Australian Government

# Social Inclusion in Australia
## *How Australia is faring*

2nd Edition
Australian Social Inclusion Board

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2nd Edition
Australian Social Inclusion Board

Information on the Australian Government's Social Inclusion agenda is available at www.socialinclusion.gov.au

Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
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# Foreword by the Hon Mark Butler MP, Minister for Social Inclusion

I am pleased to introduce the second edition of the Australian Social Inclusion Board's *How Australia is faring* report. Since 2008, the Social Inclusion Board has provided the Government with advice on a range of social issues and made a significant contribution to shaping and progressing the social inclusion agenda in Australia through its research and publications. *How Australia is faring* is one of the most crucial pieces of Board research. First published in 2010, this report sets out our progress as a nation across a range of indicators and provides vital insights into what drives social exclusion and how it can be addressed.

The 2012 edition of *How Australia is faring* tells a compelling story. In many respects, this is a report card which many nations would be proud to have. More Australians than ever are completing school, unemployment is at historic lows, and around 85% of Australians consider themselves to be in good health. However, while we have made good progress in many areas, further work is needed to address some of the complex and persistent issues identified in the report. Of particular concern are the 640,000 Australians who experience multiple and complex disadvantage, and the large gap that still exists between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

While the Gillard Government recognises that we still have a way to go to achieve our vision of a socially inclusive society, we also recognise that rigorous measurement, reporting and transparency are critical to that objective. *How Australia is faring* provides a regular snapshot of the impact of our ongoing efforts to create a socially inclusive society. These are important indicators and metrics that explain—in a coherent and holistic way—our longer term progress as a nation.

Achieving lasting and comprehensive social inclusion in Australia is one of our most complex social policy challenges. That is partly due to the scale of our ambition: social inclusion policy focuses on the most vulnerable and disadvantaged, those who need more effective social supports and need them the most. It is focussed on entrenched deprivation: deprivation that can span generations and forms part of a cycle of disadvantage from which it is difficult to break free. Such disadvantage can also become concentrated in particular locations, and resistant to traditional approaches. Tackling social exclusion therefore is not just an issue of equity, it is also an economic necessity. Strong prosperity and growth across our nation requires that everyone who can participate economically has the resources and opportunities to do so.

Since Prime Minister Gillard put social inclusion on the map as the first Commonwealth Minister for Social Inclusion, the Australian Government has made substantial investments to achieve better outcomes for the most disadvantaged, and a number of indicators in this report suggest that this investment is having an impact. For example, the proportion of low income households accessing the internet rose from 40% to 55% in the two years to 2010-11, and the increase in the supply of social housing over a similar period has been truly dramatic.

These sorts of investments—in people—are at the core of the social inclusion agenda. It is an agenda that creates a national framework for effectively investing in our communities and in our people. But this is not simply about more money. This is about different government agencies, policy areas and sectors of the economy working together to provide joined up and targeted services for those missing out on the opportunities which most of us take for granted.

I would like to thank the experts on the Board and in the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet for their authorship of this publication and for their ongoing work on the social inclusion agenda more broadly. I would like to give my special thanks to Patricia Faulkner AO, who is retiring in 2012 after four years as Chair of the Board. I would like to thank Ms Faulkner for her strong leadership and advice to Government during her time as Chair, and her commitment to keeping the needs of the most disadvantaged at the top of the Government's agenda.

**The Hon Mark Butler MP**

**Minister for Mental Health and Ageing**
**Minister for Social Inclusion**
**Minister Assisting the Prime Minister on Mental Health Reform**

# Acknowledgements

This report draws on a wide range of data from a variety of sources. We are grateful to many people for their generosity of time and expertise in the development of the evidence base underpinning this report.

## The Australian Social Inclusion Board

Patricia Faulkner AO, Chair
*Chair to June 2012*

Tony Nicholson
*Deputy Chair from October 2011*

David Cappo AO,
*Vice Chair to September 2011*

Ngiare Brown

Anna Buduls

Tom Calma AO

John Falzon

Jeff Harmer AO

Catriona Noble

Linda White
*Board member to March 2012*

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# Introduction from the Chair

The Australian Social Inclusion Board was established in May 2008 to advise Government on how to achieve better outcomes for the most disadvantaged in our community and report on our progress in building a socially inclusive community.

In early 2010, the Board released the first edition of *How Australia is faring*, which presented a statistical view of the nature and extent of social inclusion in Australia. This provided a baseline against which to measure future progress. In the 2010 report, the Board indicated its intention to continue to report on progress in relation to the social inclusion agenda and to further develop the framework for measuring inclusion.

This 2012 edition of *How Australia is faring* gives an updated statistical view on social inclusion in Australia using the latest available data. This report also makes use of developments in data collection to report on a number of indicators not previously covered. Importantly, this includes new data on entrenched and multiple disadvantage and greater exploration on the persistence of economic disadvantage, both of which are fundamentally important to understanding cycles of disadvantage.

This edition is able to examine trends over time and makes a number of international comparisons to show where Australia sits internationally. However, given the limitations in measuring change in survey data and the short time frame since the last report, there are few significant changes in many of the indicators. The indicators relate to complex and persistent problems which require a long-term approach to measurement and reporting.

What is clear is that Australia today is prosperous, and faring well in comparison to other nations in the world. Our life expectancy at birth is higher than almost every other nation and is continuing to rise. Around 85 percent of Australians rate themselves as being in good health: 25 percent higher than the OECD average. Incomes are growing and employment rates are increasing. Australians are among the best educated in the world and rates of school completion and post-school qualifications continue to rise. Almost eight in every ten Australians are satisfied with their lives—higher than the OECD average.

Yet, despite this prosperity, not all Australians are enjoying access to the same opportunities. Of particular concern is the overall increase over the past 15 years in Australia's levels of inequality, which is highlighted, above all, by the growth in income disparity over this period. Australia also has the fourth highest OECD proportion of children aged under 15 years living in jobless families. The effects of the recent global financial crisis are still being felt amongst some—particularly young—people who have not bounced back as well as others in the recovery period. There is a small, but significant, number of people experiencing multiple disadvantage, making it difficult for them to fully participate in society. The social inclusion agenda provides a way to make sure that everyone has the opportunity to contribute to and share in the benefits of Australia's success. Measuring how Australia is faring on key social inclusion indicators helps to assess where things are going well and where further work is necessary.

This statistical overview shows that while Australia is a prosperous and thriving nation, there are still too many people being left behind. The destructive effect of social inequality and exclusion diminishes the Australian community. There is a need to break down the barriers that prevent many from fully participating in society. Efforts to achieve social inclusion require commitment from all levels of government and the community. It is not just about helping people fit into existing systems and structures—it is about transforming those systems and structures to make them work for everyone. Above all, it is vital to ensure that the 640,000 Australians experiencing multiple and complex disadvantage receive the support they need to fully participate in society. Building a more inclusive society takes time and commitment. I wish the Board well in continuing its vital work with governments, community organisations, business and individuals to realise this vision.

**Patricia Faulkner AO**
**Chair of the Australian Social Inclusion Board**
**(to June 2012)**

# At a glance

There have been few significant changes in the two years since the first edition of *How Australia is faring*. There have, however, been some noticeable improvements when we look over a longer time frame, including in the key areas of health, education and employment.

Significant challenges remain, including for the 640,000 Australians who experience multiple and complex disadvantage. The indicators outlined in *How Australia is faring* relate to complex and persistent problems which require a long-term approach, including to measurement and reporting.

## Doing well

- 75% of Australians are satisfied with their life, higher than the OECD average.
- Life expectancy is high and increasing: 79.5 years for males and 84.0 years for females.
- Australians have a higher rate of self-reported good health (at 85%) than the OECD average (at 68%).
- Australia's employment rate continues its upward trend, and remains well above the OECD average.
- Australia's long-term unemployment rate is much lower than other comparable countries.
- More Australians than ever are completing school, with 75% of those aged 20–24 years having a Year 12 certificate, up from 71% in 2001.
- 64% of Australians aged 25-64 now have a non-school qualification, compared with 46% in 1997.
- Level of persistent family joblessness declined between 2002 and 2010 from 14% to 8%.
- The supply of available housing for purchase by low-income groups has grown (6.9% to 11.5%) and there has been an improvement in the level of repeat homelessness (from 9.9% to 9.0%).
- Substantiations of child protection notifications dropped 12% from 2009–10 to 2010-11.
- For those from non-English speaking backgrounds, more report being able to get outside support and less report finding it difficult to have a say on community issues.
- More low income households are accessing the internet, up from 40% in 2008–09 to 55% in 2010–11 (although 95% of high income households access it).
- More unemployed people now have weekly contact with family and friends, increasing from 94% in 2006 to 98% in 2010 putting them on par with employed people (also 98%).

## Areas for improvement

- Around 5% of Australians (or 640,000) experience multiple and entrenched disadvantage.
- In 2011, 14% of all children under 15 (or 590,000) lived in jobless families.
- 7% of people aged over 15 years have low economic resources and high financial stress (around 1.5 million people). The bulk of these are families with children.
- Only 54% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders aged 15-24 were fully engaged in education and/or work in 2008.
- Around 100,000 people were counted as homeless on Census night in 2006.
- Income inequality has increased steadily from the mid-1990s.
- Attitudes towards people from different cultures, as reported by Scanlon-Monash Index of Social Cohesion, worsened between 2007 and 2011.
- The proportion of Australians who reported feeling safe walking alone in the city or area in which they live (64%) was lower than the OECD average (67%).

# How are we faring?

This edition of *How Australia is faring* highlights a number of key issues: it shows that while we are doing well in certain areas, such as education and employment, our levels of inequality—particularly income inequality—remain high. Further, there is a small number of people experiencing multiple and entrenched disadvantage who are precluded from participating in the everyday activities of Australian society and it is these people that are at higher risk of being left behind, even in times of economic prosperity. What *How Australia is faring* tells us is that despite our successes in building a prosperous community, there is a range of areas in which further work is necessary to ensure all Australians have the opportunities, capabilities and access to the resources which will allow them to participate fully in the life of our nation.

## More Australians are employed, are getting a good education and have improved access to social and community resources

Employment is a powerful vehicle to increase social inclusion, and more Australians than ever are now experiencing the benefits of work. We have seen steady improvements in employment rates for both men and women, including a rise of over 60% in the employment rate of older Australians over the last decade. Education is also fundamental to achieving a socially inclusive society and, for many, it can provide a pathway out of disadvantage. It is encouraging that more Australians than ever are completing school, with 75% of those aged 20–24 years having a Year 12 certificate, up from 71% in 2001.

There have also been significant improvements in the proportion of Indigenous Australians gaining vocational or tertiary qualifications, with an increase of 25% between 2002 and 2008. However, there is still a substantial gap between the rate of non-school qualifications of Indigenous (40%) and non-Indigenous (64%) Australians.

Access to safe, affordable and accessible housing is essential for social inclusion. Importantly, we have recently seen improvements in the supply of available housing for purchase by low income households, which grew significantly from 2007–08 to 2009–10 (from 6.9% to 11.5%).

In addition to these overall improvements, there have also been some notable advances for particularly vulnerable groups most at risk of social exclusion. Data from homelessness service providers indicate there has recently been a drop in the number of clients who repeatedly need assistance (although there has been no new official estimate of the overall level of homelessness).

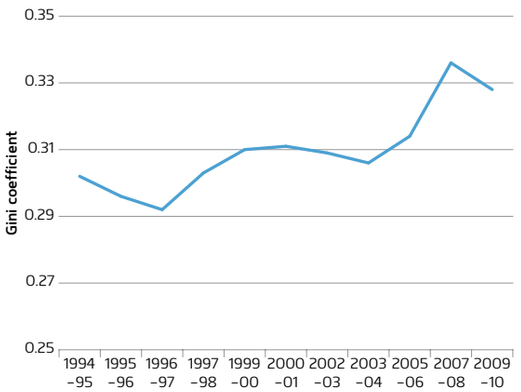
The rates of substantiated child protection notifications fell by 26% from 2008–09 to 2010–11. However, despite these overall positive trends, the substantiation rate for Indigenous children is almost eight times as high as for non-Indigenous children.

For some Australians, there have been improvements between 2006 and 2010 in their social support and greater rates of participation in community activities. For example, those not proficient in English report feeling better able to have a say in the community on issues that are important to them (52% having difficulty down from 70%); those with fair or poor health reported higher rates of participation, with an increase in their social contact (from 84% to 90%) and an increase in their involvement in community activities (from 40% to 48%).

## However, income inequality remains high

While Australia enjoyed solid economic growth from the mid-1990s, the degree of inequality within Australian society increased steadily (see figure below). A slight decline in income inequality was recorded over the latest period (2007–08 to 2009–10), however, this is not statistically significant. Our overall level of income inequality remains higher than it was in the mid-1990s.

**Australian household income distribution inequality—Gini coefficient, 1994–95 to 2009–10**




Source: ABS, Household Income and Income Distribution, Australia, cat no. 6523.0, 2009–10

We now have the ninth highest level of income inequality in the OECD (out of 26). Research by the Social Policy Research Centre at the University of NSW and Flinders University has reported the overall rise in income inequality since the mid-1990s was mainly due to growth in wage and investment/property incomes of those in higher income groups, partially offset by the equalising effect of increasing employment participation, particularly of women.

Further, the recent global financial crisis had a disproportionate impact on young people in terms of greater job losses and higher levels of unemployment than adults. Importantly, young people affected have not pulled through as well in the recovery period—the effects of the economic crisis are still being felt amongst this group, with young people aged 15 to 24 years representing more than one quarter of all long-term unemployed people in Australia.

## Too many people are experiencing multiple disadvantage

There is clear evidence that there are still too many people experiencing multiple disadvantage. While the experience of a single disadvantage can create difficulties for people, the experience of multiple disadvantage can have a compounding and persistent effect, reinforcing barriers to getting ahead and increasing the likelihood of other related problems later in life. Around 5% of the working age population, or 640,000 people, experience multiple and complex disadvantage which may affect their ability to fully participate in society.

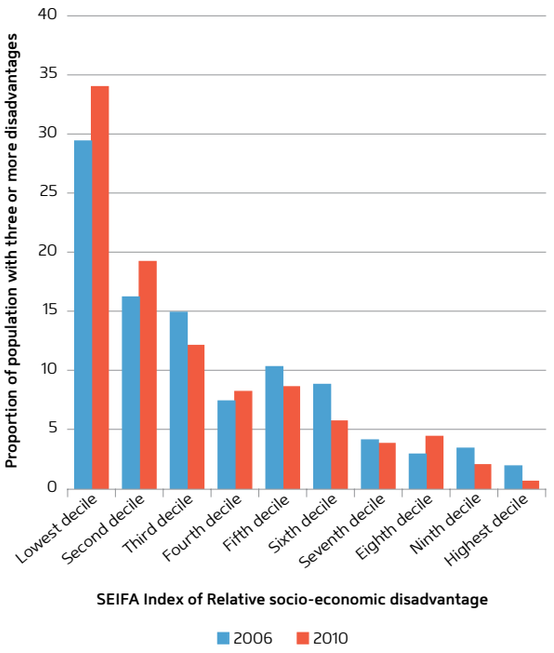
Since 2006, there was a slight (but not statistically significant) decrease in the proportion of people experiencing multiple disadvantage, from 5.2% to 4.6%. While there were small improvements in those disadvantaged by employment and education, there was also a slight worsening in the number of people experiencing poor health and little change in the income, safety and support indicators. Around 33% of those in the lowest income group experience fair or poor health compared to 6.5% of those in the highest income group. They are less likely than those in the highest income group to be able to get support in a time of crisis (89% compared to 97%) and have a lower life satisfaction rate (66% compared to 86%). They are also much less likely to have access to the internet as those in the highest income groups, although access increased from 40% to 55% between 2008–09 and 2010-11. There has also been a sharp increase in the proportion of those with multiple disadvantage living in private rental housing (from 30% to 38%) and increased disadvantage faced by single people and lone parent families. Similarly, the persistence of multiple and complex disadvantage continues to exacerbate the effects of this kind of disadvantage, with around one third of people aged 18 to 64 years who experienced multiple disadvantage in 2006 continuing to experience multiple disadvantage two years later.

Of ongoing concern is the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians over a range of indicators. For example, just over half of Indigenous students in year 9 meet the national minimum standards for writing (55%) compared to 86% of non-Indigenous students.

## Disadvantage continues to be concentrated geographically

We also know that different kinds of disadvantage tend to coincide in particular locations and persist over time. Those in the lowest socio-economic areas are around 20% less likely to attain Year 12 or equivalent (74% compared to 94%) and are more than twice as likely to feel unsafe walking alone in their local area than those in the least disadvantaged areas (33% compared to 13%). People with multiple disadvantage were also more likely to live in the most disadvantaged localities. In 2010, over 50% of people experiencing multiple disadvantage lived in the bottom two socio-economic areas and this proportion has increased since 2006.

**Proportion of the population aged 18–64 years experiencing three or more disadvantages, by decile of socio-economic disadvantage, 2006 and 2010**




Source: ABS, *General Social Surveys*, 2006 and 2010

## The number of jobless families remains high

Parents and children in jobless families have a higher likelihood of living in poverty and experiencing poor health outcomes and children in such families face barriers to future employment. The proportion of children living in families where no parent is employed has remained relatively unchanged in the two years since the global financial crisis. In June 2011, around 590,000 children aged under 15 years (or 14%) lived in jobless families, down slightly from the 619,000 (15%) reported two years earlier. This remains well above the OECD average of 8.7%, making Australia the fourth highest country in the OECD with children living in jobless families.

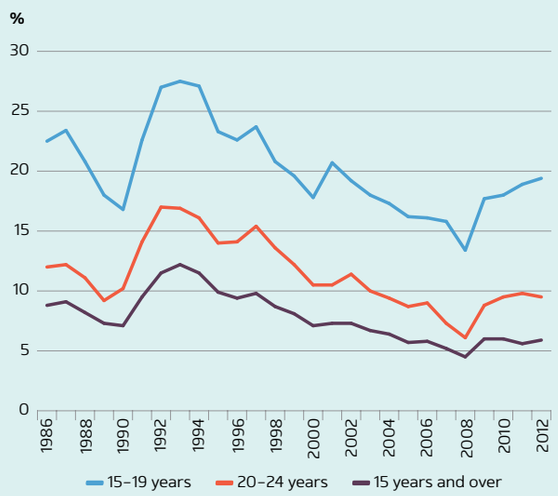
We know that children in jobless families face a number of disadvantages. For example, in this report we show that children whose parents were not in paid work in the past 12 months were more likely to fall below national minimum educational standards than students whose parents were employed. Adults living in jobless families with dependent children were also almost three times as likely as working families with dependent children to report fair or poor health in 2010 (23% compared to 8.2%).

# Feature article—youth unemployment

Lack of relevant skills and experience has meant that young people are traditionally more vulnerable to unemployment than the general population. Prolonged periods of unemployment can result in loss of skills, discouragement and eventual labour market withdrawal. The experience of unemployment itself can also have negative consequences for a young person, such as loss of confidence and work experience/knowledge, which in turn may make them less employable[1].

In February 2012, 19% of teenagers (aged 15–19 years) and 9.5% of young adults (aged 20–24 years) were unemployed, compared with 5.9% of the general population aged 15 years and over.

**Unemployment rates, youth and total population, 1986 to 2011(a)**




(a) Rate presented is for February each year. Original (not seasonally adjusted or trend) data.

Source: ABS Labour Force, Australia, cat. no. 6291.0.55.001, September 2011, detailed electronic delivery

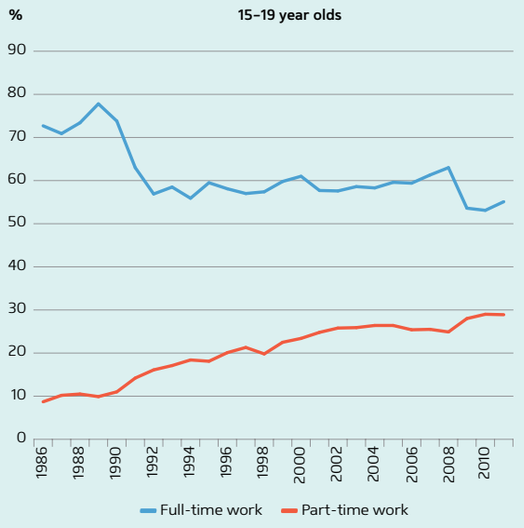
The recent global financial crisis had a disproportionate impact on young people. As with previous periods of economic downturn, young people suffered greater job losses and higher unemployment rates than adults, and have not bounced back as well in the recovery period[2].

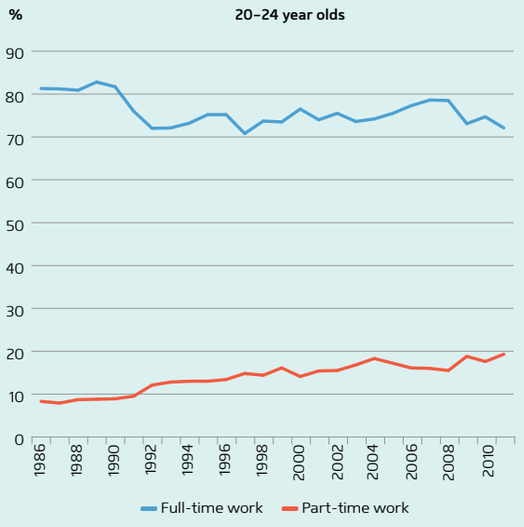
The effects of the economic crisis are still being felt, particularly in relation to long-term unemployment, with the proportion of young people unemployed for one year or more almost doubling between 2009 and 2011. In 2011, young people aged 15–24 years comprised more than one quarter of all long-term unemployed people in Australia[3].

Internationally, Australia's teenagers have slightly higher rates of long-term unemployment (1.0%) than the OECD average (0.9%), but lower rates than for the United Kingdom (2.7%) and the United States (1.2%). However the long-term unemployment rate for young Australian adults is much lower than the OECD average (1.0% compared with 2.5%)[4].

As well as facing high levels of unemployment, young people are finding it increasingly difficult to obtain full-time work. The Foundation for Young Australians' *How Young People are faring 2011* report shows that opportunities for full-time work have steadily declined in recent years, particularly for teenagers, although this has been offset somewhat by an increase in the proportion of young people staying in full-time education (see the *Proportion of 15–24 year olds fully engaged in education and/or work* indicator for more detail). Nevertheless, since the mid-1980s, the rate of full-time employment among teenagers who were not in education has decreased by more than 20 percentage points. At the same time, three times as many teenagers and more than twice as many young adults not in education now work part-time compared with 25 years ago.

## Labour force status of young people not in education




Source: The Foundation for Young Australians' *How Young People are faring 2011*

There has also been an increase in the number of young people who are underemployed (that is, people who are currently working but would like more hours) over the same period. The rate of underemployment for 15–24 year olds increased from around 5% in the mid 1980s to 13% in 2011.

Interestingly, part-time work does not appear to be a stepping stone to full-time work for the majority of young people. The Foundation for Young Australians' report noted that having a part-time job only offers a slight advantage in moving into full-time work, relative to those young people without any employment. In 2011, 5.7% of teenagers who were working part-time went on to find full-time work in the next month. This was only slightly higher than the 4.8% of unemployed teenagers who moved into full-time work. This is in direct contrast to older workers, for whom the transition rate is considerably higher for part-time workers than it is for the unemployed.

The report by the Foundation for Young Australians also explored mobility in the youth labour market, with stable, long-term employment recognised as being reflective of a successful transition from education and training to work. Compared with older workers, young people were found to change employers more regularly, although this rate has fallen over the last decade, and particularly since 2008. Job mobility and a lack of stability remains high, with an average of nearly one in five teenagers and one in six young adults changing their labour force status every month over the past year, compared with one in ten older workers.

# Social Inclusion

# What is social inclusion?

Being socially included means that people have the resources, opportunities and capabilities they need to:

**Learn** (participate in education and training);

**Work** (participate in employment, unpaid or voluntary work including family and carer responsibilities);

**Engage** (connect with people, use local services and participate in local, cultural, civic and recreational activities); and

**Have a voice** (influence decisions that affect them).

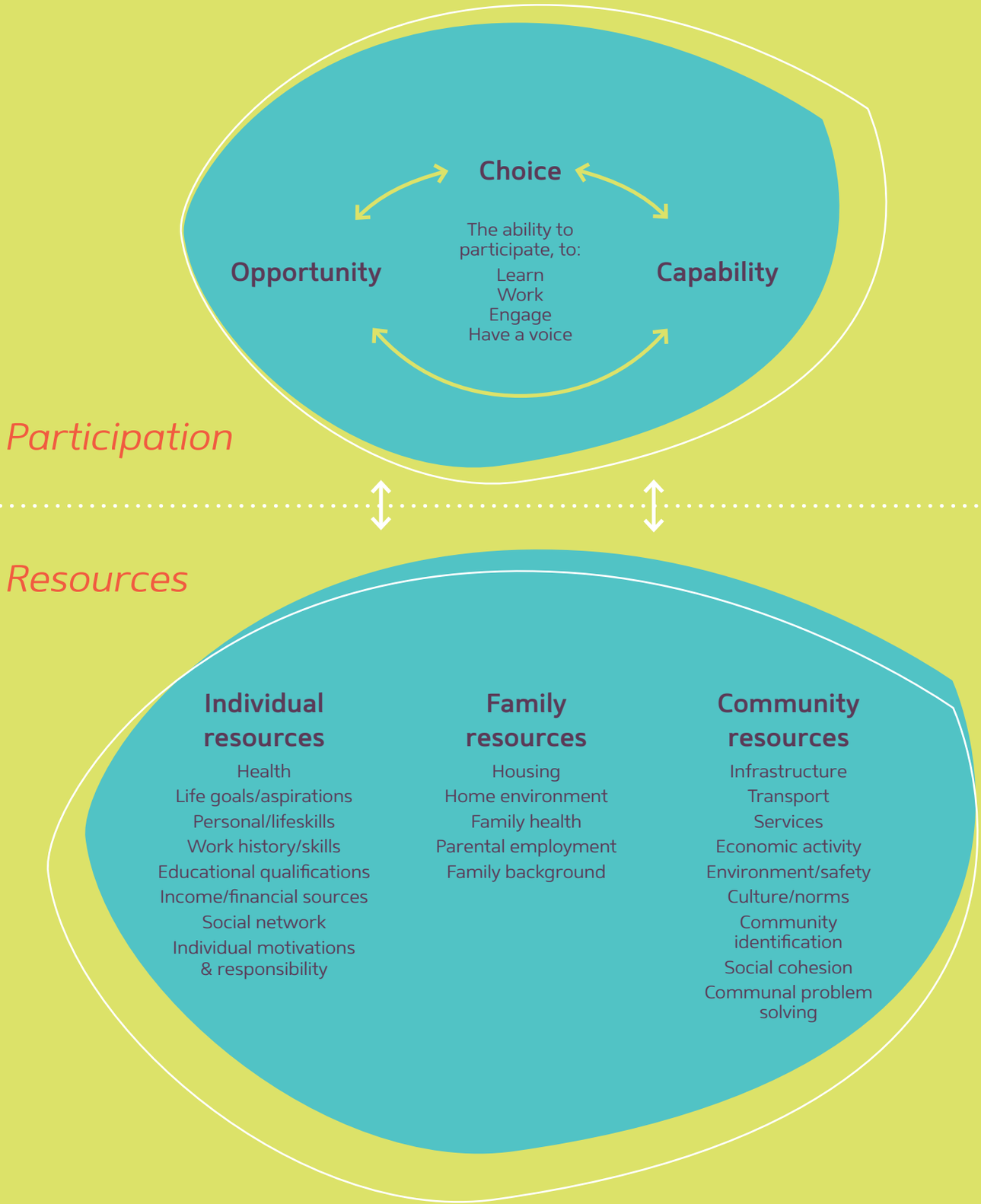
Figure 1 shows the interaction between resources, opportunities and capabilities. Resources refer to the skills and assets people have (or various types of capital, including human, social and economic capital). Capabilities refer to an individual's ability (or agency) to use resources and opportunities to achieve the outcomes they wish. Opportunities refer to the environment (or structure) that enables individuals to use their capabilities and resources to achieve the outcomes they wish.

The system of resources and participation can be mutually reinforcing. Resources help to support capabilities and opportunities, allowing people to make choices about how they wish to participate in society. In turn, participation, such as in work, training or connecting with friends, can then help to build people's resources such as work experience, qualifications or support networks, which assists further participation.

Gaps in resources, opportunities and capabilities can lead to people not fully participating in society. Problems can be exacerbated over time as low resources lead to low participation which in turn further reduces resources and participation (for example, people who become deskilled owing to unemployment).

The idea of a person 'having multiple disadvantages' is a useful operational definition of social exclusion. Operational definitions take abstract conceptual definitions and make them practical. They are often imperfect, as in this case, since 'having multiple disadvantages' puts people at risk but does not necessarily lead them to being socially excluded.

Figure 1: Social inclusion conceptual framework—participation and resources



# Social inclusion measurement and reporting strategy

This edition of *How Australia is faring* assembles the most recent data available on the indicators included in the Commonwealth Government's Social Inclusion Measurement and Reporting Strategy.

## The Framework

The Commonwealth Government developed a national Social Inclusion Measurement and Reporting Strategy as an important part of strengthened reporting and accountability arrangements that monitor progress being made in addressing social exclusion in Australia.

The indicators included in the framework cover three key concepts:

- Resources;
- Participation; and
- Multiple disadvantage.

Resources allow people to make choices about how they participate in society.

Participation, such as in work, training or connecting with friends, helps build people's resources such as work experience, qualifications or support networks, which assists further participation.

Many of the most disadvantaged people in our society are often grappling with multiple disadvantage that puts them at greater risk of being socially excluded.

The Australian Social Inclusion Board provided advice to the Government as the strategy was being developed, and published its baseline report—*How Australia is faring* 2010—on the indicators in the framework, with a large proportion of the indicators presenting data from the 2006 ABS *General Social Survey*.

## About this report

This report, published two years after the inaugural report, presents an update on these indicators, with the 2010 ABS *General Social Survey* and the *Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia* (HILDA) panel survey used as key data sources for the majority of the indicators.

A number of the indicators in the framework have been reported for the first time in this report:

- entrenched disadvantage;
- persistent low economic resources;
- housing affordability (supply);
- participation in civic engagement activities; and
- subjective quality of life.

For some of the indicators, new national data was not available for this report and readers should refer to the 2010 edition of *How Australia is faring* for the latest available data. These indicators are:

- family violence;
- people with mental illness affecting their ability to participate in employment;
- adult literacy/numeracy; and
- early child development.

Readers should also note that a new national estimate of homelessness was not available for this report. However, the indicator has been included in this report, supplemented by new information on the characteristics and service use of people who have experienced homelessness.

## Technical information about the indicator data

With only limited data to show change over time, in many cases it is not possible to draw any substantive conclusions. Where possible, this report has included longer time periods for the reporting of data. The choice of reference periods for the indicators was generally guided by the availability and comparability of data.

The use of survey data for many of the indicators places some limitations on our ability to detect change. Survey data is associated with sampling error which introduces a degree of uncertainty into the estimates. Small amounts of change, even at the national level, may be difficult to detect in a sample survey. The difficulty of measurement is highlighted by the headline indicator of multiple disadvantage, where analysis of the data has shown a small drop in the proportion of people experiencing multiple disadvantage. This apparent downturn is not statistically significant. That is, sampling variability precludes a definitive assessment of the change between 2006 and 2010 survey data used to assess this indicator. Where possible, significance testing has been undertaken for each of the indicators in this report. We have avoided commenting on changes observed in the indicators unless they are statistically significant.

# The monitoring and reporting framework—Headline and supplementary indicators of social inclusion

The indicators comprising the framework are outlined below. In this report, indicators of multiple and entrenched disadvantage—where we identify those Australians experiencing three or more disadvantages, placing them at most risk of social exclusion—are presented as the first elements of the framework.

Please note, the original framework was documented in the first edition of this report. Some changes to indicator descriptions have been made in the following table in line with data availability.

## MULTIPLE & ENTRENCHED DISADVANTAGE

| | | Headline indicators | Supplementary indicators |
|---|---|---|---|
| 23 | MULTIPLE & ENTRENCHED DISADVANTAGE | **Multiple disadvantage**<br>Proportion of people aged 18 to 64 years experiencing three or more of six disadvantages<br><br>**Entrenched disadvantage**<br>Proportion of people aged 18 to 64 years experiencing three or more of six disadvantages for two years or more<br>Newly reported in 2012 | |

# RESOURCES

| | | Headline indicators | Supplementary indicators |
|---|---|---|---|
| 28 | MATERIAL / ECONOMIC RESOURCES | **Low economic resources and financial stress/ material deprivation**<br>People in households with low economic resources and high financial stress<br><br>**Persistent low economic resources**<br>People in households with low economic resources for two or more years<br>Newly reported in 2012 | **Low economic resources**<br>People in households with low income and wealth<br><br>**Financial stress/material deprivation**<br>Proportion of people in households with high financial stress<br><br>**Real change in income for low income households**<br>Change in average real equivalised disposable weekly income of low income households<br><br>**Relative income inequality**<br>Gini coefficient for equivalised household disposable income |
| 38 | HEALTH & DISABILITY | **People with long-term health conditions affecting their ability to participate in employment**<br>Number and employment rate of people with disability<br><br>**People with mental illness affecting their ability to participate in employment**<br>Number and employment rate of people with mental illness (by level of severity)<br>No new national data for 2012, see 2010 *How Australia is faring* report<br><br>**Self-assessed health**<br>Proportion of population with fair or poor self-assessed health | **Life expectancy**<br>Life expectancy at birth<br><br>**Subjective quality of life**<br>Proportion of people reporting overall satisfaction with their lives<br>Newly reported in 2012 |
| 43 | EDUCATION & SKILLS | **Literacy and numeracy**<br>Proportion of Year 9 students reaching the national minimum standards for literacy and numeracy<br><br>**Adult literacy/ numeracy**<br>Proportion of 15 to 75 year olds with at least minimum standard of prose literacy and numeracy<br>No new national data for 2012, see 2010 *How Australia is faring* report<br><br>**Early child development**<br>Proportion of children in first year of school assessed as "developmentally vulnerable" on two or more domains in Australian Early Development Index<br>No new national data for 2012, see 2010 *How Australia is faring* report | **Poor spoken English**<br>Proportion of people who do not speak English well or at all<br><br>**Non-school qualifications**<br>Proportion of people aged 25 to 64 years with non-school qualifications |

# RESOURCES

| | | Headline indicators | Supplementary indicators |
|---|---|---|---|
| 48 | SOCIAL RESOURCES | **Support from family/friends in time of crisis**<br>Proportion of people able to get support in time of crisis from people living outside household<br><br>**Autonomy—having a voice in the community**<br>Proportion of people who do not feel able to have a say in the community on issues that are important to them<br><br>**Access to the Internet**<br>Proportion of people with access to the Internet at home | **Autonomy—having a voice in family**<br>Proportion of people who do not feel able to have a say in their family on issues that are important to them |
| 52 | COMMUNITY & INSTITUTIONAL RESOURCES | **Access to public or private transport**<br>Proportion of people who have difficulty accessing public or private transport<br><br>**Access to health service providers**<br>People experiencing difficulties accessing health services | **Access to justice services**<br>Proportion of people aged 18 and over reporting difficulty accessing justice services<br>Data combined with access to service providers<br><br>**Access to service providers**<br>Proportion of people reporting difficulty accessing services<br><br>**Attitudes to diversity**<br>Proportion of people reporting positive attitudes towards people from different cultures<br>Newly reported in 2012 |
| 58 | HOUSING | **Homelessness**<br>Proportion of the population who are homeless<br><br>**Housing affordability**<br>Lower income private rental households with housing costs exceeding 30% of household income | **Housing affordability (supply)**<br>Number of affordable houses available to purchase per 10,000 low income households<br>Newly reported in 2012<br><br>**Repeat homelessness**<br>Proportion of people experiencing repeat homelessness<br>Newly reported in 2012 |
| 63 | PERSONAL SAFETY | **Feelings of safety**<br>Proportion of people who feel unsafe alone at home or in their local community at night<br><br>**Children at risk/child protection**<br>Child protection substantiation rate | **Family violence**<br>Proportion of people experiencing family violence in past 12 months<br>No new national data for 2012, see 2010 *How Australia is faring* report<br><br>**Victim of personal crime**<br>Victims of selected personal crime (including physical assault, threatened assault, robbery, and sexual assault)<br><br>**Victim of household crime**<br>Victims of selected household crime |

# PARTICIPATION

| | | Headline indicators | Supplementary indicators |
|---|---|---|---|
| 68 | WORK | **Employment rate**<br>Employment rate (employment to population ratio)<br>**Children in jobless families**<br>Children under 15 years in jobless families<br>**Long-term income support recipient**<br>Long-term recipients of full-rate income support payments | **Persistent jobless families with children**<br>Persons in jobless families with children, where the family has been jobless for 12 months or more<br>**Jobless households**<br>People living in jobless households<br>**Long-term unemployment**<br>Long-term unemployment rate |
| 74 | LEARN | **Young people not fully engaged in education or work**<br>Proportion of 15 to 24 year olds that are fully engaged in education and/or work<br>**Year 12 or equivalent attainment**<br>Proportion of people aged 20 to 24 years attaining Year 12 or Certificate II or above | |
| 78 | ENGAGE (SOCIAL PARTICIPATION) | **Contacted family/friends**<br>Proportion of people who had contact with family or friends in the past week<br>**Participation in community groups**<br>Proportion of people involved in a community group in the last 12 months | **Got together socially with family/friends**<br>Proportion of people who got together socially with friends or relatives not living with them in the past three months<br>**Voluntary work**<br>Proportion of people who undertook voluntary work in the past 12 months<br>**Participation in community events**<br>Proportion of people who participated in a community event or activity in the past six months |
| 83 | HAVE A VOICE (POLITICAL, CIVIC, COMMUNITY) | **Civic engagement**<br>Participation in civic engagement activities<br>Newly reported in 2012 | |

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# Indicators of Social Inclusion
# How Australia is faring

## Multiple and Entrenched Disadvantage

# Proportion of people aged 18 to 64 years experiencing three or more of six disadvantages

## Key messages:

- Between 2006 and 2010, the proportion of working age people experiencing multiple disadvantages was unchanged (the slight fall, from 5.2% to 4.6%, was not statistically significant)
- Between 2006 and 2010, people living alone comprised a larger proportion of people with multiple disadvantages
- There was also an improvement between 2006 and 2010 in relation to the 'low education' disadvantage

The indicator of multiple disadvantages examined in this section is based on an analysis of the 2006 and 2010 ABS General Social Surveys, which selected six key indicators of disadvantage across three domains for the population aged 18 to 64 (see *About this Indicator* for more detail).

It is important to note that most of the changes reported in this section, including the change in the proportion of the population aged 18 to 64 years with three or more of the selected disadvantages (from 5.2% in 2006 to 4.6% in 2010, or around 640,000 people), are not statistically significant due to the relatively small numbers of records in the survey data for 2006 and 2010.

The only statistically significant changes between 2006 and 2010 were that: people living alone comprised a larger proportion of people with multiple disadvantages in 2010 than in 2006; and that there was an improvement between 2006 and 2010 in relation to the 'low education' disadvantage.

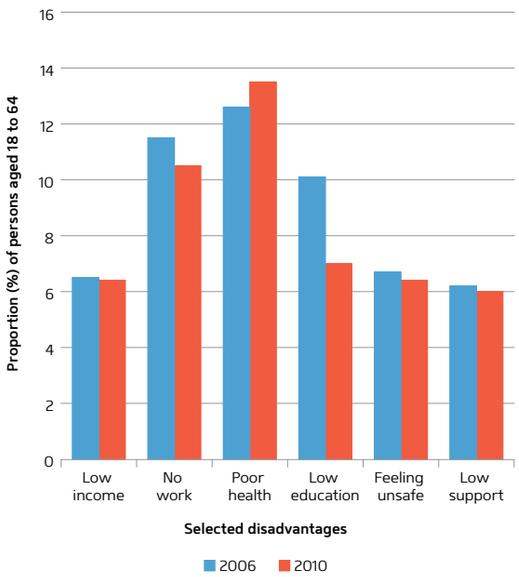
The small increase in the level of poor health was not a statistically significant change, and the small falls in the levels of no work, low income, feeling unsafe and low support were also not statistically significant changes.

Looking at the population aged 18 to 64 years with three or more of the disadvantages, the most prevalent clusters involved various combinations of the income, work, health and education indicators. The changes between 2006 and 2010 shown below were not statistically significant:

- Three disadvantages:
  - Work, health & education (12.3% in 2006, 9.3% in 2010)
  - Income, work & health (10.0% in 2006, 15.0% in 2010)
  - Income, work & education (8.2% in 2006, 6.5% in 2010)
- Four disadvantages:
  - Income, work, health & education (7.7% in 2006, 7.2% in 2010)
  - Income, work, health & support (3.7% in 2006, 2.8% in 2010)
  - Income, work, health & safety (3.3% in 2006, 4.1% in 2010)
- Five disadvantages:
  - Income, work, health, education & support (2.8% in 2006, 4.5% in 2010)

### Poor health and joblessness were the disadvantages experienced at the highest rates in 2006 and 2010

Proportion of people aged 18 to 64 years, by selected disadvantages, 2006 and 2010




Source: Social Inclusion Unit analysis of the ABS *General Social Surveys*, 2006 & 2010.

### About this indicator

The data are based on analysis conducted by the Social Inclusion Unit in the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, which used the 2006 and 2010 ABS *General Social Surveys* to estimate levels of multiple disadvantage based on six factors across three domains:

**Economic**

*Income*—persons in the bottom three deciles of equivalised household disposable income who felt they would not be able to raise $2,000 within a week for something important.

*Joblessness*—persons who lived in a household where no person was employed.

**Personal**

*Health*—persons with a self-assessed health status of fair or poor.

*Education*—persons aged 18 years or over who had not completed Year 10 or higher at school or an equivalent vocational qualification (Certificate III or higher). *Note: This indicator has been revised since the 2010 report following advice from the ABS. Previously, this indicator considered educational attainment only for those aged 20 years and over. This age restriction has now been modified to 18 years and over. Furthermore, those people whose highest level of education was coded to Certificate I, II or 'Certificate not further defined' have now been classified as disadvantaged.*

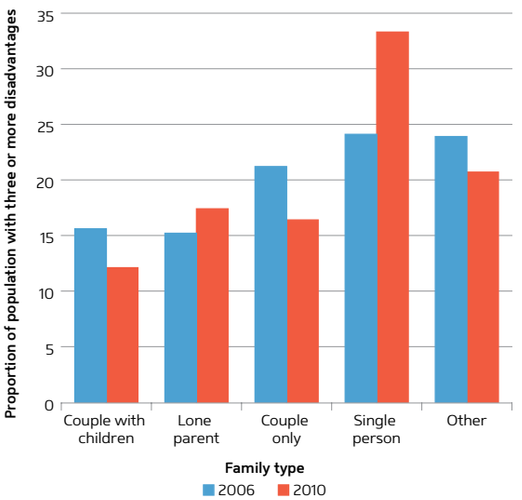
Between 2006 and 2010, the population aged 18 to 64 years with three or more disadvantages included an increased proportion of people living alone (a statistically significant change from 24.1% in 2006 to 33.3% in 2010), while the increases for lone parent families (from 15.2% in 2006 to 17.4% in 2010) and the declines in the proportions of couples (with and without dependent children) were not statistically significant changes.

Other (non-statistically significant) changes between 2006 and 2010 included:

- an increase in the proportion of people in private rental housing in the population with multiple disadvantage (from 29.9% in 2006 to 38.3% in 2010);
- an increased proportion of people aged in their 40s (from 22.8% in 2006 to 26.4% in 2010);
- an increased proportion of men (from 39.5% in 2006 to 43.1% in 2010), although women still make up the majority of people with multiple disadvantage (60.5% in 2006 and 56.9% in 2010);
- an increase in the proportion of recent migrants from non-English speaking countries (from 4.0% in 2006 to 5.6% in 2010); and
- an increased likelihood that people with multiple disadvantage were living in the most disadvantaged localities, as measured by the bottom two SEIFA deciles (from 45.6% in 2006 to 53.2% in 2010).

**People living alone represent the largest proportion of the population with three or more disadvantages**

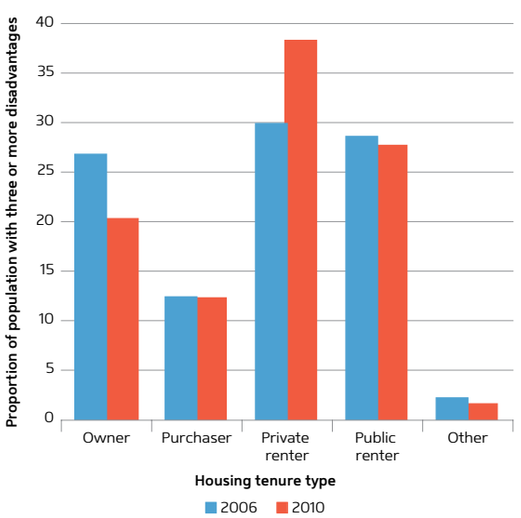
Proportion of population aged 18–64 years with three or more disadvantages, by household composition, 2006 and 2010




Source: Social Inclusion Unit analysis of the ABS *General Social Surveys*, 2006 and 2010.

**Renters of public and private housing are most likely to experience three or more disadvantages**

Proportion of population aged 18–64 years with three or more disadvantages, by housing tenure, 2006 and 2010




Source: Social Inclusion Unit analysis of the ABS *General Social Surveys*, 2006 and 2010.

**Social**

*Safety*—persons who felt unsafe or very unsafe at home alone after dark.

*Support*—persons who were not able to get support in times of crisis from persons living outside the household.

As noted above, most of the changes reported between 2006 and 2010 are not statistically significant.

# Proportion of people aged 18 to 64 years experiencing three or more of six disadvantages for two years or more

## Key messages:

- **Around one third of the people aged 18 to 64 years who experienced multiple disadvantage in 2006 experienced multiple disadvantage two years later**
- **Lone parent households are more likely than other household types to experience multiple disadvantage of one year in duration**
- **People living alone are more likely to experience multiple disadvantage persisting two or more years**

The indicator of multiple disadvantage examined in the previous section was based on the 2006 and 2010 ABS *General Social Surveys* (GSS). In order to examine how many people continue to experience multiple disadvantage over time, we need to turn to longitudinal data. The *Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia* (HILDA) Survey is the primary source of longitudinal data on economic and social issues in Australia. HILDA is a longitudinal survey which follows respondents over time and provides information about how long people experience multiple disadvantage. It includes data on each of the six indicators used in our measure of multiple disadvantage (see *About this Indicator* for more detail).

The estimated level of multiple disadvantage is higher in the HILDA Survey than in the *General Social Survey*. In 2006, 5.9% of the population aged 18 to 64 years had three of the six disadvantages according to the HILDA Survey, compared to 5.2% in the GSS. Both the HILDA and GSS surveys reported a (not statistically significant) decline in the level of multiple disadvantage between 2006 and 2010. In 2010, the proportion of the population aged 18 to 64 years with three of the six disadvantages was 5.2% in the HILDA Survey and 4.6% in the GSS.

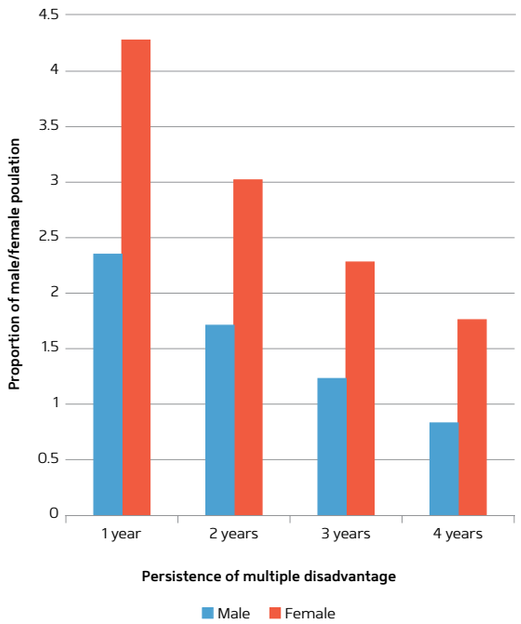
The HILDA survey shows that just over half of those aged 18 to 64 years with multiple disadvantage in 2006 also had multiple disadvantage one year later. By two years later, just over a third had continued to experience three of the six disadvantages.

Women are more likely than men to experience multiple disadvantage, and are also more likely to experience enduring multiple disadvantage. According to the HILDA data, in 2006 6.7% of women aged 18 to 64 years experienced three of the six disadvantages compared to 5.1% of men. Around 3.0% of women experience multiple disadvantage for two consecutive years, compared to only 1.7% of men.

Lone parent households are much more likely than other household types to experience multiple disadvantage of one year in duration, although people living alone are more likely to experience multiple disadvantage persisting two

### Females experience persistent multiple disadvantage at a greater rate than males

Proportion of people aged 18–64 years with multiple disadvantage, by gender and persistence of multiple disadvantage, 2006 to 2010




Source: Analysis of the HILDA Surveys, 2006 to 2010

### About this indicator

The data presented above is based on data from the *Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia* (HILDA) Survey to estimate levels of multiple disadvantage based on the same six factors across three domains previously reported based on analysis of the ABS *General Social Surveys*.

**Economic**

*Income*—persons in the bottom three deciles of equivalised household disposable income who felt they would not be able to raise $2,000 within a week for something important.

*Joblessness*—persons who lived in a household where no person was employed.

**Personal**

*Health*—persons with a self-assessed health status of fair or poor.

*Education*—persons aged 18 to 64 years who had not completed Year 10 or higher at school or an equivalent vocational qualification.

**Social**

*Safety*—persons who felt unsafe or very unsafe at home alone after dark.

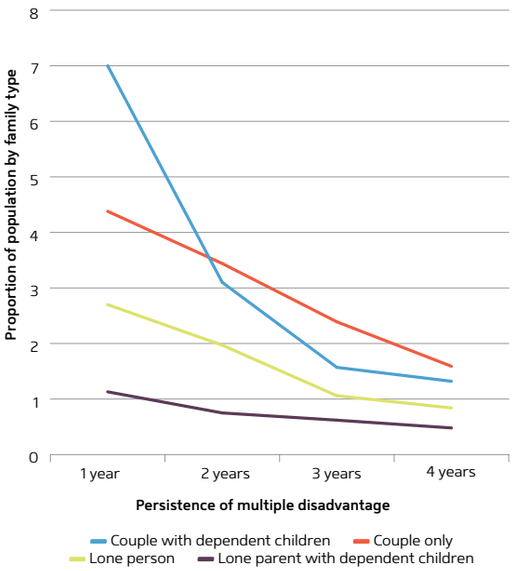
*Support*—persons who were not able to get support in times of crisis from persons living outside the household.

or more years. 7.0% of lone parent households experienced three of the six disadvantages for one year compared to 4.4% of lone person households, whereas 3.1% of lone parent households experienced three of the six disadvantages for two years compared to 3.4% of lone person households and 1.6% of lone parent households experienced three of the six disadvantages for three years compared to 2.4% of lone person households.

People with a long-term health condition are much more likely to experience persistent multiple disadvantage than people who do not have a long-term health condition. 7.7% of people with a long-term health condition continued to experience three of the six disadvantages for two years, compared to only 0.3% of people without a long-term health condition.

**There was a large decrease in entrenched disadvantage among couples with children in the four years to 2010**

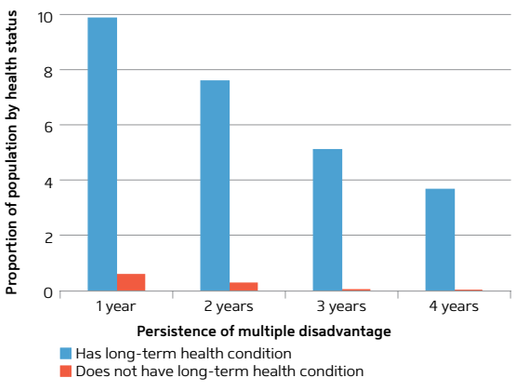
Proportion of people aged 18–64 years with multiple disadvantage, by family type and persistence of multiple disadvantage, 2006 to 2010




Source: Analysis of the HILDA Surveys, 2006 to 2010

**Since 2006, 4% of people with long-term health conditions have continued to experience multiple disadvantage for four or more years**

Proportion of people aged 18–64 years with multiple disadvantage, by health status and persistence of multiple disadvantage, 2006 to 2010




Source: Analysis of the HILDA Surveys, 2006 to 2010

# Indicators of Social Inclusion
# How Australia is faring

## Resources

# People in households with low economic resources and high financial stress

## Key message:

- **The proportion of the population with low economic resources and high financial stress was largely unchanged between 2003–04 and 2009–10**
- **Families with children are over-represented amongst households with low economic resources and high levels of financial stress**
- **The proportion of couples with dependent children in such households increased from 33% to 40% between 2003–04 and 2009–10**

Between 2003–04 and 2009–10, data from the ABS *Household Expenditure Survey* (HES) show that the proportion of the population aged 15 years and over who had low economic resources and high financial stress (see *About this Indicator* for more detail) increased from 6.1% to 7.0%, representing an increase of 300,000 people (from 1.2 million in 2003–04 to 1.5 million people aged 15 years and over in 2009–10). The reported increase is, however, not a statistically significant change.

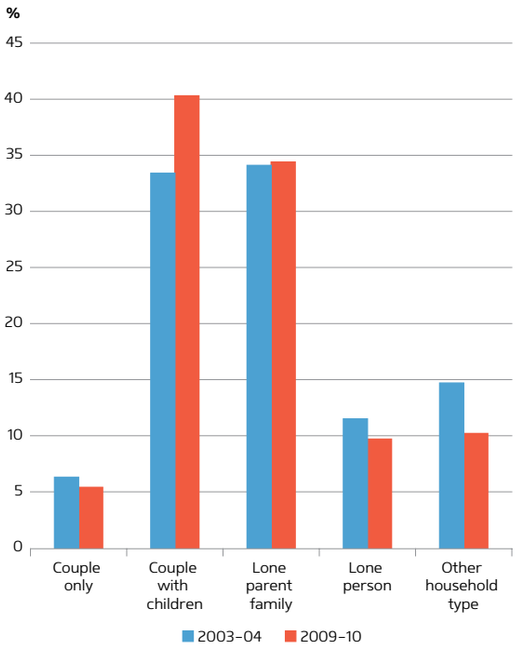
The bulk of these people were living in families with children. In 2009–10, 608,000 people with low economic resources and high financial stress were couple families with children (up from 403,000 in 2003–04), and 520,000 were people in lone parent families (up from 410,000 in 2003–04).

Between 2003–04 and 2009–10, families with children increased their representation in the population of people with low economic resources and financial stress. In particular, couple families with children made up a much larger proportion of the population in households with low economic resources and in high financial stress, increasing from 33.4% in 2003–04 to 40.3% in 2009–10. There was little change in the representation of lone parent families with children in the population of people with low economic resources (34.1% in 2003–04 and 34.4% in 2009–10).

The majority of the people in households with low economic resources and high financial stress were in households where the household reference person was not in the labour force or was unemployed, although these proportions declined between 2003–04 and 2009–10. In 2003–04, 731,000 people were in households whose reference person was not in the labour force, compared to 873,000 people in 2009–10 (representing a decline from 61% to 58% of the population aged 15 years and over). In 2003–04, 112,000 people were in households whose reference person was unemployed compared to 108,000 people in 2009–10 (representing a decline from 9.3% to 7.1% of the population aged 15 years and over).

### Households comprising couples with children represent the largest proportion of high financial stress households

Proportion of people in households with low economic resources and high financial stress, by household composition, 2003–04 and 2009–10




Source: Customised tables from the ABS *Household Expenditure Surveys*, 2003–04 and 2009–10

### About this indicator

The 2003–04 and 2009–10 *Household Expenditure Surveys* included questions about income, housing and other expenditures, wealth and indicators of financial stress[5].

The indicator identifies people living in households:

- In the bottom three deciles of both equivalised household disposable income (including the imputed rent of home owners);
- In the bottom three deciles of equivalised household net worth; and
- Who reported an incidence of five or more individual financial stress indicators (out of a total of 15) in the previous 12 months. These included being unable to pay certain bills on time, whether they could not afford activities such as a night out once a fortnight, or a special meal once a week; or whether they had gone without food or heating because of a shortage of money.

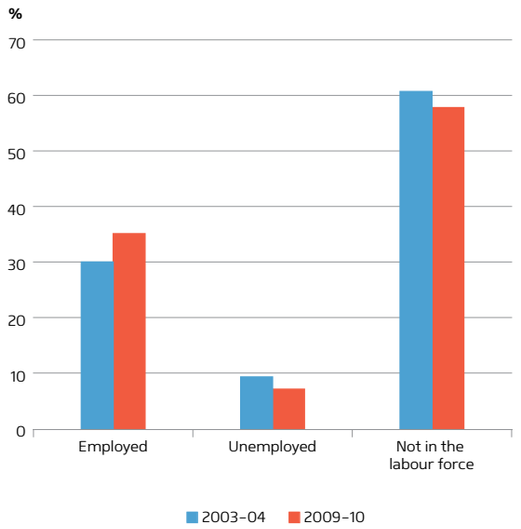
The representation of people in jobless households in the population with low economic resources and high financial stress was largely unchanged between 2003–04 and 2009–10. The number of people in jobless households who were in the population with low economic resources and in high financial stress was 695,000 in 2003–04 (58% of the population aged 15 years and over), compared to 865,000 people in 2009–10 (57% of the population).

Between 2003–04 and 2009–10, there was an increase in the proportion of employed people in the population of households with low economic resources and in high financial stress, from 30% in 2003–04 to 35% in 2009–10 (an increase of 168,000 people aged 15 years and over, from 361,000 in 2003–04 to 529,000 in 2009–10).

Of the people who disclosed whether or not they had a disability or long-term health condition, there was a higher proportion of people with a disability or long-term health condition in the population of households with low economic resources and high financial stress (47% or 430,000 people) than in the overall population (33%).

**Those not in the labour force represented the largest proportion of people reporting households in high financial stress**

Proportion of people in households with low economic resources and high financial stress, by employment status of household reference person, 2003–04 and 2009–10




Source: Customised tables from the ABS *Household Expenditure Surveys*, 2003–04 and 2009–10

# People in households with low economic resources for two or more years

## Key message:

➲ **The proportion of the population with low economic resources for two or more years was only 0.4% according to the HILDA longitudinal survey**

The indicator of low economic resources examined in the previous section was based on the 2003–04 and 2009–10 ABS *Household Expenditure Surveys* (HES). In this section we examine how many people continue to have low economic resources over an extended period, based on data from the *Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia* (HILDA) Survey. HILDA is a longitudinal survey which follows respondents over time and can provide information about the length of time people experience disadvantage. We focus on Waves 6 to 10, covering the period from 2006 to 2010 (see *About this Indicator* for more detail).

The estimated level of low economic resources and financial stress is much lower in the HILDA Survey than in the ABS HES data. This appears to be due to the financial stress item in HILDA containing fewer items than the ABS question, and focuses on items more indicative of severe financial hardship.

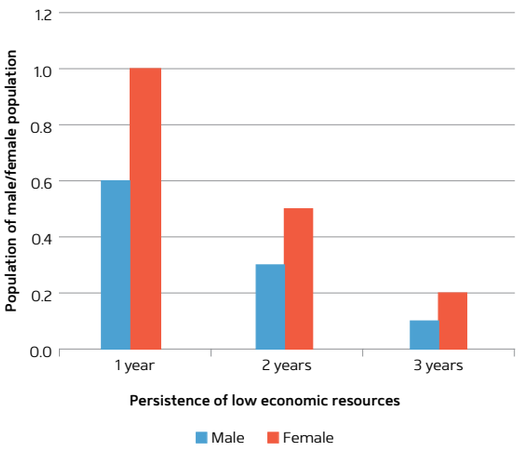
The HILDA Survey shows that 2.3% of people had low economic resources and financial stress in 2006. Tracking this group over time shows that only a third continue to have low economic resources in the following year (0.8% of people aged 18 to 64) and one sixth continued to have low economic resources two years later (0.4% of people aged 18 to 64).

Women are more likely than men to have low economic resources and financial stress, and the gap between men and women continues when rates of persistent low economic resources are compared. While 2.5% of women had low economic resources and financial stress in 2006 compared to 1.9% of men, in the following year 1.0% of women continued to have low economic resources compared to 0.6% of men. Two years later, 0.5% of women continued to have low economic resources, compared to 0.3% of men.

People with a long-term health condition are more likely to have persistent low economic resources than people who do not have a long-term health condition. In 2006, 3.8% of people with a long-term health condition had low economic resources and financial stress, compared to 1.7% of people who did not have a long-term health condition. In the following year, 1.5% of people with a long-term health condition continued to have low economic resources, compared to 0.4% of people with no long-term health condition. Two years later, 0.8% of people with a long-term health condition continued to have low economic resources, compared to 0.1% of people without a long-term health condition.

### Women are more likely than men to have persistent low economic resources

Proportion of people in households with persistent low economic resources, by gender, 2006 to 2010




Source: Analysis of the HILDA Surveys, 2006 to 2010

### About this indicator

The *Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia* (HILDA) Survey includes questions about income, housing and other expenditures, wealth and indicators of financial stress.

The indicator identifies people living in households in Wave 6 of the HILDA Survey who:

- were in the bottom three deciles of both equivalised household disposable income (including the imputed rent of home owners);
- were in the bottom three deciles of equivalised household net worth; and
- reported three or more of seven financial stress indicators, including: being unable to pay mortgage/rent or certain bills on time; pawned or sold something; asking for financial help from friends or family or from welfare or community organisations; or going without food or heating because of a shortage of money.

And who in Waves 7 to 10 were:

- in the bottom three deciles of both equivalised household disposable income (including the imputed rent of home owners); and
- in the bottom three deciles of equivalised household net worth.

# People in households with low income and wealth

## Key message:

- The proportion of people in low income and wealth households remained unchanged between 2005–06 and 2009–10, at around 13%
- Between 2005–06 and 2009–10, people in families with dependent children decreased as a proportion of people in low income and wealth households, from 67% to 58%
- Over this period, unemployed people made up a larger proportion of people in low income and wealth households and more of these people were in jobless households

In contrast to the earlier composite indicator (which was based on income including imputed rent, net wealth and an indication of financial stress) the results reported in this section are based on an indicator comprising only low income and wealth.

Using this indicator produces some contrasting results to those reported earlier. In particular, the proportion of people in low income and wealth households remained unchanged between 2005–06 and 2009–10, at around 13%, in contrast to the increase reported earlier.

Also, couples with children reduced their representation amongst low economic resource households between 2005–06 and 2009–10, when the indicator was based only on income and wealth.

In 2005–06, people in couples with children comprised 39.6% of the population of people in households with low income and wealth, compared to 35.5% in 2009–10. People in lone parent families comprised 27.6% of the population of people in households with low income and wealth in 2005–06, compared to 22.5% in 2009–10.

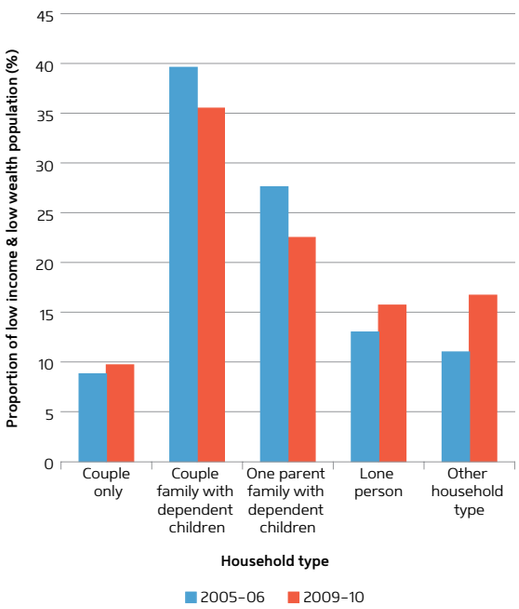
More single persons and people in 'Other household types' (mainly multiple family households and families with older non-dependent children still living at home) were in the population of households with low income and wealth in 2009–10 compared to 2005–06.

Single people comprised 15.7% of the population of people in households with low income and wealth in 2009–10, compared to 13.0% in 2005–06. People in 'Other household types' comprised 16.7% of the population of people in households with low income and wealth in 2009–10, compared to 11.0% in 2005–06.

Between 2005–06 and 2009–10, an increasing proportion of people in households with low income and low wealth were in unemployed or jobless households.

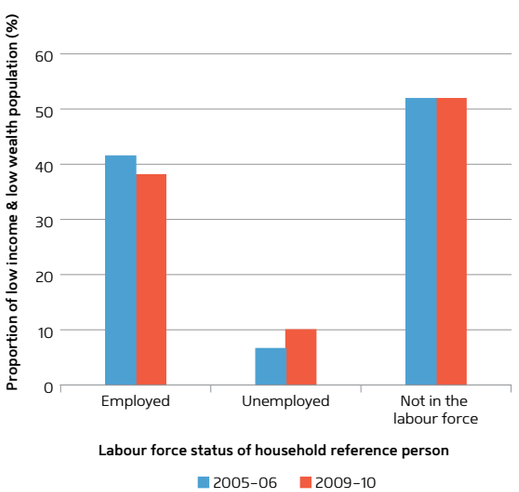
The proportion of people in households where the reference person was employed fell from 41.5% in 2005–06 to 38.1% in 2009–10. There was a sharp increase in the proportion of people

### Proportion of people in households with low income and low wealth, by household composition, 2005–06 and 2009–10




Source: Customised tables from the ABS *Surveys of Income and Housing*, 2005–06 and 2009–10

### Proportion of people in households with low income and low wealth, by employment status of household reference person, 2005–06 and 2009–10

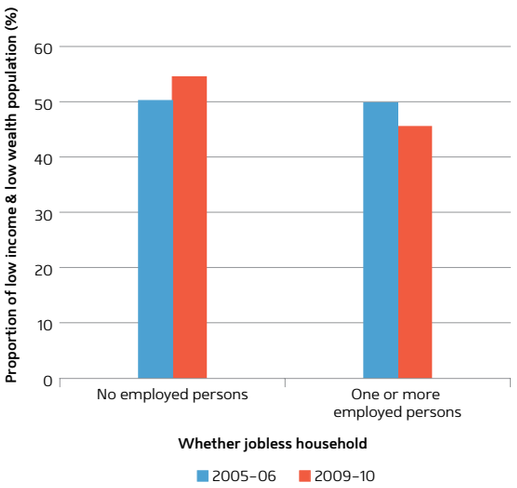



Source: Customised tables from the ABS *Surveys of Income and Housing*, 2005–06 and 2009–10

in households where the reference person was unemployed, from 6.6% in 2005–06 to 10.0% in 2009–10, while the proportion in households where the reference person was not in the labour force was unchanged between 2005–06 and 2009–10 at 51.9%.

The proportion of people in households with low income and low wealth who were in jobless households increased between 2005–06 and 2009–10, from 50.2% to 54.5%.

**Proportion of people in households with low income and low wealth, by whether jobless household, 2005–06 and 2009–10**




Source: Customised tables from the ABS *Surveys of Income and Housing*, 2005–06 and 2009–10

**About this indicator**

The indicator is derived using the ABS *Surveys of Income and Housing* conducted in 2005–06 and 2009–10[6]. The population analysed are those persons aged 15 years and over in households in the bottom three deciles of equivalised disposable household income and bottom three deciles of equivalised net worth.

# Proportion of people in households with high financial stress

## Key message:

- Data from the ABS show little change in levels of financial stress between 2003–04 and 2009–10
- In contrast, the HILDA Survey, using a different set of indicators, shows a steady decline in financial stress levels between 2001 and 2009
- Sole parents continue to have the highest levels of financial stress
- Financial stress is associated with marital dissatisfaction and family breakdown

Between 2003–04 and 2009–10, data from the ABS *Household Expenditure Survey* (HES) show that the proportion of the population in households that were in high financial stress (that is they reported five or more of 15 individual financial stress indicators—see *About this Indicator* for more detail) remained largely unchanged at around 13% (12.7% in 2003–04 and 13.7% in 2009–10).

In contrast, data from the *Household, Income and Labour Dynamics Australia* (HILDA) Survey show a steady downward trend in levels of financial stress (using a measure based on three or more of seven indicators of financial stress) between 2001 and 2009 from 8.8% to 5.5%.

The ABS HES data reveal that lone parents continue to have much higher levels of financial stress than other family types, and show a sharp increase in levels of financial stress between 2003–04 and 2009–10. The ABS HES data for 2009–10 show 45.2% of people in one parent families were in financial stress, compared to 40.6% in the 2003–04 HES data. There was little change between 2003–04 and 2009–10 in the proportion of people in other family types reporting higher levels of financial stress.

Research based on the HILDA data[7] shows that higher levels of financial stress are associated with lower levels of marital satisfaction and with later marital separation.

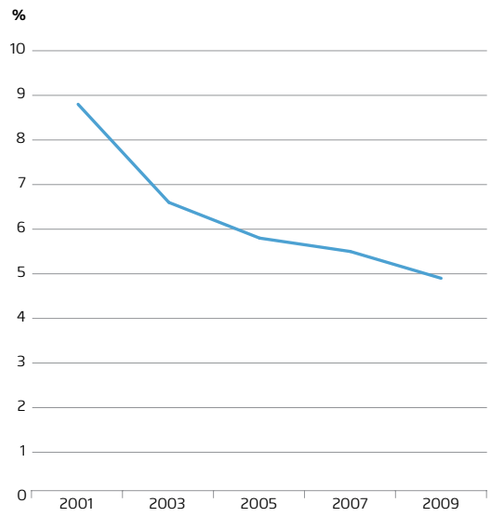
### Association of levels of financial stress with levels of marital satisfaction and marital separation, 2001–2008

| Number of indicators of financial stress | Mean change in marital satisfaction (0–10 scale) | Separated from Spouse % | Changed residence % |
|---|---|---|---|
| 0 | –0.11 | 2.3 | 18.5 |
| 1 or 2 | –0.21 | 5.1 | 27.5 |
| 3 or more | –0.32 | 8.7 | 36.1 |

Source: Wilkins, Warren, Hahn & Houng, *Families, Incomes and Jobs, Volume 6,* Melbourne Institute of Applied Economic and Social Research, the University of Melbourne, 2011

### Decline in levels of financial stress

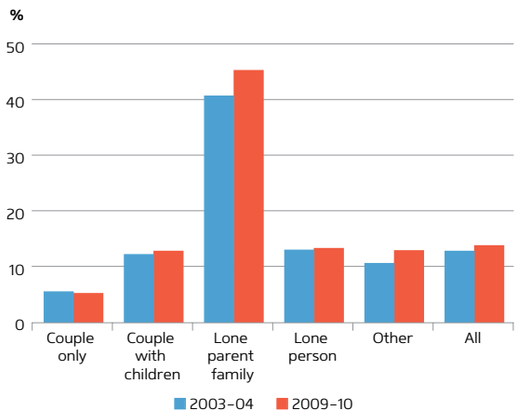
Proportion of people in households with three or more indicators of financial stress, 2001 to 2009




Source: *Household, Income and Labour Dynamics Australia* (HILDA) Survey, Waves 1 to 9

### Lone parents continue to have higher levels of financial stress

Proportion of people in households with high financial stress, by household composition, 2003–04 and 2009–10




Source: ABS, *Household Expenditure Surveys*, 2003–04 and 2009–10

### About this indicator

In the 2003–04 and 2009–10 *Household Expenditure Surveys*, the ABS asked questions about cash flow problems and aspects of deprivation. High financial stress describes the proportion of people whose household reported an incidence of five or more individual financial stress indicators (out of a total of 15) in the previous 12 months. These included being unable to pay certain bills on time, whether they could not afford activities such as a night out once a fortnight, or a special meal once a week; or whether they had gone without food or heating because of a shortage of money.

The *Household, Income and Labour Dynamics Australia* (HILDA) Survey included seven questions on financial stress in each of Waves 1 to 10 conducted between 2001 and 2010.

# Change in average real equivalised disposable weekly income of low income households

## Key message:

- **Average real equivalised disposable weekly income of low income households remained unchanged between 2007–08 and 2009–10, at around $430 per week**
- **Government pensions and allowances were the main income source for more people in the second and third income deciles in 2009–10 than in 2007–08**
- **People in lone parent families made up a larger proportion of people in the second and third income deciles in 2009–10 than in 2007–08**
- **The income share of the second and third deciles was unchanged between 2007–08 and 2009–10, at around 10%**

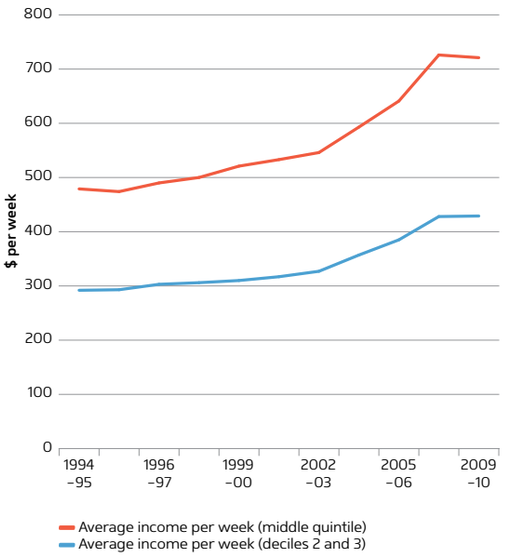
The average real equivalised disposable income of low income households (defined as households in the second and third income deciles) remained largely unchanged between 2007–08 ($428) and 2009–10 ($429). In real terms, there was no significant change in the average equivalised disposable household incomes of low, middle or high income households between 2007–08 and 2009–10.

The gap between low income households and households in the middle of the income distribution fell slightly from $298 in 2007–08 to $292 in 2009–10, but remained much higher in real (2009–10 dollar) terms than in the mid-1990s ($181 in 1995–96) or at the turn of the century ($211 in 1999–00).

Government pensions and allowances were the main income source for 54.5% of people with household income in the second and third deciles, up from 50.8% in 2007–08. In comparison, in 2009–10 government pensions and allowances were the main source of income for 20.0% of the overall population aged 15 years and over (up from 18.0% in 2007–08).

### Average incomes for low income households have increased over the last 15 years

Average income per week, second and third income deciles and middle income quintile, 1994–95 to 2009–10 (2009–10 dollars, adjusted by Consumer Price Index)




Source: ABS, *Household Income and Income Distribution*, cat. no. 6523.0, 1994–95 to 2009–10

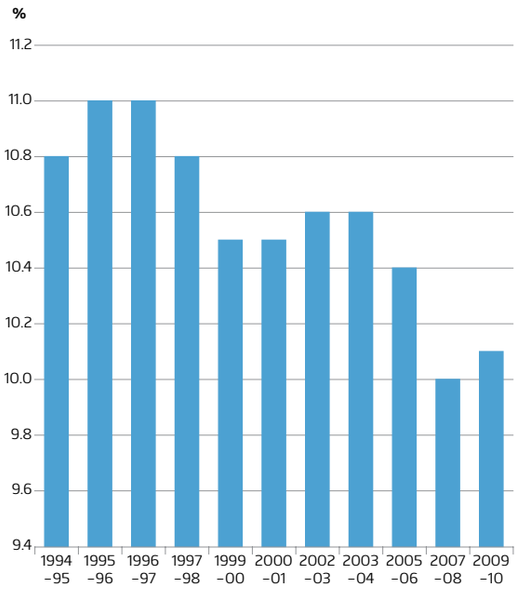
Wages and salaries were the main income source for only 10.6% of people with household income in the second and third deciles in 2009–10, down from 12.0% in 2007–08. In comparison, in 2009–10 wages and salaries were the main source of income for 67.8% of the overall population aged 15 years and over (largely unchanged from 68.4% in 2007–08). People living in households with at least one person in employment comprised a smaller proportion of people in the low income population in 2009–10 (32.9%) than in 2007–08 (36.1%).

The income share of the second and third deciles was unchanged between 2007–08 and 2009–10, increasing slightly (not statistically significant) from 10.0% to 10.1%. The income shares of other income groups also remained largely unchanged between 2007–08 and 2009–10. In 2009–10 the top income quintile received 40.2% of the total, the second top income quintile received 23.0%, and the middle income quintile received 17.0% of all income.

People in lone parent families comprise a larger proportion of people in the second and third deciles than do people in other family types, and make up a smaller proportion of people in the higher income ranges. Their representation in the low-income population increased between 2007–08 and 2009–10. People in lone parent families made up 38.9% of people in the second and third income deciles in 2009–10 (up from 33.8% in 2007–08), but only 3.6% of people in the top income quintile in 2009–10. People in lone parent families comprised 7.7% of the total population aged 15 years and over in 2009–10.

**The income share for low income households has fallen over the last 15 years, but changed little in 2009–10**

Income share of second and third income deciles, 1994–95 to 2009–10




Source: ABS, *Household Income & Income Distribution*, cat. no. 6523.0, 1994–95 to 2009–10

**About this indicator**

Low income is just one factor leading to social exclusion but nevertheless a very important factor since income can provide resources to improve participation and quality of life. This indicator looks at low income groups and how they have changed in recent years.

The indicator is derived using ABS income surveys conducted over 13 years. Average disposable household income is adjusted (equivalised) to take account of household composition and cost of living changes during that time and is presented in 2009–10 dollars.

Studies of income and expenditure have shown that households in the bottom income decile tend to have average expenditure levels that are comparable to those households with much higher income levels. This suggests that these households have access to economic resources such as property or savings, or that the instance of low or negative income is temporary. It can therefore be concluded that many of the households in the lowest income decile are unlikely to be suffering extremely low levels of economic well-being. For this reason the ABS uses households in the second and third income deciles as a 'more representative group' of 'low income households' for analysis of their characteristics and changing economic circumstances.

# Gini coefficient for equivalised household disposable income

## Key message:

- **Income inequality changed little between 2007–08 and 2009–10, but has increased since the mid-1990s**
- **Australia's level of income inequality has increased relative to the OECD average since the mid-1990s**
- **Factors contributing to the overall rise in income inequality over the past decade included growth in wages and investment/property incomes of higher income groups**

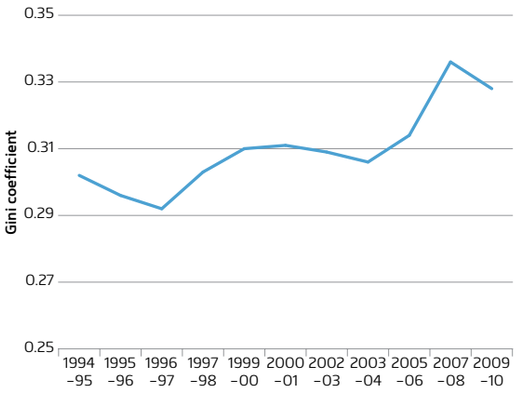
There was no significant change in the overall level of income inequality (Gini coefficient for equivalised household disposable income) between 2007–08 and 2009–10 (0.336 in 2007–08 and 0.328 in 2009–10). The overall trend, however, over the 15 year period from 1994–95 to 2009–10, has been for inequality to increase (from 0.302 in 1994–95 to 0.328 in 2009–10).

Recent international data show that Australia's income inequality is at a similar level to the OECD average. The OECD reports that in the late 2000s the Gini coefficient for Australia was 0.336 while the OECD average was 0.320.

Over the period since the mid-1990s, Australia's level of inequality has increased by more than the OECD average, resulting in Australia's ranking moving from being more equal than the OECD average to being slightly less equal (not a statistically significant difference) in the latest period.

### Income inequality has generally increased over the last 15 years

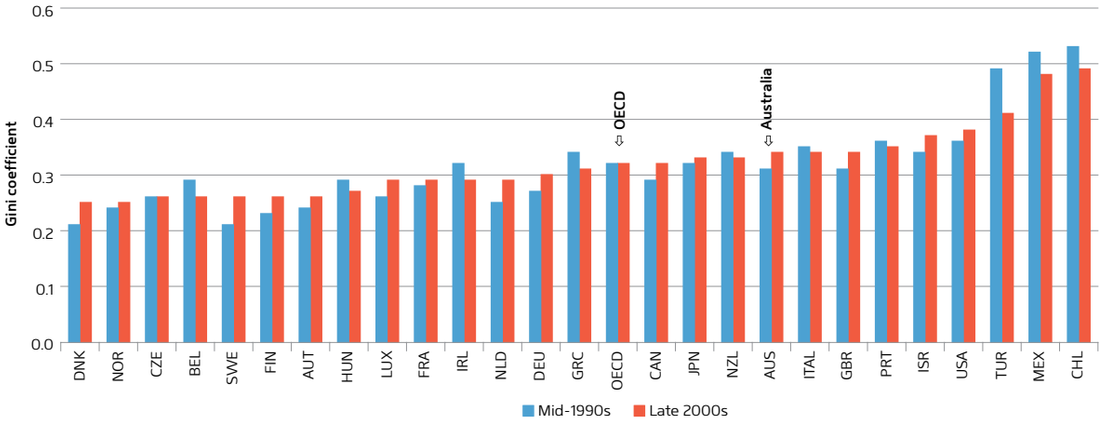
Household income distribution inequality—Gini coefficient (1994–95 to 2009–10)




Source: ABS, *Household Income and Income Distribution*, cat no. 6523.0, 2009–10

### Australia's income inequality is above the OECD average

Gini coefficients of selected OECD countries (mid-1990s & late 2000s)



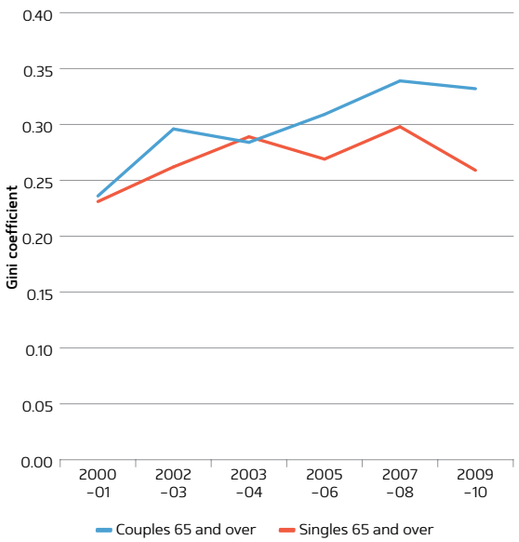

Source: OECD, *How's life? Measuring Well-Being*, 2011

Recent research by Peter Whiteford and Gerry Redmond at the Social Policy Research Centre at the University of NSW and Flinders University[8] has reported the overall rise in income inequality since the mid-1990s was mainly due to growth in wage and investment/property incomes of those in higher income groups, partially offset by the equalising effect of increasing employment participation, particularly of women. As more people were working, the tax transfer system played a lesser role than previously in redistributing income to lower income groups..

Up until 2007–08 there was a sharp rise in inequality within the aged (65+) population—particularly for couples. This is also likely to be due to increasing levels of unequal investment/property incomes. However, inequality among the aged fell after the GFC, likely because of the declining level of investment/property incomes and the increases in the level of pensions in 2009.

**Income inequality within the aged population rose until the GFC**

Gini coefficient for households with household reference person aged 65 years and over, 2000–01 to 2009–10.




Source: Peter Whiteford, 'Are the rich getting richer and the poor getting poorer?' *Inside Story*, 28 September 2011

**About this indicator**

The Gini coefficient is widely used as a summary measure of income inequality. It takes a value between zero and one, with values closer to one indicating a more unequal income distribution. The Gini coefficient is estimated on equivalised household disposable income using the ABS income surveys from 1994–95 to 2009–10 and a range of comparable surveys in other OECD nations.

The Gini coefficient is particularly useful for examining changes in income inequality over time. It assesses the full income distribution, unlike other indicators such as the ratio of the income share of the top quintile compared to the bottom quintile.

# Number and employment rate of people with disability

## Key message:

➲ **Between 2003 and 2009, there was no significant change in the employment rate for people with disability (49% and 50% respectively)**

According to the ABS 2009 *Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers* (SDAC), around four million people (18%) in Australia reported having a disability in 2009. In this survey, disability is defined as any limitation, restriction or impairment which restricts everyday activities and has lasted, or is likely to last, for at least six months.

Among the main working age population (those aged 15–64 years), around 2.2 million people (15%) had a disability, down slightly from 17% in 2003. Half (50%) of people in this age group with a disability were employed in 2009, representing no significant change from 2003 (49%). Their employment rate also remained well below that for those without a disability (77%).

Of those aged 15–64 years with a disability in 2009, men were more likely than women to be employed (55% compared with 46%). This was particularly the case for full-time employment (43% compared with 20%).

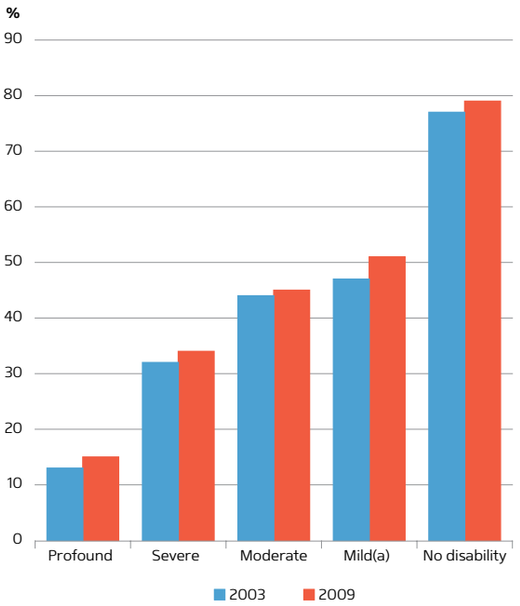
Consistent with the 2003 SDAC results, the proportion of people in employment decreased as the severity of disability increased. In 2009, only 15% of those with a profound limitation were employed compared with 34% of those with a severe limitation, 45% with a moderate limitation and 51% with a mild limitation.

In most cases, these rates showed no significant improvement from 2003. The only exception was for people with a mild limitation, for whom the employment rate increased four percentage points from 47% in 2003 to 51% in 2009.

Among those with a disability who were employed in 2009, more than half (57%) had at least one employment restriction. That is, they were limited in the type of job or number of hours they could work, or they required modifications to their working environment. This was the same rate as that reported in 2003 (57%).

### There has been little change in employment outcomes for people with disability

Proportion of people with disability who were employed, by disability status, 2003 and 2009




(a) Only statistically significant difference between 2003 and 2009 is for people with a mild limitation.

Source: ABS, *General Social Survey*, cat. no. 4159.0, 2010

### About this indicator

Assisting those with disability to find employment and/or stay in employment that accommodates their disability is important for keeping people connected to their community and maintaining their economic resources.

The employment status of people with disability was collected as part of ABS *Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers* in 2003 and 2009.

# Proportion of the population with fair or poor self-assessed health

## Key message:

- Rates of fair or poor health have remained stable between 2002 (16%), 2006 (16%) and 2010 (17%)
- Rates of self-reported poor health have, however, increased for public renters, from 45% in 2006 to 50% in 2010
- Older Australians, people in low income households and people in jobless families were more likely to be in poor health in 2010
- Rates of good or better health were higher in Australia than in most other OECD countries

According to the 2010 ABS *General Social Survey* (GSS), 17% of Australians aged 18 years and over rated their health as fair or poor in 2010, similar to the rate reported in 2002 and 2006 (both 16%). Rates of excellent or very good health declined over the same period, dropping six percentage points from 59% in 2002 to 53% in 2010.

Information on the duration of fair or poor self-assessed health is available from the *Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia* (HILDA) Survey. In the ten years to 2010, 29% of people experienced fair or poor health for two years or more and 16% for five years or more[9].

Self-assessed health remained strongly related to both age and income in 2010. The proportion of people in fair or poor health increased steadily with age, ranging from 8% of those aged 18 to 24 years to 32% of those aged 65 years and over. Conversely, rates of fair or poor health declined with rising levels of household income. One-third (33%) of those in the lowest income quintile reported fair or poor health compared with just 6.5% of those in the highest income quintile.

This indicator has remained steady for most groups. However, health appears to be worsening among renters of public housing, with half of all people in this group reporting fair or poor health in 2010, up five percentage points from 2006 (45%).

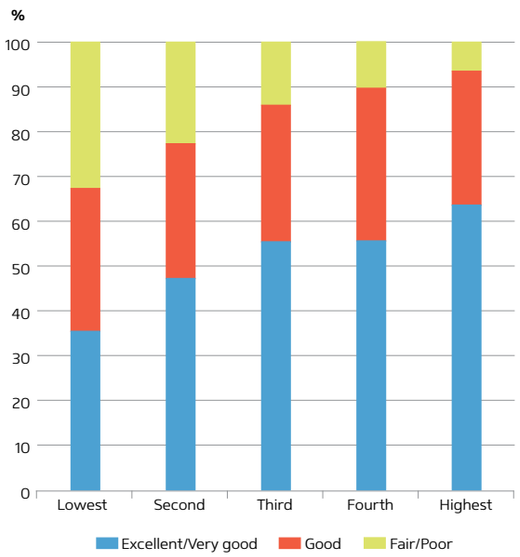
People living in jobless families with dependent children were nearly three times as likely as those living in working families with dependent children to report fair or poor health in 2010 (23% compared with 8.2%).

The GSS also shows that people in poor health are at greater risk of social isolation. In 2010, those in fair or poor health were less likely than those in excellent or very good health to have daily contact with family and friends (56% compared with 71%) or to engage in community activities, such as volunteering (26% compared with 40%). They were also more likely to report having difficulty getting to places when needed (11% compared with 2%) and in accessing service providers (35% compared with 27%).

Using a broadly comparable measure, the 2011 OECD *How's Life? Measuring Well-being* report shows that good health is, on average, higher in Australia than in most other countries. Across the OECD in 2009, 68% of the adult population rated their health as good or better. Australia (at 85%) was ranked fourth highest behind the United States (90%), New Zealand (90%) and Canada (89%)[10].

### Poor health declines with rising household income

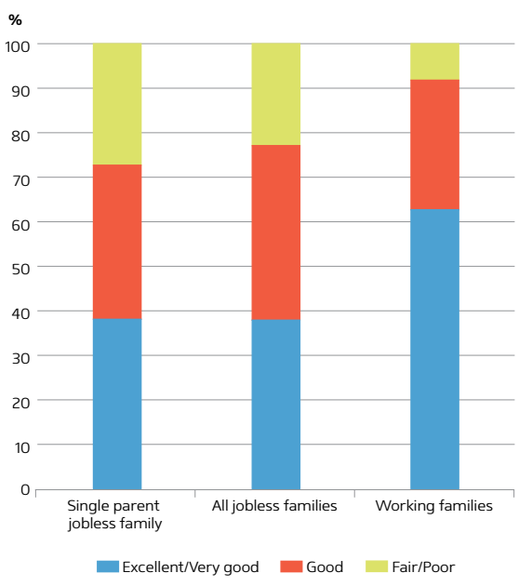
Self-assessed health status, by household income quintiles, 2010




Source: ABS, *General Social Survey*, cat. no. 4159.0, 2010

### People in jobless families are more likely to have fair or poor health

Self-assessed health status, by family type, 2010




Source: ABS, *General Social Survey*, cat. no. 4159.0, 2010

### About this indicator

Poor health can affect education, labour force and social participation, as well as family relationships and child development. Low socio-economic resources are linked to poor health. The reinforcing nature of these impacts can lead to entrenched disadvantage and social exclusion.

Self-assessed health status was collected as part of the ABS *General Social Surveys* in 2002, 2006 and 2010. The 2011 OECD *Better Life?: Measuring well-being* report has presented ABS 2007–08 *National Health Survey* results for Australia, which are directly comparable to the GSS. However, differences in response categories and question wording means that the Australian results are only broadly comparable to those collected in other OECD countries.

# Life expectancy at birth

## Key message:

➲ **Australia's life expectancy remains one of the highest in the world and continues to rise**

In 2008–2010, life expectancy at birth for Australia was 79.5 years for males and 84.0 years for females. This represented an increase of 0.2 years and 0.1 years respectively from 2007–2009.

Over the past 20 years, life expectancy has increased by 5.6 years for males and 3.9 years for females. The increase reflects declining death rates at all ages and is one of the factors contributing to the ageing of Australia's population.

Australia's more rural and remote populations tend to have higher mortality rates and consequently lower life expectancy than populations living in urbanised areas. In 2008–10, life expectancy at birth was highest in the Australian Capital Territory (80.5 years for males and 84.7 years for females) and lowest in the Northern Territory (74.0 years for males and 79.2 years for females).

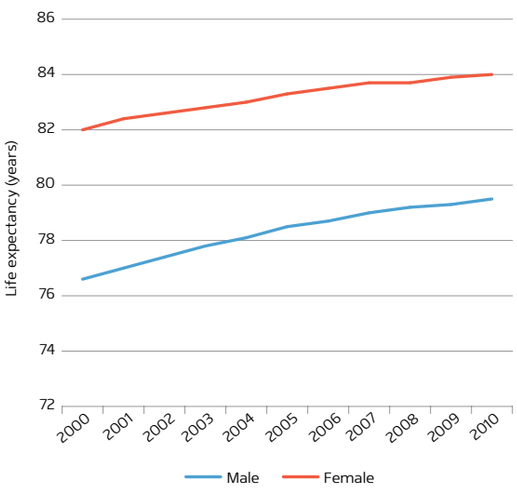
Similarly, the Northern Territory (Balance) Statistical Division had the lowest life expectancy at birth for both males and females (71.5 years and 75.9 years respectively) of all Statistical Divisions across Australia. This was about 9 years below the life expectancy of that for the Gold Coast Statistical Division, which had the highest life expectancy of 80.7 years for males and 85.2 years for females.

Low rates in the Northern Territory partly reflect the much lower life expectancy experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people compared with other Australians. In 2005–07, the gap in life expectancy was 11.5 years for males and 9.7 years for females. Updated life expectancy estimates for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population will be released by the ABS in 2013.

According to United Nations estimates for 2005–10, Australia's life expectancy at birth continues to be ranked among the highest in the world. Life expectancy at birth of Australian males is exceeded only by Iceland, Japan and Switzerland. For females, life expectancy in Australia is exceeded by Japan, Hong Kong (SAR of China), France, Switzerland and Italy.

### Australia's life expectancy continues to rise

Life expectancy at birth (years) for males and females, 2000–2010




Source: ABS, *Deaths Australia*, cat. no. 3302.0, 2010

### About this indicator

Life expectancy at birth is a measure of how long someone born in a particular year might expect to live if mortality patterns for that year remained unchanged over their lifetime. It is one of the most widely used indicators of population health. It focuses on length of life rather than quality, but provides a useful summary of the health of the population.

The ABS publishes life expectancy estimates in their annual *Deaths, Australia* publication, cat. no. 3302.0. The *United Nations World Population Prospects: The 2010 Revision* report provides the latest international data on life expectancy. The World Health Organization also produces *Health Adjusted Life Expectancy Estimates* (HALE), which take into account a person's health status when calculating years of life. However, given that these estimates are published infrequently, there has been no new information released since the 2010 *How Australia is faring* report.

# Proportion of people reporting overall satisfaction with their lives

## Key message:

➲ In 2010, nearly eight in ten Australians said they were satisfied with their lives

The ABS 2010 *General Social Survey* collected information for the first time about how people felt about their life as a whole using a scale of *Delighted, Pleased, Mostly Satisfied, Mixed, Mostly Dissatisfied, Unhappy* and *Terrible*. For the purposes of this analysis, people who were satisfied with their lives are defined as those who said they were *Delighted, Pleased* or *Mostly Satisfied*.

The survey found that the majority (78%) of Australian adults aged 18 years and over were satisfied with their lives in 2010, with 43% feeling pleased or delighted with their lives and only 5% feeling mostly dissatisfied, unhappy or terrible.

Life satisfaction varied somewhat with age. People aged 65 to 74 years were the most likely to be satisfied with their lives (83%), while rates were lowest among those aged 45 to 54 years (73%).

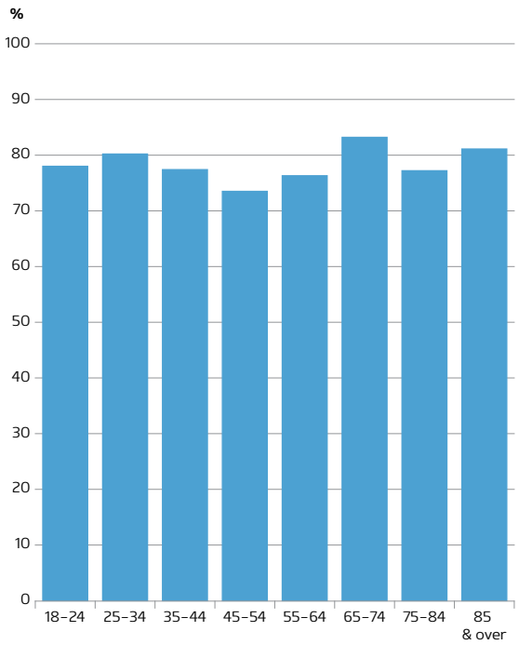
A person's health and wellbeing had a strong influence on life satisfaction in 2010. People with fair or poor health were much less likely to be satisfied with their lives (55%) than those with excellent or very good health (87%). Likewise, half (50%) of people with a profound or severe disability were satisfied with their lives compared with 83% of those without a disability.

People in couple families, either with or without children, were more likely to be satisfied with their lives (84% and 83% respectively) than people in single parent families with children (61%). Similarly, lower levels of life satisfaction were reported by those who were separated (56%) or divorced (66%) from their partners.

Life satisfaction is also strongly associated with socio-economic factors. For example, feeling satisfied with life increased with household income, ranging from 66% among those in the lowest income households to 86% in the highest income households. Rates of satisfaction were also lower for people who were who unemployed (58%) compared with those who were employed (81%), and who were living in government housing (56%) compared with those who owned or were purchasing their own home (80%).

**People aged 45–54 years are the least likely to be satisfied with their lives**

Proportion of people who were *delighted, pleased* or *mostly satisfied* with their lives, by age, 2010




Source: ABS, *General Social Survey*, unpublished data, 2010

### About this indicator

Life satisfaction relates to how people feel about their lives in general. Subjective quality of life complements more objective measures of wellbeing, such as income and health. There is a range of national and international research on life satisfaction and happiness, some of which explores the connections with socio-demographic characteristics. For some relevant research on this topic see Vinson and Ericson 2012[11] and Stiglitz, Sen and Fitoussi[12].

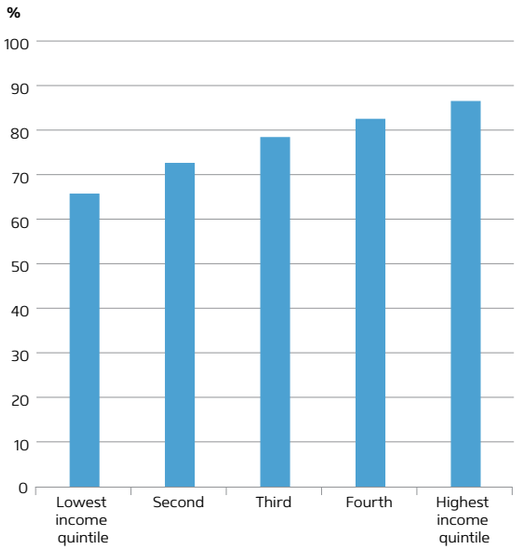
The 2010 *General Social Survey* measures life satisfaction on a scale of Delighted, Pleased, Mostly Satisfied, Mixed, Mostly Dissatisfied, Unhappy and Terrible. This is comparable to the item collected in the 2001 ABS *National Health Survey*, for which some data was presented in the last *How Australia is faring* report. The *Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia* (HILDA) Survey, also referenced here, asks respondents each year to indicate how satisfied they are with various aspects of their lives and with their life in general, using a rating scale ranging from 0 ("completely dissatisfied") to 10 ("completely satisfied"). Respondents scoring six and above were considered to be satisfied with their lives.

The *Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia* (HILDA) Survey also asked people to assess their satisfaction with life on a scale of 0 to 10. Though the scale was different to that used in the ABS survey the results were similar, with few people rating their satisfaction less than six (7% in 2010). Over the ten years of the panel survey, 2001 to 2010, most people were continuously satisfied with their lives; 97% chose scores between 6 and 10, for five or more years surveyed[13].

According to a 2009 Gallup World Poll, Australia ranks relatively highly on life satisfaction when compared with other OECD countries. The poll found that 75% of Australians were satisfied with their life as a whole, which was higher than the OECD average of 63%. Australia was also ranked above the United Kingdom (68%) and the United States (70%), but was slightly below New Zealand (77%) and Canada (78%)[14].

**Life satisfaction increases with income**

Proportion of people who were *delighted, pleased* or *mostly satisfied* with their lives, by household income quintiles, 2010




Source: ABS, *General Social Survey*, unpublished data, 2010

The OECD reports that there is no well-established programme of official reporting on subjective well-being in OECD countries. Consequently, international data for this indicator is for drawn from the Gallup World Poll. While this survey measures subjective wellbeing in a comparable way across the different countries, the small sample size may impact on the reliability of the results. For more information see the 2011 OECD *Better Life?: Measuring well-being* report.

# Proportion of Year 9 students reaching the national minimum standards for literacy and numeracy

## Key message:

- Levels of achievement in reading and numeracy were unchanged for Year 9 students between 2008 and 2011
- 30% fewer Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students reached national minimum standards in writing in 2011 compared with non-Indigenous students

In the 2011 National Assessment Program—Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) testing, 92% of Year 9 students met the national minimum standard for reading, 93% reached the numeracy standard and 85% reached the persuasive writing standard[15]. For Australia overall, there was no change in reading or numeracy achievement for Year 9 students between 2008 and 2011.

The tests found girls perform better than boys in all of the literacy domains, with the differences largest for writing. For numeracy, at the national level male and female students were found to be working at an equivalent standard. Students with a language background other than English (LBOTE) did slightly worse on the tests for reading but slightly better in spelling and numeracy.

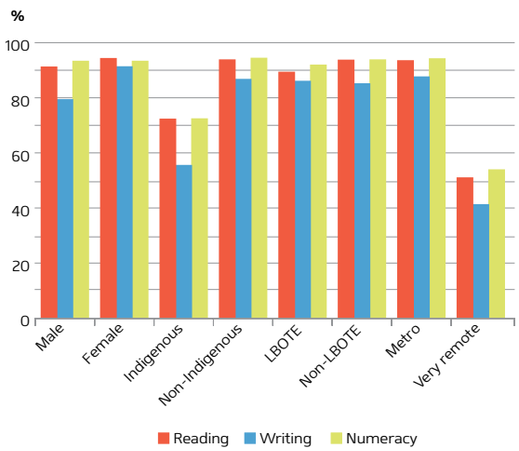
The proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students reaching the minimum standards was much lower than for the rest of the student population. The differences were most marked for writing, with 55% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students performing at or above the minimum standard, compared to 86% of non-Indigenous students.

Similarly, students—both Indigenous and non-Indigenous—living in very remote areas did not perform as well as those in cities in persuasive writing tests. Just over two-fifths of very remote students reached the minimum benchmarks (41% compared with 87% of students in metropolitan areas). Also of concern was the poor writing achievement of Indigenous students from remote and very remote areas, 66% and 78% respectively did not reach national minimum standards.

Students whose parents did not complete Year 12 were much more likely to fall below the national minimum standard. Similarly, a greater proportion of children whose parents were professionals reached the national minimum standards for each of the tests compared with those students whose parents had not been in paid work. For example, in Year 9 reading tests, students whose parents were not in paid work were 11 times more likely to fall below national minimum standards compared with students whose parents were professionals or senior managers.

**Differences between Year 9 Indigenous and non-Indigenous students were most stark for writing**

Proportion of Year 9 students reaching national minimum standards, 2011




Source: ACARA, *NAPLAN Achievement in Reading, Writing, Language Conventions and Numeracy: National Report for 2011*, 2011

### About this indicator

Benchmarks are agreed minimum acceptable standards for aspects of literacy and numeracy at particular year levels, below which students will have difficulty progressing satisfactorily at school. Benchmarks represent the essential elements of literacy and numeracy and their attainment can have a major bearing on a person's social inclusion as a certain level of literacy and numeracy skills is often required for participation in work.

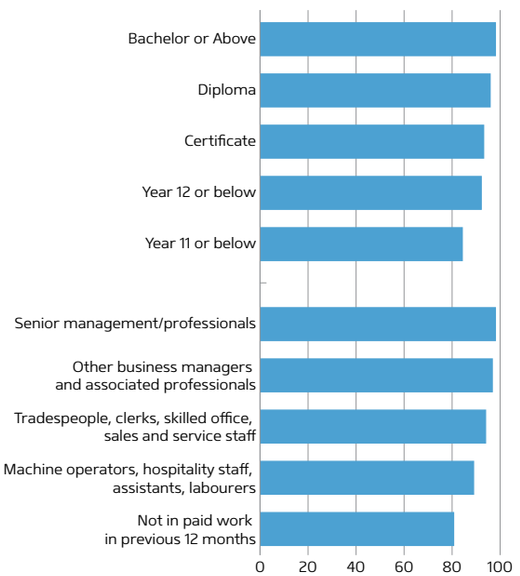
The Australian Government introduced annual standard national reporting against literacy and numeracy benchmarks, or NAPLAN, in 2008. The 2011 NAPLAN report includes an examination of the gains of students in reading and numeracy between 2008 and 2011. The report finds few of the gains made during the period to be statistically significant. The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority has noted that when examining results at the national level, the large gains made in some schools tend to cancel out the small gains in other schools. They also observed that the rate of improvement slows as schooling progresses, so the differences in mean scores for the cohort of Year 7 students in one year and the cohort of Year 9 students two years

The report also included analysis of the results over the period 2008 to 2011. Overall changes in performance were not statistically significant for Year 9 students at the national level over the period 2008 to 2011. While there was no net change in reading performance for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, the report notes an improvement from 2010 to 2011 (due to the mean in 2010 being lower than that for 2008).

The OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) assesses the performance of 15 year old students from a number of countries in reading, mathematics and science. Reading literacy was the main focus for the 2009 cycle. Results show Australian students to be above the OECD average; students scored an average of 515 points on the 2009 reading assessments, compared to the OECD average of 493 points, however, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students performed significantly lower than the OECD average, by 57 score points. Researchers from the Australian Council for Educational Research have noted that results for Australian students in reading and mathematical literacy have declined significantly over the last decade; overall performance in reading declined by 13 score points from 2000 to 2009, and in maths by 10 points from 2003[16].

**Student outcomes are related to the education and occupation of their parents**

Proportion of Year 9 students reaching national minimum standards for reading by occupation and education of students' parents, 2011




Source: ACARA, *NAPLAN Achievement in Reading, Writing, Language Conventions and Numeracy: National Report for 2011*, 2011

later are not as great as the differences between cohorts in earlier testing years[17].

The analysis of parental education and occupation data should be treated with caution, with parental education and occupation data not provided for 16% and 19% respectively of Year 9 students in 2011. Participation rates should also be considered. For example, nationally 78% of Year 9 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students participated in numeracy tests in 2011, compared with 93% of non-Indigenous students.

# Proportion of people who do not speak English well or at all

- In 2010, 4% of adults were not able to speak English well or at all
- Older people were more likely to be unable to speak English well

In 2010, 20% of adults (5.1 million people) living in Australia were born in non-English speaking countries. Of these people, 17% were not able to speak English well or at all. These people represent 4% of Australia's adult population.

Older adults were among those more likely not to be proficient in English, with 8% of people aged 65 years and over not able to speak English well or at all, compared to 3% of people aged 18–64 years. Overall, there was no significant difference in the English proficiency of adult males and females.

According to the 2010 ABS *General Social Survey,* people who do not speak English well or at all were much less likely to be employed (23%), compared with other people (65%). While the difference in unemployment for these respective groups was small (2% compared to 3%), English proficiency was found to have most impact on rates of participation in the labour market; 75% of people with limited English proficiency were not in the labour market, compared with 32% of all adults.

People who did not speak English well or at all were much less likely to have attained a Year 12 Certificate or Certificate II or above (55% compared with 71% of all adults). An ABS analysis of participation in education and training found proficiency in English to be a critical factor in determining educational outcomes[18]. For example, people who were proficient in English were twice as likely to have, or be studying towards, a university degree as people not proficient in English. Notably, people who spoke a language other than English at home but were proficient in English generally had higher educational attainment and greater participation in full-time study than people who were born in Australia and mainly spoke English at home.

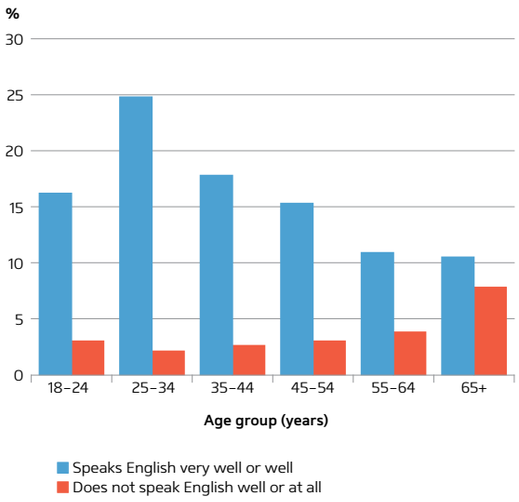
People who do not speak English well or at all are less likely to assess their health as good or better (59% compared to 83% of all people). Overall life satisfaction was also lower among those who were born in another country and who have difficulty speaking English, with 69% being mostly satisfied, pleased or delighted with their lives, compared with 79% of people born in Australia.

The survey also asked people about their participation in community and social activities. Significantly lower levels of participation in some activities were reported by people who were not proficient in English. For example, of people who were born overseas, 87% who did not speak English well or at all reported recent participation in social activities, compared to 96% of people who were proficient in English. There were also lower rates of engagement in civic activities (8% compared to 26%) and lower attendance at a community event in the previous six months (43% compared with 59%).

People born overseas who are not able to speak English well or at all also appear to be more marginalised among their family, with fewer of these people reporting that they are able to have a say in their family on issues that are important to them all or most of the time (68% compared with 79% overseas born people who speak English well, and 85% of Australian born adults).

**Older people are more likely to have difficulty speaking English than younger people**

English proficiency of people in non-English speaking households, as a proportion of all people, by age, 2010




Source: ABS, *General Social Survey*, cat. no. 4159.0, 2011

**About this indicator**

Being unable to communicate to others because of language barriers can cause isolation from the community and restrict people's level of participation in employment and community activities. Improving language skills for people with a migrant background can increase their ability to become part of the wider Australian community and find meaningful employment.

In the previous report, data from the 2006 ABS *Census of Population and Housing* was used for this indicator. As the 2011 Census data was not available at the time of writing this report, the 2010 ABS *General Social Survey* has been used, which is not comparable. The *General Social Survey* collected information on English proficiency by asking adults who lived in households whose main language spoken at home is other than English to assess their proficiency in English. The survey only collected information from adults aged 18 years and over; it did not include children, so new information is not available for the specified age range of this indicator—people over the age of five years.

# Proportion of people aged 25 to 64 years with non-school qualifications

## Key message:

- In 2011, almost two-thirds of Australians aged 25 to 64 years had a non-school qualification
- The further people lived away from urban centres, the less likely they were to have a non-school qualification
- The proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with a non-school qualification increased from 32% in 2002 to 40% in 2008

In 2011, the ABS *Survey of Education and Work* found that 64% of Australians aged 25 to 64 years had a non-school qualification. This was a significant increase from 46% in 1997. This increase was mainly due to a higher proportion of people obtaining a Bachelor Degree or higher. In 1997, 16% of people had a Bachelor Degree or higher and by 2011 this had increased to 28%[19].

Men are slightly more likely than women to have non-school qualifications (66% compared with 62%) while a greater proportion of people born overseas have non-school qualifications (67%) compared with those born in Australia (63%).

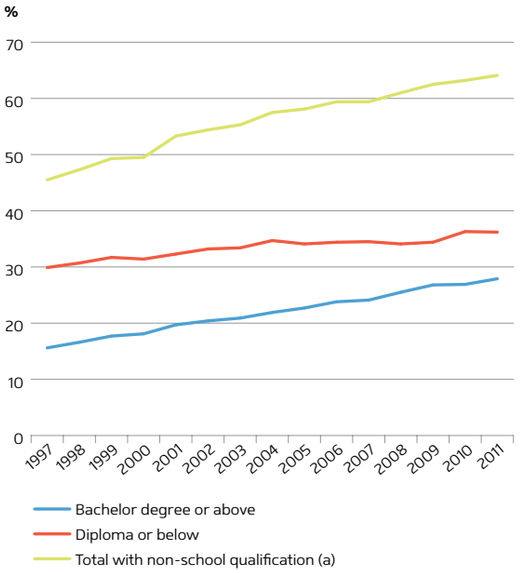
In 2011, the proportion of the population with non-school qualifications peaked for the 30–34 and 35–39 year age groups, with 70% of these groups having such a qualification, falling to 53% of those aged 60–64 years.

Not surprisingly, lower proportions of people who were unemployed (58%) and not in the labour force (47%) had non-school qualifications compared with people who were employed (68%).

In terms of geographic location, the ABS survey found that the further away from an urban centre a person lived the less likely they were to have a non-school qualification. For example, 67% of people aged 25–64 years living in major cities had a non-school qualification compared with 59% in regional areas, and 50% in remote areas and very remote areas combined. Of those living in the most disadvantaged regions, 51% had a non-school qualification, compared with 74% of those in the least disadvantaged regions[20].

**The proportion of people with non-school qualifications has steadily increased over the last 15 years**

Proportion of people aged 25 to 64 years with a non-school qualification, by type of qualification, 1997–2011




(a) Includes qualifications for which the level was not determined.

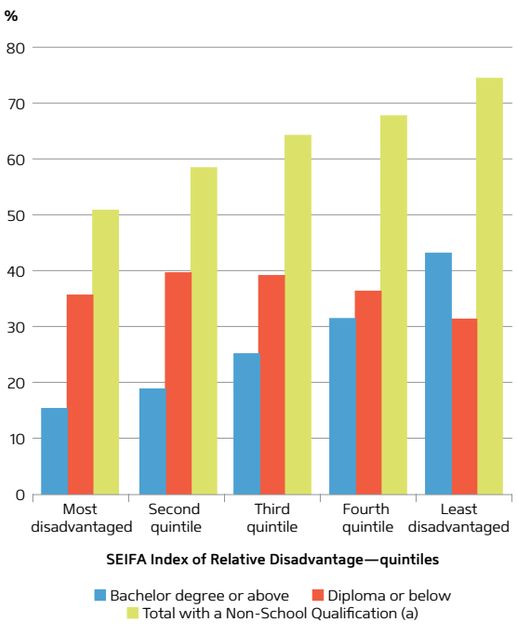
Source: ABS, *Surveys of Education and Work*, cat. no. 6227.0, 1997–2011

In 2008, the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with a non-school qualification was 40%, up from 32% in 2002. Contributing to the change over the period 2002–2008, higher proportions of Indigenous women and men attained a Certificate III/IV—up by seven and three percentage points, respectively. Indigenous Australians living in major cities were most likely to have a non-school qualification (50%) than those people living in regional areas (41%) and in remote areas (26%)[21].

The OECD includes tertiary graduation rates as an indicator of a country's capacity to produce workers with advanced, specialised knowledge and skills. In 2009, 37% of Australians aged 25–64 years had a tertiary qualification, seven percentage points above the OECD average. At 50%, Canada was reported as having the highest proportion of people with tertiary qualifications, the United States and New Zealand had 41% and 40%, respectively, and the UK reported the same proportion as Australia (37%)[22].

**People aged 25 to 64 years living in areas of most socio-economic disadvantage are less likely to have a non-school qualification compared with those in areas of least socio-economic disadvantage**

Persons aged 25 to 64 years by level of highest non-school qualification, by SEIFA Index of Relative Disadvantage quintiles




(a) Includes qualifications for which the level was not determined.

Source: ABS, *Survey of Education and Work*, unpublished data, 2011

**About this indicator**

Higher levels of education and training can assist people in developing knowledge and skills that can be used to improve personal living standards as well as those of their local community. For an individual, educational attainment can assist in obtaining a rewarding career[23]. Studies also show that educated individuals live longer lives, participate more actively in politics and in the community where they live, commit fewer crimes and rely less on social assistance[24].

Worldwide, the OECD notes that there has been a decline in demand for manual labour and for basic cognitive skills, with an increased demand for complex communication and advanced analytical skills. As such, the demand for education is increasing, bolstered by the economic crisis and worsening job prospects in the labour market[25].

Non-school qualifications are those awarded for educational attainments other than those of pre-primary, primary or secondary education.

Non-school qualifications include: Postgraduate Degree, Master Degree level, Graduate Diploma and Graduate Certificate, Bachelor Degree, Advanced Diploma and Diploma level, and Certificate I, II, III & IV levels.

# Able to get support in time of crisis from people living outside the household

## Key message:

- **In 2010, 94% of Australian adults were able to get support in time of crisis, very similar to the rate reported in 2006 (93%)**
- **Although levels of support remained relatively low among people who were not proficient in spoken English and those living in government housing in 2010, rates had significantly improved for these groups since 2006**

In 2010, the ABS *General Social Survey* (GSS) found that 94% of people aged 18 years and over were able to get support in time of crisis from people living outside their household, very similar to the rates reported in both 2002 (94%) and 2006 (93%).

Family (79%) and friends (64%) remained the most common sources of support in 2010, followed by neighbours (27%) and work colleagues (20%).

Consistent with previous GSS surveys, levels of support decreased with household income in 2010. Nearly all people in the highest income quintile (97%) had someone to turn to in time of crisis compared with 89% of those in the lowest quintile.

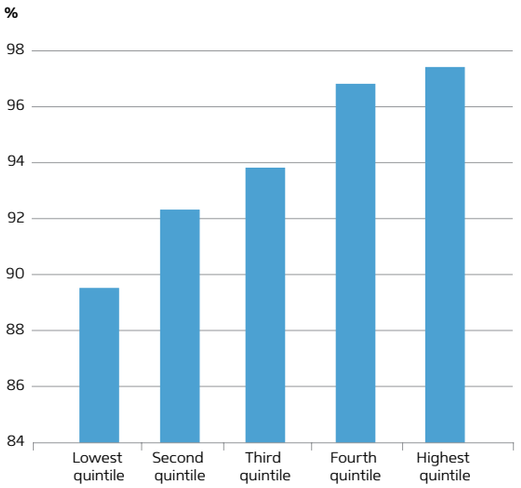
Those in high income households also had a broader range of people that they could draw support from. For example, they were more likely than those living in low income households to say that they could get support from family, friends and work colleagues, or from government or other professional services.

Other groups with relatively low levels of support in 2010 included people who were in poor health (85%), who were born overseas and were not proficient in English (86%), who were living in government housing (87%), and those in single parent jobless families with children under 15 years (89%). However, there had been some noticeable improvements from 2006, with rates of support among people from non-English speaking backgrounds increasing from 76% to 86% and rates among public renters increasing from 83% to 87%.

Internationally, the capacity of social networks to provide support in case of emergency appears to be strong in most OECD countries where, on average, nine out of every ten people could get help from family or friends in time of crisis[26].

### Support increases with household income

Proportion of people who have someone to turn to in a time of crisis, by household income, 2010




Source: ABS, *General Social Survey*, cat. no. 4159.0, 2010

### About this indicator

Having someone to turn to when in need is an important part of social inclusion. Intervention and assistance at major turning points in a person's life, such as losing a job or going through divorce or separation, are shown to reduce the chances of slipping into disadvantage. Support can also help families and communities to function through difficult times.

The ABS *General Social Survey* collects information on whether people aged 18 years and over are able to get support in time of crisis from people living outside the household.

# Proportion of people who do not feel able to have a say in the community on issues that are important to them

## Key message:

➲ **In 2010, 44% of Australians aged 18 years and over had difficulty having a say in community issues, similar to the rate reported in 2006 (46%)**

In 2010, 44% of the Australian population aged 18 years and over felt that they were able to have a say within their community a little or none of the time on issues that were important to them. This was similar to the rate reported in 2006 (46%).

Difficulty in having a say varies somewhat by age. Young people aged 15 to 24 years (51%) and older people aged 75 to 84 years (54%) were the most likely to feel unable to have a say in their community, while people aged 55 to 64 years were the least likely (41%).

People born overseas who were not proficient in English had more difficulty in having a say (52%) than those born in Australia (43%) or in other English speaking countries (44%). However, there had been a marked improvement from 2006, with the proportion of people not proficient in English who found it difficult to have a say on community issues dropping from 70% in 2006, to 52% in 2010.

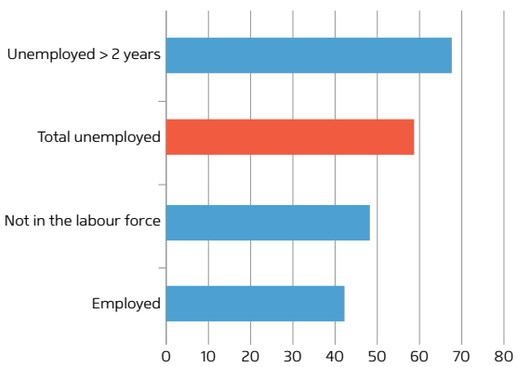
In 2010, people who were unemployed (58%), especially those who had been unemployed for two years or more (67%), had particular difficulty in having a say on community issues that were important to them. Likewise, a high proportion of people who had left school at Year 9 or below (58%) found it difficult to have a say in their community, compared with 42% of those who had completed Year 12 or a higher qualification.

Interestingly, people living in the most disadvantaged regions were only slightly more likely than those living in the least disadvantaged regions to find it difficult to have a say within their community in 2010 (48% compared with 42%).

People in fair or poor health remained more likely than those in excellent or very good health to feel unable to have a say on community issues (53% compared with 40%).

### Ability to have a say in community varies by employment status

Proportion of people who felt they could have a say in their community either a little of the time of none of the time, by labour force status, 2010




Source: ABS, *General Social Survey*, unpublished data, 2010

### About this indicator

A person's feelings regarding their ability to have a say in community issues that are important to them can be an indicator of how well people feel their opinions are valued or it may reflect their perceptions of the availability of opportunities to have a say.

The data presented for this indicator are from the ABS 2010 *General Social Survey*. The survey asked 'How often do you feel you are able to have a say within the general community on issues that are important to you?' The responses were on a scale of all, most, some, a little or none of the time.

People discussed here as finding it difficult to have a say were those who responded that they could have a say a little or none of the time.

# Proportion of people with access to the Internet at home

## Key message:

- In 2010–11, 79% of Australian households have access to the Internet at home, up from 72% in 2008–09
- Low income households remained much less likely than high income households to have a home Internet connection

The proportion of Australian households with a home Internet connection continues to rise, increasing from 72% in 2008–09 to 79% in 2010–11. This is consistent with the steady growth in Internet use over the past decade.

The majority of households with Internet access at home (92%) had a broadband connection and 5% had a dial-up connection (a further 3% did not know what type of connection they had).

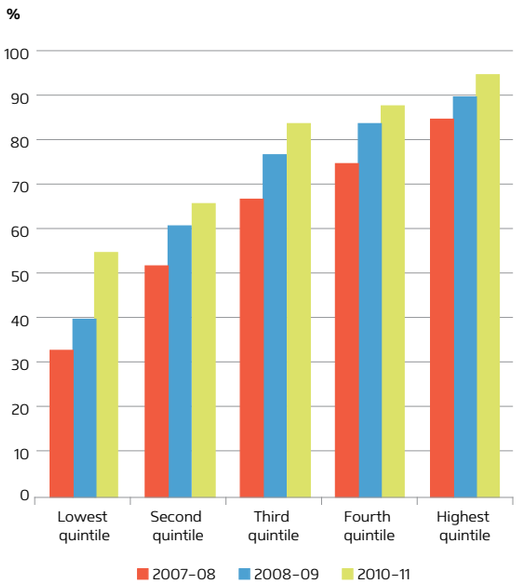
Between 2008–09 and 2010–11, rates of Internet access increased for households in all states and territories, in all remoteness areas and across all household income quintiles. There was a particularly large increase in the proportion of low income households with access to the Internet, up from 40% in 2008–09 to 55% in 2010–11. However this remained well below that for households in the highest income quintile (95%). Households in Tasmania continued to be the least likely of all the states and territories to have access to the Internet at home in 2010–11 (70%), and Internet access remained significantly lower among households in remote areas (70%) than in major cities (81%).

The 2010–11 ABS *Household Use of Information Technology Survey* also collected information on the characteristics of Internet users. It found that the use of the Internet at home was higher among younger people, those with high levels of educational attainment (such as a Bachelor degree), and people who were employed. It also showed that home Internet use was more common among people who were born in Australia or in other English speaking countries compared with those born in a non-English speaking country.

Internationally, the proportion of households with Internet access in Australia (79%) was higher than the United States (71%) and the European Union (average of 70%), but similar to the United Kingdom (80%) and Canada (78%)[27].

### Although Internet access is increasing across the board, the gap between low and high income households remains

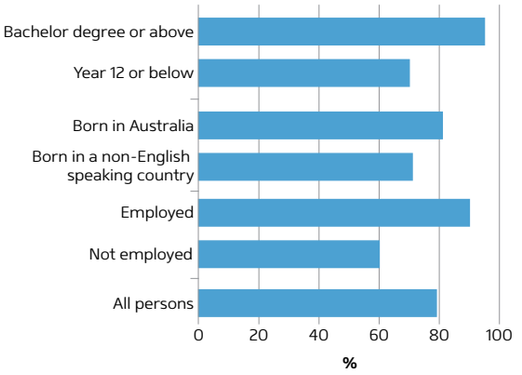
Proportion of households with Internet access at home, by income quintiles, 2007–08, 2008–09 and 2010–11




Source: ABS, *Household Use of Information Technology*, cat. no. 8146.0, 2011

### Home Internet access is more common among people who are employed and who have higher levels of education

Proportion of people aged 15 years and over who accessed the Internet at home, by selected characteristics, 2010–11




Source: ABS, *Household Use of Information Technology*, cat. no. 8146.0, 2011

### About this indicator

Internet access at home is becoming more important for people to connect and communicate with others in the community and to find information about services.

This indicator presents ABS *Household Use of Information Technology* (HUIT) data collected from the *Multipurpose Household Survey* for 2010–11.

While all data relating to Australia are taken from this source, the data for other countries in the international comparisons are sourced from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) with reference periods mainly for 2010. Although data published by the OECD in relation to households' access to the Internet are comparable to some degree, results should be interpreted with caution given differences in definitions, coverage and reference periods across the countries.

# Proportion of people who do not feel able to have a say in their family on issues that are important to them

## Key message:

- In 2010, 17% of Australians found it difficult to have a say among family and friends on important issues, similar to the rate reported in 2006 (16%)
- People living in jobless families and people not proficient in English continued to find it difficult to have a say in 2010

In 2010, the ABS *General Social Survey* found that 17% of people aged 18 years and over felt they were only able to have a say among family or friends on issues that were important to them some, a little, or none of the time. This was very similar to the rate reported in 2006 (16%).

Difficulty in having a say remained fairly stable (at around 15%) for the broad age groups up until 55 to 64 years, where rates increased to 23%. Overall, men (18%) were slightly more likely than women (16%) to find it difficult to have a say, although this difference was not statistically significant.

People in jobless families[28] remained much more likely than those families with at least one employed person to have difficulty in having a say with family and friends (29% compared with 11%). Rates were particularly high among one-parent jobless families with dependent children (33%).

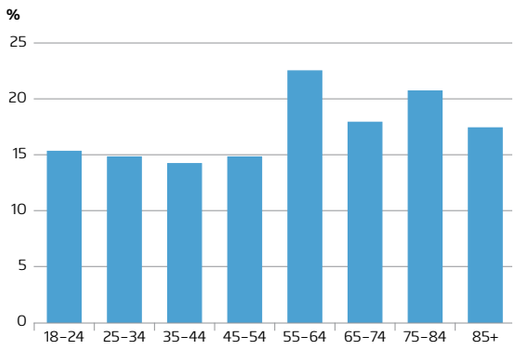
Those born overseas and who were not proficient in spoken English were much more likely to have difficulty in having a say with family and friends (32%) than those who were proficient in English (21%), or who were born in a main English speaking country (14%) or in Australia (15%). This pattern was similar to that found in 2006.

People living in lower income households were more likely to have difficulty in having a say in their family; 27% of people in the lowest income households reported difficulties compared with 8% in the highest income households. Likewise, of those living in the most disadvantaged regions, 23% were only able to have a say a little, some or none of the time compared with 15% of those living in the least disadvantaged regions.

Relatively high proportions of people with fair or poor health (28%) or with a core activity restriction (28%) found it difficult to have a say with their family and friends in 2010.

### Difficulty in having a say was highest for people aged 55 to 64 years

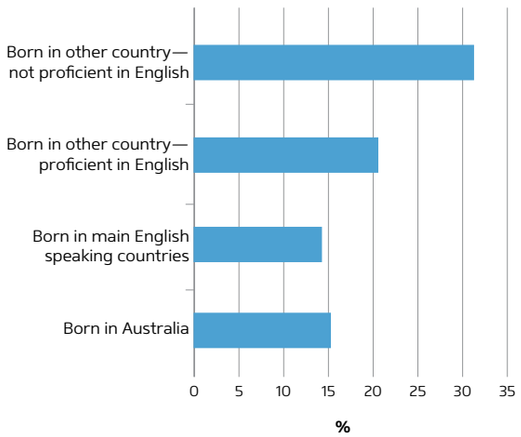
Proportion of people able to have a say among friends/family only *some, a little* or *none of the time* by age, 2010




Source: ABS, *General Social Survey*, unpublished data, 2010

### People who were born overseas and not proficient in English are more likely to find it diffcult to have a say among family and friends

Proportion of people able to have a say among friends/family only *some, a little* or *none of the time* by country of birth and English proficiency, 2010




Source: ABS, *General Social Survey*, unpublished data, 2010

### About this indicator

Giving people a voice to influence decisions that affect their lives is very important for social inclusion. Being able to have a say on important issues with family and friends is crucial as they are often the most influential people in an individual's life and their action and decisions can have a large impact on an individual's wellbeing. Having a say with friends and family is also usually a first step towards having a say in issues involving the wider community.

The data discussed here are from the ABS 2006 and 2010 *General Social Surveys*. The surveys asked respondents 'How often do you feel you are able to have a say with your friends on issues that are important to you?' The respondents could choose *all, most, some, a little or none of the time*. People discussed here as finding it difficult to have a say are those who answered *some, a little or none of the time*.

# Proportion of people who have difficulty accessing public or private transport

## Key message:

- There was little change in the proportion of people having difficulty accessing transport between 2002 and 2010
- People in poor health, on low incomes, public renters, people not proficient in English, older people and Indigenous people in remote locations are more likely to have transport difficulties
- Around 4% of people report difficulty accessing transport between 2002 and 2010—3.7% in 2002, 4.3% in 2006 and 4.1% in 2010

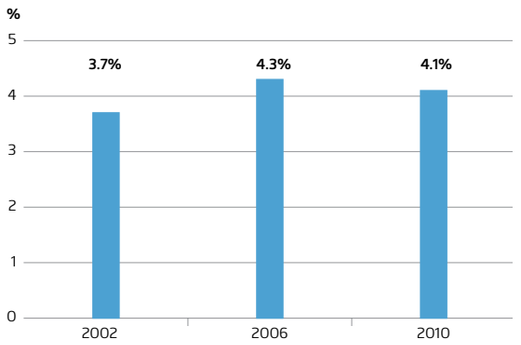
In 2010, the ABS *General Social Survey* found that 4.1% of the population could not or often had difficulty getting to places needed, a small decline from 4.3% in 2006, and slightly higher than in 2002 when 3.7% said they had transport difficulties.

People reporting difficulties accessing transport were Indigenous people in remote locations (15%[29]), public renters (14%), people in the lowest income quintile (8%), older people (7% of people aged 75–84 years and 10% of those aged 85 years or over) and those not proficient in English (9%).

People in poor health reported much higher levels of difficulty with transport than those with fair or better self-assessed health. In 2010, 20% of those with poor self-assessed health reported having difficulty with transport, up slightly from 18% in 2006. In comparison, in 2010 only 2% of people with excellent or very good health reported transport difficulties.

### Around 4% of people report difficulty accessing transport

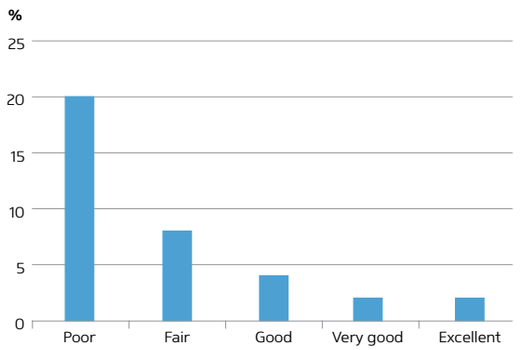
People experiencing difficulty accessing the transport they need (2002–2010)




Source: ABS, *General Social Surveys* 2002, 2006 & 2010, cat. no. 4159.0

### People in poor health have more difficulty accessing transport

Difficulty with transport by health status (2010)




Source: ABS, *General Social Survey*, cat. no. 4159.0, 2010

### About this indicator

Having access to transport is an important aspect of getting and keeping a job, undertaking daily activities, and maintaining social and community connections. The indicator is derived from the ABS *General Social Surveys* conducted in 2002, 2006 and 2010. The variable was the proportion of the population that said that they could not or often had difficulty getting to places needed.

# People experiencing difficulties accessing health services

## Key message:

➲ **In 2010, 14% of people reported they had, at some time in their lives, deferred seeing a doctor due to financial barriers**

The 2010 ABS *General Social Survey* reported that 14% of adults aged 18 years and over had at some time in their lives, delayed getting a medical consultation because they could not afford it, while 11% reported that they had delayed purchasing prescribed medication because they could not afford it.

Doctors (9.9%) were the second most frequently reported type of service that people aged 18 years and over had difficulty accessing, after telecommunications (11%).

Women reported more difficulty accessing doctors than men (11.4% compared to 8.3%), people aged 35–44 and 45–54 years reported higher levels of difficulty (12.8 and 12.3 per cent respectively) and people with higher levels of disability reported more difficulty accessing doctors (16.5 per cent of those people with a core activity restriction).

The COAG Reform Council *National Healthcare Agreement: Performance report for 2009–10*[30] reports on the following two indicators using data from the 2009 ABS *Patient Experience Survey*:

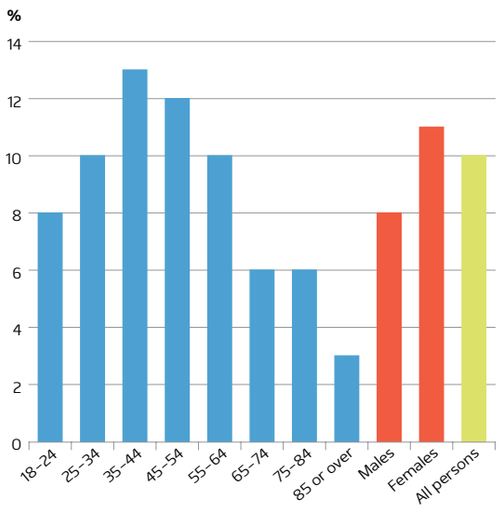
- waiting times for general practitioners; and
- people deferring treatment due to financial barriers.

It reported that 60% of people aged 15 years and over saw a general practitioner within four hours of making an urgent appointment, 25% saw a general practitioner between four and 24 hours after making an urgent appointment, and 14% waited longer than 24 hours.

Around 1.1 million people aged 15 years and over (6.4% of the population) reported that they had delayed seeing or had not seen a general practitioner due to cost in the previous 12 months. Women were more likely to have deferred seeing a general practitioner due to cost (7.3%, compared to 5.3 per cent of males), and people without private health insurance were more likely to have deferred seeing a general practitioner due to cost (8.4%, compared to 4.6% for those with private health insurance).

### People aged between 35 and 54 years were the most likely to report difficulty accessing doctors

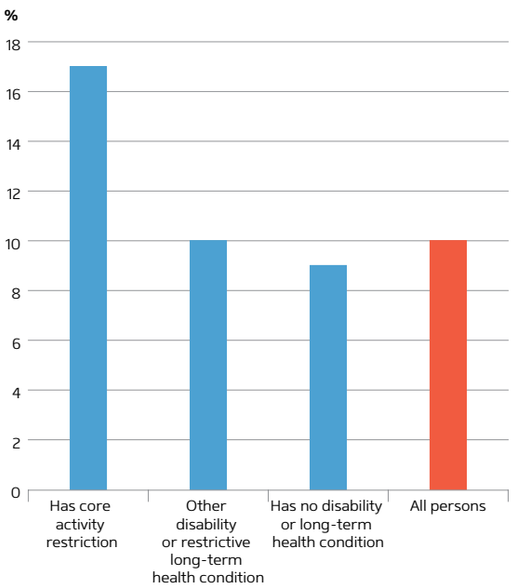
People experiencing difficulty accessing doctors, by age and gender




Source: ABS, *General Social Survey*, cat. no. 4159.0, 2010

### People with core activity restrictions had more difficulty accessing doctors

People experiencing difficulty accessing doctors, by disability or long-term health condition




Source: ABS, *General Social Survey*, cat. no. 4159.0, 2010

**About this indicator**

Having access to the right healthcare professionals when needed means that individuals and families can remain healthy and participate actively in the community and at work.

The COAG *National Healthcare Agreement* aims to provide all Australians with timely access to quality healthcare services based on their needs, not their ability to pay, and regardless of where they live in the country.

# Proportion of people reporting difficulty accessing services

## Key message:

- In 2010, 30% of Australians reported having difficulty accessing service providers
- Lone parents (46.4%) and unemployed people (43.6%) had the highest rates of difficulty accessing services
- In 2010, the proportion of people aged 18 years and over reporting difficulty accessing legal services was around 1.5%, but people with a core activity restriction reported double that rate (3.1%)

The 2010 ABS *General Social Survey* reported that 30% of people aged 18 years and over reported having difficulty accessing service providers. This was not, however, comparable to the 22% reported in the 2006 *General Social Survey* due to changes in the survey questions.

The most frequently reported type of service that people aged 18 years and over had difficulty accessing was telecommunications (11.1%), followed by doctors (9.9%), Commonwealth income support, health and related services, such as Centrelink, Medicare and the Family Assistance Office (9.1%), dentists (7.7%), banks and other financial services (6.1%), hospitals (5.4%), employment services (1.7%), legal services (1.5%), mental health services (1.4%) and disability services (1.1%).

The most frequently reported difficulties were 'Waiting too long/appointment not available' (18.4%), followed by poor customer service (13.3%), inadequate services in local area (7.5%), cost of service (5.5%), no services in area (4.8%), could not trust them (3.1%), transport/distance (2.8%) and language difficulties (2.7%).

Unemployed people reported higher levels of difficulty accessing services (43.6%), compared to people in employment (30.2% of those employed full-time and 34.7% of those employed part-time), while retired people had the lowest rate of difficulty accessing services (24.1%).

Lone parents reported the highest rate of difficulty accessing services (46.4%) relative to people in other family types. Single people aged 65 years and over reported the lowest rate of difficulty accessing services (18.9%), compared to 34.1% of single people aged less than 35 years, and 33.5% of people in couple families with children.

In contrast to these pronounced differences, there were no significant differences in the rates of difficulty accessing services by income quintile. Thus, the need for services appears to be primarily being driven by socio-demographic factors, such as the presence of children, unemployment and health or disability, rather than by income levels.

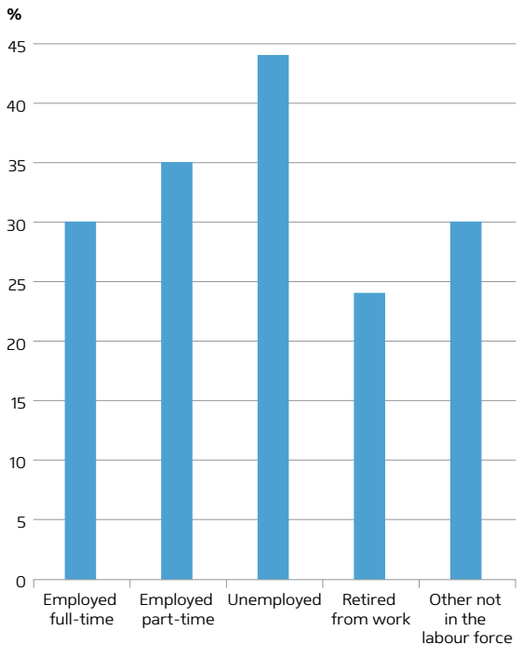
Women reported more difficulty accessing services than men (31.8% compared to 28.6%), younger people reported higher levels of difficulty than those in the older age groups (people in the 35 to 44 years age group reported the highest rate of difficulty at 37.1%, compared to rates under 20% for those aged 75 years and over) and people with higher levels of disability reported more difficulty accessing services (47.2% of people aged 18 to 64 years with a core activity restriction compared to 28.8% of those aged 18 to 64 years with no disability or long-term health condition).

People in the smaller states and territories reported higher levels of difficulty accessing services—42.4% of people in the Northern Territory; 37.3% in Tasmania; 34.7% in the ACT; 33.6% in WA; 32.3% in Queensland; 28.8% in NSW and 28.3% in Victoria.

While only 1.5% of people aged 18 years and over reported difficulty accessing legal services, people with a core activity restriction reported double that rate (3.1%).

### Unemployed people were more likely to experience difficulty acessing services

Proportion of people experiencing difficulty accessing services, by labour force status




Source: ABS, *General Social Survey*, cat. no. 4159.0, 2010

**About this indicator**

Access to services affects people's ability to participate in society.

The 2006 ABS *General Social Survey* collected information about the difficulty people have accessing services in general and whether the services were provided by government or the private sector.

There was a change introduced in the 2010 ABS *General Social Survey* which recorded the type of service people had difficulty accessing e.g. employment, health or justice services.

# The proportion of people reporting positive attitudes towards people from different cultures

## Key message:

- **In 2010, 80% of Australians agreed on the benefits of cultural diversity in Australia, according to the ABS General Social Survey**
- **The Scanlon-Monash Index of Social Cohesion reported a continued downward trend in levels of acceptance between 2007 and 2011**
- **The proportion of Australians reporting experiences of discrimination based on skin colour, ethnic origin or religion increased between 2007 and 2011, from 9% to 14%**

The ABS *General Social Survey* for 2010 reported positive attitudes towards people from different cultures, with 80% of people agreeing with the statement that *'It is a good thing for a society to be made up of people from different cultures'*.

The Scanlon-Monash Index of Social Cohesion reported an overall decline in the level of social cohesion between 2007 and 2011. Between 2010 and 2011 trends in the components of the index stabilised, with the notable exception of the indicator of acceptance and rejection, which continued to deteriorate[31].

The acceptance and rejection indicators reflect views on immigration and government support to ethnic minorities, experience of discrimination and expectations for the future. In response to a question on whether 'accepting immigrants from many different countries makes Australia stronger', the 2011 Scanlon Foundation survey found that 64% of Australians agreed, 27% disagreed and 6% were neutral. Lower levels of agreement were reported by people living in Queensland; people living outside capital cities; those over the age of 55 years; those without post-school qualifications; and those who described their financial situation as 'just getting along', 'struggling to pay bills' and 'poor'.

The 2011 survey also found that more people disagree that the government should help ethnic minorities to maintain their customs and traditions, those that disagreed increased from 26% in 2007, to 31% in 2010.

The survey also asked respondents about their feelings towards immigrants from 12 specified countries. The results showed that the majority of Australians held positive or neutral attitudes towards all groups in 2011. The level of negative feeling was lowest towards immigrants from Italy and Greece (less than 3%) and was 7% and 13% towards immigrants from Vietnam and China respectively. The highest level of negative feeling was towards those from Iraq and Lebanon (24%).

These findings were consistent with people's attitudes towards different faith groups. More than half of all Australians were positive towards Christians (59%) and Buddhists (54%), but less than one-third (30%) held positive attitudes towards Muslims.

### Indicators of acceptance and rejection have continued to deteriorate

The Scanlon-Monash Index of Social Cohesion, 2007–2011

| | 2007 Index | 2009 Index | 2010 Index | 2011 Index | Change 2010–11 (per-centage points) | Direction of change |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Sense of belonging | 100 | 96.9 | 95.0 | 96.6 | +1.6 | Higher |
| 2. Sense of worth | 100 | 97.2 | 96.7 | 96.5 | –0.2 | Lower |
| 3. Social justice and equity | 100 | 112.4 | 91.9 | 94.4 | +2.4 | Higher |
| 4. Participation | 100 | 105.3 | 98.0 | 106.4 | +8.4 | Higher |
| 5. Acceptance (rejection) | 100 | 94.4 | 81.5 | 75.3 | –6.2 | Lower |
| **Average** | **100** | **101.2** | **92.6** | **93.8** | **+1.2** | **Higher** |

Markus, A *Mapping Social Cohesion: Scanlon Foundation Surveys Summary Report*, 2011, p13

The 2010 *How Australia is faring* report discussed the critical link between discrimination and social exclusion. Discrimination can reduce people's participation in a wide range of economic, social and community activities. It can impact on a person's employment, income, local neighbourhood and community networks, social supports, access to services and health.

There remains a lack of comprehensive national data on the general population's perceptions of discrimination or on the impact of discrimination in Australia. However, the Scanlon Foundation found that in 2011, 14% of Australians had experienced discrimination based on their skin colour, ethnic origin or religion in the previous 12 months. This rate has increased in recent years, up from 9% in 2007.

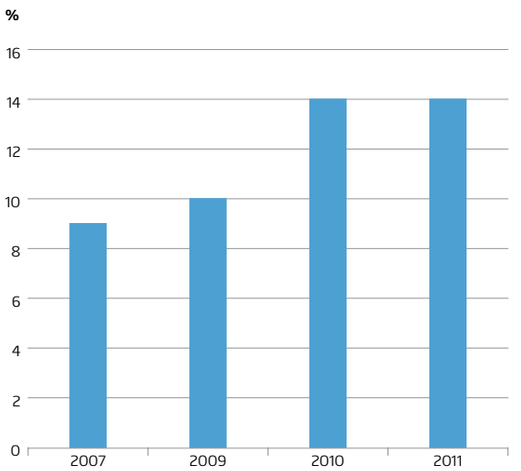
For the first time, the ABS collected comprehensive information on racial discrimination experienced by Indigenous Australians in the 2008 *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey* (NATSISS)[32]. The survey showed that 27% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years and over had experienced discrimination in the previous year. The most common situations or places where this had taken place included from the general public (11%), by police/security personnel/courts of law (11%), and at work or when applying for work (8%).

The survey revealed that discrimination was particularly prevalent among those who had been removed from their natural families (45%), or who had a disability or long-term health condition (32%). However, rates did not significantly vary by household income, level of schooling or ability to speak and/or understand English. The ABS also reported that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who had experienced discrimination were more likely than those who had not experienced it to have high levels of psychological distress, to drink alcohol at harmful levels and to take illicit substances. They were also less likely to have trust in the police, their local school, their doctor and/or hospital and other people in general.

The NATSISS also showed that 7% of Indigenous Australians aged 15 to 24 years reported experiencing discrimination when accessing

**In 2011, 14% of people reported experiences of discrimination**

Proportion of people who reported experiences of discrimination based on skin colour, ethnic origin or religion in the previous 12 months, 2007 to 2011




Source: The Scanlon Foundation, *Mapping Social Cohesion*, 2011

**About this indicator**

Positive community attitudes towards other cultures have positive social and economic effects as people from migrant backgrounds and other minority groups feel more welcome and are less likely to experience the damaging effects of discrimination. A range of data sources have been explored to provide an overview of attitudes to diversity and experiences of discrimination in Australia.

The Scanlon Foundation *Mapping Social Cohesion Survey* investigates a range of social cohesion and population issues. The report of the survey results, prepared by Professor Andrew Markus at Monash University, notes difficulties in defining social cohesion but identifies a number of common elements to definitions which have guided their measurement approach. The survey explores and reports on five key indicators of social cohesion: belonging, worth, social justice, participation and acceptance, with the acceptance indicator providing valuable information on the attitudes of Australians towards living in a diverse society and experiences of discrimination[37].

services (including at hospitals or government agencies). Similarly, around 5% of Indigenous Australians aged 15 years and over had experienced discrimination by government agency staff in the past 12 months. Other research shows that people from non-English speaking backgrounds face similar challenges and barriers when accessing services. For example, a 2006 Victorian Health Promotion Foundation survey that compared the reported experience of discrimination across a range of State-based services in Victoria, found that people born in a country in which English is not the main language spoken were more likely to report that they had experienced discrimination due to their ethnic origin than those born in Australia.

Likewise, a 2003 Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission survey of Muslim Australians on the experience of prejudice because of their race or religion (described by respondents as often occurring on the basis of their dress, appearance or name) found that:

- 12% of respondents reported experiences of racism, abuse or violence while in, or while accessing services in, government offices, compared with 2.7% of non-Muslims; and
- 40% of survey respondents who were born in Afghanistan reported they had experienced racism in government offices[33].

Discrimination can also be a barrier to finding, and remaining in, employment. The *Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia* (HILDA) Survey included questions on perceived experiences of employment discrimination (based on sex, age, ethnicity, religion and parenting responsibilities), both in applying for jobs and in the course of employment. The survey found that in 2008, 8.3% of those who had applied for a job in the past two years believed they had been unsuccessful because of discrimination and that around 8% of people who had been an employee for the last two years believed that their employer had discriminated against them at some stage during this period. The survey also found that age was the most common reason reported for discrimination, followed by gender. Overall, rates of job-related discrimination were generally higher among women, older people, Indigenous people and women with young children[34].

Similarly, a large scale discrimination study conducted by the Australian National University in 2009 sought to test labour market discrimination for entry-level jobs across different minority groups in Australia. In this experiment, over 5,000 fictional résumés with ethnically-identifiable names were sent in response to job advertisements that did not require post-school qualifications. The results showed that for Anglo-Saxon sounding names, the mean call-back rate for interview was 35%, compared to only 26% for Indigenous applicants, and 22% and 21% respectively for Middle Eastern and Chinese applicants[35].

Results from the Australian Reconciliation Barometer provide an indication of the relationship between Indigenous and other Australians, including perceptions affecting progress towards reconciliation and closing the gaps. The 2010 Barometer found that 87% of all Australians agree the relationship between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians and other Australians is important and 48% say it is improving. Over half (58%) of the Indigenous respondents to the study believed that the Apology to Australia's Indigenous Peoples by the Commonwealth Government in 2008 improved the relationship. The general community's knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures is fairly low (39%). However, around four out of five Australians believe it is important to know about Indigenous history and culture. Notably, there was strong acknowledgement that there are still high levels of prejudice between Indigenous and other Australians (93% of Indigenous respondents and 71% of other respondents agreed with this statement)[36].

The ABS *General Social Survey* in 2010 included a new question on tolerance of cultural diversity, with respondents asked to indicate their level of agreement with the statement that 'It is a good thing for a society to be made up of people from different cultures'[38].

The Australian Reconciliation Barometer is a national research study that looks at the relationship between Indigenous and other Australians. Designed to be repeated every two years, the Barometer explores how we see and feel about each other, and how perceptions affect progress towards reconciliation and closing the gap[39].

# Proportion of the population who are homeless

## Key message:

- **There have been no new official estimates of the overall level of homelessness since the 2010 *How Australia is faring* report**
- **Administrative data shows that women and children are the most likely to use homelessness services, and the main reason they seek homelessness services is domestic/family violence**
- **Families with children are more likely to be turned away than other groups when seeking homelessness support services**

New estimates of the level of homelessness based on the 2011 ABS Census are due to be published later in 2012, and are likely to vary significantly from previous estimates due to revisions to the methodology used to identify the various components of the homeless population.

In the meantime, the latest available data on the homeless population remain those reviewed in the previous *How Australia is faring* report. These data were reported in *Counting the homeless 2006*[40] and were based on the 2006 ABS Census of Population and Housing, the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) National Data Collection and the National Census of Homeless School Students.

It was estimated that the number of people who were homeless in Australia on Census night 2006 was 104,676 or 0.53%, around the same rate as in 2001.

In the absence of a new estimate of the level of homelessness, this section draws on the following sources:

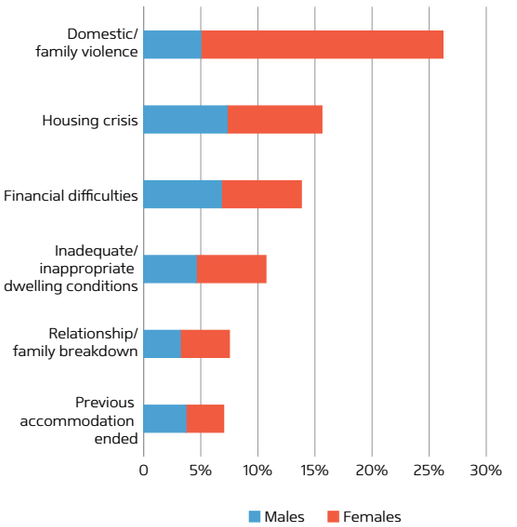
- First results from the new homelessness services data collection *Specialist Homelessness Services Collection: first results, September quarter 2011*[41];
- A report on the characteristics of people turned away from homeless services, using the now superseded SAAP data collection[42]; and
- An article on people who had previously experienced homelessness based on the 2010 ABS General Social Survey[43].

The *Specialist Homelessness Services Collection* (SHSC) report states that women and children are the main groups seeking homelessness services and that the main reason for seeking homelessness services was domestic/family violence (reported by 26% of clients), followed by housing crisis (16%) and financial difficulties (14%). Domestic/family violence was the most common main reason for female clients seeking assistance (36%), while the main reason given by male clients was housing crisis (18%) followed by financial difficulties (17%).

The SHSC report found there were generally modest improvements in outcomes following usage of homelessness services. For instance, around 10% of clients were living in a motor car or in an improvised dwelling prior to seeking assistance, compared to 7% at the end of the

**Women and children escaping domestic or family violence were the main group seeking homelessness services**

Main reason for seeking homelessness support services, by gender, 2011




Source: AIHW, *Specialist Homelessness Services Collection: first results*, 2012

### About this indicator

Homelessness occurs for many reasons and affects many sections of the community. Being homeless makes it difficult to gain and maintain employment, or stay in education, and/or participate in the wider community.

Homelessness can be defined in many different ways and does not only refer to people who do not have shelter. When estimating homelessness numbers from the 2006 Census, the ABS has used a cultural definition of homelessness that distinguishes between primary, secondary and tertiary categories of homelessness. New estimates of homelessness based on the 2011 Census and using a revised definition and methodology are due to be released in late 2012.

As part of the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness, the Council of Australian Governments has set several goals to reduce homelessness and reports on progress in relation to these goals. This reporting is primarily based on administrative data collected by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare on the characteristics of people seeking and utilising homelessness services.

In 2010 the ABS *General Social Survey* collected data for the first time about the experiences of people who had previously experienced homelessness, including their utilisation of government homelessness services.

support period, and there was a decrease of six percentage points in the level of unemployment, from 55% to 49%.

The majority of people leaving care and custodial settings were provided with accommodation, but less than a quarter were provided with accommodation for more than six weeks.

An Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) report on the characteristics of people turned away from homeless services[44], found that families with children are more likely to be turned away when seeking homelessness support services, than individuals or couples without children.

An ABS analysis of the 2010 *General Social Survey* found that the 1.1 million people who had experienced at least one episode of homelessness in the previous ten years were much more likely than people who had not been homeless to be unemployed; to be experiencing financial difficulties; and/or to have a disability or health condition[45].

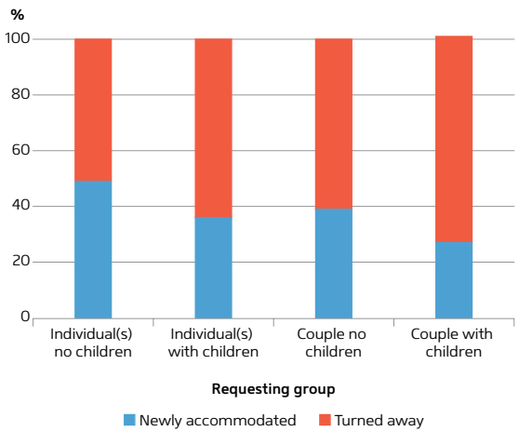
At the time of the ABS survey, 9% of people who had previously experienced at least one episode of homelessness were unemployed compared to only 3% of people who had not experienced homelessness. Those who had been homeless were more than three times as likely to report not being able to pay electricity gas or telephone bills on time (37% compared with 10%) and one in ten people reported that a member of their household had gone without meals (11% compared with 1% who had not been homeless).

People who had experienced homelessness in the last ten years were about three times as likely to be a victim of physical or threatened violence in the year before the survey (25% compared with 9%); much more likely to be living in public housing compared with those who hadn't been homeless (10% compared with 2%); and twice as likely to be in a one-parent family (17% compared with 8%).

They were also more likely to report a disability or long-term health condition (64% compared with 37% of those who had not been homeless); they were twice as likely to have a physical disability (47% compared with 24%); and four times as likely to have a psychological disability (22% compared with 5%).

**Families with children are more likely to be turned away when seeking support services**

People turned away from homelessness support services, by family type, 2010–11




Source: AIHW, *People turned away from government-funded specialist homelessness accommodation 2010–11*

# Lower income private rental households with housing costs exceeding 30% of household income

## Key message:

- **The proportion of households renting privately has increased over the past 15 years, private rents have risen by more than earnings and by more than the costs of home ownership over the past decade, and vacancy rates remain at low levels**
- **The proportion of lower income households in private rental housing paying more than 30% of household income on housing costs was unchanged between 2005–06 and 2009–10 at 49.4%**

The latest ABS *Housing Occupancy and Costs* publication[46] reports that between 1994–95 and 2009–10 the proportion of households renting privately rose from 18% to 24%, while the proportion of home owners remained largely unchanged at around 70%. This publication also reports that the increase in average private rental costs between 1994–95 and 2009–10 (45%) was more than the increases in the costs of home ownership (42%) and public rental (29%).

The proportion of low income private rental households paying more than 30% of their household income on housing costs was unchanged between 2005–06 and 2009–10 at 49.4%. The proportion of low income home buyer households decreased slightly from 40.4% to 37.2%, while the proportion of public rental householders increased from 2.1% in 2005–06 to 7.5% in 2009–10. This finding should be treated with caution as most public rents are capped at 25% of assessed income, well below the 30% threshold[47].

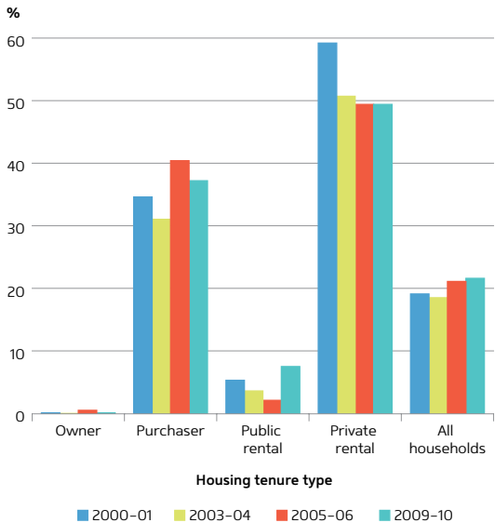
Over the past decade private rents have risen by more than average earnings and the Consumer Price Index. The Real Estate Institute of Australia has reported that median rents rose by 85 per cent between 2001 and 2011, while average weekly earnings rose by around 60 per cent over the same period[48].

A property advisory and forecasting research house, SQM Research[49] reports vacancy rates below 3% (equilibrium level) in all major cities. In July 2011 the vacancy rate was 2.8% in Melbourne, 2% in Brisbane, 1.6% in Adelaide and Sydney, 1.2% in Perth, 1.1% in Darwin, 1.0% in Hobart and 0.7% in Canberra[50].

A recent publication, using another definition of housing stress, has reported that renters in Hobart have the highest rates of rental stress (33%), while Sydney contains the largest number of such households (over 100,000)[51].

### Low income private rental households were most likely to be in housing stress

Proportions of lower income households in housing stress by tenure type, 2000–01 to 2009–10




Source: ABS, *Housing Occupancy and Costs* 2000–01, 2003–04, 2005–06 & 2009–10, unpublished data

### About this indicator

Housing is an important resource that enables people to participate in society. A home provides people not just with shelter from the elements, but with facilities for cooking and self-care, privacy, and a secure base to enable the establishment of a daily routine. Those with stable housing are then able to focus on employment, building relationships and contributing to their local community. Therefore, affordable housing is an important element in developing an inclusive society.

Lower income households are defined here as those containing the 30% of people with equivalised disposable household income between the 10th and 40th percentiles. People in housing stress are those with lower income who spend 30% or more of their gross household income on housing costs. People in the bottom income decile are not included as the ABS has expressed concerns due to research that has found that the average expenditure pattern of these people are comparable to people with much higher income levels, suggesting they may have access to other economic resources.

The indicator focuses on private renters because they pay the highest proportion of their income on housing and have a less secure form of housing than owners, purchasers and people in public rental housing.

# Number of affordable houses available to purchase per 10,000 low income households

## Key message:

➲ **The share of homes affordable to low-income households grew by two-thirds over the period 2007–08 to 2009–10, from 6.9% to 11.5%**

The Council of Australian Governments (COAG) Reform Council recently reported that the share of homes affordable to low-income households grew by two-thirds over the period 2007–08 to 2009–10, from 6.9% to 11.5%, with increases in each State and Territory over this period.

The National Housing Supply Council's (NHSC) *State of Supply Report 2011* reports that the current overall shortage of housing is likely to continue into the future:

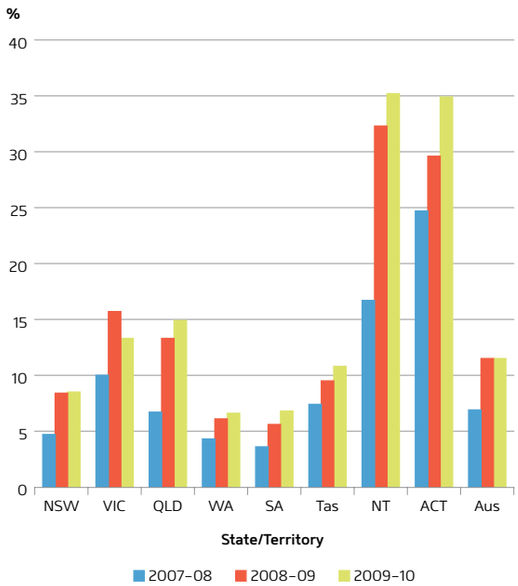
*The gap between underlying demand and housing supply in Australia is estimated to have increased by approximately 28,200 dwellings in the year to June 2010, to a cumulative shortfall of 186,800 dwellings since 2001... By 2015, applying the Council's medium scenarios for demand and supply, the cumulative demand–supply gap from 2001 is projected to grow by a further 142,000 dwellings to 328,800 dwellings by 2015.*

However, the NHSC report also notes that the supply of housing available for low income households has increased recently, due in part to Commonwealth and State government investments in programs that have increased the supply of housing for low-income groups, including the:

- National Rental Affordability Scheme;
- Housing Affordability Fund; and
- National Partnership Agreement on Social Housing.

### The affordable housing supply was largely unchanged between 2008–09 and 2009–10

Proportion of homes sold that were affordable to low-income households by state and territory, 2007–08, 2008–09 and 2009–10




Source: COAG Reform Council, *National Affordable Housing Agreement: Performance report for 2009–10*

### About this indicator

When housing is in short supply and much of the available housing is unaffordable for low-income groups it is important to monitor the level of housing that is available to these households.

The indicator, the proportion of homes sold that were affordable to low-income households, is taken from COAG Reform Council reporting on the National Affordable Housing Agreement.

For this indicator, a home is considered affordable if a household spends no more than 30% of gross income on mortgage repayments, based on the Reserve Bank standard variable interest rate, a deposit of 10% of the home price and a 25 year loan term.

The indicator takes home sales data from State and Territory valuers-general for the relevant year, and calculates how many of these would have been affordable to low-income households.

Low-income households are defined as those at the 40th percentile of equivalised disposable household income, based on data from the ABS Surveys of Income and Housing.

Gross household income is identified by finding the median figure across a small range of households around the 39th to 41st percentiles.

Income data for 2008–09 and 2009–10 was projected using STINMOD, a micro-simulation model developed by the National Centre for Social and Economic Modelling at the University of Canberra.

# Proportion of people experiencing repeat homelessness

## Key message:

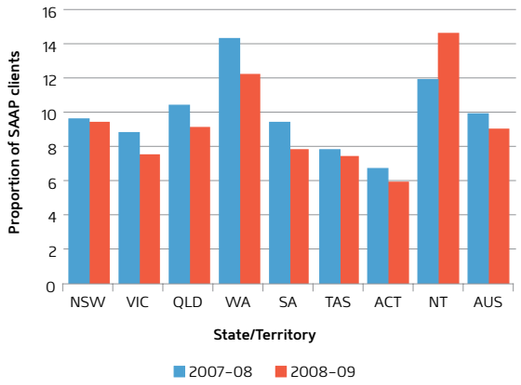
➲ **Data from homelessness service providers indicate a drop in the number of clients with a repeat need for assistance**

Recent reporting by the COAG Reform Council (CRC) shows the proportion of Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) clients who over a 12 month period had a repeat need for assistance fell from 9.9% to 9.0% between 2007–08 and 2008–09[52]. The SAAP is a joint Commonwealth/State program that provides transitional supported accommodation and related support services to help people who are homeless or at imminent risk of homelessness.

The CRC *National Affordable Housing Agreement: Performance report for 2009–10* shows falls in the proportion of SAAP clients with an identified repeat need for support in all states and the ACT (but not in the Northern Territory), and falls in the sub-groups monitored (Indigenous/non-Indigenous, males/females, age groups).

### Falls in the proportion of clients needing accommodation assistance in all states and the ACT

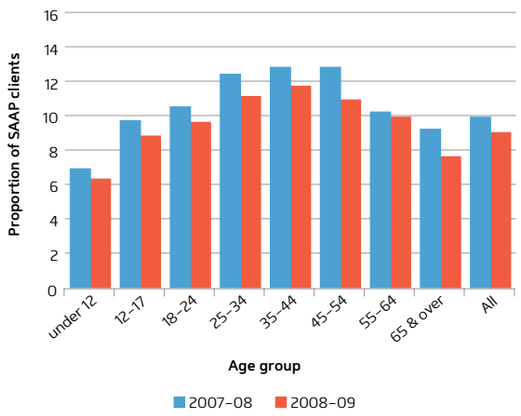
Proportion of SAAP clients identified as needing accommodation assistance more than once in a 12 month period, by state and territory, 2007–08 and 2008–09




Source: COAG Reform Council 2011, *National Affordable Housing Agreement: Performance report for 2009–10* (Volume 1)

### Falls in the need for accommodation assistance in all age groups

Proportion of SAAP clients identified as needing accommodation assistance more than once in a 12 month period, by age group, 2007–08 and 2008–09




Source: COAG Reform Council 2011, *National Affordable Housing Agreement: Performance report for 2009–10* (Volume 2)

### About this indicator

Reducing repeat homelessness is one of the COAG goals specified in the National Affordable Housing Agreement. Progress in relation to this goal is monitored by the COAG Reform Council in each National Affordable Housing Agreement: Performance report. These reports draw primarily on data provided to the CRC by the Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision (SCRGSP), which in turn is based on AIHW SAAP client data.

# Proportion of people who feel unsafe alone at home or in their local community at night

## Key message:

- In 2010, 7% of Australians felt unsafe or very unsafe at home alone after dark, representing no change from 2006
- Concerns for safety were high among people living in jobless families, in low income households or in public housing

In 2010, 6.6% of people aged 18 years and over felt unsafe or very unsafe at home alone after dark and 18% felt unsafe or very unsafe walking alone in their local area after dark[53]. These rates have not changed since 2006.

Women remained much more likely than men to feel unsafe at home alone after dark in 2010 (11% compared with 2.3%) and when walking alone at night (27% compared with 9.6%).

Similar proportions of people living in major cities and in regional or other areas reported feeling unsafe either at home alone or walking alone after dark. Of all the states and territories, people in the Northern Territory (in mainly urban areas) were the most likely to report feeling unsafe after dark, both at home (8.1%) and in their local area (29%).

In 2010, the likelihood of feeling unsafe when walking alone in the local area after dark steadily increased with higher levels of socio-economic disadvantage. Rates ranged from 33% of those living in the most socio-economically disadvantaged regions to 13% of those living in the least disadvantaged regions. This relationship was also similar for those who felt unsafe at home alone after dark.

People with disability were twice as likely as those without disability to feel unsafe at home alone after dark (9.8% compared with 4.6%), but were only slightly more likely to feel unsafe in their local area (21% compared with 18%).

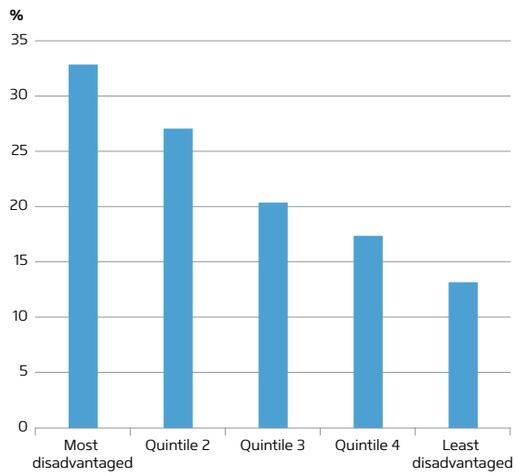
People living in jobless families were particularly concerned about their safety in 2010, with 21% feeling unsafe at home alone after dark and 36% feeling unsafe when walking alone after dark. Rates were also high among people renting from public housing authorities (19% felt unsafe at home at night and 26% felt unsafe walking alone at night). This is not unexpected given that both of these groups were, on average, more likely than the general population to report being a victim of physical violence, or a victim of break-in during the previous 12 months.

Nevertheless, there had been some improvement from 2006, with the proportion of public renters feeling unsafe in their local area dropping from 32% in 2006 to 26% in 2010.

According to the 2011 OECD *How's Life? Measuring Well-being* report, people in Australia are less likely than people in other like countries to feel secure in their local community. In 2010, the proportion of Australians who said they felt safe walking alone in the city or area in which they live (64%) was slightly lower than the OECD average (67%). Australia also ranked below Canada (81%), New Zealand (81%), the United States (77%) and Great Britain (71%)[54].

### People living in areas of high socio-economic disadvantage are more likely to feel unsafe

Proportion of people who felt unsafe when walking alone in their local area, by SEIFA Index of Relative Disadvantage (a) quintiles, 2010




(a) The Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA). See Glossary for more information on SEIFA.

Source: ABS, *General Social Survey*, 2010, unpublished data

### About this indicator

A person's feeling of safety can play an important part in their decision to participate in activities in their local community, as well as their ability to access and utilise community services.

The ABS *General Social Survey* collects information from people aged 18 years or more about how safe they feel when they are at home alone after dark and when walking through their local area alone after dark. The OECD data shown here are drawn from the Gallup World Poll based on the following question: "Do you feel safe walking alone at night in the city or area where you live?" The OECD notes that small sample sizes and other limitations mean that caution is needed when interpreting the results[55].

# Child protection substantiation rate

## Key message:

- In 2010–11, 40,466 child protection notifications were substantiated, representing a 12% drop from 2009–10
- Substantiations for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children remained well above those for non-Indigenous children

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) reports that 40,466 child protection notifications were substantiated in 2010–11, representing a 12% drop from the previous year (46,187) and a 26% drop from 2008–09 (54,621).

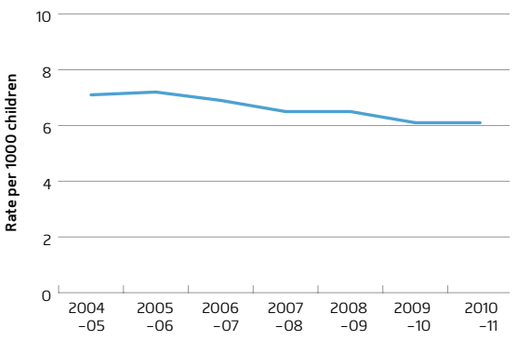
In 2010–11, 6.1 per 1,000 children were subject to a substantiated notification during the year, representing no change from 2009–10 (also 6.1 per 1,000 children). There continued to be large variations across the states and territories, ranging from 3.4 per 1,000 children in Western Australia to 22.8 per 1,000 children in the Northern Territory. Between 2009–10 and 2010–11, while the rate of children subject to a substantiated notification remained stable nationally, there were increases in all jurisdictions except for New South Wales, Queensland and the Australian Capital Territory.

Rates of substantiated child protection notifications decreased with the child's age, ranging from 12 per 1,000 children under the age of one to 2.9 per 1,000 children aged 15–17 years. This pattern was consistent across all states and territories.

Across Australia, substantiations for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children remained well above those for non-Indigenous children. In 2010–11, the national substantiation rate for Indigenous children was almost eight times as high as for non-Indigenous children; rates were 34.6 per 1,000 for Indigenous children compared to 4.5 per 1,000 for non-Indigenous children.

### The number of child protection substantiations is generally decreasing

Children who were the subject of a child protection substantiation, 2004–05 to 2010–11




Source: AIHW, *Child Protection Australia 2010–11*, cat. no. CWS 41, 2012

### Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children continue to have a much higher child protection substantiation rate in all states and territories

Rate of children aged 0–17 years who were subject to a child protection substantiation, by Indigenous status and state or territory, 2010–11

Source: AIHW, *Child Protection Australia 2010–11*, cat. no.CWS 41, 2012

### About this indicator

Child abuse and neglect can have a long lasting impact on both physical and mental health. It can lead to children being placed into other care arrangements and losing their connections with family and friends.

Child protection substantiations are cases where child protection notifications received by child protection departments have been investigated and found that there is reasonable cause to believe that the child has been, or was likely to be, abused or neglected or otherwise harmed.

The rates of substantiated child protection notifications vary greatly between states and territories, at least partly due to different child protection procedures and policies. Therefore differences between states and territories need to be interpreted with caution.

For detail on issues related to the data collection and the child protection process, see the AIHW *Child Protection Australia 2010–11*, cat. no. CWS 41, 2012.

# Victims of selected personal crime (including physical assault, threatened assault, robbery and sexual assault)

## Key message:

➲ Rates for most selected personal crimes decreased between 2008–09 and 2009–10

In 2009–10, the ABS *Crime Victimisation Survey* found that 3.1% of people aged 15 years and over had been a victim of at least one face-to-face threatened assault, 2.9% had been a victim of at least one physical assault and 0.4% had been a victim of at least one robbery. Around 43,400 (0.3%) people aged 18 years and over had been victims of at least one sexual assault, of which the majority were women (79%).

Rates for most personal crimes (including physical assault, threatened assault, robbery and sexual assault) decreased between 2008–09 and 2009–10. Small but significant declines occurred for robbery, face-to-face threatened assault and non-face-to-face threatened assault.

Men were more likely than women to have been victims of at least one physical assault and/or robbery. The likelihood of being a victim of physical assault decreased with age, with 6.0% of people aged 15–24 years having been a victim of at least one physical assault in 2009–10, compared with just 0.8% of those aged 65 years and over.

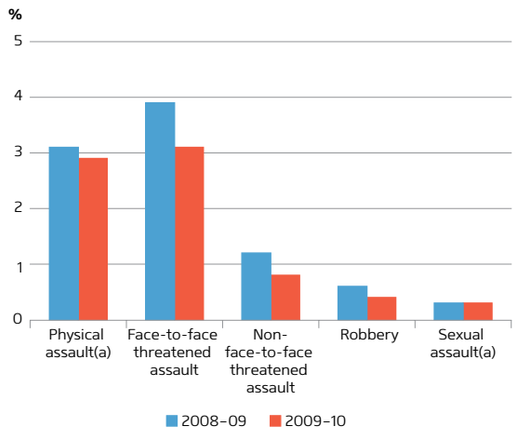
People who were unemployed were more likely to have been a victim of at least one physical assault (8.4%) than people who were employed full-time (2.9%) or part-time (2.8%). Rates were also slightly higher among people born in Australia (3.3%) compared with those born overseas (2.0%).

The ABS 2008 *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey* found that (after adjusting for differences in age structure) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 18 years and over were nearly twice as likely as non-Indigenous people to have been a victim of physical or threatened violence in the previous year[56].

In 2009–10, the proportion of people who reported the most recent crime to police varied depending on the type of crime. Reporting rates were highest for robbery (61%) and physical assault (51%), followed by sexual assault (37%) and face-to-face threatened assault (32%). The level of reporting was generally similar to 2008–09, although incidents of robbery were more highly reported in 2009–10 (61% compared with 39% in 2008–09).

### Rates for most personal crimes decreased between 2008–09 and 2009–10

Personal crime victimisation rates, by type of crime, 2008–09 and 2009–10




(a) Difference between 2008–09 and 2009–09 for physical assault and sexual assault rates is not statistically significant.

Source: ABS, *Crime Victimisation, Australia*, cat. no. 4530.0, 2009–10

### About this indicator

Being the victim of a personal crime can have lasting impacts on a person's feelings of safety in their community, home, or place of work and can cause physical and mental health concerns for both the victim and their families.

The 2009–10 ***Crime Victimisation Survey*** is the second in a new series of regular crime victimisation surveys conducted by the ABS. Differences in collection methodology and survey questions mean that data collected on experiences of personal crime in the 2008–09 and 2009–10 surveys are not directly comparable with data from previous years' Crime and Safety Surveys, including those presented in the 2010 *How Australia is faring* report.

# Victims of selected household crime

## Key message:

➲ **Rates for attempted break-in, theft from a motor vehicle and malicious property damage all decreased between 2008–09 and 2009–10**

In 2009–10, 3.0% of Australian households were victims of at least one break-in to their home, garage or shed and 2.4% were victims of at least one attempted break-in. A small proportion of households (0.9%) had at least one motor vehicle stolen and 3.7% reported experiencing at least one theft from a motor vehicle. Around one in ten households (9.1%) had experienced at least one incident of malicious damage to their property.

Between 2008–09 and 2009–10, there were small decreases in the rates for attempted break-in, theft from a motor vehicle and malicious property damage. Rates for other types of household crime remained stable.

Across the states and territories, rates for break-ins were highest in the Northern Territory (5.5%) and Western Australia (5.2%), and lowest in Victoria (2.4%). Motor theft in the Northern Territory was more than twice as high as the national average (2.2% compared with 0.9%, although data for the Northern Territory refers to mainly urban areas only).

Nationally, offenders stole property in nearly three-quarters (74%) of recent break-ins, with money (19%) and jewellery (18%) being the most common types of items being taken. One in ten recent break-ins involved the offender confronting a household member during the robbery.

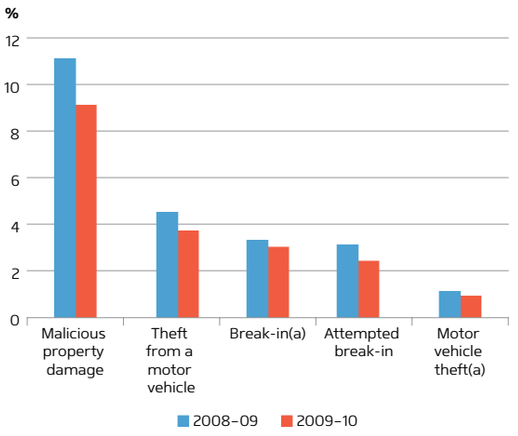
Among the most recent incidents of motor vehicle theft, the majority (65%) took place at the victim's home and 11% occurred in a car park.

Exterior items, including walls, windows, doors and fences (65%) were the most common targets in the most recent incidents of malicious property damage, followed by cars or other motor vehicles (28%).

Car theft was the most commonly reported household crime in 2009–10 with 90% of victims reporting the most recent incident to the police. More than three-quarters (76%) of actual break-ins were reported to police compared with less than half (42%) of attempted break-ins. The reporting rate for malicious property damage was higher in 2009–10 (47%) than 2008–09 (43%), but the reporting rates for other household crimes remained unchanged.

### Households were less likely to be victims of most selected crimes in 2009–10 than in 2008–09

Proportion of households that were victims of selected crimes, by type of crime, 2008–09 and 2009–10

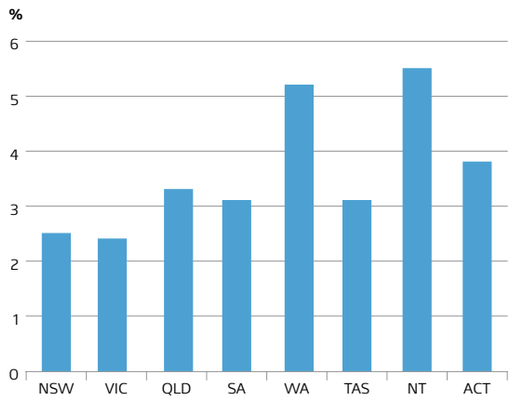



(a) Differences between 2008–09 and 2009–10 for break-in and motor vehicle theft rates are not statistically significant.

Source: ABS, *Crime Victimisation, Australia*, cat. no. 4530.0, 2009–10

### Rates of break-in varied by state and territory

Proportion of households experiencing break-ins by state and territory, 2009–10




(a) Data for the NT refer mainly to urban areas only.

Source: ABS, *Crime Victimisation, Australia*, cat. no. 4530.0, 2009–10

### About this indicator

Being the victim of a household crime can impact on a person's feelings of safety in their community, street or home. The fear of crime can also impact on the wider neighbourhood's satisfaction with their local area and community.

The 2009–10 *Crime Victimisation Survey* is the second in a new series of regular crime victimisation surveys conducted by the ABS. It collects information on a broader range of household crimes than the previous ABS Crime and Safety Survey. Therefore the types of household crimes covered in this indicator now include theft from a motor vehicle and malicious property damage in addition to break-in, attempted break-in and motor vehicle theft.

Differences in collection methodology and survey questions mean that data collected in the 2008–09 and 2009–10 surveys are not directly comparable with data from previous years' Crime and Safety Surveys, including those presented in the 2010 *How Australia is faring* report.

# Indicators of Social Inclusion
# How Australia is faring

## Participation

# Employment rate (employment to population ratio)

## Key message:

- In 2010–11, 79% of men and 67% of women aged 15–64 years were employed
- The employment rates for both men and women have been increasing over the last decade, dipping during the Global Financial Crisis (GFC), before resuming their upward trends

In 2010–11, 79% of men and 67% of women of working age (15–64 years) were employed. Employment rates for both men and women fell by one percentage point between 2008–09 and 2009–10, before returning to 2010–11 rates.

The employment rates for the total population aged 15 years and over (including those aged 65 years and over) in 2010–11 were 69% for men and 56% for women.

Consistent with the trend in previous years, there was little difference between main working age employment rates in capital cities (73%) and the rest of the state (72%) in 2010–11. Likewise, the employment rate for people born overseas remained lower than that for Australian born people (70% compared with 74%).

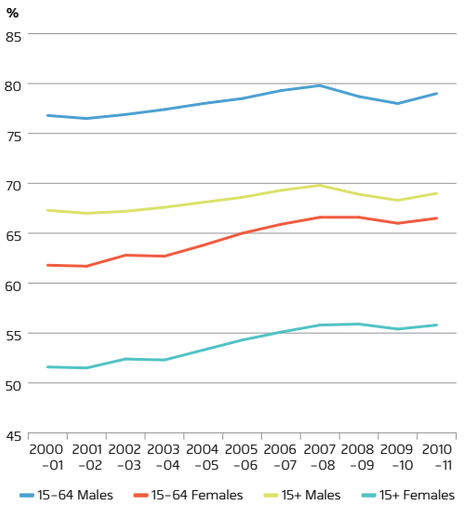
The increased life expectancy of Australians, and the much longer years of life after the traditional retirement age of 65, have seen the employment rate among older Australians rise by more than 60% in the past decade. Between 2001–02 and 2010–11, the annual average employment rate for women aged 65 years and over increased from 3.3% to 6.8% and for males from 10% to 15%.

The underemployment rate for those aged 15 years and over (that is, people who are employed who would like to work more hours) has been slowly but steadily falling since 2009. Average annual rates have decreased from 7.5% in 2009–10 to 7.1% in 2010–11. Underemployment rates remained higher among women (9.1%) than men (5.5%) in 2010–11.

Over the past decade, Australia's employment rate for people aged 15 years and over remained well above the OECD average. The GFC resulted in a drop in employment rates across the world, with the most dramatic decline recorded in the United States, where employment rates fell from 61% in 2007 to 56% in 2010. In contrast, Australia's employment rate dropped by under half a percentage point in the same period and before returning, in 2010, to a level similar to 2007[57].

**The employment rate for both men and women increased over the past decade, but dipped during the GFC**

Employment to population ratio, 2000–01 to 2010–11




Source: ABS, *Labour Force Australia*, cat. no. 6291.0.55.001, 2011, detailed electronic delivery

### About this indicator

The employment rate (or employment to population ratio) is considered a better measure of social inclusion than either the unemployment rate or the labour force participation rate because employment is the positive outcome of increasing participation in the labour market. To understand the extent of disadvantage, the employment rate for different demographic groups should be examined.

The employment rate is the number of people employed (either full-time or part-time) as a percentage of the population. The underemployment rate is the number of employed people who want to, and are available to, work more hours as a percentage of the labour force.

# Children under 15 years in jobless families

## Key message:

- In June 2011, 14% of all children aged under 15 years lived in jobless families
- Australia has the fourth highest rate of children in jobless families in the OECD

In June 2011, 590,000 or 14% of Australian children under the age of 15 years were living in jobless families. The proportion of children in jobless families has remained relatively unchanged in the two years since the GFC, dropping slightly from 15% in 2009 to 14% in 2010, and then remaining steady at 14% in 2011.

However, when looking at this trend by family composition, there has been a noticeable drop in the percentage of children in one-parent families who were jobless, down from 51% in 2009 to 48% in 2011. This is nearing the pre-GFC low of 46% in 2008.

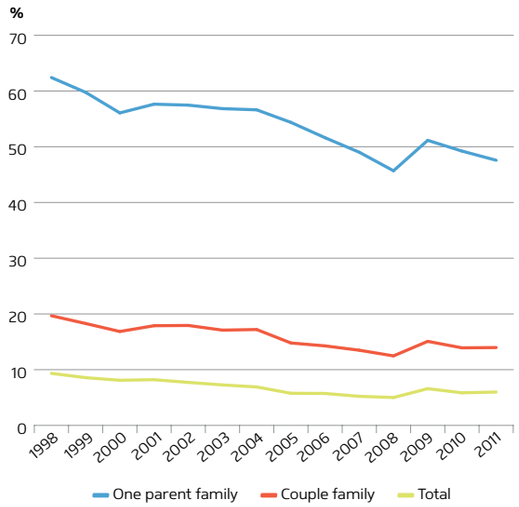
Younger children are more likely than older children to live in jobless families. In 2011, 17% of all Australian children aged 0–4 years were living in a jobless family, compared with 13% of children aged 5 to 9 years and 12% of children aged 10 to 14 years. Two-fifths (40%) of all children aged 0–14 years in single parent jobless families were under five years of age.

Unlike the other indicators in the Work domain, Australia is not faring well internationally when it comes to the proportion of children living in jobless families. OECD data for 2008 report Australia as having the fourth highest proportion of children aged under 15 years living in jobless families (15%) among OECD countries, behind the United Kingdom, New Zealand and Turkey, and well above the OECD average of 8.7%[58].

Research by Peter Whiteford in 2009 into joblessness noted that Australia's international ranking for jobless households with children was in stark contrast to our international ranking for individual joblessness—where we have one of the lowest rates among OECD countries. Whiteford's analysis compares employment rates and jobless households in OECD countries and concludes that despite high overall employment, Australia and the UK are among the worst for joblessness among families with children.[59]

### The percentage of children in one-parent jobless families has been declining since the GFC

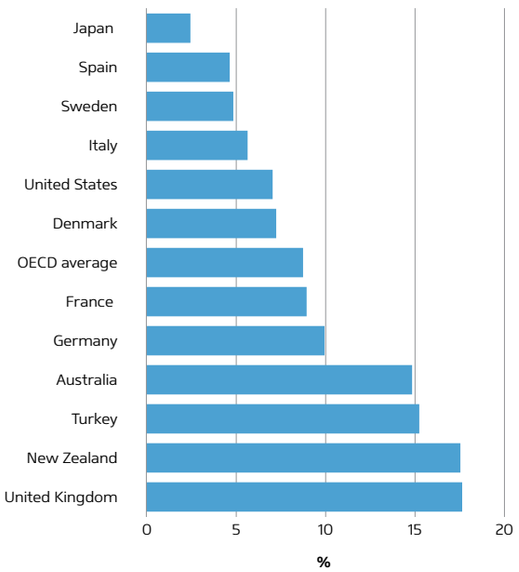
Proportion of children aged under 15 years living in jobless families by family composition, June 1998 to June 2011




Source: ABS, *Labour Force Status and Other Characteristics of Families*, cat. no. 6224.0.55.001, June 2011, electronic delivery

### Australia has the fourth highest rate of children in jobless families in the OECD

Proportion of children living in jobless households, by selected countries, 2008




Source: OECD, *OECD Family Database*, 2011, last viewed 21 February 2012 at www.oecd.org/social/family/database

### About this indicator

The definition of a jobless family used here is a family with at least one child under 15 years of age, where both of the parents or a lone parent are either unemployed or not in the labour force. People are considered not to be in the labour force if they do not want to work, are not able to work or are not actively seeking work. The estimate of jobless families may include a small number of families where another person in the family aged 15 years or over (such as an older sibling) is employed.

The jobless family figures reported by the ABS in its *Labour Force Status and Other Characteristics of Families* publication[60] do not align with those presented in this indicator, as they use a different definition. The ABS defines a jobless family as a family with at least one child under 15 years of age, where no-one aged 15 years and over in the family is employed. This results in a lower estimate of children in jobless families (530,000 children in June 2011) than the one presented in this indicator. The OECD data reported in this indicator is similar to this latter definition of jobless families.

# Long-term recipients of full-rate income support payments

## Key message:

➲ **At June 2011, 9% of the population aged 15–64 years had been on a full-rate income support payment for at least 12 months, unchanged from 2009**

In June 2011, almost 1.4 million people aged 15–64 years (9%) had been on full-rate, non-education related income support for at least 12 months. Of them, the vast majority (88%) had been on these payments for at least two years (almost 1.2 million people or 8% of the working age population).

There has been very little change in this indicator since the previous *How Australia is faring* report. The proportion of the working age population on income support for at least 12 months has remained at 9% since 2009. Likewise, the proportion of people on very long-term income support (two years or more) has stayed at 8% over the same period.

In 2011, nearly half (46%) of people on income support for at least 12 months received the Disability Support Pension, similar to the rate reported in 2009 (48%). A further 19% received Newstart Allowance and 14% received Parenting Payment (single). Around one in twelve (8%) received a carers payment. A range of other payments (such as Special Benefit) made up the remaining 8%.

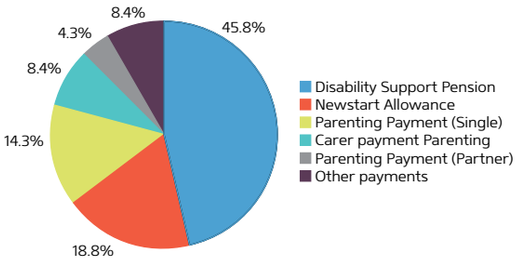
In 2011, women remained slightly more likely than men to be receiving income support for 12 months or more (10% compared with 7%). Overall, the proportion of people receiving income support for at least 12 months generally increased with age, ranging from 6% of those aged 15 to 24 years compared with 15% of those aged 55 to 64 years.

One-third (33%) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people had been on full-rate income support for at least 12 months in 2011, slightly higher than the rate in 2009 (30%). Relatively high proportions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were in receipt of Newstart Allowance and Parenting Payment (Single).

Close to half (48%) of all people on income support for 12 months or more had a disability. The vast majority of this group (95%) were receiving the Disability Support Pension.

### The Disability Support Pension is the most common type of payment received

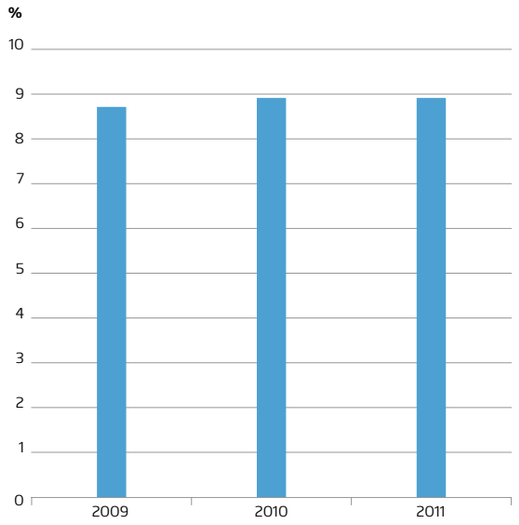
Proportion of people aged 15–64 years in receipt of a full-rate, non-education related income support for at least 12 months, by payment type, June 2011




Source: Centrelink administrative data

### The proportion of people on long-term income support has remained stable for the last three years

Proportion of people aged 15–64 years in receipt of a full-rate, non-education related income support for at least 12 months, 2009 to 2011




Source: Centrelink administrative data

### About this indicator

The data presented for this indicator have been extracted from Centrelink administrative databases and refer to people aged 15–64 years who have been on a full-rate, non-education related payment for at least 12 months, or for at least two years.

The Australian income support system provides a safety net for those who do not have the resources to support themselves. However, long-term reliance on income support often results in reduced contact with the workforce, can result in low income and loss of skills and networks which, in turn, may lead to social exclusion.

The long-term income support data presented here are collected by the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace relations (DEEWR). For further detail, see the DEEWR publication Labour Market and Related Payments—a monthly profile[61].

# Persons in persistent jobless families with children, where the family has been jobless for 12 months or more

## Key message:

- In 2010, 8% of people aged 15 to 74 years had been in a jobless family for 12 months or more
- Almost half of the people living in public housing were families with children that had been jobless for 12 months or more
- Over 2% of people in families with children had been jobless for the five years since 2006

Although there is a headline indicator that specifically discusses children in jobless families, it is also important to examine how many families with children remain jobless for an extended period. Using the *Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia* (HILDA) Survey, this indicator examines persons, aged between 15 and 74 years, in jobless families with children, where the family has been jobless for 12 months or more. HILDA is a longitudinal survey, it follows respondents over time and provides information about how long families and households remain jobless (the persistence of joblessness).

Data from the HILDA Survey shows that in 2010, 7.9% of all people aged 15 to 74 years had been in a jobless family for 12 months or more. Since 2002, this proportion declined, from 14% to the 2010 rate of 7.9%, however this change was not statistically significant.

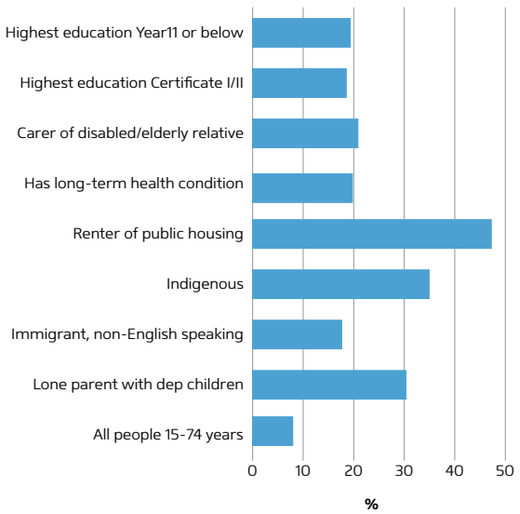
In 2006, around 1.4 million people (8.7%) in families with children had been jobless for 12 months or more. Five years later, almost 400,000 of these people (2.3% of Australians aged 15–74 years) remained jobless.

Almost half of all people in public housing were from families with children suffering persistent joblessness (47%). People from lone parent families with dependent children were also much more likely to suffer persistent joblessness (30% compared with 4.9% of people in couple families with dependent children).

Other families with children who are more likely to suffer persistent joblessness include Indigenous Australians (35%); people with long-term health conditions (18%); people with caring responsibilities for an elderly or disabled relative (21%) and people with lower levels of educational attainment (19% of people with a highest qualification of Certificate I or II and 19% of people with Year 11 or below).

**A high proportion of people in families with children that have been jobless for 12 months or more have long term health conditions or are carers of a disabled or elderly relative**

Jobless household rates for families with children that have been jobless for 12 months or more, 2010




Source: Melbourne Institute for Applied Economic and Social Research, *Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia* (HILDA) Survey, 2010, unpublished data

### About this indicator

Although short term joblessness is a concern, households that remain jobless for longer periods of time are a more serious concern because persistent joblessness is more likely to impact on a family's ability to maintain important resources and social networks[62]. Therefore, not only helping to reduce the number of jobless households is important, but it is also important to keep households and families out of joblessness.

In this indicator, the definition of a jobless family is a family where either a lone parent, or both parents in a couple parent family, are unemployed and/or not in the labour force (not actively looking for work). Persistence was defined as those families that remained jobless from one year of the survey to the next.

The definition of a jobless family used here is consistent with information presented for the indicator, **Children in jobless families**, which was drawn from ABS data. As the definition of a jobless family is based on the labour force status of the parents, it is possible that the estimate of jobless families include a small number of families where another person in the family aged 15 years or over (such as an older sibling) is employed. For further information about definitional issues concerning jobless families refer to the Glossary.

# People living in jobless households

## Key message:

➲ **Since 2001, there has been a small decline in the proportion of people living in jobless households**

In 2010, according to the *Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia* (HILDA) *Survey*[63], 6.5%, or almost 1 million people aged 15 to 64 years lived in households in which no person was employed[64]. Females were more likely than males to be living in a jobless household, representing 7.4% and 5.5% of females and males aged 15–64 years respectively.

Over the ten years, 2001 to 2010, 4.4% of people had lived in jobless households for five years or more. During this ten year period, the proportion of people living in a jobless household has dropped by three percentage points; from 9.5% of people aged 15 to 64 years in 2001 to 6.5% in 2010.

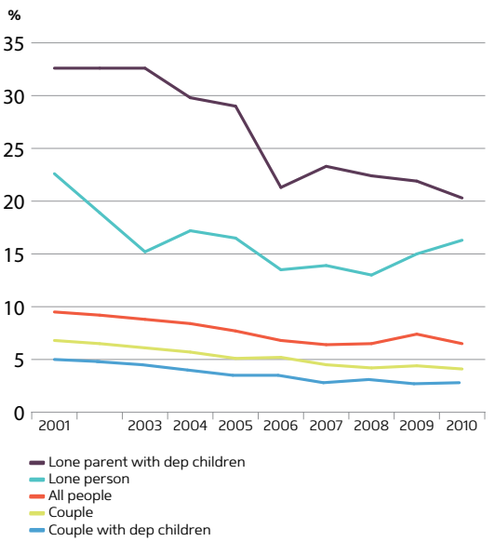
In 2010, 20% of people aged 15–64 years living in lone-parent households with dependent children were in jobless households. Lone person households also had a high proportion of jobless people (16%), whereas a relatively low proportion of people who lived in couple households with dependent children were jobless (2.8%).

People living in lower socio-economic areas were more likely to be living in a jobless household; 18% of people living in the lowest decile of the SEIFA index of disadvantage were in jobless households, 13% in decile two were in jobless households, dropping to 3% of people in the least disadvantaged decile.

Other people who were more likely to live in a jobless household include people who lived in public housing (30%), Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (21%) and people with long-term health conditions (16%).

**Over the ten years to 2010, the proportion of people living in jobless households has dropped slightly**

Proportion of people in jobless households, 2001–2010(a)




(a) Data for 2002 was unavailable.

Source: Melbourne Institute for Applied Economic and Social Research, *Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia* (HILDA) Survey, 2001–2010, unpublished data

### About this indicator

The definition of a jobless household used here is a household where there are no people employed. Furthermore, the definition was further narrowed to only include those people living in jobless households under the age of 65 years where at least one member of the household had not yet retired.

These definitions of jobless households are different to the ABS definition of jobless families, which refer to the employment status of the parent or guardians only. For further information about the differences refer to the Glossary.

# Long-term unemployment rate

## Key message:

- The long-term unemployment rate remained stable between September 2009 and September 2011
- Australia has a relatively low long-term unemployment rate when compared with other countries

In September 2011, 114,000 people aged 15 years and over (around 0.9% of the labour force) had been unemployed for one year or more (long-term unemployed). This rate had remained relatively stable since September 2009 (0.9%)[65].

According to an ABS *Australian Social Trends* article[66], the annual average long-term unemployment rate for 2010–11 was 1.0%. This represented around one-fifth (19%) of all unemployed people. Nearly half (45%) of people who were in long-term unemployment in 2010–11 had been unemployed for two years or more.

Across the states and territories in 2010–11, New South Wales had the highest long-term unemployment rate (1.1%), while the Northern Territory and the Australian Capital Territory had the lowest (both 0.4%). At the regional level, some of the highest rates of long-term unemployment—over double the national average—were in the Statistical Regions of Far North Queensland, Fairfield-Liverpool (NSW) and Northern Adelaide (SA).

The long-term unemployment rate was highest for people aged 15–24 years (1.5%, compared with around 0.8% for most other age groups). Young people were also disproportionately affected by the economic downturn, with the proportion of young Australians unemployed for a year or longer nearly doubling since 2008[67].

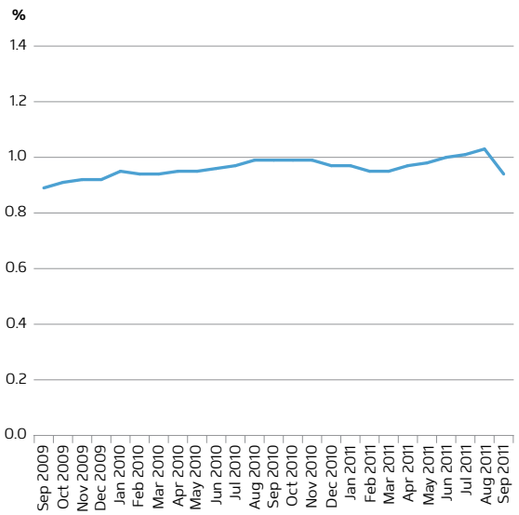
According to the ABS 2007–08 *National Health Survey* and 2009 *Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers*, people who were in long-term unemployment were four times as likely as employed people to be in fair or poor health and more than twice as likely to have a disability[68].

Internationally, Australia's long-term unemployment rate in 2010 (1.0%) was much lower than the relative rates in the United States (2.8%), the United Kingdom (2.5%) and other countries in the European Union, such as Greece (5.6%) and France (3.7%)[69]. However, Australia's rate was higher than New Zealand's rate of long-term unemployment (0.5%).

Between 2008 and 2010, the long-term unemployment rate increased in all of these countries as the effects of the global economic downtown took hold. The most dramatic rise was in the United States, where the rate more than quadrupled from 0.6% in 2008 to 2.8% in 2010[70].

### The long-term unemployment rate has remained relatively stable over the past two years

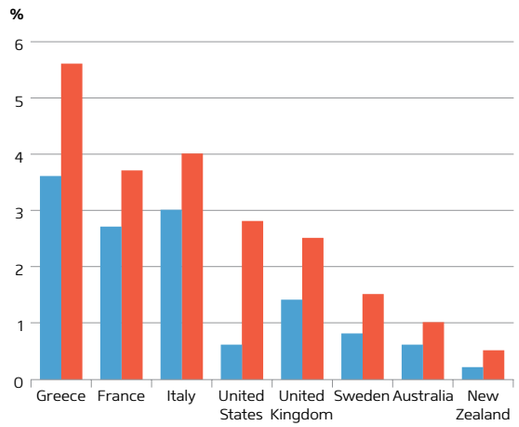
Long-term unemployment rate, September 2009 to September 2011




Source: ABS, *Labour Force, Australia*, cat. no. 6291.0.55.001, September 2011, detailed electronic delivery

### Australia has a relatively low long-term unemployment rate when compared with other OECD countries

Long-term unemployed people as a proportion of the labour force, annual average for selected countries, 2008 and 2010




Source: ABS, *Australian Social Trends* September 2011, cat. no. 4102.0, 2011

### About this indicator

People who are unemployed for long periods of time can experience prolonged economic hardship, lose connections with their community and also have more difficulties finding employment because of loss of relevant skills over the time they have not worked.

The long-term unemployment rate is the number of people who have been continuously unemployed for a period of 12 months or more, as a percentage of the labour force.

# Proportion of 15 to 24 year olds that are fully engaged in education and/or work

## Key message:

- In 2011, the proportion of young people who were fully engaged in education and/or work was unchanged from 2001
- The proportion of Australian young people in education is below the OECD average

The 2011 ABS *Survey of Education and Work* found that 81% of people aged 15 to 24 years were fully engaged in education or training and/or work[71].

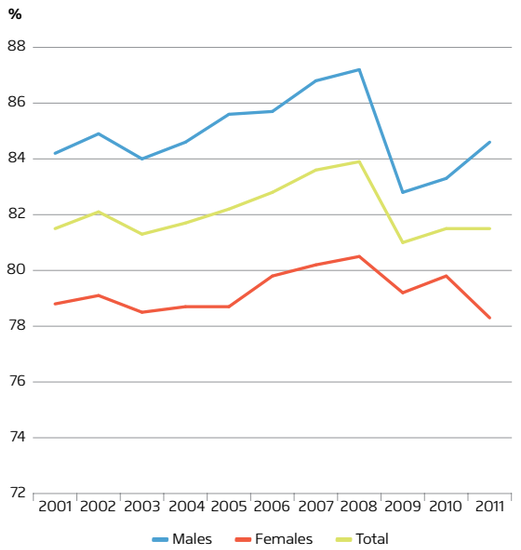
Over the last decade, the proportion of young people who were fully engaged rose marginally to 84% in 2008, and then declined during the economic downturn of 2009, to 81%. The 2011 proportion of young people fully engaged (81%) is not significantly different to the rate in 2001 (82%)[72].

A detailed examination of participation in education and the labour market among people aged 15–24 years by the ABS found that full engagement was highest amongst the younger people in this cohort, where the majority were still attending school. Analysis of engagement rates by single year of age showed the lowest rates of engagement at 19 years (74%) and again at 24 years (74%)[73].

The ABS analysis also looked at the characteristics of those young people aged 15–24 years not fully engaged, finding that 47% of the group did not complete Year 12 and were not currently undertaking a non-school qualification. Mothers also made up a large part of the group, representing 15% of the non-fully engaged group.

**Engagement in education and/or work increased from 2001 to 2008, but has dropped since the Global Financial Crisis**

Proportion of 15–24 year olds fully engaged in education and/or work by sex, 2001 to 2011




Source: ABS, *Survey of Education and Work*, cat. no. 6227.0, 2010; and ABS, *Survey of Education and Work*, Australia—Additional Data Cubes, cat. no. 6227.0.55.003, May 2011

### About this indicator

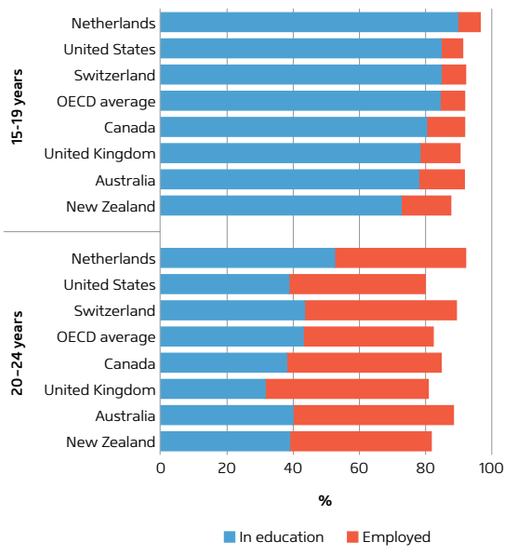
Young people who spend extended periods of time outside the workforce and full-time education may miss out on important employment experiences and the development of important skills needed for work. This may lead to a decreased chance of finding employment in the future. It also may mean that these young people are less likely to be gaining opportunities to meet new people and form social networks at their school or work. Therefore, increasing the proportion of people aged 15 to 24 years who are in education or work, is likely to assist in increasing young peoples' resources and attachment to their community leading to improved social inclusion.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people aged 15–24 years were also more likely not to be fully engaged, however their rate of engagement in work and/or study improved between 2002 and 2008, rising from 47% fully engaged to 54% in 2008[74].

The OECD's *Education at a Glance 2011* also examined the transitions from school to work using data from 2009. The report provides information on the proportions of 15–19 and 20–24 year old people in employment and/or in education[75]. Australia was above the OECD average for 20–24 year olds engaged in education and or work; 88% and 82% respectively. Among 15–19 year olds, Australia was equal to the OECD average of 92%. Notably, for both age groups Australia was below the OECD average for the proportion of people in education, 78% of 15–19 year olds and 40% of 20–24 year old Australians were in education, compared with OECD averages of 84% and 43% respectively[76].

**Australian rates of engagement in education or work are similar to other OECD countries**

Proportion of young people fully engaged in education or work by age group, Australia and selected OECD countries, 2009




Source: OECD, *Education at a Glance 2011: OECD indicators*, 2011

People who were regarded as 'fully engaged' in the analysis of the *Survey of Education and Work* were either in:

- full-time education and training; or
- full-time work; or
- part-time education and training, and part-time work.

The Council of Australian Governments (COAG), as part of the National Education Agreement, has used a similar indicator to assist in measuring progress towards their aim of increasing the number of young people making a successful transition from school to work and further study[77]. Similarly, the National Partnership Agreement on Youth Attainment and Transitions includes a number of measures to support engagement in education and training[78].

# Proportion of people aged 20 to 24 years attaining Year 12 or Certificate II or above

➲ **The proportion of young people who have attained a Year 12 or Certificate II or above qualification has risen from 79% in 2001 to 84% in 2011**

In 2011, the ABS *Survey of Education and Work* found that around 1.4 million young adults had attained Year 12 or a Certificate II qualification or above. Over the decade to 2011, the proportion has risen from 79% in 2001 to 84% in 2011. Over the same period, those attaining Year 12 (not Certificate II) rose from 71% to 75%.

Young women are consistently more likely than young men to have attained Year 12 or Certificate II or above. In 2011, 87% of females aged 20 to 24 had completed Year 12 or equivalent or obtained a Certificate II or above, compared with 82% of young males of the same age.

People who attained Year 12 or Certificate II or above were more likely to be employed than those without (76% compared with 62%).

A higher proportion of people aged 20 to 24 years who were born in non-English speaking countries had completed Year 12 or Certificate II (94%) than people born in other English speaking countries (86%) and people born in Australia (82%).

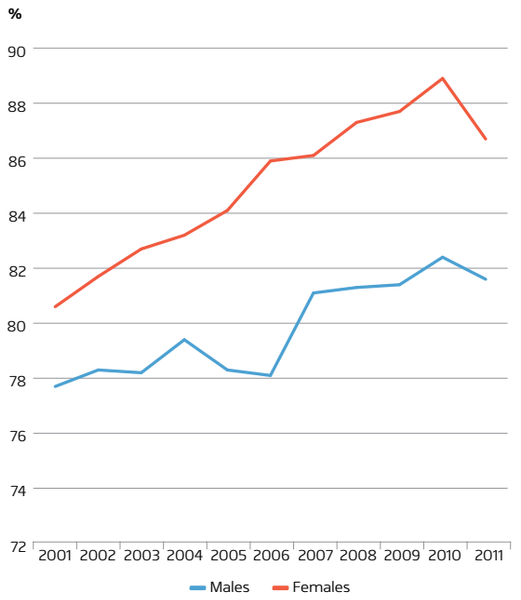
Attainment of Year 12 or Certificate II or above is linked to socio-economic status; 94% of 20 to 24 year olds from areas of low socio-economic disadvantage had attained Year 12 or Certificate II or above, compared to 74% in areas of high socio-economic disadvantage. Higher levels of Year 12 or Certificate II or above attainment are also observed in major cities (87%), compared to regional areas (75%) and remote areas of Australia (67%)[79].

The 2008 *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey* found that a much lower proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 20–24 years had completed Year 12 or Certificate II or above (45%). The equivalent proportion of non-Indigenous Australians of the same age in 2008 was 85%[80].

Research by the ABS in 2010 explored trends in Year 12 attainment, that is, completion of the Senior Secondary Certificate of Education which marks the end of Year 12 and excluding other Certificate attainment. It found similar patterns in attainment of Year 12 by 20–24 year olds to those described above: females had higher levels of attainment than males (83% and 73%,

**Over the last decade, females have had a consistently higher attainment of Year 12 or Certificate II than males**

Proportion of people aged 20 to 24 years who have completed Year 12 (or equivalent), by sex, 2001 to 2011




Source: ABS, *Survey of Education and Work*, Australia—Additional Data Cubes, May 2011, cat. no. 6227.0.55.003, 2011

**About this indicator**

Participating in schooling and completing Year 12 or an equivalent qualification assists people to find employment, participate in community activities and improve their wellbeing. Education also provides a pathway out of disadvantage, particularly for people in low socio-economic groups.

The importance of a Year 12 or Certificate II or above education in relation to future outcomes has been recognised by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG), with the setting of a 90% attainment target by 2015. The COAG attainment target has since been amended to Year 12 or Certificate III by 2020, with Certificate III recognised as the international standard of equivalence to upper secondary education and considered the minimum measure of attainment of a depth and breadth of skills required for a 21st century labour market. Halving the gap for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander 20 to 24 year olds in Year 12 or equivalent attainment by 2020 is also a COAG target.

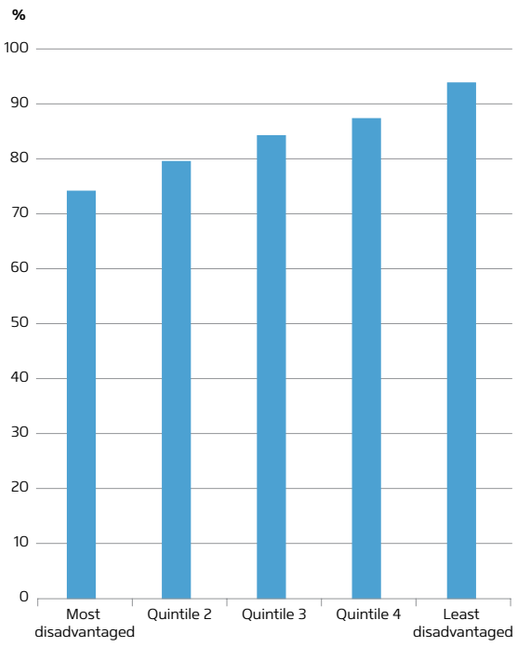
respectively), major cities had higher levels of attainment (81%, compared with 67% in inner or outer regional areas and 64% in very remote areas), and those with poor self-assessed health had lower attainment rates (50%, compared with 79% of people who rate their health as very good or excellent). Between 2002 and 2008, there was a small, but not statistically significant, increase in the proportion of Indigenous people aged 20–24 years with Year 12 (from 28% to 31%)[81].

Data from the ABS 2009 *Survey of Education and Training* indicate that the presence of a disability or long-term health condition affects the attainment of Year 12. Around one-fifth (22%) of 20–24 year olds had a disability or were restricted by a long-term health condition. Of these, 74% had attained Year 12 or a Certificate II or above, compared with 87% of those without these conditions. A quarter (25%) of those young people with a disability or long-term health condition were categorised as having an education restriction (for example, needing time off from regular classes or requiring special tuition). Of this group, 61% had attained Year 12 or Certificate II or above[82 83].

The OECD's *Education at a Glance 2011* compares the proportion of the population aged 25 to 34 years who have attained at least an upper secondary education in 2009[84]. Of those countries reported, attainment varied between 98% in Korea and 42% in Turkey. With 83% of Australians of this age having attained at least an upper secondary education, Australia was just above the OECD average of 81%. Australia's rate was similar to that for the United Kingdom (82%) and New Zealand (79%), but lower than that in the United States (88%) and Canada (92%)[85].

**Substantially fewer young people from areas of high socio-economic disadvantage complete Year 12 or attain a Certificate II or above compared with those from areas of least socio-economic disadvantage**

Proportion of people aged 20 to 24 years who have completed Year 12 or Certificate II or above, by SEIFA Index of relative disadvantage quintiles (a), 2011




(a) The Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA). See Glossary for more information on SEIFA

Source: ABS, *Survey of Education and Work*, 2011, unpublished

# Proportion of people who had contact with family or friends in the past week

## Key message:

- **Nearly all (97%) Australians had contact with friends and family outside their household at least once a week in 2010, similar to the rate reported in 2006 (96%)**
- **There have been significant improvements in the level of social contact among people who are unemployed and those not proficient in English**

In 2010, the ABS *General Social Survey* showed that almost all Australians aged 18 years and over (97%) had some form of contact with family or friends who did not live with them at least once a week. This was similar to the levels reported in both 2002 and 2006.

Between 2006 and 2010, mobile phone and SMS communication (84%) had overtaken landlines (83%) as the most common way for people to contact family and friends. There was also a sharp increase in the proportion of people who used email and chat rooms as a method of contact, up from 47% in 2006 to 60% in 2010.

In 2010, women (98%) remained more likely than men (95%) to have weekly contact with friends or family. Rates decreased slightly with age, although the differences across broad age groups were not great, ranging from 99% of those aged 18 to 24 years, to 92% of those aged 85 years and over.

Weekly contact with friends also differed slightly with self-assessed health status. Around 98% of those in excellent or very good health had contact with friends and family at least once a week, compared with 94% of those in fair or poor health.

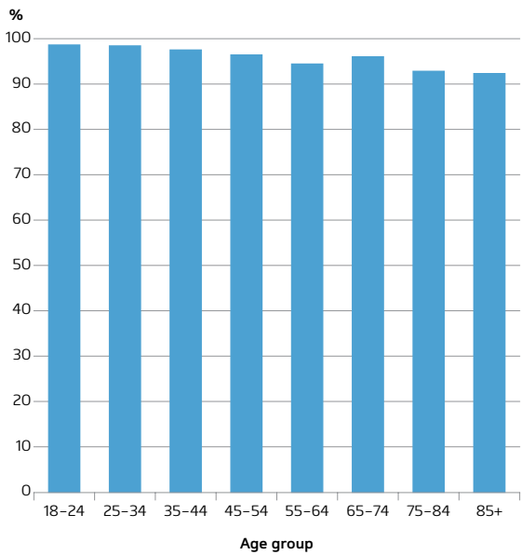
Between 2006 and 2010, social contact increased among people born overseas and not proficient in spoken English, up from 88% to 93%. However, rates remained lower than for people who were born in main English speaking countries (96%) or in Australia (97%).

There was also an improvement in the proportion of unemployed people who had weekly contact with family and friends, increasing from 94% in 2006 to 98% in 2010, to a level that was equivalent with employed people (also 98%).

Among jobless families, the level of contact with family and friends did not vary between one-parent families with dependent children and couple families with dependent children (both 97%). Interestingly, one-parent jobless families were more likely than one-parent working families to have been in contact with family or friends at least once a week (97% compared 94%).

### Young people aged 18 to 24 years had the highest rate of social contact

Proportion of people who had contact with family and friends outside the home at least once a week, by age, 2010




Source: ABS, *General Social Survey*, 2010, unpublished data

### About this indicator

Having regular contact with family or friends has many benefits. Communicating with family or friends can assist people to feel connected, cared for and part of a strong family or social network. Regular communication with friends and family also means that when people are faced with challenges it is more likely that they will have someone to turn to for support or to talk to.

The data discussed here are from the ABS 2006 and 2010 *General Social Surveys*. The surveys asked respondents if they had contact with family or friends who were not living with them in the last three months. The data presented in this indicator combine those who had contact with family or friends every day or at least once a week. Contact includes face-to-face contact and contact by telephone, email and mail.

# Proportion of people involved in a community group in the last 12 months

## Key message:

- Almost three-quarters (71%) of Australian adults were involved in at least one community group in 2010, similar to the rate reported in 2006 (72%)
- Participation was relatively low among people who were unemployed, living in low income households or living in public housing

In 2010, 63% of Australians had actively participated in one or more social groups during the last 12 months, 35% in community support groups and 19% in civic or political groups. Overall, 71% of the population were involved in at least one of these groups (either social, community or political), very similar to the rate reported in 2006 (72%).

Participation in the different types of groups varied somewhat by age in 2010. People aged 35 to 64 years were the most likely to participate in community support groups, while participation in social groups remained fairly steady up until the age of 75. Participation in civic and political groups generally increased with age, peaking at 24% among those aged 55 to 64 years. For all types of groups, participation declined sharply after the age of 75.

In 2010, people in families with dependent children (79% in couple families and 74% in single parent families) were more likely to participate in at least one community group than those without children.

Participation in community groups increased with household income, ranging from 60% of those in the lowest income households to 80% of those in the highest income households. This pattern has remained unchanged since 2006.

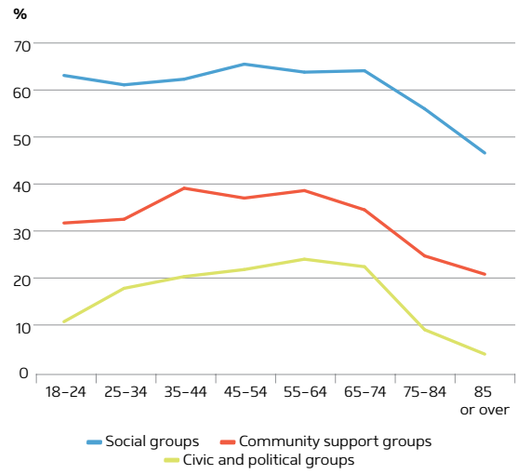
Three-quarters (75%) of employed people had participated in at least one community group in 2010 compared with 61% of unemployed people and 63% of those not in the labour force. While this pattern was consistent with that found in 2006, rates of participation in community groups among the unemployed have actually decreased, down from 68% in 2006 to 61% in 2010.

Similarly, people living in jobless families had a lower participation rate than those living in families where at least one adult was working (63% compared with 73%). People renting from public housing authorities also had much lower levels of participation (57%) than those who owned (68%) or were purchasing (77%) their own home.

Nearly two-thirds (60%) of those living in the most disadvantaged regions had participated in at least one community group, compared with 80% of those in the least disadvantaged regions. Again, this pattern remained unchanged since 2006.

### Participation in community groups declines after the age of 75

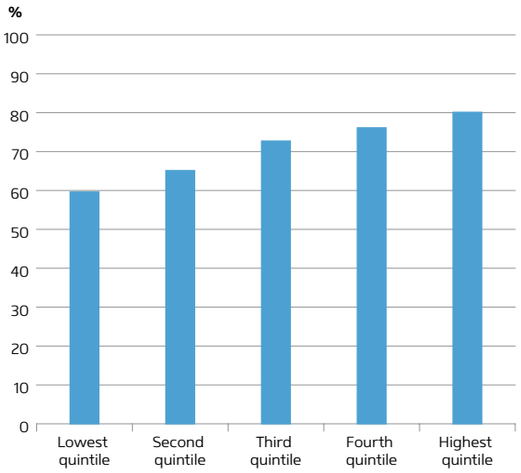
Proportion of people aged 18 years and over who participated in a community group in the previous 12 months, by age and type of group, 2010




Source: ABS, *General Social Survey*, cat. no. 4159.0, 2010

### Participation in community groups increases with household income

Proportion of people aged 18 years and over who participated in at least one community group in the previous 12 months, by household income quintile, 2010




Source: ABS, *General Social Survey*, 2010, unpublished data

### About this indicator

Being involved in a community group provides networks, friendships and the feeling of being part of the community. It can also provide new skills.

The data presented in this indicator are from the 2006 and 2010 ABS *General Social Surveys*. Social groups include sporting, arts, religious, craft or hobby, adult education, recreation or special interest groups, ethnic/multicultural clubs and social clubs providing restaurants and bars. Community support groups encompass service clubs, welfare/community organisation, groups related to education, parents, health promotion and support, emergency services and international aid and development. Civic and political groups include trade unions, professional associations, political parties, environmental or animal welfare groups, human and civil rights groups, bodies corporate or tenants' associations and consumer organisations. Here we have used the term 'community group' to refer to any one of these social groups, community support groups or civic and political groups.

# Proportion of people who got together socially with friends or relatives not living with them, in the past three months

## Key message:

- **In 2010, 96% of the Australian population aged 18 years and over had met socially with friends/relatives in the previous three months, similar to the rate in 2006 (95%)**
- **People in poor health, who were not proficient in English or who were living in government housing were the least likely to have met socially with friends/relatives outside the house**

In 2010, the ABS *General Social Survey* found that the vast majority (96%) of Australians aged 18 years and over had met socially with friends or relatives (not living with them) in the previous three months. This represented no significant change from 2006 (95%).

Younger people remained more likely than older people to get together with friends or relatives in 2010. Nearly all people aged 18 to 44 years (97%) had met socially with friends in the previous three months compared with 91% of those aged 65 years and over and 87% of those aged 85 years and over.

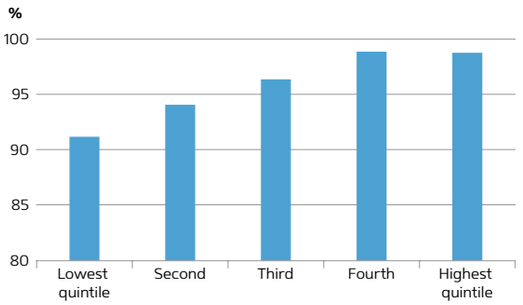
The likelihood of getting together with friends increased with household income in 2010, ranging from 91% among those in the lowest income households to 99% in the highest income households. Similarly, people living in jobless families (89%) were less likely than those living in families with at least one employed person (98%) to have met socially with friends or relatives.

Social participation also decreased as people's self-assessed health became worse. Nine in ten people in fair or poor health (90%) had got together socially with friends or relatives, compared with 97% of those in excellent or very good health. However, there had been some improvement from 2006, with the proportion of people in fair or poor health who met socially with friends or relatives increasing from 84% to 90%.

Other groups with relatively low rates of social contact in 2010 included those who were born overseas and were not proficient in English (87%) and those who were living in government housing (86%).

### People in low income households were less likely to have met socially with friends

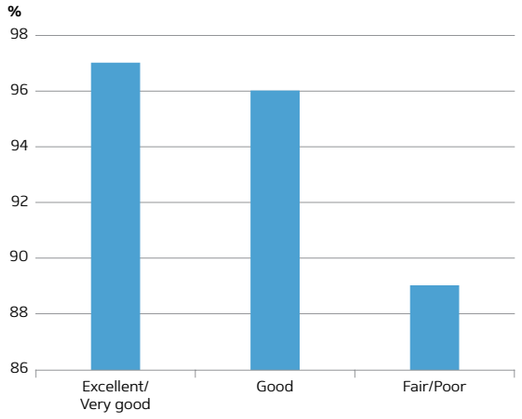
Proportion of people who met socially with friends or relatives outside the household in the previous three months, by household income, 2010




Source: ABS *General Social Survey*, 2010, unpublished data

### Social contact decreases as self-assessed health gets worse

Proportion of people who met socially with friends in the previous three months, by self-assessed health, 2010




Source: ABS *General Social Survey*, 2010, unpublished data

### About this indicator

Having regular contact with family and friends who live outside the household provides many benefits. Visiting or meeting friends and family can help people feel connected, cared for, and part of their community.

The data presented in this indicator are from the ABS 2010 *General Social Survey*. The survey asked respondents if in the three months prior they had:

- Visited or been visited by friends;
- Been out with or met a group of friends—outdoor activities;
- Been out with or met a group of friends—indoor activities.

# Proportion of people who undertook voluntary work in the past 12 months

## Key message:

- There was no significant change in rates of volunteering between 2006 and 2010
- Women, baby boomers, people with children and part-time workers were the most likely to volunteer in 2010

In 2010, the ABS *General Social Survey* found that 6.1 million people aged 18 years and over (36%) had undertaken some form of voluntary work in the previous 12 months, similar to the rate reported in 2006 (34%)[86].

Women remained more likely than men to volunteer in 2010 (38% compared with 34%). Overall, rates of volunteering were highest among the `baby boomer' generation of people aged 45 to 64 years (43%). Volunteering within this group increased significantly between 2006 and 2010, particularly for those aged 55 to 64 years, where rates increased from 32% to 42%.

In 2010, people in families with dependent children were more likely to volunteer than those without children. Volunteering rates were also noticeably lower in the major capital cities (34%) than elsewhere (42% in inner regional and 41% in other areas).

Employed people, especially those who worked part-time (44%), were more likely to volunteer than those who were unemployed (20%) or not in the labour force (31%). As with other social participation indicators, the likelihood of volunteering increased with household income, with 43% of those in the highest quintile volunteering in 2010 compared with 28% in the lowest quintile.

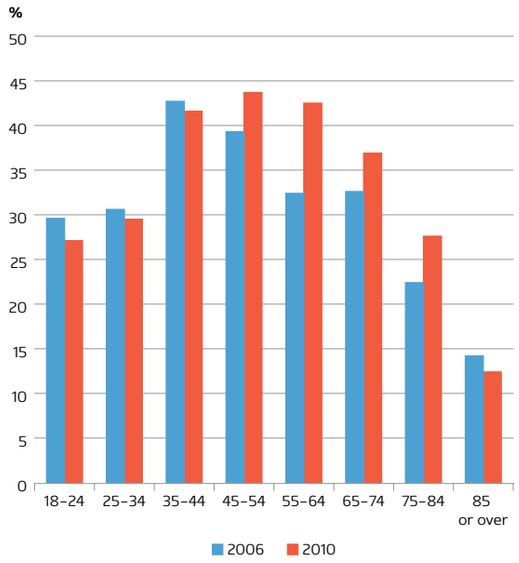
The types of groups or organisations that people did voluntary work for varied according to age. For example, young people tended to volunteer for groups related to sport and recreation, while volunteering for parenting groups was relatively high among those aged 25 to 44 years. Volunteering for a welfare, religious or community-related group was most common among older Australians.

Whether a person does voluntary work might be influenced by whether their parents did voluntary work. In 2010, 52% of adults reported that their parents had done voluntary work. The volunteering rate among those whose parents had volunteered was 46% compared with 26% for those whose parents had not volunteered.

Volunteering rates in Australia are comparable with those in other OECD countries, although reliable comparisons are difficult because definitions and collection methods differ. The 2010 *World Giving Index* Survey found that on average 20% of people surveyed had volunteered for an organisation in the month before the survey. In Australia, the reported rate was 38%, compared to 39% in the United States, 35% in Canada and 29% in the United Kingdom[87].

### People aged 45–64 years were the most likely to volunteer in 2010

Proportion of adults who volunteer, by age, 2006 and 2010




Source: ABS, *General Social Survey*, cat. no. 4159.0, 2010

### About this indicator

Volunteering provides an indication of how actively involved people are within the community. A high level of volunteering is likely to reflect a greater sense of community connectedness and social inclusion.

The ABS *General Social Survey* collects information on whether a person had undertaken voluntary work in the previous 12 months. The data presented here exclude people who were compelled to do voluntary work because of employment or study commitments, such as work for the dole. If these people were included, the rates of volunteering would increase slightly (from 34% to 35% in 2006 and from 36% to 38% in 2010).

# Proportion of people who participated in a community event or activity in the past six months

## Key message:

- In 2010, nearly two-thirds (65%) of the Australian population aged 18 years and over had attended a community event
- There has been no significant change for this indicator between 2006 and 2010

In 2010, the ABS *General Social Survey* found that 65% of people aged 18 years and over had attended a community event, such as a fete, show or festival, in the previous six months. This was very similar to the rate reported in 2006 (64%).

People over the age of 65 years continued to have lower levels of attendance in 2010 (52%), particularly when compared with those aged 35 to 44 years (73%). Overall, women were slightly more likely than men to have taken part in a community event or activity (67% compared with 63%).

Couple families with dependent children (76%) had higher rates of attendance at community events than single parent families with dependent children (64%), couple only families (63%) or lone-person households (48%). Participation also remained much lower among those living in jobless families compared with families with at least one employed person (52% compared with 77%).

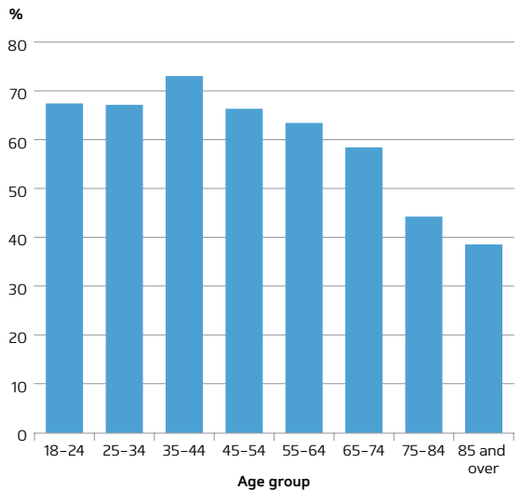
People living in areas of high socio-economic disadvantage were less likely than those living in areas of low socio-economic disadvantage to have participated in a community event (54% compared with 69%).

Compared with the general population, groups with relatively low attendance at community events included those living in government housing (42%) or in low income households (52%), as well as people who were in fair or poor health (48%) or who were born overseas and are not proficient in English (43%).

Generally, levels of attendance among these groups have remained unchanged since 2006. However, there has been a small improvement for people with fair or poor health, with the proportion participating in community activities increasing from 40% in 2006 to 48% in 2010.

### People aged 18 to 34 years were the most likely to participate in community events

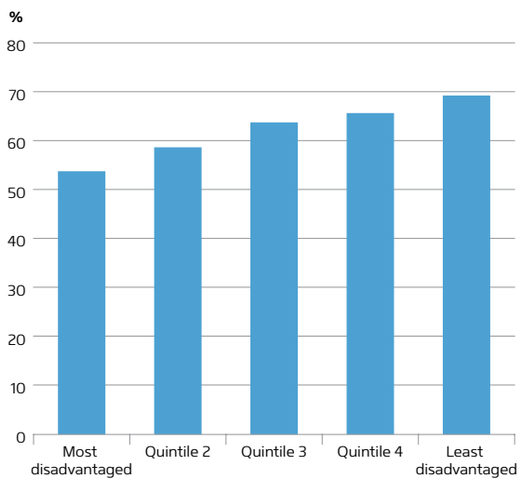
Proportion of people who attended a community event, by age, 2010




Source: ABS, *General Social Survey*, 2010, unpublished data

### People living in areas of high socio-economic disadvantage were the least likely to attend community events

Proportion of people who attended a community event, by SEIFA Index of Disadvantage, 2010




Source: ABS, *General Social Survey*, 2010, unpublished data

### About this indicator

Attendance at community events is a good indication of how welcome people feel in their community as well as how many people are involved in, or connected to, community groups. Attendance at events like fetes, shows or festivals can bring people together and foster social inclusion.

The data discussed in this indicator are from the ABS 2006 and 2010 *General Social Surveys*. The surveys asked respondents if they had 'attended any events that bring people together such as fetes, shows, festivals or other community events', in the six months prior to the survey. Further data development will be needed to capture the proportion of people who attended a community event over a 12 month period.

# Participation in civic engagement activities

## Key message:

➲ In 2010, 43% of Australians aged 18 years and over had participated in civic engagement activities

For the first time, the ABS 2010 *General Social Survey* (GSS) collected information on Australians' participation in civic engagement activities (such as signing a petition, contacting a Member of Parliament or taking part in a protest or rally).

The survey found that 43% of people aged 18 years and over had taken part in these activities in the previous year. Women were slightly more likely than men to participate (45% and 41% respectively) and rates were highest among people aged 45 to 54 years (50%).

In 2010, civic activity was more common among those living in regional areas (52%) than those living in major cities (39%). Across the states and territories, rates were highest in the Northern Territory (in mainly urban areas) (52%) and lowest in New South Wales (39%).

Socio-economic characteristics can influence whether or not an individual takes part in civic engagement activities. In 2010, rates of engagement were generally lower among people who were unemployed (36%), who had left school at Year 9 or below (27%) or who were living in low income households (32%) or in jobless families (36%).

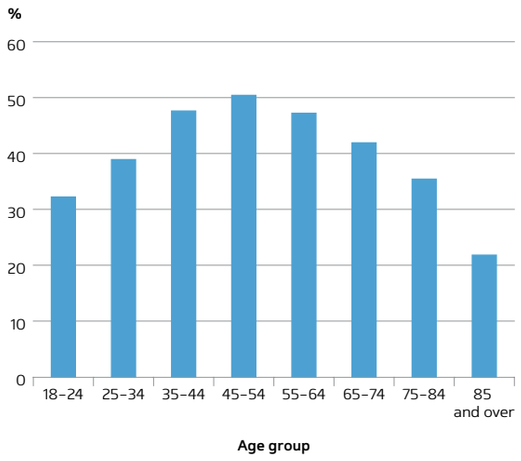
The GSS also showed that people who were born overseas in a non-English speaking country (23%) had much lower rates of civic participation than those who were born in Australia (47%) or in other main English speaking countries (53%). Rates were particularly low for those who were not proficient in English (8%).

Internationally, the level of civic engagement in Australia is on par with that of European countries. The OECD reports that, on average, 40% of Europeans had participated in political activities in 2008 (as measured by the 2008 *European Social Survey*). Although this was similar to the rate reported by Australians in the 2010 GSS (43%), differences in definitions and time periods mean that results are only broadly comparable[88].

The *European Social Survey* also shows that there is a very high level of civic activity for Scandinavian countries, particularly Sweden, where 71% of the population had taken part in political activities in 2008. Rates were also relatively high for France (56%) and Great Britain (53%)[89].

### People aged 45 to 64 years are the most likely to take part in civic engagement activities

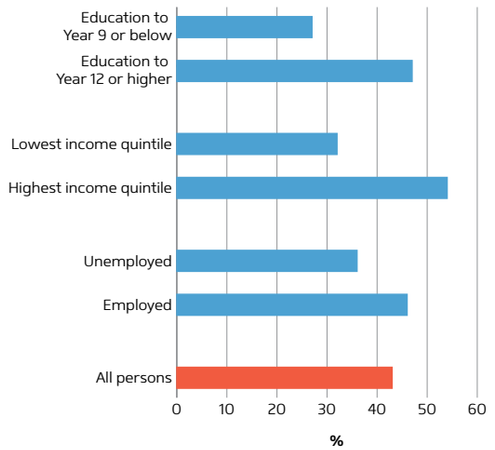
Proportion of population who participated in civic engagement activities in the last 12 months, by age, 2010




Source: ABS, *General Social Survey*, 2010, unpublished data

### Participation in civic engagement activities varies by socio-economic characteristics

Proportion of population who participated in civic engagement activities in the last 12 months, by selected socio-economic characteristics , 2010




Source: ABS, *General Social Survey*, 2010, unpublished data

### About this indicator

Civic or community engagement is about involving the community in the decision making process and is critical to the successful development of acceptable polices and decisions in government, the private sector and the community.

In 2010, The ABS *General Social Survey* collected information for the first time on level of participation in civic activities for people aged 18 years and over. For more information, see the publication *General Social Survey*: User Guide, Australia, 2010, cat. no. 4159.0.55.002.

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# Appendices

# Appendix A—Social Inclusion Strategic Change Indicators Reporting

When developing the Social Inclusion Measurement and Reporting Strategy, the Commonwealth Government also developed, in close consultation with the Australian Social Inclusion Board (the Board), a range of Strategic Change Indicators to monitor progress in areas of government policy and service delivery likely to influence the six social inclusion priority areas outlined in the Government's statement on social inclusion *A Stronger, Fairer Australia*:

- targeting jobless families with children to increase work opportunities, improve parenting and build capacity;
- improving the life chances of children at greatest risk of long-term disadvantage;
- reducing the incidence of homelessness;
- improving outcomes for people living with disability or mental illness and their carers;
- closing the gap for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians; and
- breaking the cycle of entrenched and multiple disadvantage in particular neighbourhoods.

Strategic Change Indicators were reported on by the following departments in their 2010-11 annual reports:

- Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR);
- Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA);
- Department of Human Services (DHS);
- Department of Health and Ageing (DoHA); and
- Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy (DBCDE).

The diagram on the following page shows the Strategic Change Indicators selected and reported against by Commonwealth Government departments in their 2010-11 annual reports. In the diagram, these have been mapped against the Framework of Indicators for Social Inclusion.

The reporting by departments provides information about the number of people accessing services and, in some cases, the number of people assisted by such services. It also provides statistics as to the numbers of people facing particular disadvantages.

For this first report, some indicators were not reported on as departments indicated that data was unavailable, incomplete or could not be reported for other reasons. In addition, as this was the first collection period, it is not possible to make comparisons over time. In future reports, the Board hopes further information will be made available to give a fuller overview on these Strategic Change Indicators, and that further work is undertaken to ensure the information is made available in time for inclusion in departmental annual reports. We also believe there are a number of other departments, such as the Commonwealth Treasury and the Department of Finance and Deregulation, which should consider reporting against the Strategic Change Indicators.

# Framework of Indicators for Social Inclusion

**ASPIRATIONS**

**An inclusive Australia is one where all Australians have the capabilities, opportunities, responsibilities and resources to learn, work, engage and have a say**

**HEADLINE & SUPPLEMENTARY INDICATORS(a)**

12 DOMAINS

27 HEADLINE INDICATORS

22 SUPPLEMENTARY INDICATORS

## Participation

**Work**
- Employment rate
- Children in jobless families
- Long-term income support recipients
- Persistent jobless families with children
- Jobless households
- Long-term unemployment

**Learn**
- Young people not fully engaged in education or work
- Year 12 equivalent attainment

**Engage**
- Contacted family/ friends
- Participation in community groups
- Got together socially with family/friends
- Voluntary work
- Participation in community events

**Have a voice**
- Participation in civic engagement activities

## Resources

**Material/ economic resources**
- Low economic resources and financial stress/material deprivation
- Persistent low economic resources
- Low economic resources
- Financial stress
- Real change in income
- Relative income inequality

**Health and disability**
- Employment rate of people with long-term health conditions
- Employment rate of people with mental illness
- Self-assessed health
- Life expectancy
- Subjective quality of life

**Education and skills**
- Literacy and numeracy
- Adult literacy/ numeracy
- Early child development
- Poor spoken English
- Non-school qualifications

**Social resources**
- Support from family/friends in time of crisis
- Autonomy—having a voice in the community
- Access to internet
- Autonomy—having a voice in family

**Community and institutional resources**
- Access to public or private transport
- Access to health service providers
- Access to justice services
- Access to service providers
- Tolerance of diversity

**Housing**
- Homelessness
- Housing affordability
- Repeat homelessness

## Multiple disadvantage

**Personal safety**
- Feelings of safety
- Children at risk/ child protection (b)
- Family violence
- Victim of personal violence
- Victim of household crime

**Multiple and entrenched disadvantage**
- Multiple disadvantage by life cycle group
- Entrenched multiple disadvantage (2 years or more)

**PRIORITY AREAS (b)**

| *Targeting jobless families with children to increase work opportunities, improve parenting and build capacity* | *Improving the life chances of children at greatest risk of long-term disadvantage* | *Reducing the incidence of homelessness* | *Improving outcomes for people living with disability or mental illness and their carers* | *Closing the gap for Indigenous Australians (c)* | *Breaking the cycle of entrenched and multiple disadvantage in particular neighbourhoods* | *Cross-cutting* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

**STRATEGIC CHANGE INDICATORS (a) (d)**

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Proportion of long-term unemployed jobseekers (LTU) in employment, education or training three months following participation in employment services—DEEWR<br>Proportion of LTU off benefit 12 months following participation in employment services—DEEWR<br>Labour force participation of single parents by age group of youngest child (0-4, 5-9, 10-14)—DEEWR | Proportion and number of clients with improved knowledge and skills related to family functioning, parenting, family safety or child development under FSP (e)—FaHCSIA<br>Proportion of children (aged 3-5 years) from special needs groups enrolled in State and Territory funded or provided preschools (f)—DEEWR<br>Proportion of students at or above the national minimum standard in reading and numeracy for:<br>> Students in schools participating in the Literacy and Numeracy National Partnership in years 3, 5 and 7;<br>> Indigenous students in years 3, 5, 7 and 9—DEEWR | Number of people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness who are assisted to secure and sustain their tenancies (g)—FaHCSIA<br>Number of people who are assisted to move from crisis accommodation or primary homelessness to sustainable accommodation—FaHCSIA<br>Number of people under 18 years claiming "Youth allowance—unable to live at home" assisted by social workers to reconnect with families and/or communities—DHS | Proportion of jobseekers with disability in employment, education or training three months after participation in employment services—DEEWR<br>Proportion and number of supported employees/clients with reduced reliance on income support payments (sufficient income to affect DSP)—FaHCSIA<br>Proportion and number of clients, families and carers of individual with a mental illness maintaining progress against individual goals (h)—FaHCSIA (for reporting from 2012) | Mortality rate (age-standardised by Indigenous status and by SEIFA) including child (0-4) mortality - DoHA<br>Availability and usage of public internet access facilities in remote Indigenous communities—DBCDE | Number of people accessing wrap around services in designated sites (i)—DHS<br>Number of people and families provided with outreach services by Community Engagement Officers—DHS | Obesity rate by Indigenous status, SEIFA and remoteness—DoHA |

(a) All indicators, including headline, supplementary and strategic change indicators, will be disaggregated by gender and cultural background where data is available.
(b) Governments have agreed to focus policy attention on these six strategic areas.
(c) Reporting in this priority area picks up selected social inclusion indicators and will also refer to progress against selected Closing the Gap targets and existing reporting mechanisms.
(d) Over time, progress in these areas is expected to lead to improvement in the headline and supplementary indicators. Strategic change indicators don't always sit neatly in one priority area and have been included in the most relevant priority area.
(e) Improved family functioning and child wellbeing are defined by an improvement in the areas of family relationships (with partner, children or other family members), conflict and safety and partnering arrangements.
(f) "Special needs" children include children from language backgrounds other than English (LBOTE), Indigenous children, children with disability, children from regional areas, and children from remote areas.
(g) Currently reported under the National Affordable Housing Agreement, Council of Australian Governments, 2009.
(h) The data for this indicator will be collected from the Targeted Community Care (Mental Health) program, and reported on from 2012. The target groups for this program are people with severe mental illness and their families and carers.
(i) Within Local Connections to Work program sites.

Abbreviations:

| | |
|---|---|
| AGD | Attorney-General's Department |
| DBCDE | Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy |
| DEEWR | Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations |
| DHS | Department of Human Services |
| DIAC | Department of Immigration and Citizenship |
| DoHA | Department of Health and Ageing |
| FaHCSIA | Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs |

| Strategic Change Indicator | Department | Reporting |
|---|---|---|
| ***Targeting jobless families with children to increase work opportunities, improve parenting and build capacity*** | | |
| Proportion of long term unemployed jobseekers (LTU) in employment, education or training three months following participation in employment services. | DEEWR | In 2010-11, 46.7% of long-term unemployed job seekers were in employment, education or training three months after participating in employment services. |
| Proportion of LTU off benefit 12 months following participation in employment services. | DEEWR | Data was not available for the 2010-11 annual report, but will be reported in the 2011-12 annual report. |
| Labour force participation of single parents by age group of youngest child (0-4, 5-9, 10-14). | DEEWR | Between 2005 and 2010, labour force participation rates of single parents rose from:<br>› 68.3% to 78.2% for those with children aged 10 to 14 years; and<br>› 70.1% to 73.3% for those with children aged 5 to 9 years.<br>However, there was a decline for single parents with children aged 0 to 4 years from 40.8% to 39.6%. |

| Strategic Change Indicator | Department | Reporting |
|---|---|---|
| ***Improving the life chances of children at greatest risk of long-term disadvantages*** | | |
| Percentage and number of clients with improved knowledge and skills related to family functioning, parenting, family safety or child development under the Family Support Program. | FaHCSIA | 93% of respondents (549) reported that their family functioning, including child wellbeing, improved as a result of using Family Relationship Services.<br>97% of respondents (14,957) reported increased knowledge and skills related to family functioning, parenting, family safety or child development as a result of attending the Family Support Program. |
| Proportion of children (aged 3-5 years) from special needs groups enrolled in State and Territory funded or provided preschools. | DEEWR | In 2009-10, children from the following special needs groups were under-represented in state and territory preschools:<br>› children from language backgrounds other than English (10.6% compared to 18.7% of all 3-5 year olds);<br>› children with disability (6.1% compared to being 8.0% of all children aged 3-5 years; and<br>› children from regional areas (28.9% compared to 32.3% of all 3-5 year olds).<br>Children from the following special needs groups were over-represented in state & territory preschools:<br>› Indigenous children (5.3% compared to 4.5% of all 3-5 year olds); and<br>› children in remote areas (4.0% compared to 3.2% of all children aged 3-5 years). |

| Strategic Change Indicator | Department | Reporting |
|---|---|---|
| Proportion of students at or above the national minimum standard in reading and numeracy for:<br>Students in schools participating in the Literacy and Numeracy National Partnership in years 3, 5 and 7;<br>Indigenous students in years 3, 5, 7 and 9. | DEEWR | As school jurisdictions did not have comparable starting points in collection of data on reading and numeracy standards, DEEWR stated it was not possible to provide a succinct report on data for students in years 3, 5 and 7 in schools participating in the Literacy and Numeracy National Partnership.<br>In 2010, nationally across all domains, around 70% of Indigenous students were at or above the national minimum standard, compared to 94% for non-Indigenous students. The overall change from 2009 to 2010 was not reported in the DEEWR Annual Report, although the following changes in particular areas were reported.<br>From 2009 to 2010, the gaps between the percentages of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and other Australian students at or above the national minimum standard declined for both Year 3 numeracy and Year 7 reading (by 2.5 percentage points), and increased for Year 9 numeracy (by 2.9 percentage points). From 2009-2010 the gains in Years 3-5 for Indigenous students were largely similar to those of other Australian students, although the gains for Indigenous students exceeded those for non-Indigenous students in spelling. In Years 5-7 the gains for Indigenous students in reading, grammar and punctuation exceeded gains made by non-Indigenous students. In all other domains, for both Years 5-7 and Years 7-9, the gains for Indigenous students and other Australian students were similar. |
| ***Reducing the incidence of homelessness*** | | |
| Number of people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness who are assisted to secure and sustain their tenancies. | FaHCSIA | Final, complete data were not available at the time of the Annual Report. The following interim data was provided:<br>The Reconnect program in 2010–11 provided support for 6,015 cases, through 104 services located nationally in metropolitan, regional and remote locations.<br>The Household Organisational Management Expenses (HOME) Advice program assisted 431 families from July 2010—March 2011. |
| Number of people who are assisted to move from crisis accommodation or primary homelessness to sustainable accommodation. | | |
| Number of people under 18 years claiming "Youth allowance—unable to live at home" assisted by social workers to reconnect with families and/or communities. | DHS | During 2010–11, 22,450 young people at risk of homelessness were supported by social workers, with 4,055 provided with intensive support and intervention. |

| Strategic Change Indicator | Department | Reporting |
|---|---|---|
| ***Improving outcomes for people living with disability or mental illness and their carers*** | | |
| Proportion of jobseekers with disability in employment, education or training three months after participation in employment services. | DEEWR | In 2010-11, 42.3% of job seekers with disability were in employment, education and training three months after participating in employment services. |
| Proportion and number of supported employees/clients with reduced reliance on income support payments (sufficient income to affect DSP). | FaHCSIA | The FaHCSIA Annual Report stated that 47% of people supported in employment were able to earn sufficient income from working in an Australian Disability Enterprise to affect their income support payment. |
| ***Closing the gap for Indigenous Australians*** | | |
| Mortality rate (age-standardised by Indigenous status and by SEIFA) including child (0-4) mortality. | DoHA | In 2008, the mortality rate for Indigenous Australians was more than double that of the rate for all Australians (1,498 deaths per 100,000 people compared to 603 deaths).<br>The mortality rate for Indigenous children aged 0-4 in 2005-2009 was also double that of the rate for non-Indigenous children (235 deaths per 100,000 compared to 106 deaths).<br>Data on mortality rates by the ABS Socio-Economic Indices for Areas (SEIFA) were not available. |
| Availability and usage of public internet access facilities in remote Indigenous communities. | DBCDE | During 2010–11, public internet access facilities were improved in 40 remote Indigenous communities, which have a total population of more than 20,000 people. Of these, 16 communities previously had no public internet access facilities. Training on how to access and use the internet was provided in 72 communities to 1,444 people. |
| ***Breaking the cycle of entrenched and multiple disadvantage in particular neighbourhoods*** | | |
| Number of people accessing wrap around services in designated sites. | DHS | During 2010–11, 3,148 people accessed wrap around services through Local Connections to Work. |
| Number of people and families provided with outreach services by Community Engagement Officers. | DHS | In 2010–11, the Department of Human Services' network of 90 Community Engagement Officers made 213,996 contacts with customers who were homeless or at risk of homelessness. |
| ***Cross-cutting*** | | |
| Obesity rate by Indigenous status, SEIFA and remoteness. | DoHA | In 2007-08, 25% of all Australians were obese, with 33% of people in the lowest socio-economic areas being obese, compared to 19% of those in the highest socio-economic areas. Indigenous Australians also had a higher rate of obesity (at 34%) and those living in remote areas had a 35% obesity rate compared to 23% in major cities. |

# Appendix B—Work of the Australian Social Inclusion Board—2011 Annual Report

The Board's work program for 2011 accorded with the priorities set by the Minister for Social Inclusion:

## Charter, Terms of Reference and Membership

The Board operated under a charter set by the Minister for Social Inclusion in 2011. This charter set priorities for the Board's second term from June 2011 to May 2014, a revised terms of reference and key areas of focus for 2011. In 2011, the Board started its second term with a refreshed membership.

## Engaging with Government on the Board's priority areas

The Board also provided advice on the development of a number of place-based measures under the Government's *Building Australia's Future Workforce* package announced in the 2011-12 Budget. The Board engaged closely with the Department of Human Services (DHS) to advise on case coordination, best practice models and strength-based approaches that will work more effectively for the most disadvantaged. The Board is continuing to work with DHS.

A number of the 2011 Budget measures, particularly under the Government's *Building Australia's Future Workforce* package, were influenced by the Board's advice. Mechanisms which assisted in achieving this outcome included briefings to the Social Policy and Social Inclusion Committee of Cabinet and the Secretaries Committee on Social Policy on the findings of the Board's 2010 projects on governance for place-based initiatives, jobless families and breaking the cycles of disadvantage.

The Board continues to be actively involved in the implementation of the Government's place-based measures through the Chair of the National Place-Based Advisory Group, Mr Tony Nicholson, to ensure that the Board's principles for governance of location-based initiatives are being implemented.

Work on the racism, discrimination and stigma priority examined the concept of an equality duty on the public sector in the context of the Australian legislative framework. The Board also considered the evidence of racism and discrimination in service delivery and employment services and provided its advice to relevant government stakeholders.

## Advice to Ministers on social inclusion issues

### Jobless families and children at risk

- Submission on employment services to the Minister for Employment Participation and Child Care on encouraging employers to provide supports such as training and mentoring to assist disadvantaged job seekers.
- Advice to the Minister for Employment Participation and Childcare on alternative approaches to wage subsidies and the effectiveness of wage subsidies in securing employment for the most disadvantaged.
- Advice to the Minister for Tertiary Education, Skills, Jobs and Workplace Relations, on approaches to increase participation of disadvantaged groups in apprenticeships.
- Advice to the Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs on conditions associated with government payments and services and the need to measure outcomes for compulsory income management in achieving behavioural change.
- Advice to the Minister for School Education, Early Childhood and Youth on the issue of school participation for children in state out-of-home care.
- Advice to the Minister for Social Inclusion expressing support for the Australian Communications and Media Authority proposal to remove call charges affecting disadvantaged and vulnerable Australians.

### Service delivery

- Advice to the Minister for Human Services on case coordination concepts and strengths-based approaches that will work more effectively for those who are most disadvantaged.
- The National Place-Based Advisory Group, chaired by Tony Nicholson, provided advice to the Minister for Human Services on the implementation of the Government's place based trials.

**Racism, discrimination and stigma**

- Research on the evidence of racism and discrimination in service delivery and employment services was provided to the Minister for Social Inclusion and circulated to key stakeholders.
- Commentary on the accessibility of Job Services Australia for disadvantaged new Australians was provided to the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations.

**Mental health and ageing**

- Advice to the Minister for Mental Health and Ageing on mental health reforms including recommending the expanded *headspace* program be accessible to the most disadvantaged.
- Advice to the Minister for Mental Health and Ageing, in response to the Productivity Commission report on the Inquiry into Aged Care, *Caring for Older Australians*, on the capacity of specific groups of vulnerable or disadvantaged people to participate in a market-based approach to aged care.

## Measurement and reporting of social inclusion indicators

Under the Board's terms of reference, one of its key work priorities is ongoing measurement and reporting of key indicators of social inclusion in Australia.

As part of this work, the Board, in conjunction with the Government, developed a range of Strategic Change Indicators to monitor progress of government policy and service delivery impacting on the six social inclusion priority areas identified by Government in its statement on social inclusion, *A Stronger, Fairer Australia*. These indicators are reported on annually by departments, through their annual reports. Attachment A provides an overview of the information which was included in departmental reports for the 2010–11 year.

The development of the 2012 edition of *How Australia is Faring* (this report) also formed a significant part of the Board's work in 2011-12.

## Consultation and community engagement

Four Board meetings were held during the year, in Shepparton, Sydney, Canberra and Melbourne. Senior representatives from a range of departments attended these meetings to participate in discussions and provide briefings on relevant policy matters. Associated community engagement events included attendance at the Greater Shepparton City Council and the Shepp*ART*on Festival; the Centrelink Campsie *Local Connections to Work* program, The Big Issue and Street Soccer.

Consultations with external stakeholders included briefings from the Australian Bureau of Statistics on developments in statistical reporting; the Australian Multicultural Advisory Council on the Government's multicultural policy; the Department of Health and Ageing on the Productivity Commission's review of aged care and Reconciliation Australia on progress of reconciliation.

## Presentations

As part of the Board's role to act as a conduit between social policy experts and not-for-profit stakeholders, the Chair and members presented at a range of not-for-profit conferences and meetings throughout the year. This allowed the Board's research, particularly on significant issues such as governance models for location-based initiatives and breaking cycles of disadvantage, to be widely disseminated.

# Appendix C—Terms of Reference and Membership of the Australian Social Inclusion Board

The Australian Social Inclusion Board was established in May 2008 to provide advice to Government on achieving better outcomes for the most disadvantaged.

In 2011, the Board operated under a charter set by the Minister for Social Inclusion. This charter set key priorities for the Board's 2011 work and revised the Board's terms of reference.

## Terms of Reference

- Advise the Government on the implementation of Government programs and policies impacting the most disadvantaged.
- Alert the Minister for Social Inclusion to emerging issues and new policy ideas relevant to social inclusion.
- Act as a conduit between social policy experts and not-for-profit sector stakeholders.
- Report annually to Government on progress of social inclusion, via the Minister for Social Inclusion.

### Ms Patricia Faulkner AO (Chair to June 2012)

Ms Patricia Faulkner chairs the Board of Jesuit Social Services, is a Board member of St Vincent's Health Australia, is a member of the Council of Australian Governments Reform Council, is a member of the Commonwealth Grants Commission; and Chairman of the National Health Performance Authority.

Ms Faulkner was awarded an Order of Australia in June 2008 for her services to Health and Social Policy and in 2002 she received a Centenary Medal for services to Public Administration.

From April 2007 to December 2010, Ms Faulkner was KPMG Partner, Global Leader—Healthcare.

From August 2000 until March 2007, Ms Faulkner was the Secretary of the Victorian Department of Human Services. She held senior and chief executive roles in the Victorian Government during the 1980s and early 1990s, including as Director of Consumer Affairs, Director of Occupational Health and Safety and Director of Employment.

### Dr Ngiare Brown

Dr Ngiare Brown is an Aboriginal woman from the south coast of NSW and one of the first half-dozen identified Aboriginal medical graduates in Australia.

Currently working at the Australian Indigenous Doctors' Association, Dr Brown has a clinical background in acute care and primary health, as well as experience in medical education, policy and research.

Dr Brown has previously been Indigenous Health Advisor to the Federal Australian Medical Association and was Foundation CEO of the Australian Indigenous Doctors' Association.

She has recently undertaken doctoral studies in human rights, human rights law and public health.

### Ms Anna Buduls

Anna Buduls' experience spans the business and not-for-profit worlds. She has a background in finance and investment banking, and for the last 17 years has been a non-executive Director on the boards of a range of listed and government-owned enterprises.

Over the last decade or so, Ms Buduls has also been deeply involved in a range of not-for-profit activities, including co-founding and chairing Beyond Empathy, a community, arts and cultural development organisation which uses the arts to influence change in the lives of individuals and communities experiencing recurring hardship.

Ms Buduls was part of the steering group for the Australian Government's White Paper on Homelessness and has guided and philanthropically supported several initiatives aimed at stopping homelessness and alleviating its impacts.

### Dr Tom Calma AO

Dr Tom Calma is an Aboriginal elder from the Kungarakan tribal group and a member of the Iwaidja tribal group in the Northern Territory.

He is the National Coordinator for Tackling Indigenous Smoking, Co-Chairs Reconciliation Australia and chairs the Ethics Council of the National Congress of Australia's First Peoples.

Dr Calma was the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner from 2004 to 2010 and from 2004 to 2009 was also the Race Discrimination Commissioner. He has also served in roles relating to Indigenous and mainstream employment, community development and education.

In his 2005 Social Justice Report, Dr Calma called for the life expectancy gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people to be closed within a generation.

Dr Calma has been recognised for his public service and work in higher education and Indigenous health, receiving an honorary doctorate from Charles Darwin University in 2010 and an Honorary Doctorate from Curtin University in 2011.

### Monsignor David Cappo AO (Vice Chair to 15 September 2011)

Monsignor David Cappo is a Catholic Priest and an influential figure in the social policy domain. A qualified social worker, Monsignor Cappo is Vicar General of the Archdiocese of Adelaide and deputy to the Archbishop.

In 2002 Monsignor Cappo was appointed Chair of the former Social Inclusion Board in South Australia. In May 2006, Monsignor Cappo was appointed Commissioner for Social Inclusion to further strengthen his ability to influence and implement social policy across the South Australian Government. Through these roles, he has spearheaded social policy reform for the State to address a range of pressing social issues including school retention, homelessness, youth offending and mental health.

A former National Director of the Australian Catholic Social Welfare Commission, Monsignor Cappo was made an Officer of the Order of Australia in the 2007 Australia Day Honours. Monsignor Cappo was an Independent Adviser for the Executive Committee of State Cabinet and also is a former member of the Economic Development Board of South Australia.

### Dr John Falzon

Dr John Falzon, a sociologist working in the area of social justice and social change, is Chief Executive Officer of the St Vincent de Paul Society National Council.

Dr Falzon has written and spoken widely on the structural causes of marginalisation and inequality in Australia and has long been involved in advocacy campaigns for a fairer and more inclusive Australia, especially with regard to welfare legislation, housing justice, homelessness and poverty.

Dr Falzon has worked in academia, in research and advocacy with civil society organisations, and in community development in large public housing estates.

### Dr Jeff Harmer AO

After a 33 year career in the Australian Public Service, Dr Jeff Harmer retired as Secretary of the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs in 2011.

Dr Harmer has occupied a range of executive positions across a number of Commonwealth departments spending some seven years at the senior executive level at the Department of Community Services and Health, having led significant reforms in Indigenous Affairs under the Howard, Rudd and Gillard governments.

In 2008, Dr Harmer was a leader in government reviews of the aged and disability support pension system and the tax system. In 2011 Dr Harmer was appointed to the National Disability Insurance Scheme Advisory Group.

Dr Harmer was made an Officer of the Order of Australia in 2010 for the significant achievements in his public service career,  particularly his leadership of key policy initiatives such as  programs for housing assistance, child support, mental health, the disabled, health insurance reform and initiatives for Indigenous Australians.

### Mr Tony Nicholson (Deputy Chair from October 2011)

Mr Tony Nicholson is currently Executive Director of the Brotherhood of St Laurence in Melbourne, a leading not-for-profit agency at the forefront of knowledge development and practice of a genuinely Australian approach to social inclusion.

Mr Nicholson has dedicated 30 years to improving conditions for those living on or close to the edges of society. A feature of his work has been his ability to collaborate with social justice organisations, governments and business to achieve reform in public policy and service delivery to the benefit of disadvantaged Australians. Mr Nicholson's expertise in understanding the historic and emerging needs of Australians experiencing homelessness led to his appointment in January 2008 as Chair of the Government's Steering Committee for the development of the White Paper on Homelessness.

Mr Nicholson heads the Prime Minister's Council on Homelessness which develops advice to the Government on ways to improve the economic and education participation and services and health outcomes for people experiencing homelessness. Mr Nicholson is also the Chair of the National Place Based Advisory Group which reports to the Australian Social Inclusion Board and the Government on the implementation of the Government's place-based trials.

### Ms Catriona Noble

Ms Catriona Noble is currently Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer at McDonalds Australia following a distinguished career in the company including appointment to the Board of McDonalds Australia.

Ms Noble has worked across many areas of the business. Immediately prior to her role as Managing Director she held the position of Chief Operating Officer and, before that, was the Senior Vice President/Director of Corporate Strategy and Business Planning.

Ms Noble is a member of the National Place Based Advisory Group which reports to the Australian Social Inclusion Board and the Government on the implementation of the Government's place-based trials. She is also actively involved in Ronald McDonald House Charities and is the chair of the Ronald McDonald House Charities Board.

### Ms Linda White (Board member to March 2012)

Ms Linda White is the Assistant National Secretary of the Australian Services Union (ASU), the largest union working in the social and community services sector. Her work at the ASU includes responsibility for the union's national strategy in the private sector and the social and community services sector.

Linda is a solicitor, Vice President of the Australian Council of Trade Unions, Director of Legalsuper, Director of the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne and member of the ALP National Executive and the Community Services and Health Industry Skills Council.

# Glossary

**Core activity limitation**—There are four levels of activity limitation: profound, severe, moderate and mild. These levels are related to whether a person needs assistance, has difficulty with, or uses aids/equipment to perform core activities such as self-care, mobility and communication.

**Child substantiation of notification rates**—Substantiations of notifications received in a given year refer to child protection notifications made to relevant authorities during the year ended 30 June, which were investigated and the investigation was finalised by 31 August, and it was concluded that there was reasonable cause to believe that the child had been, was being or was likely to be abused or neglected or otherwise harmed.

**Disability**—Any limitation, restriction or impairment which has lasted, or is likely to last, for at least six months and restricts everyday activities.

**Equivalised Gross Household Income**—Gross household income adjusted using an equivalence scale. For a lone person household it is equal to gross household income. For a household comprising more than one person, it is an indicator of the gross household income that would need to be received by a lone person household to enjoy the same level of economic wellbeing as the household in question. Some indicators report disposable rather than gross income, as noted in the indicator discussions.

**Homelessness**—Homelessness can be defined in many different ways and does not only refer to people who do not have shelter. When conducting the 2006 Census the ABS used a definition of homelessness which distinguished between primary, secondary and tertiary categories of homelessness. The ABS has indicated that, when estimates of homelessness based on the 2011 Census are released in late 2012, they will use a different definition to those previously published.

**Income Deciles**—Groupings that result from ranking all households in the population in ascending order according to their household income and then dividing the population into 10 equal groups, each comprising 10% of the estimated population.

**Indigenous Australians**—Means Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and is used as an abbreviated term to describe Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians.

**Joblessness**—Joblessness includes people who are unemployed and people who are not in the labour force. In ABS surveys, unemployed persons are those aged 15 years and over who were not employed during the reference week, had actively looked for work at any time in the four weeks up to the reference week, and were available for work in the reference week. People who are not in the labour force include people who are not working and who do not meet the criteria to be classified as unemployed. They include students who are not working, people primarily caring for children or other family members at home and retired people.

**Jobless families**—A number of different definitions of joblessness are used in this report depending on the data source.

ABS labour force analysis of jobless families includes couple families where both parents are either unemployed or not in the labour force and one-parent families where the sole parent is unemployed or not in the labour force. Other people in the household over the age of 15 years may be employed (although this is not common).

The ABS *General Social Survey* defines a jobless family as one in which no usual resident aged 15 years or over is currently employed.

HILDA data uses the same definition as the *General Social Survey*, however, it also excludes households where all the members of the household (other than dependent children) have retired.

**Labour force**—The total number of people who are either employed or unemployed.

**Long-term health condition**—Long-term health conditions refer to disabilities or health conditions that have lasted, or were likely to last, for at least six months, and which restricted everyday activities.

**Long-term unemployment**—A period (duration) of unemployment lasting 12 months or more. Duration of unemployment is the length of the incomplete spell of unemployment of a currently unemployed person. The duration is calculated from the time a person either last worked in any job for two weeks or more, or began actively looking for work (whichever is the more recent).

**Low income households**—In this report, mostly refers to households with an equivalised gross household income in the bottom 20% of all Australian households (the bottom income quintile). In some indicators refers to households in the second and third deciles of equivalised income as noted in the discussion. (Some households in the bottom income decile have disproportionately high levels of consumption expenditure and/or wealth relative to their incomes and so households in the second and third deciles better represent those with low consumption possibilities.)

**Mental disorder and mental illness**—According to the World Health Organisation (WHO) ICD-10 Classification of Mental and Behavioural Disorders, a disorder is 'the existence of a clinically recognisable set of symptoms or behaviour associated in most cases with distress and with interference with personal functions'. People discussed in this report with a mental health disorder met the criteria for diagnosis of a lifetime mental disorder and had symptoms in the 12 months prior to interview.

Within the mental health sector, the term *mental disorder* is used when discussing indicators that draw on specific data sources on prevalence of mental disorders. The term *mental illness* is used in general discussions. This terminology has been adopted for this report.

**Mental disorder severity scale**—Severity was measured using the World Mental Health Survey Initiative severity measure (modified for recent changes in the survey instrument). For each individual with a 12-month mental disorder the measure summarises the impact of all the mental disorders experienced in the previous 12 months into a mild, moderate or severe category: To be classified as severe, in addition to having a 12-month mental disorder, one of the following must have occurred in the previous 12 months: an episode of mania; attempted suicide; or experienced severe role impairment on at least two domains of the disorder specific Sheehan Disability Scales or overall functional impairment at a level equivalent to a Global Assessment of Functioning score of 50 or less.

- A classification as moderate requires a 12-month mental disorder and moderate role impairment in one domain on the Sheehan Disability Scales.
- The remaining people with a 12-month mental disorder were categorised as mild.

For more information regarding severity see the ABS *National Survey of Mental Health and Wellbeing: Users' Guide*, cat. no. 4327.0, 2007.

**Non-school qualifications**—Are those awarded for educational attainments other than those of pre-primary, primary or secondary education. Non-school qualifications include: Postgraduate Degree, Master Degree level, Graduate Diploma and Graduate certificate, Bachelor Degree, Advanced Diploma and Diploma level, and Certificate I, II, III & IV levels. For further information see the *Australian Standard Classification of Education*, cat. no. 1272.0.

**Not in the labour force**—Refers to people who did not actively seek work or were not available for work as well as those who have chosen not to work, including parents caring for one or more children.

**Reference person**—In the *ABS Household Expenditure Survey* and *Survey of Income and Housing* the reference person for each household is chosen by applying, to all household members aged 15 years and over, the selection criteria below, in the order listed, until a single appropriate reference person is identified:

- one of the partners in a registered or de facto marriage, with dependent children;
- one of the partners in a registered or de facto marriage, without dependent children;
- a lone parent with dependent children;
- the person with the highest income;
- the eldest person.

In addition, the person with the highest housing tenure was ranked as follows:

- owner without a mortgage;
- owner with a mortgage;
- renter; and
- other tenure.

**Remoteness Area (RA)**—A structure of the Australian Standard Geographical Classification, covering the whole of Australia. It is intended to classify areas sharing common characteristics of remoteness into broad geographical regions (Remoteness Areas). The remoteness of a point is measured by its physical distance by road to the nearest urban centre. As remoteness is measured nationally, not all Remoteness Areas are represented in each state or territory.

**Socio-Economic Index for Areas (SEIFA)**—A geographical indicator developed by the ABS which summarises many different socio-economic aspects of people living in areas, which shows how disadvantaged an area is compared with other areas in Australia. The Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage (IRSD) is one of four SEIFA indexes. IRSD relates to disadvantage based on Census variables such as low income, low educational attainment, unemployment and dwellings without motor vehicles. Index values are often grouped into five quintiles or ten deciles, with quintile or decile one, or the 'bottom quintile/decile', being the most disadvantaged and quintile five or decile ten being the least disadvantaged.

**Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP)**—Provides transitional supported accommodation and related support services to assist people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. States and territories are responsible for managing the program, while services are provided largely by independent agencies. Support may involve the provision of accommodation as well as a range of other services.

**Underemployed workers**—In the ABS Monthly Labour Force Survey underemployed workers are employed persons aged 15 years and over who want, and are available for, more hours of work than they currently have. They comprise:

- persons employed part-time who want to work more hours and are available to start work with more hours, or
- persons employed full-time who worked part-time hours in the reference week for economic reasons (such as being stood down or insufficient work being available). It is assumed that these people wanted to work full-time in the reference week and would have been available to do so.

**Working age**—Many people participate in the labour market beyond the age of 65 years and the Government recognises the need to maximise workforce participation among older Australians to offset the impacts of population ageing. However, for a number of indicators it is important to examine the situation for people who are of 'main working age'. In this report, main working age has been defined as people aged 15–64 years and in some cases 18–64 years depending on the data source.

# Abbreviations

| | |
|---|---|
| ABS | Australian Bureau of Statistics |
| ACARA | Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority |
| ACT | Australian Capital Territory |
| AEDI | Australian Early Development Index |
| AIHW | Australian Institute of Health and Welfare |
| ASGC | Australian Standard Geographic Classification |
| AUST | Australia |
| CDs | Census Collection Districts |
| COAG | Council of Australian Governments |
| DEEWR | Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations |
| DSP | Disability Support Pension |
| GSS | General Social Survey |
| HALE | Health adjusted life expectancy |
| HILDA | Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia Survey |
| ICD | International Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems |
| IRSD | Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage |
| LSAC | Longitudinal Study of Australian Children |
| LBOTE | Language background other than English |
| LGA | Local Government Area |
| NAPLAN | National Assessment Program—Literacy and Numeracy |
| NSW | New South Wales |
| NT | Northern Territory |
| OECD | Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development |
| PM&C | Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet |
| Qld | Queensland |
| SA | South Australia |
| SAAP | Supported Accommodation Assistance Program |
| SEIFA | Socio-Economic Index for Areas |
| Tas | Tasmania |
| Vic | Victoria |
| WA | Western Australia |
| WHO | World Health Organization |

# Endnotes


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