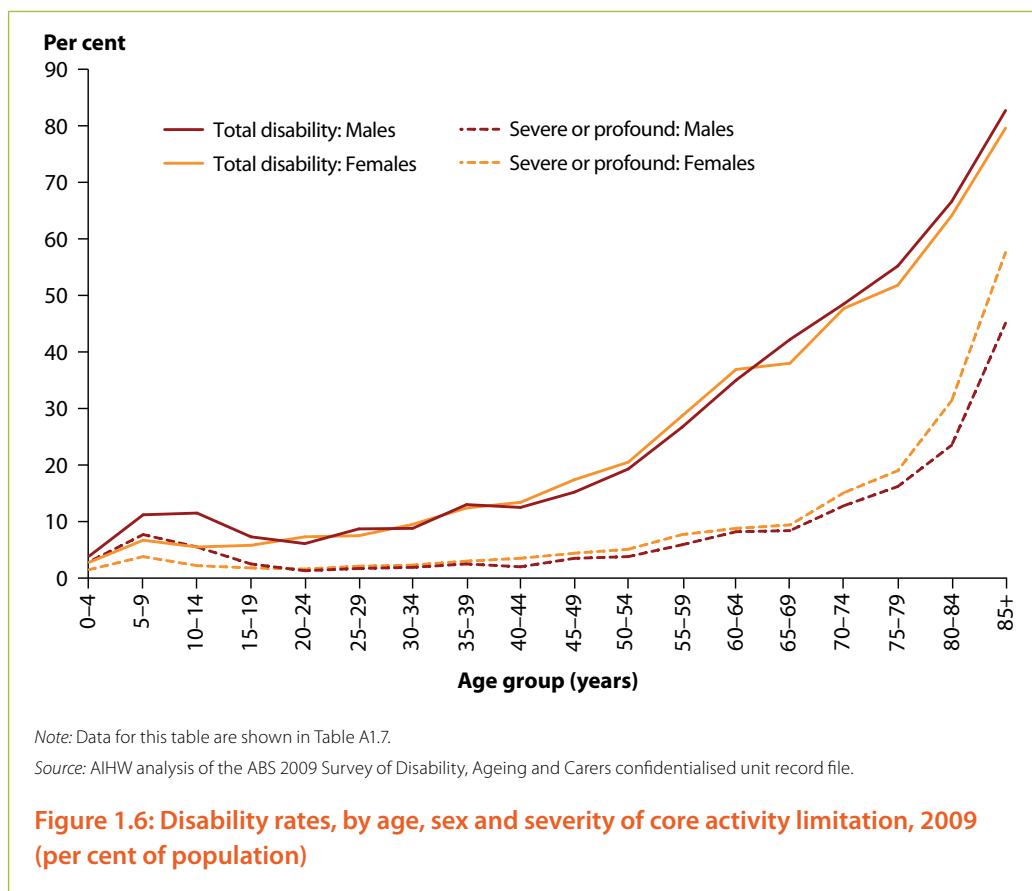
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The prevalence of disability

In 2009, an estimated 4.0 million Australians had some form of disability—18.5% of the population. This included 1.3 million people (5.8%) with severe or profound core activity limitation (ABS 2010b). As explained in more detail in the Glossary, people with such a limitation are those who sometimes or always need help with core activities of daily living (mobility, self-care and communication).

With the exception of boys aged 5 to 14 (where the rates were around 11%), disability rates were below 10% among people aged under 35 in 2009 (Figure 1.6). The higher rates of disability for boys aged 5 to 14 are largely due to higher rates of conditions such as autism spectrum disorders and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, which are often diagnosed after schooling begins (AIHW 2006, 2012).



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Figure 1.6 shows that the prevalence of disability generally increased gradually throughout middle age and then, after around the age of 50, rose considerably—from 20% in the 50–54 age group to 81% among people aged 85 and over. Rates of severe or profound core activity limitation were even more strongly associated with age. This degree of disability was reported for fewer than 1 in 20 Australians up to the age of 50 (excluding boys aged 5 to 14), but for almost one-third (31%) of people aged 75 and over (ABS 2010b). See Chapter 5 for more information about people with disability.



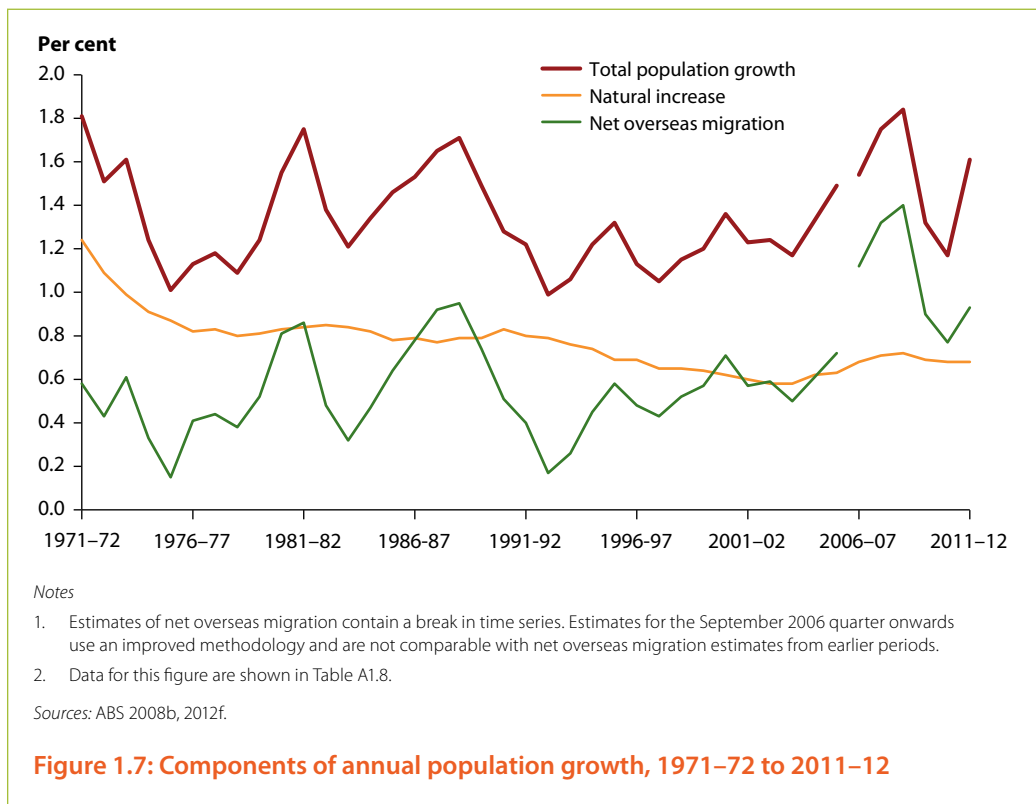
1.4 Components of population growth

Changes in population size are determined by two factors:

- 'natural increase' (that is, the number of births minus the number of deaths)
- 'net overseas migration' (the difference between the number of people migrating into a country and emigrating out of it).

Between June 2011 and June 2012, the Australian population grew by 1.6%, with 0.9% of this due to net overseas migration and 0.7% due to natural increase (ABS 2012f).

Annual population growth attributable to net overseas migration has been quite volatile over the 40 years between 1971–72 and 2011–12 (Figure 1.7). In contrast, the annual growth rate due to natural increase has been relatively more stable. These factors combined have resulted in the Australian population growing by between 1.0% and 1.8% per year over the 40 years, with net overseas migration overtaking natural increase as the main component of such growth consistently from 2005–06.

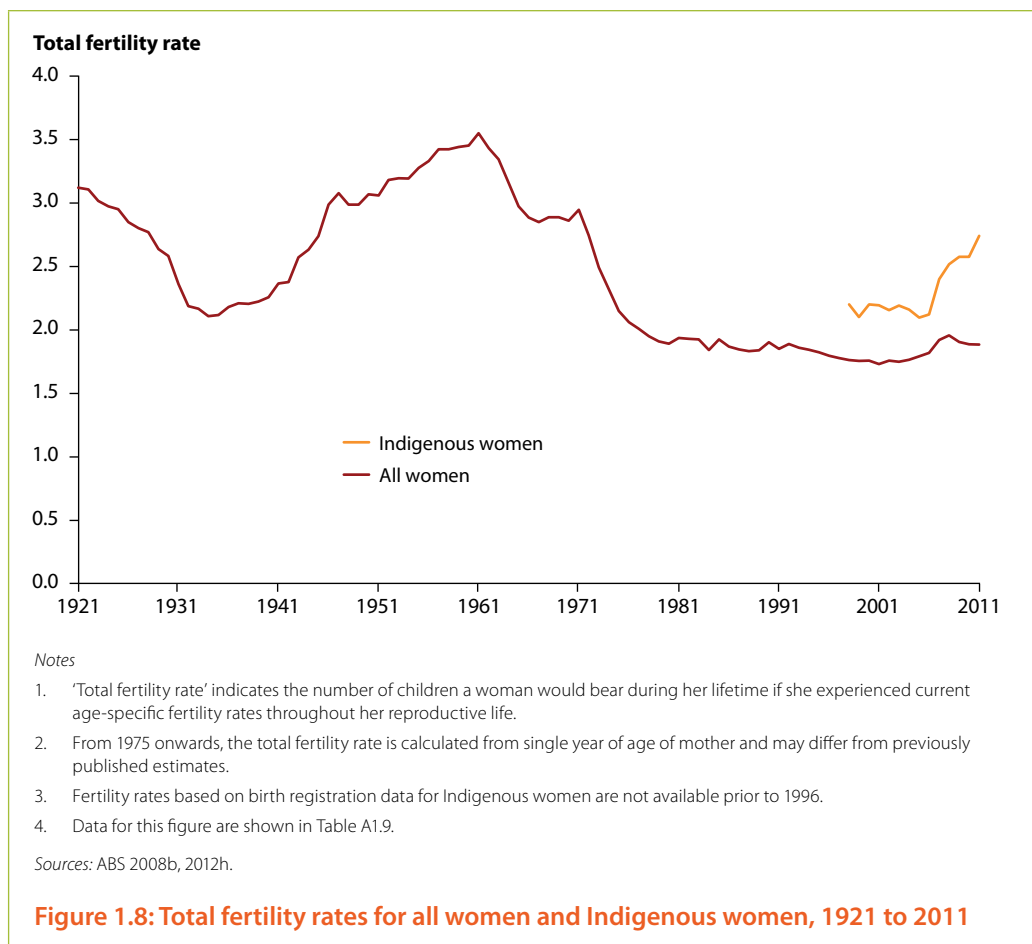


Fertility

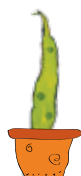
In 2011, a total of 301,617 births were registered in Australia, about 55,200 (22%) more than the number registered in 2001 (246,394) (ABS 2012h). Just over half (51%) of all births registered in 2011 were male babies.

The total fertility rate is a summary measure used to describe the number of children 'an average woman' would bear during her lifetime if she experienced current age-specific fertility rates throughout her child-bearing life. The level of fertility at which a population replaces itself from one generation to the next is referred to as the 'replacement rate', and is generally estimated at 2.1 births per woman in developed countries (Craig 1994).

Australia's total fertility rate in 2011 was 1.9 births per woman—an increase from its historical low of 1.7 in 2001 (Figure 1.8). Australia experienced a decline in fertility in the 1920s and 1930s, before rebounding to more than three births per woman in the 1950s and 1960s (the post-World War II 'baby boom'). However, the current period of lower fertility has been sustained for more than a generation—the total fertility rate has been consistently below the replacement rate since 1977.



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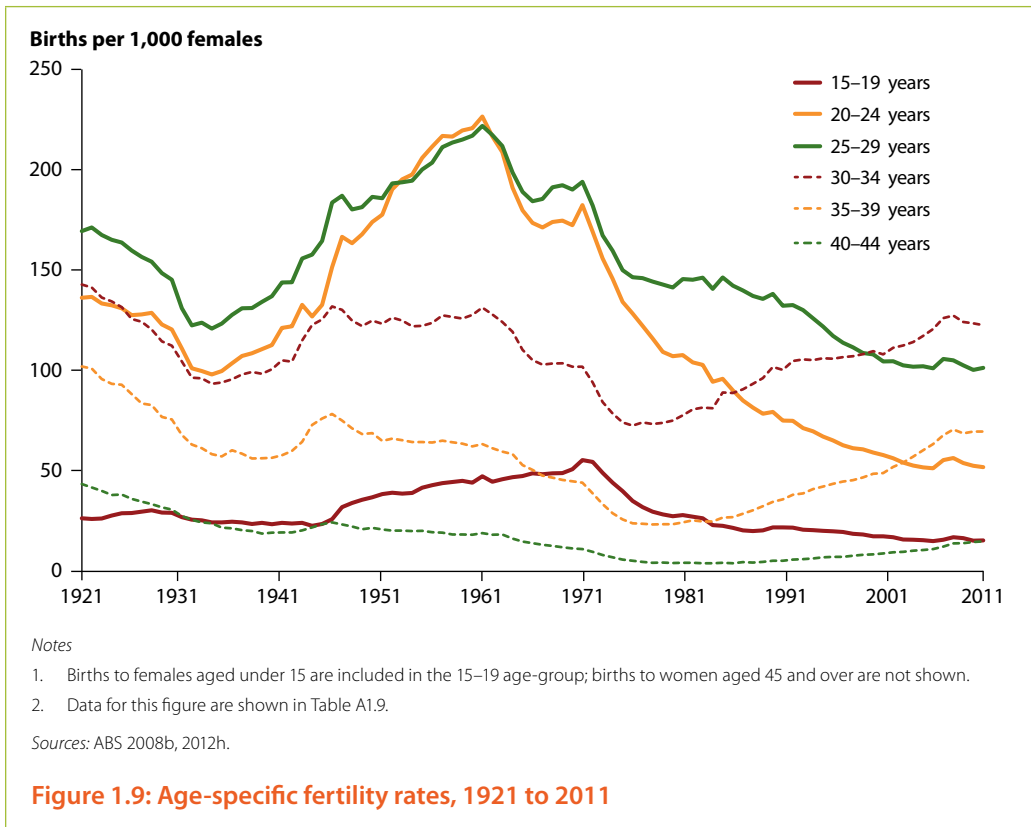
While all jurisdictions are working to improve the quality of Indigenous status data in birth registrations, variability in earlier records makes historical comparisons difficult. Recent data suggest a higher fertility rate among Indigenous women than the population as a whole (Figure 1.8). The total fertility rate among Indigenous women in 2011 was 2.7 births per woman. This difference, in part, contributes to the younger age structure of the Indigenous population.

Between 1926 and 1986, fertility rates were highest among women aged 20 to 29 (Figure 1.9). However, from 1987 onwards, there was a shift: the fertility rates were highest among those aged 25 to 34, with the rate for those aged 20–24 having dropped sharply from the early 1960s. Since 2000, fertility has been highest among women aged 30–34 and, from 2004, rates among women aged 35–39 have exceeded those of women aged 20–24.

Over the 90 years shown in Figure 1.9, fertility rates for teenagers aged 15–19 peaked in 1971 (at 56 births per 1,000 women) and then fell to a historical low in 2006 (15 births per 1,000 women). In 2011, the rate was 16 births per 1,000 teenagers aged 15–19.

As a consequence of these trends in fertility rates, the median age of mothers has changed over time—it fell from 28.8 years in 1921 to 25.4 in 1971 and then rose to 30.0 in 2001. Over the decade to 2011, the median age remained around 30 years, standing at 30.6 in 2011 (ABS 2008b, 2012h).

The median age of fathers (for which data are only available from 1975 onwards) has also shown an upwards trend since the 1970s. It was 28.6 years in 1975, rose to 33.1 in 2006 and has stabilised around that level in the following years, standing at 33.0 in 2011 (ABS 2012h).

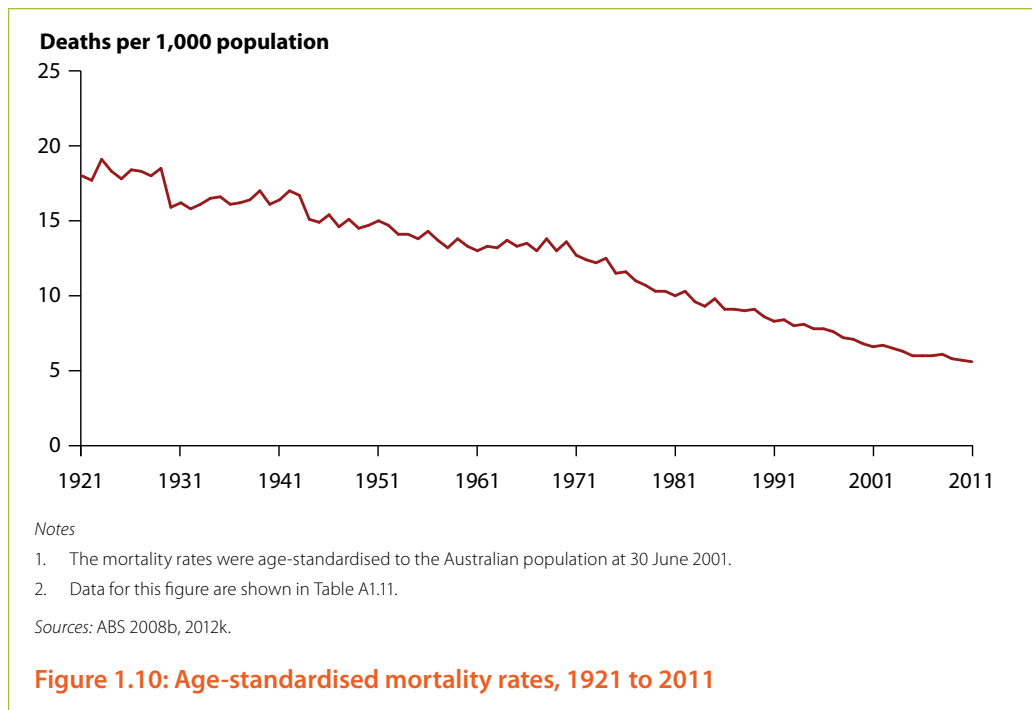


Indigenous men and women are more likely to have children at younger ages than the general population. For Indigenous births (that is, at least one parent reported being an Indigenous person), the median age of mothers in 2011 was 25.1 and the median age of fathers was 27.7 (ABS 2012h). In that same year, the fertility rate for Indigenous teenagers (those aged 15–19) was about 5 times as high as that for all teenagers (78 and 16 births per 1,000 females, respectively) and, for those aged 20–24, 3 times as high (155 and 52 births per 1,000 females). While the fertility rate for Indigenous women aged 25–29 was still higher than for all women in that age group, the difference is no longer as marked (45% higher) and, for the remaining age groups, the fertility rate of Indigenous women was lower (Table A1.10).

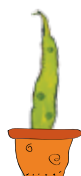
Mortality

There were 146,932 deaths registered in Australia in 2011, which is 14% more than in 2001 (128,544) (ABS 2012k). After accounting for differences due to changes in the population age structure over time, Australia’s mortality rate in 2011 was 5.6 deaths per 1,000 population.

There has been a long and continuing decline in mortality rates in Australia over time (Figure 1.10). The age-standardised death rate fell by 69% between 1921 and 2011, from 18.0 to 5.6 per 1,000 population. The decline in mortality in the first half of the last century tended to be associated with factors such as control of infectious diseases, and better hygiene and nutrition. In contrast, the decline in later years was associated with improvements in road safety measures, falls in smoking rates, and improvements in prevention, detection and treatment of diseases such as cardiovascular disease (AIHW 2000).



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Infant mortality (under the age of 1 year) is a well-established and widely accepted indicator of population health and the effectiveness of the health system (see Chapter 11 for more information about health- and welfare-related indicators). Like the overall mortality rate, the infant mortality rate has fallen over past decades, but the decline has been markedly steeper—falling from 65.7 to 3.8 per 1,000 live births between 1921 and 2011 (Table A1.11). The rate of 3.8 recorded for 2011 is the lowest rate on record. Improvements in infant mortality over time are related to improvements in acute care for seriously ill newborn babies and to postnatal factors such as nutrition, infectious diseases and environment, immunisation coverage and access to primary health care services (AHMAC 2012).

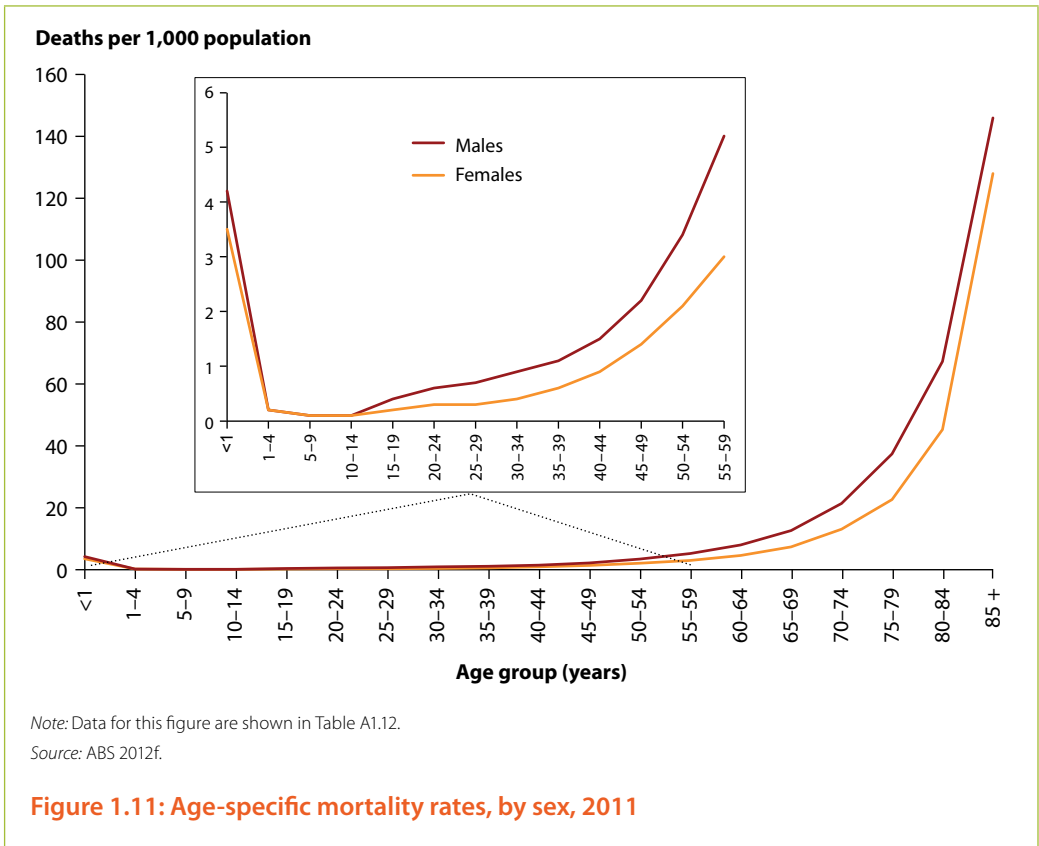
Indigenous infant mortality rates are higher than non-Indigenous infant mortality rates, although there has been a significant closing of the gap between these rates over recent years. Based on data for five jurisdictions with adequate identification of Indigenous deaths, infant mortality among Indigenous people declined by 46% between 2001 and 2011 (from 11.2 to 6.6 per 1,000 live births) (Table A11.2). By comparison, non-Indigenous infant mortality declined by 13% over the same period (from 5.0 to 3.6 per 1,000 live births). Data about specific causes of death indicate that there were declines in Indigenous infant mortality rates for all but one major cause of infant death between 2001–2005 and 2006–2010, with the exception being diseases of the circulatory system, which showed a slight increase (AIHW 2013).

Life expectancy is another common indicator of the general health of the population that is associated with mortality. As detailed in Indicator 1 in Chapter 11, a boy born in Australia between 2009 and 2011 can expect to live to the age of 79.7 years and a girl, 84.2 years (ABS 2012k). In the decade to 2011, life expectancy increased by 2.7 years for males and 1.8 years for females.

Age-specific death rates in 2011 were lowest for people aged 5–9 and 10–14 (both 0.1 per 1,000 population). These rates increased with age thereafter, albeit more slowly initially (Figure 1.11). By the age of 55–59, the death rate was 4.1 deaths per 1,000 population, while it was 10.0 deaths per 1,000 population for those aged 65–69 and 134.1 deaths per 1,000 population for those aged 85 and over.

Mortality was higher among males than females for nearly all age groups, including being more than twice as high for people between the ages of 15 and 34. The exceptions are the age groups spanning 1 to 14 years, where the rates were the same for boys and girls.





As well as varying with age and sex, mortality rates are associated with demographic factors, including Indigenous status and remoteness of residence. In the period 2007–2011, age-specific death rates among Indigenous people in all age groups were at least double that of non-Indigenous people, except for two groups—those aged 65 and over and those aged under 1 year—where the rates were still higher but less than double (Table 1.1). The most pronounced differences in mortality rates were for those aged between 25 and 54, where Indigenous mortality rates were 4 to 5 times as high as non-Indigenous rates.

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Table 1.1: Age-specific mortality rates, by Indigenous status and age, selected states and territories, 2007–2011

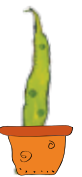
Age group (years)	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous	Indigenous to non-Indigenous rate ratio
Deaths per 1,000 live births (infant mortality)			
Less than 1	7.6	4.0	1.9
Deaths per 100,000 population			
1–4	49.6	18.3	2.7
5–14	21.8	9.3	2.4
15–24	112.9	37.4	3.0
25–34	220.8	56.8	3.9
35–44	478.9	97.4	4.9
45–54	874.8	220.3	4.0
55–64	1,644.2	513.0	3.2
65 and over	5,167.0	3,862.4	1.3

Notes

1. Death rates are based on the average number of death registrations between 2007 and 2011 divided by the population at 30 June 2009.
2. Excludes deaths where Indigenous status was not stated.
3. Based on data for New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia and Northern Territory (state/territory of usual residence). Data for other jurisdictions are excluded because of data quality issues in registered Indigenous deaths data.

Source: ABS 2012k: Table 19.1.

People living in areas classified as *Major cities* generally have lower mortality rates than people living in other parts of Australia, as mortality rates increase with remoteness (see Box 1.3 for information about the classification of geographical information). In 2010, the age-standardised mortality rates for people living in *Inner regional* areas and *Outer regional* areas were 1.1 times the rate for those living in *Major cities*; the corresponding rate ratio for *Remote and very remote* areas compared with *Major cities* was 1.2. Differences in mortality rates by remoteness areas were greatest in the 15–24 year age group, with a particularly large difference between people in this age group living in *Remote and very remote* areas compared with *Major cities* (Figure 1.12). Mortality rates among people aged 65 and over did not differ substantially between remoteness areas.



Box 1.3: Classification of geographical information

The ability to access and provide a wide range of services is influenced by the distance between clients and providers, be it for the clients to travel to the service providers or for the providers to travel to deliver services close to a person's home. The geographical location of areas is therefore an important concept in planning and analysing the provision of services.

The Australian Standard Geographical Classification (ASGC) Remoteness Structure (ABS 2006) allocates areas to one of five remoteness categories depending on their distance from urban centres, where the population size of the urban centre is considered to govern the range and types of services available. The five categories are: *Major cities*, *Inner regional*, *Outer regional*, *Remote* and *Very remote*. The category *Major cities* includes Australia's capital cities, with the exceptions of Hobart and Darwin, which are classified as *Inner regional*.

In July 2011, the ABS adopted a new geographical framework—the Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS). This standard brings all the geographic disaggregations for which the ABS publishes statistics into a single framework.

One component of the ASGS is the remoteness structure which is built using the same principles as the earlier remoteness structure. Although the ASGS remoteness areas have been defined using a different base unit, the ABS has indicated that the remoteness areas from the ASGC and the ASGS are generally comparable (ABS 2013a). Further information is available on the ABS website <www.abs.gov.au>.

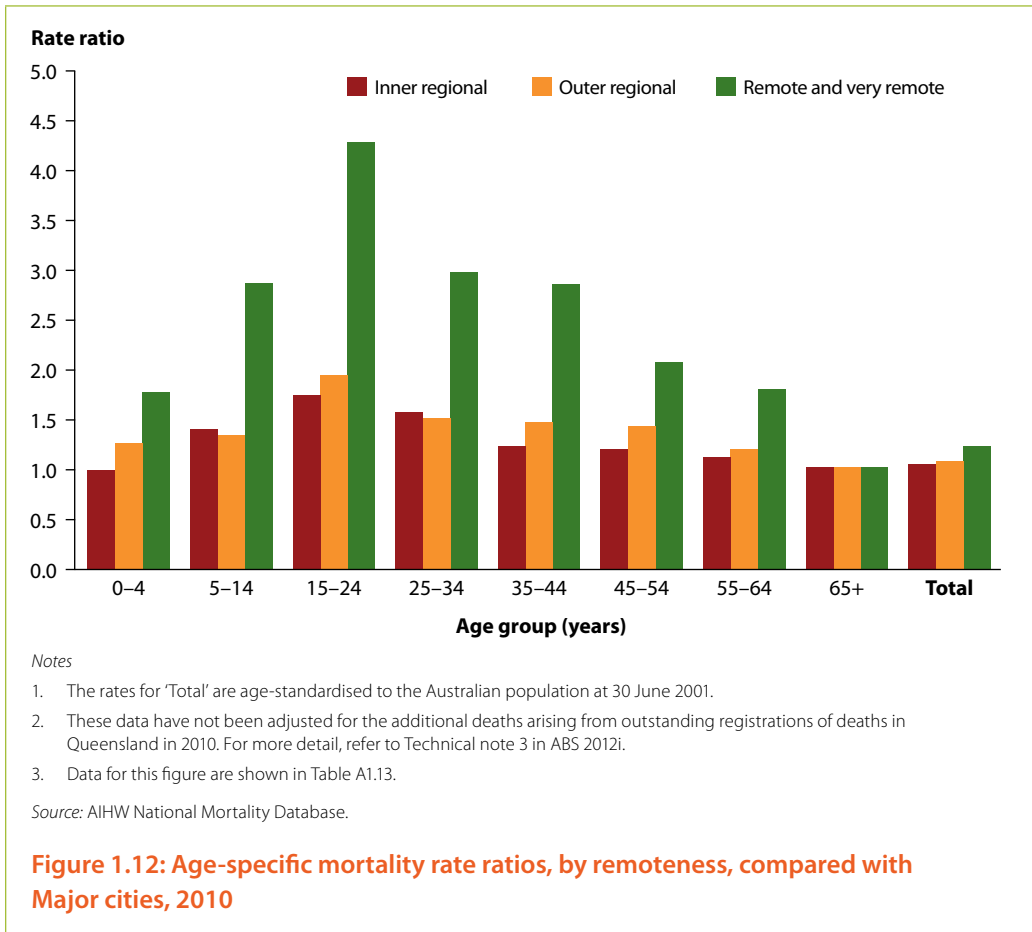
Another component of the ASGS that is used in this report is the Greater Capital City Statistical Area (GCCSA) structure. GCCSAs are designed to represent a socioeconomic definition of each state and territory capital city. The GCCSA boundaries include people who regularly socialise, shop or work within the city but live in areas surrounding the city. The GCCSAs do not define the built-up edge of the city.

The ABS is currently transitioning from the ASGC to the ASGS with the new classification being initially used for the release of data from the 2011 Census. The vast majority of ABS spatial data will be based on the ASGS by 2014. The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) is also in the process of transitioning its data collections towards the use of the new geography standard.

In this report, the reporting of geographies is most often based on the older ASGC because the data are only available according to that classification system. However, in a number of instances, it has been possible to use the newer ASGS system (such as in Section 1.5) or the data are only available based on a classification scheme other than those mentioned here. Throughout this report, when the geographical classification scheme used is other than the ASGC, it is noted.

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Overseas migration

Net overseas migration

Net overseas migration equals the number of incoming international travellers minus the number of outgoing international travellers, where the movement to or from Australia is for 12 months or more. A number greater than 0 means that, on balance, more people are entering the country than leaving it, contributing to population growth. In Australia, net overseas migration comprises five groups:

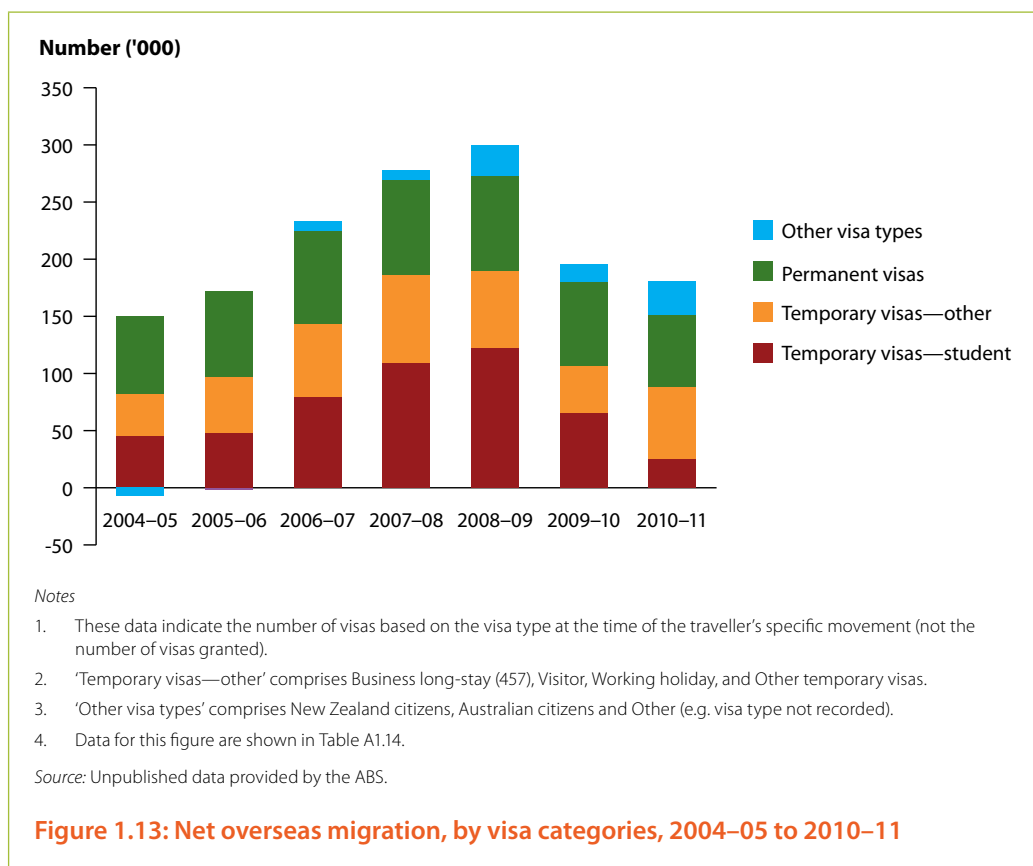
- people holding temporary visas—including student visas and Business long-stay visas
- people holding permanent visas—Skill visas, Family visas and Special eligibility and humanitarian visas
- Australian citizens
- citizens of New Zealand who are free to cross Australia's borders due to the 1973 Trans-Tasman Travel Arrangement
- other migration, including non-citizen permanent residents of Australia, and those with onshore visas and visas with the type not recorded.

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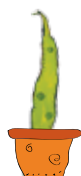


As illustrated by Figure 1.7, which shows net overseas migration (NOM) over 4 decades, population growth from NOM fluctuates markedly over time. This fluctuation is due to changes in government policy and a range of other factors. Figure 1.13, which focuses on more recent years, indicates that net overseas migration more than doubled between 2004–05 and 2008–09, rising from 142,500 people to a record high of 299,860 people. The number fell sharply the next year to 196,060 and continued to fall to 180,360 in 2010–11.

Although final data for 2011–12 were not available at the time of writing, preliminary estimates by the ABS suggest that Australia’s net overseas migration rose in 2011–12 to 208,300 people, comprising 472,100 arrivals and 263,800 departures (ABS 2012f).



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Information according to visa type is available only for final NOM data, and the latest final data pertain to 2010–11. Note that data on visa type are based on the visa type held by the traveller at the time of entering or leaving Australia, not the total number of visas granted by the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) (some of which may never be used or be used in a different period).



Net overseas migration data by visa type for 2010–11 indicate that:

- Temporary visa holders accounted for just under half (49%) of NOM, including students (14% of NOM), Business long-stay (13%), and Working holiday visa holders (15%).
- Permanent visa holders comprised about one-third (35%) of NOM, with the net number of Family permanent visas (29,060 people, or 16% of NOM) somewhat larger than the number of Skill permanent visas (25,140 people, or 14%).
- New Zealand citizens accounted for 21% of NOM (37,280 people).
- Around 8,790 more Australian citizens left the country than moved back from overseas, which had a negative effect on overall population growth (–5%).

Temporary visa holders have been the largest contributor to fluctuations in net overseas migration in recent years. Between 2004–05 and 2008–09, the net number of temporary visas more than doubled (from 82,000 to 189,220). This was followed by a sharp decrease of 44% between 2008–09 and 2009–10 (to 106,510) and a further fall to 88,000 in 2010–11. These changes were primarily driven by the education sector—in 2008–09, 41% of net overseas migration was attributable to temporary visas for higher education, vocational education and training, or other education courses, compared with 33% in 2009–10 and 14% in 2010–11 (Table A1.14). The drop in the student contribution to net overseas migration reflects a drop in applications for student visas, which may be related to a number of factors including a stronger Australian dollar, the global financial crisis, and changes to both visa processing and the General Skilled Migration Program (DIAC 2011, 2012b). DIAC expects the flow of international students to increase as the recommendations of the Knight Review of the Student Visa Program are progressively implemented (DIAC 2012b, 2013).

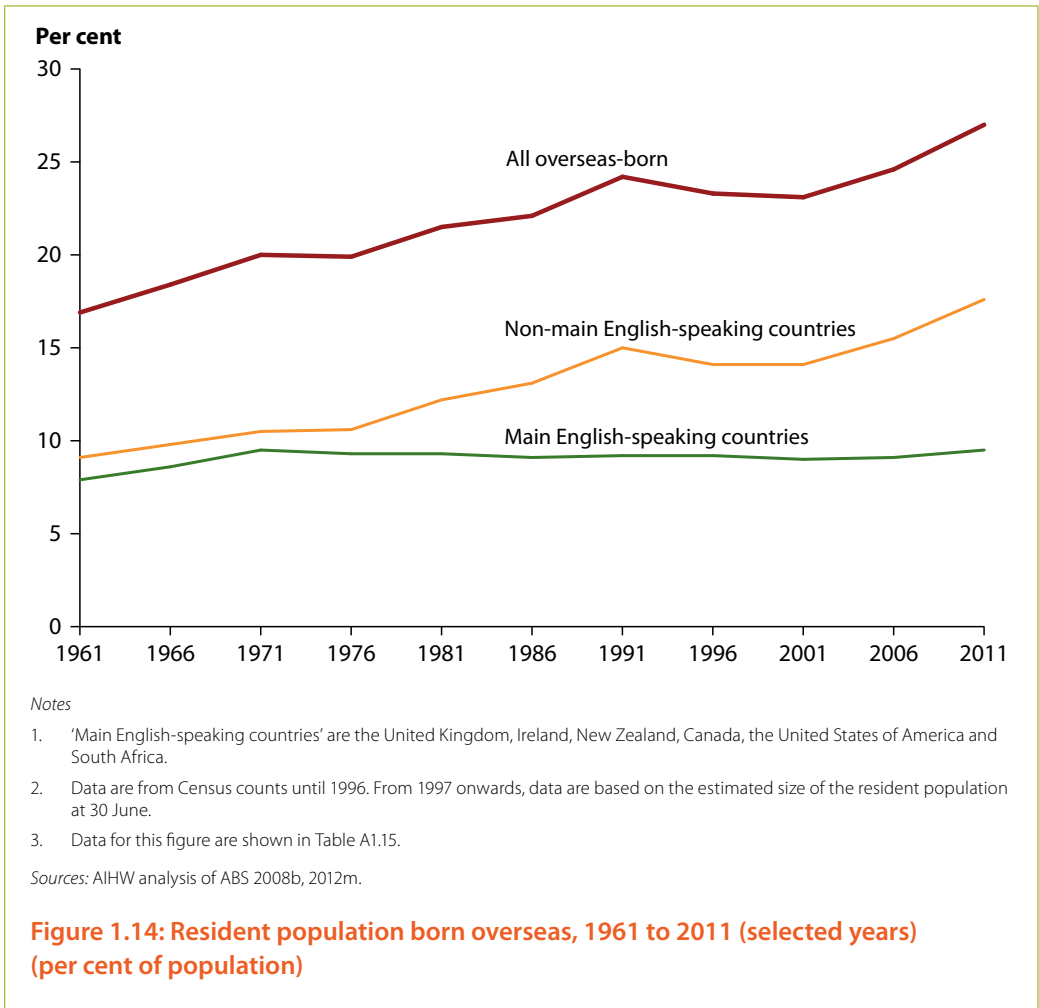
The net number of permanent visas has fallen from a high of 83,930 people in 2008–09 to 63,250 in 2010–11 (Figure 1.13). Of the three visa types that comprise permanent visas, the largest decrease over that period was for Skill visas (39%) (Table A1.14)—this was at least partly due to an increased proportion of Skill visas being granted onshore (DIAC 2012b). Since 2004–05, the net number of Special eligibility and humanitarian visas has fluctuated between 13,240 in 2004–05 and 9,060 in 2010–11.

Australia's population by country of birth

At 30 June 2011, 9% of the Australian population was born overseas in 'main English-speaking countries'—that is, the United Kingdom, Ireland, New Zealand, Canada, the United States of America and South Africa. Another 18% were born in other overseas countries which are often referred to collectively as 'non-main English-speaking countries'. In total, more than one-quarter (27%) of the Australian population was born overseas (Figure 1.14). Note that it cannot be assumed that a person born in a main English-speaking country (or in Australia) is proficient in English, nor that a person born in a non-main English-speaking country has poor English language skills. Therefore, while there may be a relationship at the broad level, data about country of birth are not interchangeable with data about proficiency in English.

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As a proportion of the total population, Australia’s overseas-born population has grown steadily since the late 1940s—increasing from 1 in 10 Australians (10%) in 1947 to more than 1 in 4 (27%) in 2011 (Table A1.15). This increase has been driven largely by migration from non-main English-speaking countries, with the proportion of residents born in these countries rising from just 2% in 1947 to 18% in 2011. Over the same period, the proportion born in main English-speaking countries has remained at around 8% to 9%.

In regard to specific source countries, people born in the United Kingdom represent the largest proportion of overseas-born residents (comprising 5.3% of Australia’s total population at 30 June 2011), followed by people born in New Zealand (2.5%), China (1.8%), India (1.5%), Vietnam (0.9%) and Italy (0.9%) (ABS 2012m).

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The composition of the population born overseas has changed over recent decades. According to the 2011 Census, among migrants who arrived before 2007 and were in Australia on Census night, 25% were from the United Kingdom, while the remaining top 10 countries of birth included an equal mix of European and Asian countries. Among those who arrived in 2007 or after, 13% were born in India, followed by 11% in the United Kingdom; the remaining top 10 birth countries were in Asia (ABS 2012o).

Given the changing composition of countries of birth for migrants over time, older migrants in Australia are most likely to have been born in European countries, while younger people are relatively more likely to have been born in New Zealand or countries throughout Asia.

The proportion of migrants from different countries varies considerably between regions, as well as between suburbs within large cities. For example, according to the 2011 Census, more than half of all Australian residents born in Iraq (60%) and Lebanon (70%) lived in *Greater Sydney*, while nearly half of those born in Sri Lanka (49%) and Greece (48%) lived in *Greater Melbourne* (AIHW analysis of 2011 Census). In general, migrants disproportionately live in capital cities rather than regional and remote areas.

Australia has two programs for permanent migration: the Migration Program and the Humanitarian Program. In 2010–11, a total of 168,685 permanent visas were granted under the Migration Program, with visas granted to people from the People's Republic of China, the United Kingdom, India and the Philippines collectively accounting for 51% of the Migration Program places (DIAC 2012a). (Note that these data pertain to the total number of visas granted, not the number of visas contributing to net overseas migration as discussed earlier).

In 2010–11, 13,799 visas were granted under the Humanitarian Program. This program has an 'offshore resettlement' component and an 'onshore protection' component. Offshore resettlement entails the granting of a permanent resettlement visa to refugees, from outside Australia. The top three countries of birth for people granted offshore humanitarian visas in 2010–11 were Iraq (24%), Myanmar (Burma) (16%) and Afghanistan (11%). Onshore protection is for those seeking asylum in Australia, with claims assessed in Australia. Those people found to be refugees who meet health and character requirements are granted Protection visas, which provide for permanent residence. Among those granted onshore Protection visas in 2010–11, the top three countries of citizenship were Iran (23%), Pakistan (12%) and the People's Republic of China (9%) (DIAC 2012a).

The increasing diversity of the Australian population, especially the growth in the proportion of people born in non-main English-speaking countries, creates challenges for service providers to be able to accommodate the cultural and language-related needs of their clients or potential clients. Further, the composition of welfare service target groups in terms of ethnic and language background varies between service types. For example, in the aged care sector, there is currently a greater need for services to accommodate people speaking European languages rather than Asian languages; among services targeted at traditional working-age people, the reverse is true.

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1.5 Where do Australians live?

As services are often delivered to people in the areas in which they live and work, population distribution and density is an important factor in planning and delivering welfare services. Providers may face cost and resource barriers to delivering services to small groups of people, particularly those living far away from large population centres or transport routes. At the same time, people living in sparsely populated areas often have to travel long distances to access services, and may have a reduced range of options compared with people living in more densely populated areas.

Populations living in different parts of the country are not uniform in their composition—for example, some areas have a relatively high number of children, people with disability, or people from a particular migrant background—so geography has varying implications for different service sectors. In addition, the need for welfare is related to a number of non-demographic factors that vary between local areas, such as participation in employment and access to economic resources (discussed in Chapter 2). Finally, aspects of the physical and built environment that differ throughout the country can affect demand for services, as well as the manner in which they are delivered.

The large majority of the Australian population lives in a number of relatively small geographical areas, as shown in Figure 1.15. In particular, the population is heavily concentrated in the south-east of the country, especially in urban areas. Population density ranged from between 0.1 to 1 person per square kilometre throughout most of central and northern Australia to more than 1,000 people per square kilometre in some city suburbs in June 2012. The highest population densities in Australia were in central Sydney suburbs, with between 13,100 to 13,900 people per square kilometre (ABS 2013b).

In terms of the distribution of the population by jurisdiction, in 2012, almost 1 in 3 people (32%) lived in New South Wales, 1 in 4 in Victoria (25%), 1 in 5 in Queensland (20%), 11% in Western Australia, 7.3% in South Australia, 2.3% in Tasmania, 1.7% in the Australian Capital Territory, and 1.0% in the Northern Territory (ABS 2013b).

Meanwhile, the majority (70%) of the Australian population lived in *Major cities*, 18% in *Inner regional* areas, 9.0% in *Outer regional* areas, 1.4% in *Remote* areas and 0.9% in *Very remote* areas in 2012 (ABS 2013b; see Box 1.3 for information about the classification of geographical areas).

Remote areas of Australia are disproportionately populated by Indigenous people. While the relevant data based on the 2011 Census were not available at the time of writing, available data indicate that while Indigenous Australians comprised less than 3% of the total population in 2006, almost half (47%) of people living in *Very remote* areas and 15% in *Remote* areas were Indigenous Australians (ABS 2008c). Note, though, that Indigenous people were still more likely to live in urban than remote areas. While about 1 in 4 lived in *Remote* areas (9%) or *Very remote* areas (15%) in 2006, about one-third (32%) lived in *Major cities*, 21% in *Inner regional* areas, and 22% in *Outer regional* areas.

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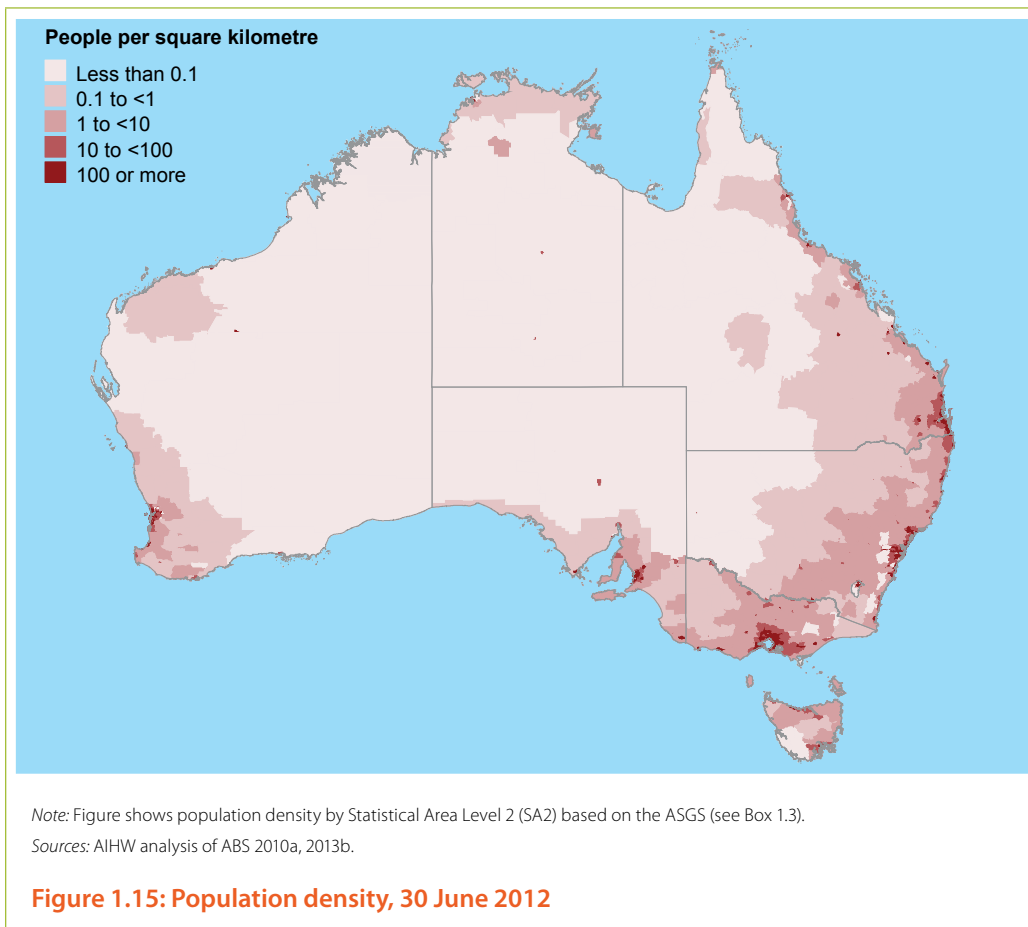


Table 1.2 shows the proportion of the Indigenous population living in each state and territory based on preliminary population data for 30 June 2011. New South Wales was home to the largest proportion of all Indigenous people (31%), just as it is for all Australians (32%). However, there were notable differences in other jurisdictions. Compared with the general population, a higher proportion of Indigenous Australians lived in Queensland and the Northern Territory, while a substantially lower proportion lived in Victoria.

Meanwhile, the proportion of Indigenous to non-Indigenous people within each jurisdiction varied widely from one jurisdiction of Australia, ranging from 30% of people in the Northern Territory to 1% in Victoria (Table 1.2).



Table 1.2: Distribution of population, by Indigenous status, and state and territory, 30 June 2011

State or territory	Per cent			Indigenous population as % of jurisdiction population
	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous	All Australians	
New South Wales	31.1	32.3	32.3	2.9
Victoria	7.1	25.3	24.8	0.9
Queensland	28.2	19.8	20	4.2
South Australia	5.6	7.4	7.3	2.3
Western Australia	13.2	10.5	10.5	3.8
Tasmania	3.6	2.2	2.3	4.7
Northern Territory	10.3	0.8	1.0	29.8
Australian Capital Territory	0.9	1.7	1.6	1.7
Australia	100.0	100.0	100.0	3.0

Note: Indigenous data are preliminary ABS population estimates based on the 2011 Census.

Source: ABS 2012f.

The age profile of the population varies between different regions of Australia, with capital cities generally having younger populations than the rest of the country. This is largely due to the high proportion of people in their 20s and 30s living in cities. According to 2011 Census data, almost 30% of people living in Greater capital cities were aged 20–39, compared with 23% living outside the capital cities (Table 1.3). The concentration of education, employment and other opportunities in cities is a driving factor behind young adults moving out of regional areas (ABS 2012n).

Table 1.3: Population living within and outside Greater capital cities^(a), by age, 2011 (per cent)

Age group (years)	Greater capital cities ^(b)	Outside capitals ^(c)
0–19	25.5	26.5
20–39	29.8	23.4
40–59	26.6	27.6
60–79	14.4	18.2
80 and over	3.7	4.3
Total	100.0	100.0

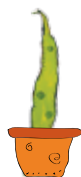
(a) Data are classified according to the ASGS Greater Capital City Statistical Area structure (see Box 1.3).

(b) 'Greater capital cities' includes *Greater Sydney, Greater Melbourne, Greater Brisbane, Greater Adelaide, Greater Perth, Greater Hobart, Greater Darwin* and the Australian Capital Territory.

(c) 'Outside capitals' includes *Rest of New South Wales, Rest of Victoria, Rest of Queensland, Rest of South Australia, Rest of Western Australia, Rest of Tasmania, Rest of Northern Territory, and Other Territories.*

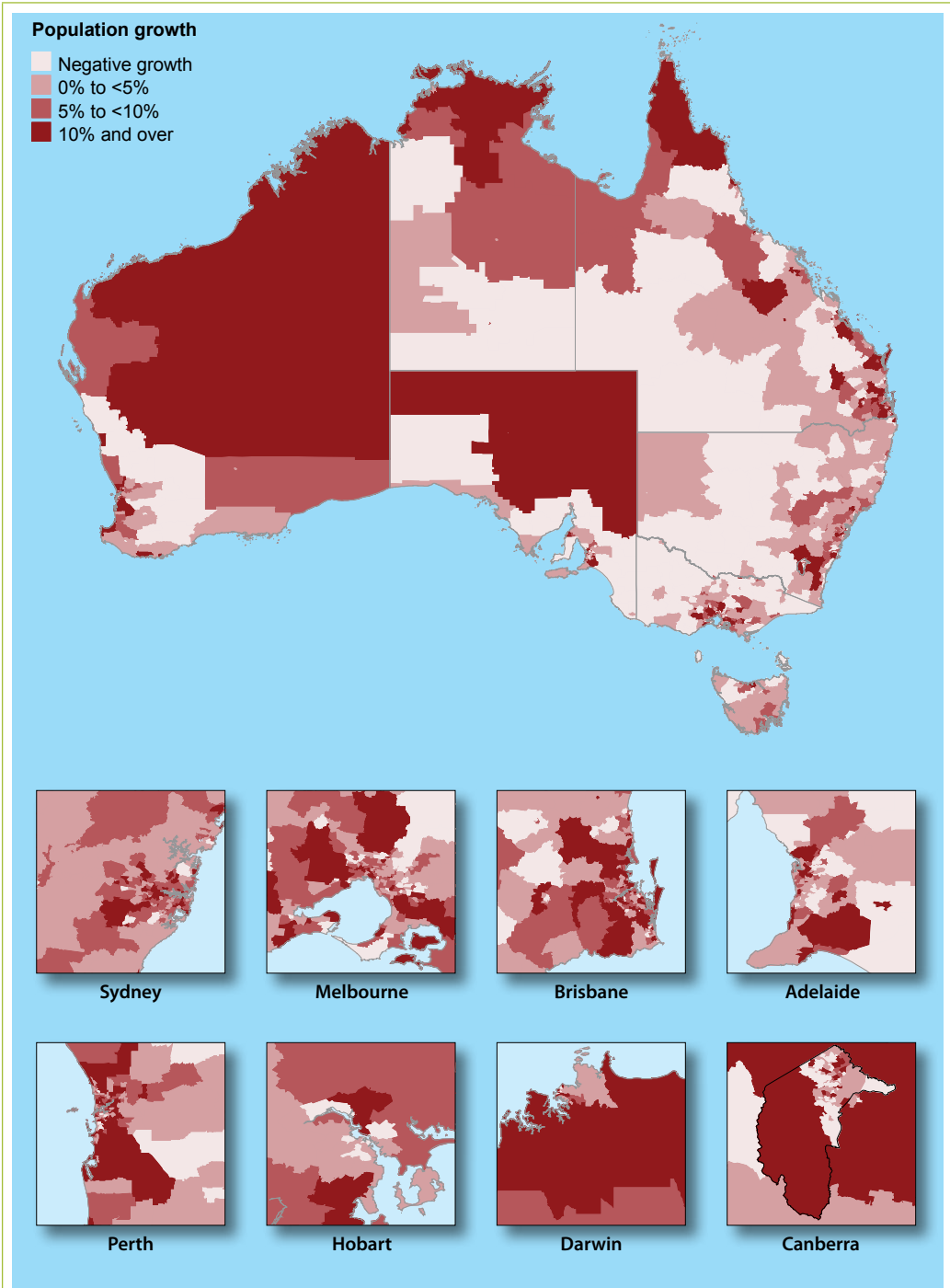
Source: AIHW analysis of ABS 2011 Census.

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As the demographic composition of the population is not constant across geographical regions, the implications of population size for demand on welfare services differ between service types and locations. For example, after taking into account population size differences, regional areas require a relatively greater number of services targeted at older people than cities, while Indigenous communities in remote Australia have a relatively high need for children's services. Between 2007 and 2012, the Australian population grew by 8%, representing an average annual change of 1.6% each year (AIHW analysis of ABS 2013b). Over this period, there was population growth in all states and territories. Western Australia experienced the fastest growth (average of 3.0% per year), followed by the Australian Capital Territory (1.9%) and the Northern Territory (1.8%). Figure 1.16 shows the average annual population change for 2007 to 2012 across Australia. Growth rates were higher than the national average in many regions of Western Australia and in a number of smaller geographical areas, especially on the fringes of the capital cities as well as in some coastal areas. Declines in population numbers were most prominent in the inland rural areas of Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria.





Note: Figure shows population change by Statistical Area level 2 (SA2) based on the ASGS (see Box 1.3).
 Sources: AIHW analysis of ABS 2012m, 2013b.

Figure 1.16: Change in population size from 2007 to 2012



1.6 Household structure

Households play a critical role in facilitating personal wellbeing. People living together generally provide social, material and financial support that affects the need for welfare services (see, for example, the discussion of informal carers in Chapter 8). Further, many services are delivered to entire families or households rather than to individuals, so an understanding of the structure of Australian families and households is important in the planning and delivery of welfare services. At a population level, family structure is related to the welfare of children and young people. Thus, understanding the composition of different family types, including how and why this is changing, is important in any consideration of population wellbeing.

According to the 2011 Census, there were 7.8 million households in Australia on Census night (ABS 2012e). While projections based on the 2011 Census were not yet available, projections based on the 2006 Census suggest that there will be between 11.4 and 11.8 million households in Australia by 2031 (ABS 2010c). While family households (with or without children) will remain dominant, the greatest relative increase is anticipated among lone-person households. Projected growth of up to 91% between 2006 and 2031 in the number of lone-person households is mainly associated with population ageing.

Data from the 2011 Census indicate that the average household size (that is, the number of people usually living in the household) was 2.6, the same as in the 2001 and 2006 Censuses, but lower than the 2.7 recorded in the 1996 Census (ABS 2008a, 2012d).

The information in this section pertains to people living in households (private dwellings). While this remains the dominant living arrangement—98% of Australians were members of households living in private dwellings including houses and apartments in 2009–10 (ABS 2012q)—many people live in other types of residences, both short and long term. Living arrangements described elsewhere in *Australia's welfare 2013* include:

- general housing (see Chapter 3)
- residential (for example group homes) and facility-based out-of-home care for children and young people (Chapter 4)
- youth justice facilities (Chapter 4)
- residential aged care facilities for older people as well as some younger people with disability (chapters 5 and 6)
- supported accommodation for the homeless, boarding houses, improvised dwellings and other temporary lodging (Chapter 7).

Family composition

According to the 2011 Census, almost three-quarters (72%) of the 7.8 million households were family households, one-quarter (24%) were lone-person households and 4% were group households. Nearly all (98%) family households contained a single family, while 2% were multiple family households. Note that for all discussions about family composition in households, the presence or absence of children is in relation to whether the children are usually living in the household (not to whether a person or couple has any children), as detailed further in Box 1.4.

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Box 1.4: Statistical classification of families

Concepts of what constitutes a family vary widely—some people may consider their family to be those relatives who live together, while others include extended relatives living elsewhere, or unrelated people in close relationships.

The data in this report draw on statistics about families from a range of ABS and other collections, some of which may have slight variations in definitions of family-related concepts (such as 'dependent student'). Definitions of these concepts, as used for the ABS Census, are provided here.

A family is defined as:

Two or more people, 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. Each separately identified couple relationship, lone parent–child relationship or other blood relationship forms the basis of a family. Some households contain more than one family. Non-related people living in the same household are not counted as family members (unless under 15 years of age).

Families are classified by the relationships that exist between the family members, with different types of families identified based on the presence or absence of couple relationships, parent–child relationships, child dependency relationships and other family relationships.

A 'child' is defined as:

A person of any age who is a natural, adopted, step, foster or nominal son or daughter of a couple or lone parent, usually resident in the same household. A child is also any individual under 15, usually resident in the household, who forms a parent–child relationship with another member of the household. This includes otherwise related children aged less than 15 and unrelated children less than 15. In order to be classified as a child, the person can have no identified partner or child of his/her own usually resident in the household. A separate family in the household is formed in this instance.

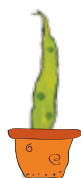
Three types of children are identified by the ABS, with the first two collectively referred to as dependent children:

- a child under 15
- a dependent student—that is, a child aged 15 to 24 who attends a secondary or tertiary educational institution as a full-time student and for whom there is no identified partner or child of his/her own usually resident in the same household
- a non-dependent child—that is, a child aged 15 or over who is usually resident in the household and who is not a full-time student aged 15 to 24, and who has no identified partner or child of his/her own usually resident in the household.

These are general classifications used for statistical purposes. Non-dependent children may still receive support (material or non-material, including financial) from their parent(s) or other members of the household, depending on individual and family circumstances.

Sources: ABS 2011a, 2011b.

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As detailed in Table 1.4, the 2011 Census data also indicate that of the 5.7 million families:

- 38% were couples with no children
- 37% were couples with dependent children (with or without non-dependent children)
- 8% were couples with non-dependent children only
- 11% were one-parent families with dependent children
- 5% were one-parent families with non-dependent children only
- 2% were 'other family types', such as adult siblings living together in the absence of both parents.

Overall, 60% of families comprised a parent, or parents, with one or more children, with 47% of families having dependent children living with them and 13%, only non-dependent children.

Of all families with children, 74% were couple families, while 26% were one-parent families. In addition, of such families, one-parent families were more likely than couple families to have only non-dependent children living with them (33% of one-parent families and 18% of couple families with children, respectively). The majority of lone parents were female (82%) (ABS 2012e).

Table 1.4: Family composition, 2011

Type of family	Number ('000)	Per cent
Couple family		
With no children	2,150.3	37.8
With dependent children	2,086.3	36.7
With non-dependent children only	448.1	7.9
<i>Total</i>	4,684.7	82.4
One-parent family		
With dependent children	600.9	10.6
With non-dependent children only	300.7	5.3
<i>Total</i>	901.6	15.9
Other family ^(a)	97.7	1.7
Total	5,684.1	100.0

(a) 'Other family' is defined as a group of related individuals residing in the same household, who cannot be categorised as belonging to a couple or one-parent family, such as siblings living together where neither is a spouse/partner, lone parent or child.

Source: ABS 2012b: Table B25.

According to the 2011 Census, there were 209,000 households (2.7% of all households) in Australia in which at least one Indigenous person lived (these are referred to as Indigenous households for brevity). Indigenous households were more likely than other households to be family households (81% and 71% respectively), while they were less likely to be lone-person households (14% and 25%) (ABS 2012a; see Table A1.16).

Of all family households, 6% of Indigenous households were multiple-family households, compared with 2% of other households.

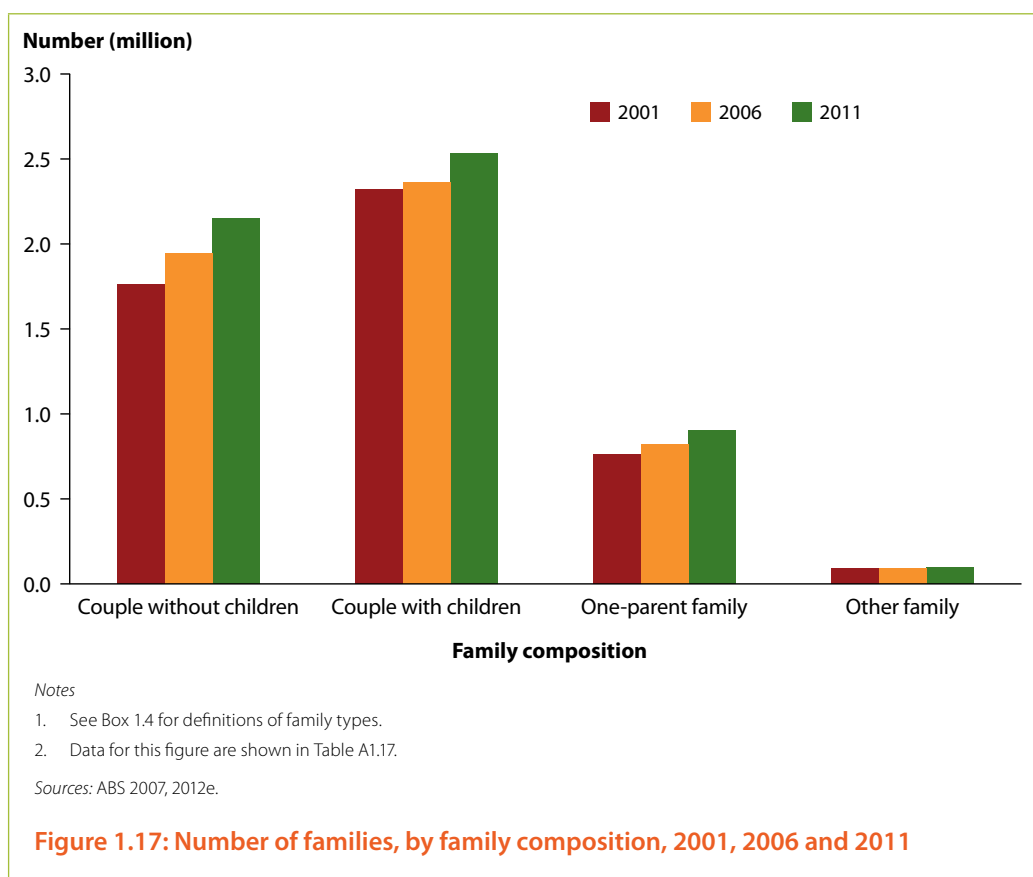
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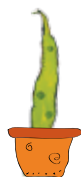
Among one-family households, Indigenous households were more than twice as likely as other households to be one-parent families (36% and 15%) and about half as likely to be a couple family with no children (20% and 38%).

Projections based on the 2006 Census suggest that the number of couple families without children in the household would grow larger than the number of couple families with children by 2014 to become the most common family type—due in part to increasing numbers of ‘empty nesters’ as higher life expectancy results in more people living together to older ages than in past generations (ABS 2010c).

Between the 2001 and 2011 Censuses, the total number of Australian families grew by 747,200, or 15%. More than half of the additional families added over this period were couples without children (Figure 1.17).



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Families with children

According to the 2011 Census, there were 4.9 million dependent children living in families on Census night, with 79% (3.9 million) of these aged 0–14, and 21% (1.0 million) aged 15–24 (ABS 2012c). Since these data only include those children who were home on Census night, the actual number of dependent children may be understated, particularly in the older age groups (where children are more likely to be absent from home) but also among younger children (for example, when there are shared care arrangements with another parent). For this reason, data about families with children that are based on the usual residence of people, as sourced from the ABS 2009–10 Family Characteristics Survey, are mainly shown in this section in favour of Census data.

There were almost 7.0 million children living in 3.7 million families in 2009–10, including dependent and non-dependent children (ABS 2011c). Around three-quarters (77%, or 5.4 million) of children living in families were dependent children, with 60% aged under 15 and 17% dependent students aged 15–24 (Table 1.5). Non-dependent children comprised 23% of children living in families in 2009–10, with 13% aged 15–24 and 10% aged 25 and over. In 1997, a smaller proportion (20%) of all children living in families were non-dependent children.

In 2009–10, 1 in 5 children (20% or 1.4 million) lived in a one-parent family—a rate that has not changed since 1997 (Table 1.5). One-parent families were more likely than couple families to include children aged 25 and over living with their parent(s) (19% and 7% respectively in 2009–10). Conversely, fewer than half (48%) of the children living in one-parent families and almost two-thirds (63%) of those in couple families were aged under 15.

Between 1997 and 2009–10, the number of dependent children living in families grew by 12% (from 4.8 million to 5.4 million), with the growth in the number of dependent children in couple families (13%) outpacing that of dependent children in one-parent families (7%) (Table 1.5). The number of children living in the family home who were dependent students aged 15–24 increased by 29% in couple families and by 53% in one-parent families between 1997 and 2009–10. Trends in participation in education among young people are explored further in chapters 2 and 4.

Notably, there were fewer children aged 0 to 9 living in one-parent families in 2009–10 (420,000) than in 1997 (462,000). This may be due in part to the declining divorce rate and increasing duration of marriages before divorce observed in recent years (see the following discussion on divorce).

Although the number of dependent children living in families has grown over time (as noted above), growth in the number of non-dependent children living in families has been even more substantial—with an increase of 34% between 1997 (1.2 million) and 2009–10 (1.6 million). This increase was due to growth both in the number of non-dependent children aged 15–24 living in families (24%) and the number of children aged 25 and over (51%). For more information about the living arrangements of young people, see Section 4.5.

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Table 1.5: Children living in families, by family type and dependency/age of child, 1997, 2003, 2006–07 and 2009–10

Dependency and age of child (years)	1997		2003		2006–07		2009–10	
	No. ('000)	%	No. ('000)	%	No. ('000)	%	No. ('000)	%
Couple families								
Dependent children	3,935	82.3	3,987	80.3	4,143	80.9	4,439	80.1
0–4	1,088	22.7	1,043	21.0	1,133	22.1	1,261	22.8
5–9	1,055	22.1	1,048	21.1	1,061	20.7	1,105	19.9
10–14	1,055	22.1	1,047	21.1	1,079	21.1	1,122	20.3
Dependent student aged 15–24	737	15.4	849	17.1	870	17.0	951	17.2
Non-dependent children	848	17.7	977	19.7	977	19.1	1,100	19.9
Non-dependent child aged 15–24	588	12.3	628	12.7	657	12.8	702	12.7
25 and over	260	5.4	349	7.0	320	6.3	398	7.2
Total children in couple families	4,783	100.0	4,963	100.0	5,120	100.0	5,539	100.0
One-parent families								
Dependent children	868	72.4	940	73.4	884	69.0	931	65.7
0–4	204	17.0	199	15.5	150	11.7	177	12.5
5–9	258	21.5	261	20.4	235	18.3	243	17.1
10–14	246	20.5	292	22.8	290	22.6	266	18.8
Dependent student aged 15–24	160	13.3	188	14.7	209	16.3	245	17.3
Non-dependent children	332	27.7	342	26.7	398	31.0	485	34.2
Non-dependent child aged 15–24	152	12.7	152	11.9	196	15.3	218	15.4
25 and over	180	15.0	190	14.8	202	15.8	267	18.8
Total children in one-parent families	1,199	100.0	1,281	100.0	1,282	100.0	1,417	100.0

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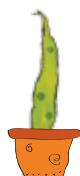


Table 1.5 (continued): Children living in families, by family type and dependency/ age of child, 1997, 2003, 2006–07 and 2009–10

Dependency and age of child (years)	1997		2003		2006–07		2009–10	
	No. ('000)	%	No. ('000)	%	No. ('000)	%	No. ('000)	%
All families								
Dependent children	4,803	80.3	4,927	78.9	5,027	78.5	5,370	77.2
0–4	1,292	21.6	1,242	19.9	1,283	20.0	1,438	20.7
5–9	1,313	21.9	1,309	21.0	1,296	20.2	1,348	19.4
10–14	1,301	21.7	1,339	21.4	1,369	21.4	1,388	20.0
Dependent student aged 15–24	897	15.0	1,037	16.6	1,079	16.9	1,196	17.2
Non-dependent children	1,180	19.7	1,319	21.1	1,375	21.5	1,585	22.8
Non-dependent child aged 15–24	740	12.4	780	12.5	853	13.3	920	13.2
25 and over	440	7.4	539	8.6	522	8.2	665	9.6
Total children in all families	5,982	100.0	6,245	100.0	6,402	100.0	6,955	100.0

Note: See Box 1.4 for relevant definitions.

Source: ABS 2011c: Table 6.1.

Family formation and dissolution

Marriage

Couple families, with or without children, include people in a registered marriage as well as those in de facto relationships. During 2011, there were 121,752 registered marriages (ABS 2012l). Between 1991 and 2011, the number of registered marriages declined from 6.6 to 5.4 per 1,000 population (Table 1.6). Over the same period, the median age at marriage increased by 3.0 years for males and 3.3 for females. Around 1 in 5 people entering into a registered marriage in 2011 had previously been married (21% of males and 19% of females).

De facto relationships (also referred to as de facto marriages) have become increasingly common in Australia. According to the 2011 Census, 9.5% of Australians aged 15 and over were living in a de facto relationship in 2011 compared with 7.3% in 2001 (ABS 2012b, 2012d). De facto relationships were most common among younger people: 19% of people aged 25–34 and 14% of those aged 20–24 were in a de facto relationship in 2011 (Figure 1.18). In contrast, fewer than 3% of people aged 65 and over were in a de facto relationship.

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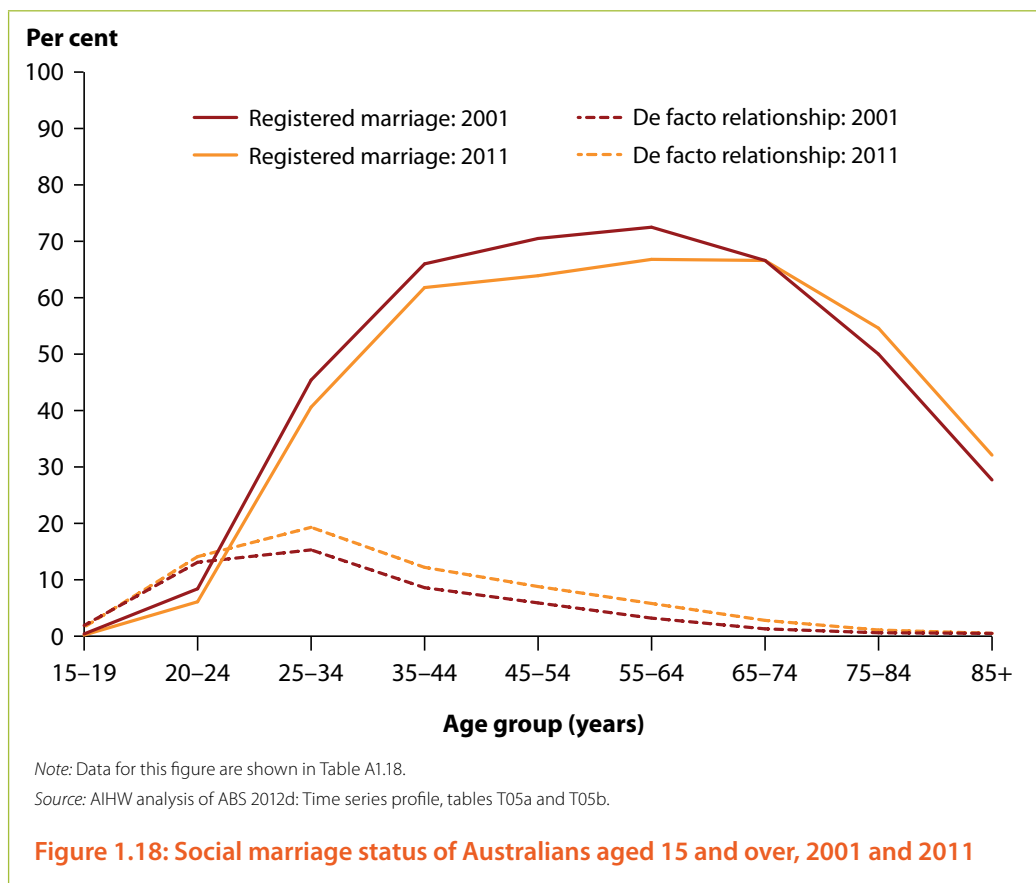
Table 1.6: Selected marriage indicators, 1991 to 2011 (selected years)

	1991	2001	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Number of registered marriages	131,869	103,130	116,322	118,756	120,118	121,176	121,752
Crude marriage rate ^(a)	6.6	5.3	5.5	5.5	5.5	5.4	5.4
Median age at marriage (years)							
Males	28.4	30.6	31.6	31.6	31.5	31.4	31.4
Females	26.0	28.6	29.3	29.3	29.2	29.2	29.3
Previously married (%) ^(b)							
Males	23.7	24.5	23.2	22.7	21.9	21.3	21.1
Females	22.8	23.4	21.5	21.0	20.2	19.6	19.4

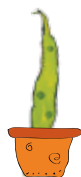
(a) Per 1,000 population, excluding males aged under 18 and females aged under 16.

(b) People previously married include those who have been widowed or divorced.

Source: ABS 2012I.



In 2011, more than 3 in 4 couples (78%) entering a registered marriage had previously lived together, compared with 72% in 2001 (ABS 2012I).



Divorce

Almost 49,000 divorces were granted in 2011—a rate of 2.2 per 1,000 population (Table 1.7). The crude divorce rate has been generally falling since 2001, when it was 2.8 per 1,000 population. The 2011 rate of 2.2 per 1,000 population (also recorded in 2008) is the lowest since the introduction of the *Family Law Act 1975* which changed the grounds under which divorce could be granted (ABS 2009).

Just under half (48%) of all divorces in 2011 occurred between couples with children aged under 18, a decrease from 54% in 1991. However, the average number of children per divorce has remained steady since 1991, at 1.9 (ABS 2012l).

The two decades to 2011 saw an increase in the median duration of marriage (from date of marriage registration to divorce) from 10.3 to 12.2 years. Meanwhile, the median age at divorce rose by 6 years for both men and women (from 38.4 to 44.5 and from 35.5 to 41.7 respectively) in the same period.

Table 1.7: Selected divorce indicators, 1991 to 2011 (selected years)

	1991	2001	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Number of divorces	45,652	55,330	47,963	47,209	49,448	50,240	48,935
Crude divorce rate ^(a)	2.6	2.8	2.3	2.2	2.3	2.3	2.2
Median duration of marriage ^(b) (years)	10.3	11.8	12.5	12.3	12.3	12.3	12.2
Divorces involving children ^(c) (%)	54.2	51.2	49.3	48.8	49.1	49.5	48.3
Median age at divorce (years)							
Males	38.4	41.8	44.2	44.1	44.4	44.4	44.5
Females	35.5	39.1	41.3	41.4	41.5	41.5	41.7

(a) Number of divorces per 1,000 estimated resident population at 30 June of each year.

(b) Median duration of the marriage to divorce (decree made absolute).

(c) Unmarried children of the marriage who were aged under 18 at the time of application for divorce.

Source: ABS 2012l.

Same-sex couple families

According to the 2011 Census, there were 33,714 same-sex couples on Census night, with the majority identifying as de facto partners (96%). The remaining 4% identified as the husband or wife of someone of the same sex. These couples may have been married in a country other than Australia, registered their relationship under state or territory law, been through a private ceremony, or regard the term 'married' to be the most appropriate term to describe their relationship (ABS 2012p).

Most same-sex couples lived together without children or other relatives in their family (86%), although just over 1 in 10 (12%) had children (of any age including adults) living with them in their family. There were 6,120 children under the age of 25 in same-sex couple families, of whom 78% were under the age of 15 (ABS 2012p). Female same-sex couples were 7 times as likely as male same-sex couples to have children in their family (22% versus 3%).

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Step and blended families

The Census differentiates between various types of couple families with children, including intact, step and blended families (see Box 1.5).

Of all families with children in 2011, 2.2 million (88%) were intact families with no other children present (Table 1.8). Almost 172,000 (7%) families were step families with no other children present and another 100,000 (4%) were blended families with no other children present. The proportion of children living in step or blended families with no other children did not change markedly between 2006 and 2011 (ABS 2008a, 2012b).

In 2011, just over 23,000 (1%) families were intact families with other children present, such as a foster child, or a grandchild being raised by grandparents. Another 11,500 (0.5%) families were 'other couple families', such as grandparents raising grandchildren and couple families with only foster children.

Box 1.5: Census definitions of couple families with children

In the ABS Census, couple families with children are classified according to the parent-child relationships within the family, with temporarily absent children taken into account. The four categories are:

- **intact family:** a couple family with at least one child who is the natural or adopted child of both partners in the couple and no child who is the step child of either partner in the couple
- **step family:** a couple family with one or more children, at least one of whom is from a previous relationship of either partner, but none of whom is the natural or adopted child of both members of the couple
- **blended family:** a couple family with two or more children, of whom at least one child is the natural or adopted child of both members of the couple and at least one is the step child of either partner in the couple
- **other couple family:** a couple family containing one or more children where no child is the natural or adopted child of either partner in the couple, and no child is the step child of either parent in the couple.

Source: ABS 2011a: 'family blending variable'.

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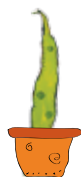


Table 1.8: Couple families with children, by type of family, 2006 and 2011

Type of family	2006		2011	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
Families with no other children present				
Intact family with no other children present	2,081,216	88.1	2,223,032	87.7
Step family with no other children present	155,464	6.6	171,683	6.8
Blended family with no other children present	92,960	3.9	100,430	4.0
Families with other children present				
Intact family with other children present	19,404	0.8	23,236	0.9
Step family with other children present	2,283	0.1	1,597	0.1
Blended family with other children present	1,189	0.1	2,963	0.1
Other couple family with other children only	10,069	0.4	11,456	0.5
Total	2,362,585	100.0	2,534,397	100.0

Note: See Box 1.5 for definitions of 'couple families with children' as used in the ABS Census.

Sources: ABS 2007, 2012a.

Children and young people living outside their birth families

While the large majority of children and dependent young people live with one or both of their natural parents, some do not live with their birth families. These arrangements may be permanent or temporary, and can be divided into the following broad categories:

- adoptions
- out-of-home care, in which children and young people aged under 18 are placed in residential care, foster care or relative/kinship care overseen by state or territory child protection authorities
- informal care, such as children and young people living with grandparents without formal arrangements negotiated through the child protection system.

Chapter 4 provides information about adopted children and those living in out-of-home care.

Children with a natural parent living elsewhere

Although most Australian children live in intact families, 1 million children aged 0 to 17 (21%) had a natural parent living elsewhere during 2009–10 (ABS 2011c). In the large majority of cases (81%), this was their father. Teenagers were more likely than young children to live in non-intact families: 30% of young people aged 15–17 had a natural parent living elsewhere, compared with 12% of children aged under 5.

While many of these children saw their non-resident parent on a regular basis—55% once a month or more often—a quarter (24%) saw their non-resident parent less than once per year or never. Almost half (45%) of those children with a natural parent living elsewhere do not stay overnight with them.

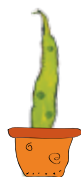
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