



Australian Government

Australian Institute of  
Health and Welfare

infocus

2016 National Social  
Housing Survey

# Social housing: households with children

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In 2016, nearly 3 in 10 (27%) social housing tenants lived in households with children.

This report presents, for the first time, detailed information on the self-reported characteristics and circumstances of households comprising single adults, couples or extended families with one or more children.

Of particular interest is how households *with children* differ from households *without children*, especially in relation to:

- satisfaction with their housing provider
- proximity to facilities and services
- use of community and support services
- benefits of living in social housing.

This information is drawn from additional analysis of the 2016 National Social Housing Survey. Households *with children* have been chosen as a population of special interest because different tenants and households respond very differently to certain aspects of the survey. For example, what is important to a young family may not be as important to an older single person who receives the Age Pension.

## What is the National Social Housing Survey?

The National Social Housing Survey (NSHS) is a biennial survey undertaken on behalf of the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) and state and territory governments.

The NSHS collects data on the profile of social housing tenants and their satisfaction with services provided by their housing providers and the amenity and location of their dwellings.

The first NSHS, in 1996, surveyed public housing tenants only. The NSHS expanded to include community housing tenants in 2001 and SOMIH tenants in 2005.

## Tenants living in households with children:



87% were aged  
15 to 64



79% were female



18% were Indigenous

## Households with children

The NSHS 2016 sample consisted of 9,738 completed surveys:

- 2,990 (27%) of social housing tenants lived in households *with children*:
  - 27% (1,371) of all public housing (PH) tenants surveyed
  - 24% (714) of all community housing (CH) tenants surveyed
  - 65% (905) of all state owned and managed Indigenous housing (SOMIH) tenants surveyed.
- 6,544 (73%) of social housing tenants lived in households *without children*.

The higher proportion of SOMIH tenants living with children largely reflects the age differences between tenants in the different social housing types—a higher proportion of SOMIH tenants are aged 44 or younger (44%) compared with public (15%) and community (22%) housing tenants.

### Proportion of social housing households with children

	PH (%)	SOMIH (%)	CH (%)
NSW	27	63	24
Vic	28	-	29
Qld	31	76	20
WA	26	-	17
SA	16	55	23
Tas	23	39	32
ACT	31	-	8
NT	34	-	-
<b>Aust.</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>24</b>

### Characteristics of tenants living in households with children

• About 8 in 10 (79%) were female.



• About 1 in 5 (18%) had been homeless in the 5 years before the survey.



• Almost 9 in 10 (87%) were aged 15 to 64.



• 71% lived in *Major cities*, 26% in *Inner/Outer regional areas*, 3% in *Remote or Very remote areas*.



*Note:* These estimates have been derived by weighting the survey responses to ensure that they represent the total population, to the extent possible.

SOMIH only operates in New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia and Tasmania. Community housing does not operate in the Northern Territory.



## Males and females

Female tenants were more likely than male tenants to live in households *with children*.



Female tenants living in households *with children* accounted for:

- 1 in 3 public housing households (33%)
- about 7 in 10 SOMIH households (72%)
- about 3 in 10 community housing households (31%).

Male tenants living in households *with children* accounted for:

- around 1 in 6 public housing households (16%)
- almost half of SOMIH households (48%)
- around 1 in 10 community housing households (12%).

'Have been able to provide a secure home environment for my family (daughter and grandson), especially my grandson who has been able to go to one school for the entire 7 years of primary school, and subsequently to the local high school with his friends.'

Social housing tenant, 2016 NSHS

## What are the different social housing programs?

Social housing is all rental housing owned and managed by government, or by not-for-profit community organisations, which can be let to eligible households. It includes but is not limited to:

- **Public housing (PH)** (also called 'public rental housing'): publicly owned or leased dwellings funded and managed by state and territory governments.
- **State owned and managed Indigenous housing (SOMIH)**: housing administered by state and territory governments specifically targeted to Indigenous households (with at least 1 Indigenous member). Currently, SOMIH is provided in New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia and Tasmania.
- **Mainstream community housing (CH)**: is managed by not-for-profit organisations (except for in the Northern Territory) and included in the NSHS where these organisations received capital or recurrent funding from government.
- **Indigenous community housing (ICH)**: is owned and/or managed by Indigenous communities to provide housing services to Indigenous Australians.

*Note:* Indigenous community housing is out of scope of the 2016 National Social Housing Survey.

## Indigenous status

Nearly 1 in 5 (18%) social housing tenants who were living in households *with children* identified as Indigenous.



For social housing tenants living in households *without children*, fewer than 1 in 10 (8%) identified as Indigenous.



## Overall satisfaction

Tenants living in households *with children* had a lower rate of satisfaction with their social housing providers than tenants in households *without children*.

*With children:*

Housing program	Satisfied (%)	Neither (%)	Dissatisfied (%)
PH	64	19	17
SOMIH	66	12	22
CH	76	11	13

*Without children:*

Housing program	Satisfied (%)	Neither (%)	Dissatisfied (%)
PH	76	11	13
SOMIH	71	11	18
CH	82	9	9

Note: 'Satisfied' includes answers of 'very satisfied' and 'satisfied', while 'dissatisfied' includes answers of 'very dissatisfied' and 'dissatisfied'.

## Working age

SOMIH tenants were more likely to be of working age and living in households *with children* (71%) than were public (41%) or community (36%) housing tenants. Working age tenants are those aged between 15–64.

## Community and support services

Health and medical services

- Social housing tenants *with children* were more likely to have used health and medical services (74%) than tenants living in households *without children* (69%).

Services providing support for children, family or carers

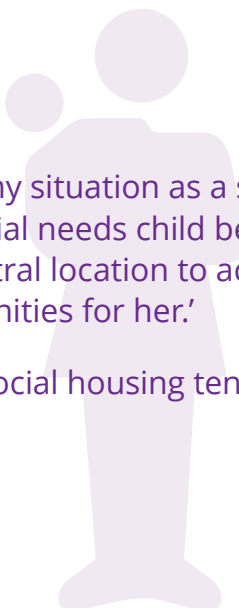
- Nearly 1 in 5 (18%) social housing tenants living *with children* used services providing support for children, family or carers, compared with 3% of tenants who were living *without children*.

Drug and alcohol counselling

- The presence of children made no difference in the proportion of households using drug and alcohol counselling (4% for both). Tenants in households *with children* had a lower rate of referral to counselling (11%), than tenants in households *without children* (13%).

Family and domestic violence services

- A greater proportion of households *with children* (6%) used domestic and family violence services, compared with households *without children* (2%).






'It suits my situation as a sole carer of a special needs child because of [the] central location to activities and amenities for her.'

Social housing tenant, 2016 NSHS



## Where do they live?

Overall, the highest proportion of households *with children* were in *Remote areas* (48%).

	Major cities	Inner/Outer regional areas	Remote areas
Households with children			
All social housing	29%	33%	48%
PH	27%	25%	35%
SOMIH	63%	65%	72%
CH	24%	24%	n.p.

n.p. = not publishable because of small numbers, confidentiality or other concerns about data quality.

Note: Remote areas include *Remote* and *Very remote* areas.

## Proximity to facilities

### Education and training facilities

- About 4 in 5 working-age tenants living in households *with children* rated closeness to education and training facilities as important (PH 76%, SOMIH 79%, CH 78%). Of these, around 9 in 10 considered their household needs were being met by the location of their current home (PH 88%, SOMIH 92%, CH 91%).

### Child-care facilities

- Nearly half of the tenants living in households *with children* rated closeness to child-care facilities as important (PH 44%, SOMIH 47%, CH 47%). Of these, around 9 in 10 considered their needs were being met by the location of their current home (PH 84%, SOMIH 93%, CH 87%).

## Benefits of social housing

Tenants living in households *with children* considered the following to be benefits of living in social housing:

### *Be able to continue living in this area:*

- around 9 in 10 social housing tenants (PH 89%, SOMIH 91%, CH 88%).

### *Have better access to services:*

- more than 4 in 5 social housing tenants (PH 81%, SOMIH 86%, CH 84%).

### *Be able to manage rent/money better:*

- more than 9 in 10 social housing tenants (PH 93%, SOMIH 91%, CH 90%).

'...The unit is good and fit for me and my son, and it is close to the public transport, childcare and not really far from the convenience store.'

Public housing tenant, 2016 NSHS



## Time in social housing

A higher proportion of tenants *with children* had lived in **social housing** for 5 years or less, compared with tenants *without children*:

- PH: 29% compared with 21%
- SOMIH: 27% compared with 15%
- CH: 46% compared with 40%.

Households *with children* were also more likely to have lived in their **current home** for 5 years or less than households *without children*:

- PH: 43% compared with 31%
- SOMIH: 47% compared with 30%
- CH: 60% compared with 52%.

'My youngest daughter has autism and my life currently revolves around her, taking her to various programs, special needs playgroups, doctors/specialists appointments, etc. My caring for her is my full time job. We have something on every day!'

Social housing tenant, 2016 NSHS

## Labour force status

SOMIH and community housing tenants living in households *with children* were more likely than public housing tenants to be in the labour force. SOMIH also had the highest proportion of tenants *not in the labour force*.

		Employed full-time	Employed part-time	Unemployed	Not intending/ unable to work	Not in labour force
<i>With children</i>	PH	7%	14%	20%	35%	25%
	SOMIH	10%	9%	25%	25%	32%
	CH	10%	17%	22%	22%	29%
<i>Without children</i>	PH	4%	8%	9%	70%	10%
	SOMIH	9%	8%	17%	57%	9%
	CH	3%	11%	10%	66%	9%



## Influences on employment

Of those tenants living *with children*, *want and/or need to stay home and take care of children* strongly influenced their employment situation:

- SOMIH tenants (54%) were more likely than public housing (42%) or community housing tenants (45%) to agree this *influenced their decision a lot*.
- Public and community housing tenants were more likely to agree it *influenced their decision somewhat* more (24% and 26%, respectively) than SOMIH tenants (14%).

Of the tenants living *with children* who reported that *child care was too expensive and/or unavailable*, public (20%) and community (18%) housing tenants were more likely to agree this *influenced a lot* on their employment situation than SOMIH tenants (14%); or that it *influenced their decision somewhat* more than SOMIH tenants (13%). A higher proportion of social housing tenants said that their employment situation was *not at all influenced* by child-care issues (PH 64%, SOMIH 73%, CH 60%).

## Features of home

Tenants living in households *with children* rated the importance of particular home features higher than tenants *without children*.

Size of home:

- *with children*: PH 87%, SOMIH 92%, CH 91%
- *without children*: PH 77%, SOMIH 84%, CH 78%.

Number of bedrooms:

- *with children*: PH 93%, SOMIH 95%, CH 95%
- *without children*: PH 79%, SOMIH 86%, CH 77%.

Car parking:

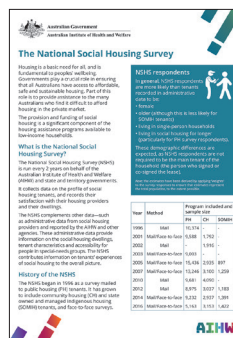
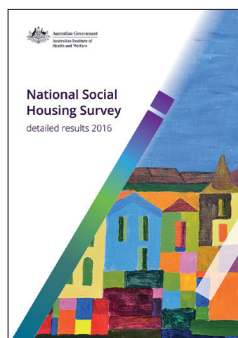
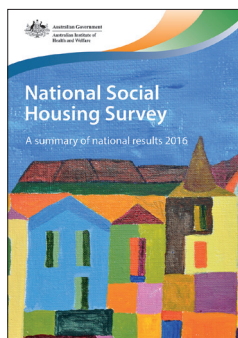
- *with children*: PH 87%, SOMIH 89%, CH 88%
- *without children*: PH 73%, SOMIH 81%, CH 77%.

Yard space and fencing:

- *with children*: PH 89%, SOMIH 96%, CH 88%
- *without children*: PH 77%, SOMIH 89%, CH 75%.



This *In focus* report is part of the NSHS 2016 release, which includes a range of publications and supplementary data tables. For more information see <<http://www.aihw.gov.au/housing-assistance-publications/>>.



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