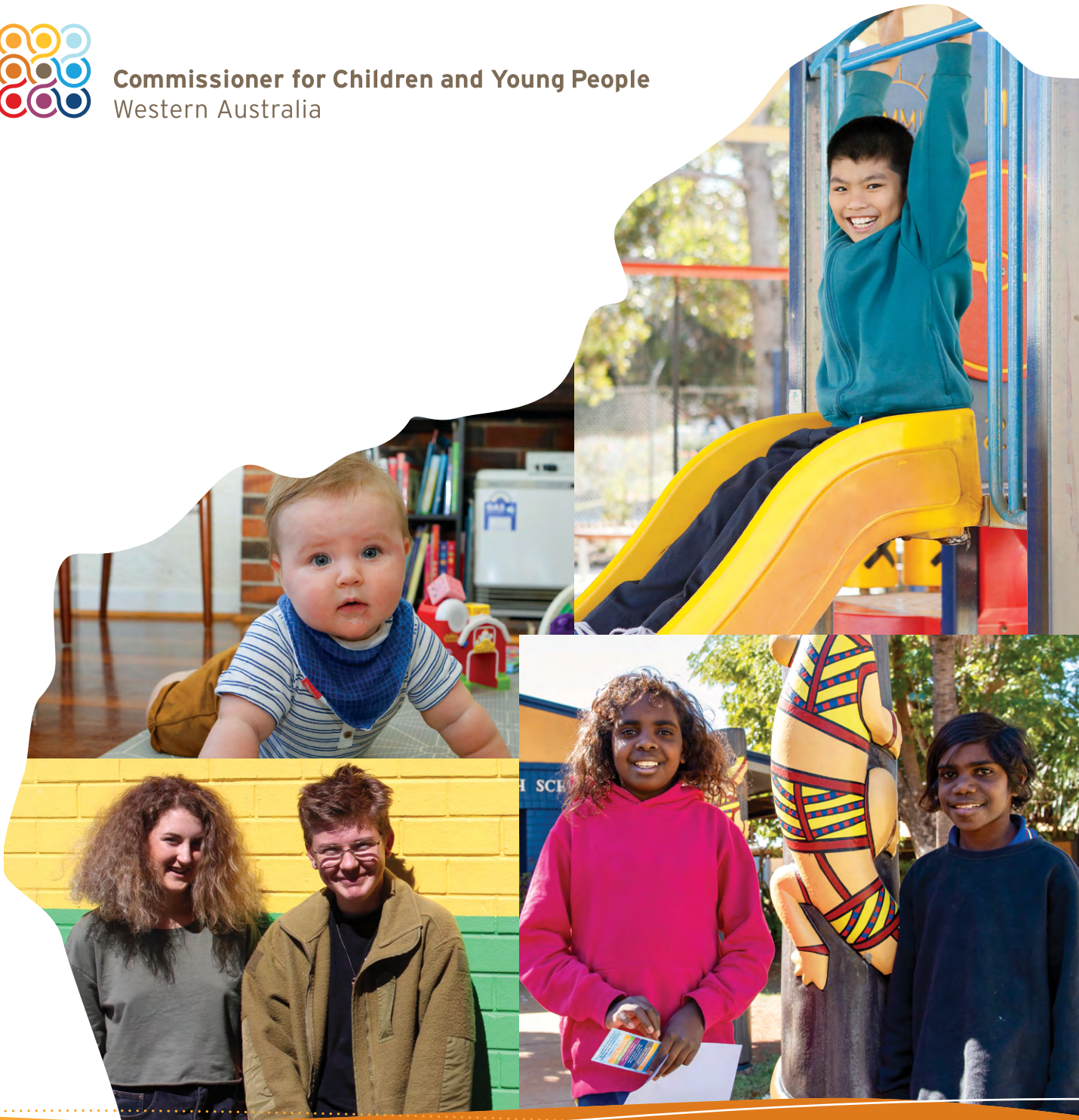




Commissioner for Children and Young People  
Western Australia



# Profile of Children and Young People in WA

January 2020

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## Recognising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People

The Commissioner for Children and Young People WA acknowledges the unique culture and heritage of our Aboriginal peoples and the contributions Aboriginal peoples have made and continue to make to Western Australian society. For the purposes of this publication, the term 'Aboriginal' is intended to encompass the diverse cultures and identities of the First Peoples of Western Australia and also recognises those of Torres Strait Islander descent who call Western Australia home.

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### Alternative formats

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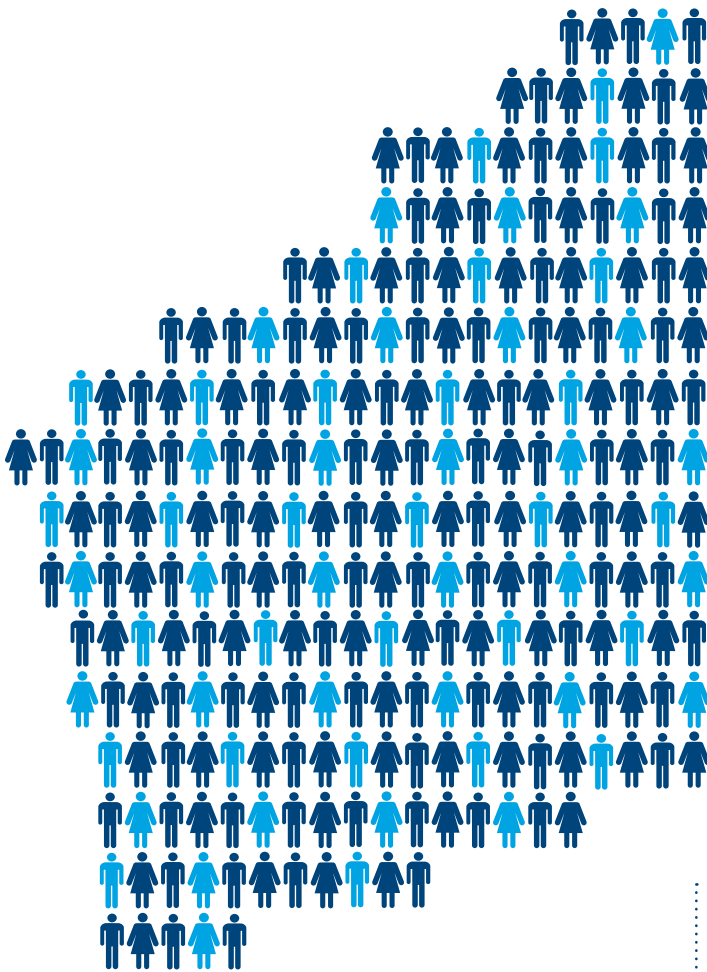


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# Western Australia's children and young people



Approximately

# 598,000

children and young people live in WA and make up **23 per cent** of the state's population



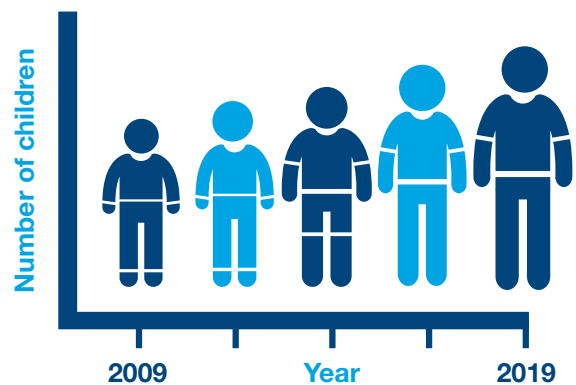
Poverty line



Up to

# 17%

of children and young people are living below the poverty line in WA

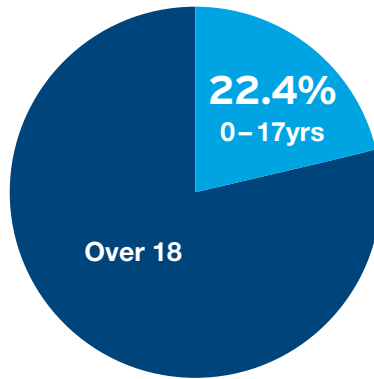


In the last 10 years there has been a **20 per cent** increase in the number of children aged 6 to 11 years living in WA

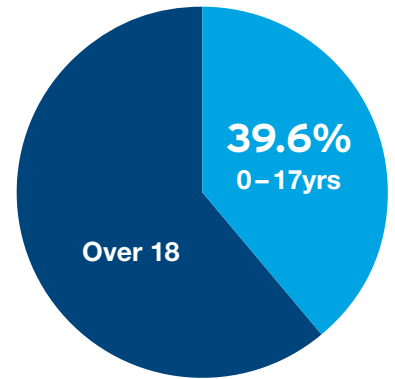
# Western Australia's children and young people

## Aboriginal children and young people

There are about **40,000** Aboriginal children and young people aged under 18 years living in WA. Children and young people aged under 18 years make up **39.6 per cent** of the total WA Aboriginal population



WA non-Aboriginal population



WA Aboriginal population



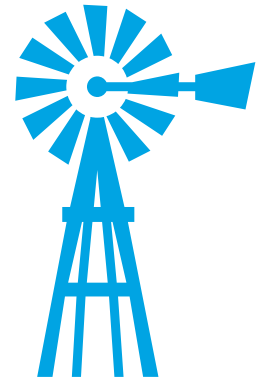
**33,459**

births were registered in WA during 2018

Around

**152,000**

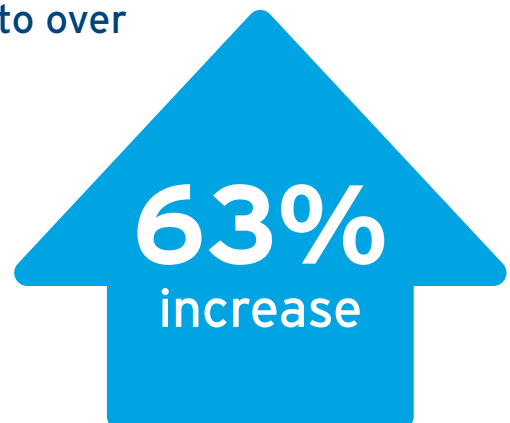
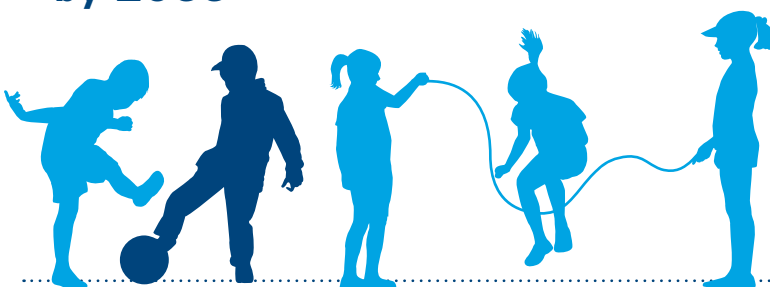
or **25 per cent**, of children and young people in WA live in regional and remote areas



The number of WA children and young people is projected to increase by **63 per cent**, to over

**1 million**

by 2066





# Population

Western Australia (WA) is home to 598,000 children and young people, who represent 23 per cent of WA's total population.

Between June 2017 and June 2018, the number of children and young people in WA increased by 0.7 per cent (Table 1).

**Table 1: Children and young people aged 0 to 17 years, number and per cent, WA and Australia, 2017 and 2018**

	June 2018			June 2017	Change from 2017 to 2018
	Children and young people	Total population (all ages)	Proportion of total population	Children and young people	
	Number	Number	Per cent	Number	
<b>WA</b>	597,916	2,594,181	23.0	593,584	0.7
<b>Australia*</b>	5,559,575	24,982,688	22.3	5,507,128	1.0

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics 2019, *3101.0 - Australian Demographic Statistics, June 2019*, Table 55. Estimated Resident Population By Single Year Of Age, WA and Table 59. Estimated Resident Population By Single Year Of Age, Australia

\* Figure includes other territories comprising Jervis Bay Territory, Christmas Island and the Cocos (Keeling) Islands.

# Population

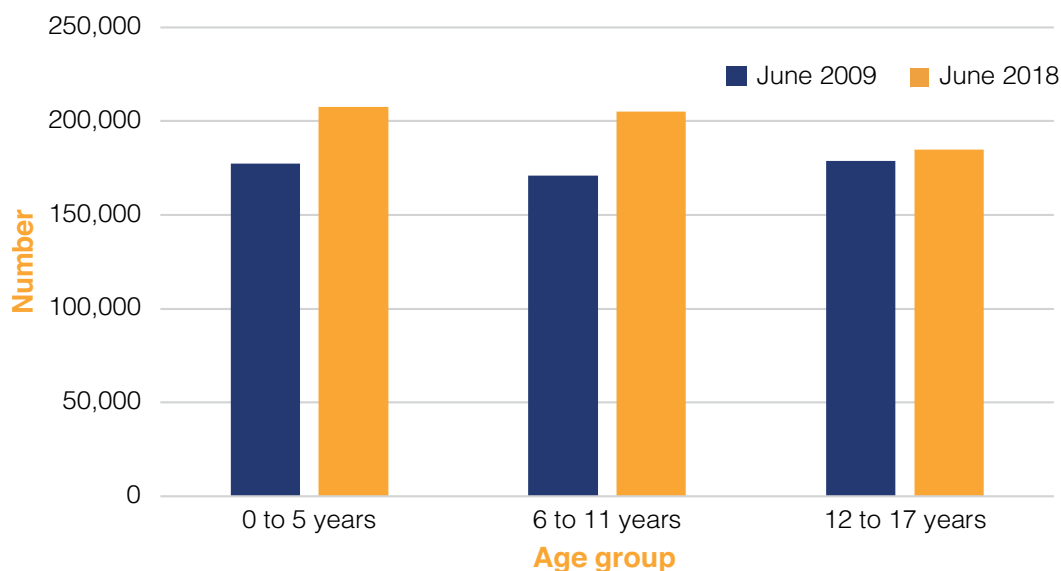
From 2009 to 2018, the number of 0 to 17 year-olds in WA increased by almost 71,000 or 13.4 per cent (Table 2). The largest increase (20.0%) occurred in the primary school years for children aged six to 11 years.

**Table 2: Children and young people aged 0 to 17 years by age group, number and per cent, WA, 2009 and 2018**

	June 2018		June 2009		Change from 2009 to 2018	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
0 to 5 years	207,794	34.8	177,386	33.6	30,408	17.1
6 to 11 years	205,247	34.3	171,025	32.4	34,222	20.0
12 to 17 years	184,875	30.9	178,771	33.9	6,104	3.4
<b>0 to 17 years</b>	<b>597,916</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>527,182</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>70,734</b>	<b>13.4</b>

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics 2019, *3101.0 - Australian Demographic Statistics, June 2019*, Table 55. Estimated Resident Population By Single Year Of Age, WA

**Figure 1: Population of children and young people aged 0 to 17 years by age group, number, WA, 2009 and 2018**



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics 2019, *3101.0 - Australian Demographic Statistics, June 2019*, Table 55. Estimated Resident Population By Single Year Of Age, WA

Over the last decade, the number of WA children aged 0 to 11 years has increased more than the number of young people aged 12 to 17 years mainly due to a higher fertility rate. The WA fertility rate grew during the 2000s but has been in decline again in recent years (refer Births section). An increase in the number of 12 to 17 year-olds (secondary school years) in WA will then naturally follow in the next decade.

# Population

## Gender

The gender distribution of children and young people in WA is 51.2 per cent male and 48.8 per cent female, which is consistent with most Australian states and territories and the national distribution.<sup>1</sup>

## Cultural background

In 2016, 14 per cent of all children and young people in WA were born overseas, compared to 85.5 per cent born in Australia.

For WA's children and young people, the most common country of birth after Australia is England (2.6%), followed by New Zealand (1.7%), the Philippines (1.2%) and South Africa (1.1%) (Table 3).

**Table 3: Children and young people aged 0 to 17 years\* by country of birth, number and per cent, WA, 30 June 2016**

	Number	Per cent
<b>Australia</b>	<b>503,624</b>	<b>85.5</b>
England	15,599	2.6
New Zealand	10,267	1.7
Philippines	6,914	1.2
South Africa	6,525	1.1
India	5,390	0.9
China (excludes SARs and Taiwan)	2,776	0.5
Malaysia	2,732	0.5
Scotland	2,248	0.4
United States of America	1,966	0.3
Other	30,826	5.2
<b>All overseas born</b>	<b>85,244</b>	<b>14.5</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>588,868</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics 2019, *Migration, Australia 2017–18, cat. no. 3412.0*, Dataset: Estimated resident population, Country of birth, State/territory, Age and sex - as at 30 June 1996 to 2016, Census years

\* The ABS reports the estimated resident population (ERP) by country of birth and state and territory for age groups 0 to 4 years, 5 to 9 years, 10 to 14 years and 15 to 19 years. Population estimates by country of birth by state and territory are only available for Census years. The estimated number and percentage of young people aged 0 to 17 years has been calculated by the Commissioner for Children and Young People using this data.

1 Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2019, *3101.0 - Australian Demographic Statistics, June 2019*, cat. no. 3101.0, Table 59. Estimated Resident Population By Single Year Of Age, Australia, ABS.

# Population

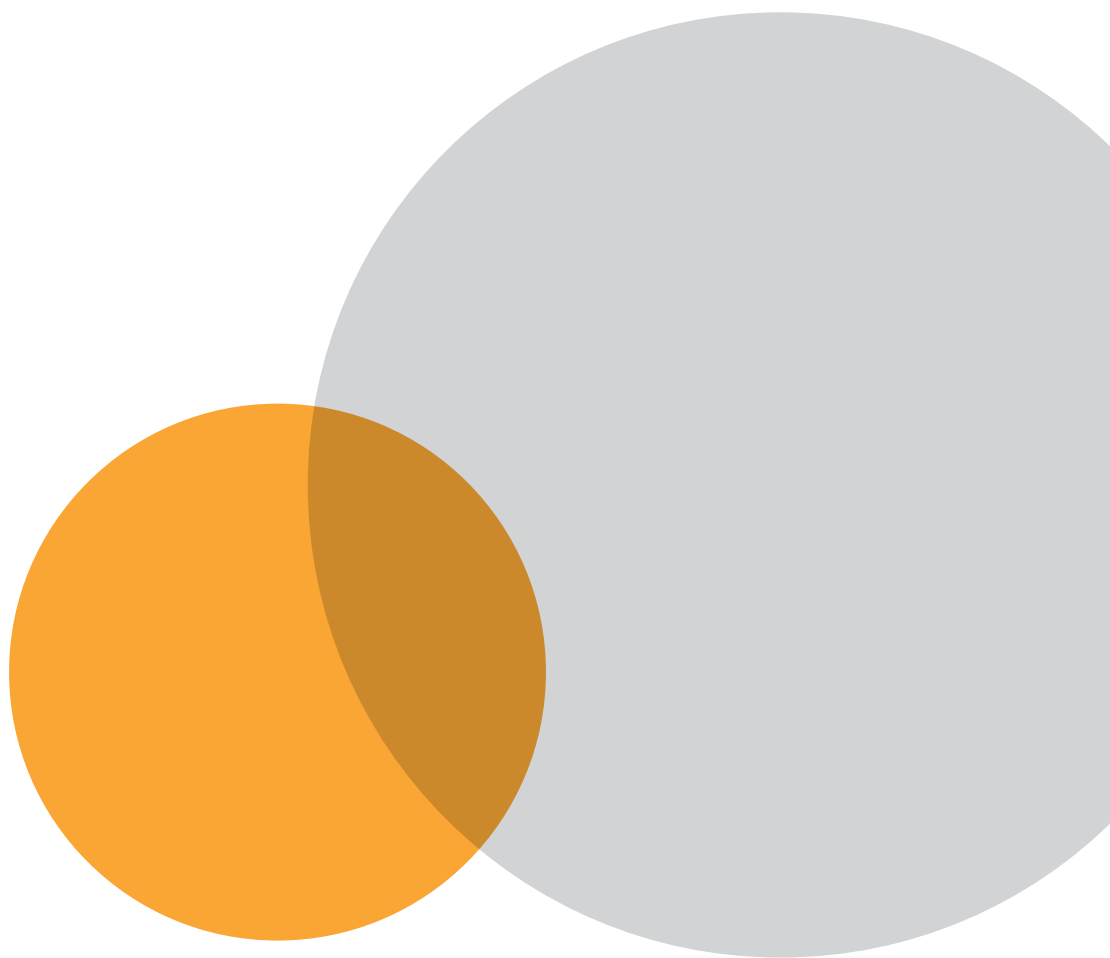
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According to Census 2016 data, the majority of WA children and young people speak English at home (78.5%). The most common other languages spoken at home are Chinese languages (2.0%), Indian languages (1.8%) and South East Asian languages (1.7%).<sup>2</sup>

## Geographical distribution

The geographical distribution of children and young people across WA remains largely unchanged from previous years. In 2018, around 75 per cent of the population of 0 to 17 year olds resided in the metropolitan area,<sup>3</sup> a little less than 17 per cent resided in regional areas and just under 10 per cent in remote areas of WA (Table 4).

In the metropolitan area, Perth – South West and Perth – North East recorded an increase in the number of children and young people (1.5% and 1.4% respectively). Mandurah also recorded an increase of 1.7 per cent. In regional and remote areas, the Pilbara and Mandurah recorded increases (1.8% and 1.7% respectively) while Esperance and the Gascoyne recorded a decrease in the number of children and young people (3.6% and 3.3% respectively) (Table 4).



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2 Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2018, Table-builder: 2016 Census – Cultural Diversity, ABS.

3 The metropolitan area corresponds to the five Perth Statistical Area Level 4s as defined by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. It does not include Mandurah.

# Population

**Table 4: Geographical distribution of children and young people aged 0 to 17 years by age group, number and per cent, WA, June 2018**

	0 to 5 years	6 to 11 years	12 to 17 years	Total 0 to 17 years	Change from 2017 to 2018	Proportion of WA children
	Number	Number	Number	Number	Per cent	Per cent
<b>Metropolitan</b>	<b>157,004</b>	<b>151,747</b>	<b>137,312</b>	<b>446,063</b>	<b>1.1</b>	<b>74.6</b>
Perth – South East	42,973	39,538	35,014	117,525	1.1	19.7
Perth – South West	35,374	34,908	31,041	101,323	1.5	16.9
Perth – North East	21,947	20,688	18,884	61,519	1.4	10.3
Perth – North West	46,196	45,123	41,151	132,470	0.9	22.2
Perth – Inner	10,514	11,490	11,222	33,226	0.2	5.6
<b>WA regional</b>	<b>30,919</b>	<b>34,607</b>	<b>32,145</b>	<b>97,671</b>	<b>0.1</b>	<b>16.3</b>
Mandurah	7,255	7,981	7,289	22,525	1.7	3.8
Bunbury (d)	13,981	15,573	14,914	44,468	0.3	7.4
Wheatbelt (e)	9,683	11,053	9,942	30,678	-1.2	5.1
<b>WA remote</b>	<b>19,983</b>	<b>18,851</b>	<b>15,434</b>	<b>54,268</b>	<b>-1.0</b>	<b>9.1</b>
Esperance	1,269	1,271	1,293	3,833	-3.6	0.6
Goldfields	3,897	3,460	2,849	10,206	-3.2	1.7
Mid West	4,189	4,454	4,297	12,940	-2.0	2.2
Gascoyne	757	776	632	2,165	-3.3	0.4
Pilbara	6,028	5,261	3,448	14,737	1.8	2.5
Kimberley	3,843	3,629	2,915	10,387	0.0	1.7
<b>Total WA</b>	<b>207,906</b>	<b>205,205</b>	<b>184,891</b>	<b>598,002</b>	<b>0.7</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics 2019, *Estimated resident population (ERP)*, Customised report June 2018 and June 2017 (unpublished)

Notes:

- a) The totals in this table do not agree exactly to Tables 1 and 2 as ERP for sub-state regions are only prepared annually (as opposed to quarterly revisions). They are prepared based on a modelling process incorporating Census and administrative data sources. The accuracy of sub-state ERPs is described in the Quality Declaration for Regional Population Growth, Australia (cat. no. 3218.0).
- b) Per cent totals may not add up to 100 due to rounding.
- c) To provide a detailed picture of the geographical distribution of children and young people across WA, Statistical Area Level 4 (SA4) was chosen to represent areas within the metropolitan area and regional WA and Statistical Area Level 3 (SA3) for remote areas. For more information on these areas see Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS)*.
- d) Includes Busselton, Margaret River, Augusta and Manjimup.
- e) Includes Albany, Wheatbelt North and Wheatbelt South.

# Population

## Aboriginal children and young people

In 2016, there were approximately 40,000 Aboriginal children and young people under 18 years of age in WA. Aboriginal children and young people represent 6.8 per cent of the total population of children and young people in WA (Table 5).

**Table 5: Estimated residential population including children and young people aged 0 to 17 years by Aboriginal status, number and per cent, WA, 2016**

	Aboriginal		Non-Aboriginal		Total
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number
0 to 17 years	39,779	6.8	549,089	93.2	588,868
<b>Total population</b>	100,512	3.9	2,455,466	96.1	2,555,978
Children and young people as a proportion of population (per cent)	39.6		22.4		23.0

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics 2018, *3238.0.55.001 - Estimates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, June 2016*

Note: The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) uses the results of the Census as the main data source to produce population estimates for Aboriginal Australians. Estimates of the population of Aboriginal peoples in the Census are undercounted for a variety of reasons. The estimated resident population (ERP) presented in Table 5 is adjusted for the net undercount. For more information, refer the ABS *3238.0.55.001 - Estimates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, June 2016*.

The proportion of children and young people in the Aboriginal population is almost double that of the proportion of children and young people in the non-Aboriginal population (39.6% compared to 22.4%).<sup>4</sup> The primary reasons for this are lower life expectancy and higher fertility rates of Aboriginal people compared to non-Aboriginal people.<sup>5</sup>

With respect to geographic distribution, around 58 per cent of Aboriginal children and young people aged 0 to 17 years live in regional and remote areas compared to 20 per cent of non-Aboriginal children and young people (Table 6). Most notably, nearly one-in-four (23.5%) Aboriginal children and young people live in very remote parts of WA.

4 Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2018, *Estimates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, June 2016 cat. no. 3238.0*, Estimated resident Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Non-Indigenous populations, States and Territories, Single year of age, Table 5 – Western Australia, ABS.

5 Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2012, *4725.0 - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Wellbeing: A focus on children and youth*, Apr 2011, ABS.

# Population

**Table 6: Children and young people aged 0 to 17 years by remoteness area and Aboriginal status, number and per cent, WA, 2016**

	Non-Aboriginal		Aboriginal		Total*	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
Major cities**	402,764	79.5	12,558	41.7	435,609	76.8
Inner regional	45,820	9.0	2,300	7.6	51,690	9.1
Outer regional	36,005	7.1	4,268	14.2	43,512	7.7
Remote	15,483	3.1	3,862	12.8	21,547	3.8
Very remote	6,114	1.2	7,083	23.5	14,363	2.5
<b>Total*</b>	<b>506,479</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>30,141</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>567,163</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics 2018, *Census Tablebuilder: Dataset – Cultural Diversity and remoteness area*

Note: This data is from the 2016 Census which has not been adjusted for undercounting. The estimated resident population (ERP) in Table 5 has been adjusted for the net undercount and Australian residents temporarily overseas however does not provide single age data by remoteness area for WA. Totals in the table are per the ABS and may not sum exactly.

\* Totals include Aboriginal status not stated and no usual address and therefore do not sum.

\*\* The Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS) defines remoteness areas into five classes of relative remoteness across Australia using a combination of population sizes (to define urban centres) and distances from urban centres. In this classification, Mandurah is included in the Major Cities category. Refer to the ABS, [1270.0.55.005 - Australian Statistical Geography Standard \(ASGS\): Volume 5 - Remoteness Structure, July 2016](#) for more information.

# Population

## Disability

The ABS estimates that in 2015, 54,400 WA children and young people aged 0 to 24 years had a reported disability (Table 7).<sup>6</sup> This represented 6.6 per cent of the total population of 0 to 24 year-olds in 2015.<sup>7</sup>

**Table 7: Children and young people aged 0 to 24 years with disability by age group and type of disability, number, WA and Australia, 2015**

	WA		Australia	
	Reported disability	Profound or severe core activity limitation*	Reported disability	Profound or severe core activity limitation*
0 to 4 years	5,100**	2,600**	52,800	31,000
5 to 14 years	23,700	13,200	274,600	145,100
15 to 24 years	25,600	8,900	249,600	78,300
<b>Total</b>	<b>54,400</b>	<b>24,700</b>	<b>577,000</b>	<b>254,400</b>

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics 2017, *Disability, Ageing and Carers, cat. no. 4430.0*, Table 3.1  
All persons, disability status, by age and sex—2015, estimate – Western Australia and Australia

\* 'Profound or severe core activity limitation' indicates the person is unable to do, or always needs help with, a core activity task such as communication, mobility or self-care.

\*\* Estimate has a relative standard error of 25 to 50 per cent and should be used with caution.

In Australia, 72 per cent of 0 to four year-olds with disability have a sensory or speech disability (including loss of sight or loss of hearing). In the five to 14 year-old age group 64 per cent of children and young people with disability have an intellectual disability.<sup>8</sup>

6 The ABS notes that for the Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers a person has a disability if they report they have a limitation, restriction or impairment, which has lasted, or is likely to last, for at least six months and restricts everyday activities.

7 Calculated by the Office of the Commissioner for Children and Young People WA from ABS, *3101.0 Australian Demographic Statistics, June 2019*.

8 Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2019, *4430.0 - Disability, Ageing and Carers, Australia: Summary of Findings, 2018*, Table 3.1: Children aged 0-14 years with disability, living in households, Disability group by Sex and Age – 2018, Estimates, ABS.

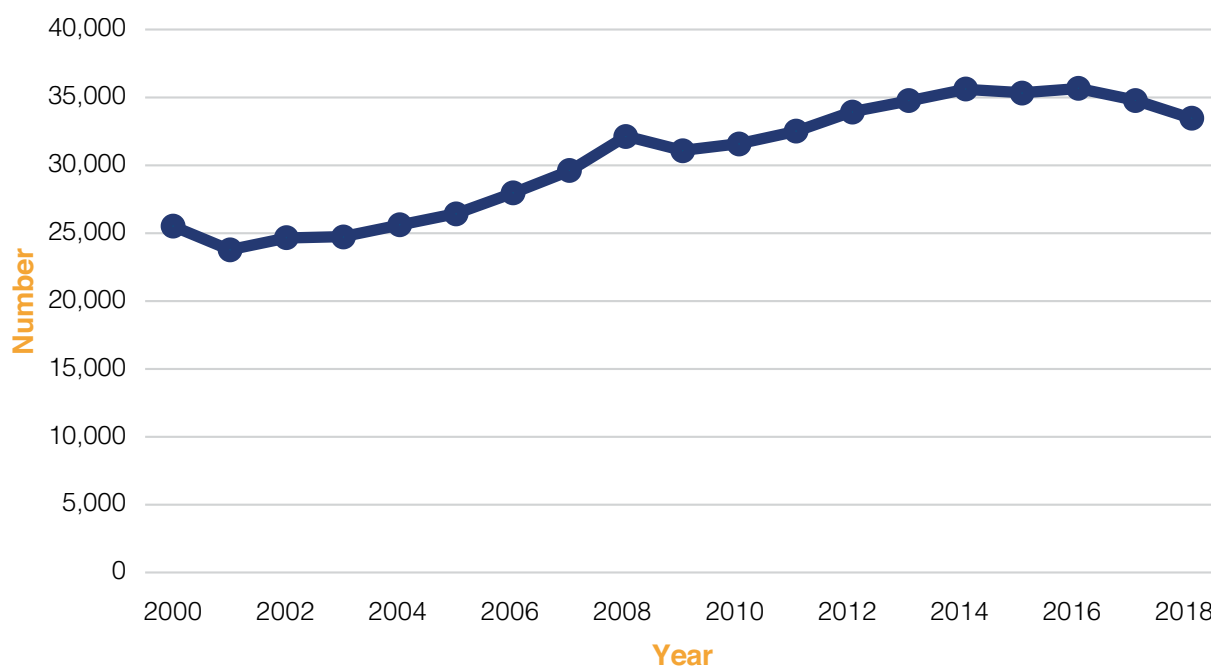
# Population

## Births

After declining since the 1960s, WA's fertility rate increased in the early 2000s to reach 2.095 babies per woman in 2008 (a rate last reached in the late 1970s). Since 2008, the total fertility rate in WA has again started to decline and in 2018 was at 1.759 babies per woman.<sup>9</sup>

There has been a strong and steady increase in the number of WA births during the 2000s with the number stabilising around 35,000 births per year in the early 2010s. More recently, the number of births has declined with fewer births registered in 2018 (33,459) than in 2017 (34,768), representing a 3.8 per cent decrease for that period (Figure 2).<sup>10</sup>

**Figure 2: Total births, number, WA, 2000 to 2018**



Source: WA Department of Justice 2019, *WA Registry of Births Deaths and Marriages*

The median age of all mothers for births registered in WA in 2018 was 31.2 years (an increase in the median age of 30.3 recorded in 2008), while the median age of fathers was 33.3 years (also a slight increase in the median age of 32.8 years recorded in 2008).<sup>11</sup>

9 Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2019, *3301.0 Births, Australia, 2018*, ABS.Stat, Fertility by age, by state, ABS.

10 WA Department of Justice 2019, *WA Registry of Births Deaths and Marriages - Statistics*, WA Government.

11 Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2019, *3301.0 Births, Australia, 2018*, cat. no. 3301.0, ABS.Stat Dataset, Confinements, by nuptiality, by state, ABS.

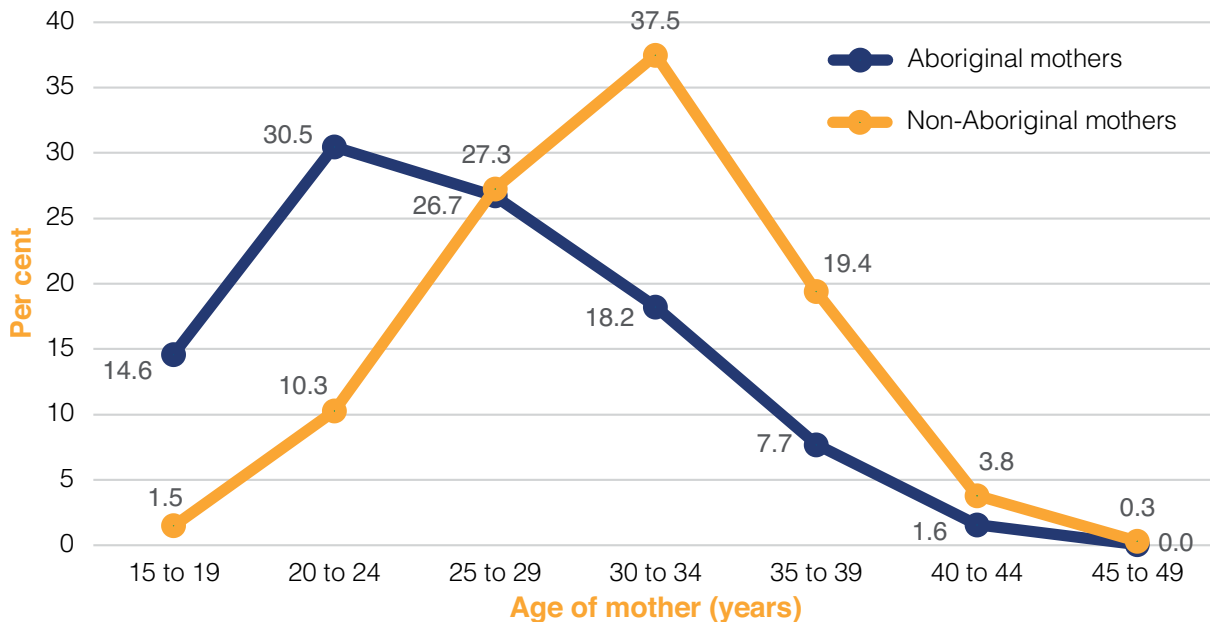
# Population

There were 2,725 births (8.2% of all births) registered in WA during 2018 where at least one parent recorded themselves as Aboriginal on their child's birth registration form.

In general, Aboriginal mothers give birth at a younger age than non-Aboriginal mothers. The median age of Aboriginal women who registered a birth in WA in 2018 was 26.2 years, five years less than the median age of all mothers (31.2 years) but an increase to the median age of 24.7 years recorded for Aboriginal mothers in 2008.<sup>12</sup>

Correspondingly, the highest proportion of Aboriginal women giving birth is in the age group 20 to 24 years (30.5%) compared with 30 to 34 years for non-Aboriginal women (37.5%) (Figure 3).

**Figure 3: Proportion of overall births by Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal mothers by age group, per cent, WA, 2018**



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics 2019, *Births, Australia, 2018*, cat. no. 3301.0, ABS.Stat – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander fertility, by age, by state

Over the past decade, the total number of births in the 15 to 19 year-old cohort has declined by 54.6 per cent, from 1,686 in 2008 to 765 in 2018. The number of births to Aboriginal mothers in this age group has decreased from 448 in 2008 to 306 in 2018 (-31.7%).<sup>13</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2019, *3301.0 Births, Australia, 2018*, cat. no. 3301.0, ABS.Stat Dataset, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander fertility, by age, by state, ABS.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

# Population

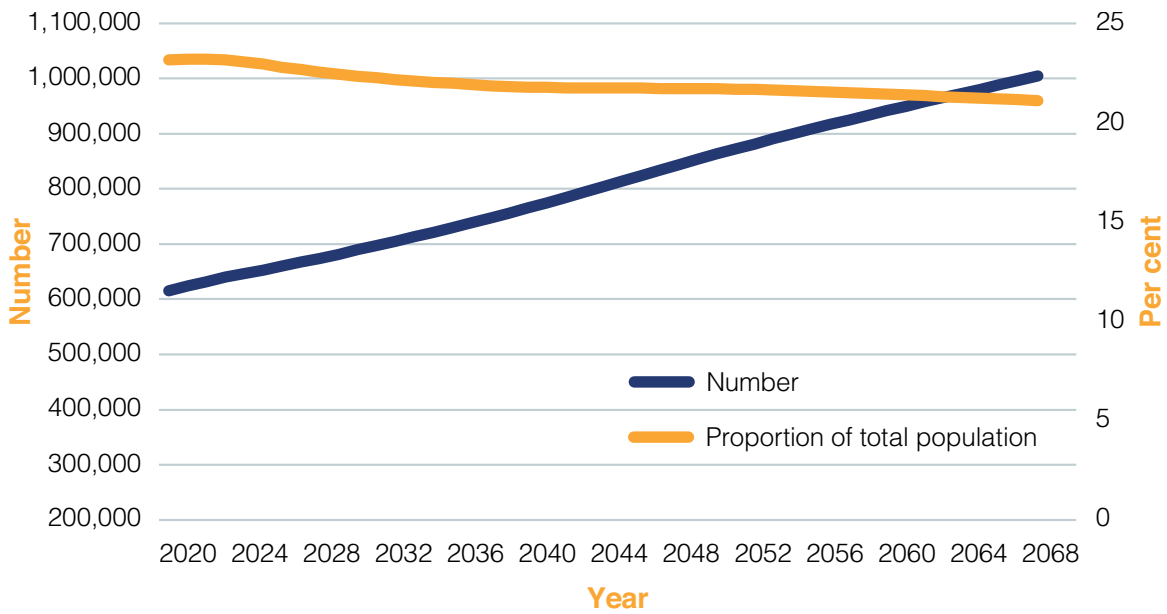
## Projected population growth

The ABS projects that WA's population will reach almost 4.8 million people in 2066, if fertility, life expectancy and migration remain largely in line with current trends.<sup>14</sup>

The number of children and young people in WA is projected to reach over 1 million by 2066 representing a 63.3 per cent increase.<sup>15,16</sup>

The proportion of children and young people in the overall population is projected to decrease from 23.2 per cent to 21.1 per cent due to Australia's ageing population (Figure 4).

**Figure 4: Projected population of children and young people aged 0 to 17 years, number and per cent of total population, WA, 2020 to 2066**



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics 2018, *3222.0 - Population Projections, Australia 2017 (base) - 2066*, Table B5. Population projections, By age and sex, Western Australia - Series B

14 Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2018, *3222.0 - Population Projections, Australia 2017 (base) - 2066*, Table B5. Population projections, By age and sex, Western Australia - Series B, ABS.

15 Ibid.

16 This represents a lower population projection using these assumptions than the previous (2013) release of the *3222.0 - Population Projections, Australia, 2012 (base) to 2101*.



# Family, childcare and education

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There are over 380,000 households with children in WA and two-thirds have children under the age of 15.

## Family composition

The most recent Census data reports that there were 385,482 households with one or more children in WA in 2016.

Of these households, 244,566 or 63.4 per cent were couple families with dependent children and about 62,230 or 16.1 per cent were single-parent families with dependent children (Table 8).

The majority of single parents in WA are female (81.7 per cent).<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2018, ABS Census 2016, *Quick Data, WA*, ABS.

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# Family, childcare and education

**Table 8: Families with children by family composition, number and per cent, WA, 2016**

	Couple families		Single-parent families		Total
	Number	Per cent of total	Number	Per cent of total	Number
With dependent children under 15 years*	205,891	53.4	48,488	12.6	254,379
With dependent children over 15 years and no children under 15 years	38,675	10.0	13,742	3.6	52,417
<b>Total with dependent children**</b>	<b>244,566</b>	<b>63.4</b>	<b>62,230</b>	<b>16.1</b>	<b>306,796</b>
With non-dependent children***	47,574	12.3	31,112	8.1	78,686
<b>Total families with children</b>	<b>292,140</b>	<b>75.8</b>	<b>93,342</b>	<b>24.2</b>	<b>385,482</b>

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing 2016, compiled using Table Builder – Dataset 2016 Census: Selected Family Characteristics

\* Includes families with children under 15 years and dependent children over 15 years.

\*\* Dependent children include children under 15 (dependent by definition) and dependent students aged 15 to 24 years.

\*\*\* This can include adult children (over 25 years) living with a parent.

## Childcare

Almost 50 per cent (47.6%) of WA children aged less than two years and more than 60 per cent (61.9%) of children aged two to three years attend either formal or informal childcare. This includes all types of formal day care and informal care, which could be provided by a grandparent or other relative who is not a parent or guardian.

Childcare arrangements become less common once children start formal schooling (Table 9).

**Table 9: Type of care attended by children aged 0 to 12 years by age group and type of care arrangement, number and per cent, WA, 2017**

	Under 2 years		2 to 3 years		4 to 5 years		6 to 12 years	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
<b>Usually attended care</b>	<b>31,300</b>	<b>47.6</b>	<b>45,600</b>	<b>61.9</b>	<b>38,000</b>	<b>55.5</b>	<b>97,000</b>	<b>41.3</b>
Formal care only <sup>a)</sup>	9,400*	14.3*	18,100	24.6	9,000	13.1	14,700	6.3
Informal care only <sup>b)</sup>	14,300	21.7	11,400	15.5	21,800	31.8	77,600	33.0

## Family, childcare and education

	Under 2 years		2 to 3 years		4 to 5 years		6 to 12 years	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
Both formal and informal care	7,500*	11.4*	15,400	20.9	5,500*	8.0*	3,700*	1.6*
<b>No usual care arrangement</b>	<b>36,200</b>	<b>55.0</b>	<b>24,300</b>	<b>33.0</b>	<b>34,300</b>	<b>50.1</b>	<b>139,500</b>	<b>59.4</b>
<b>Total <sup>c)</sup></b>	<b>65,800</b>		<b>73,700</b>		<b>68,500</b>		<b>234,800</b>	

Source: ABS 2018, *Childhood Education and Care, Australia, June 2017*, cat. no. 4402.0, Table 1 Children aged 0–12 years: Care usually attended by age of child – Western Australia

\* Estimate has a relative standard error of 25 per cent to 50 per cent and should be used with caution.

Notes:

- Includes formal care such as long day care, family day care, before and/or after school care and other.
- Includes informal care provided by a relative such as grandparent, non-resident parent, brother/sister or other relative.
- Cells in this table have been randomly adjusted to avoid the release of confidential data. Discrepancies may occur between sums of the component items and totals.

### Education

More than two-thirds of WA students are educated in government schools.

Government schools are the largest provider of school education in WA. Between Semester 1 2018 and Semester 1 2019, the number of school students enrolled in WA rose slightly from 455,333 to 460,035, an increase of 1.0 per cent (Table 10).

**Table 10: Students in government and non-government schools by year level, number and per cent, WA, Semester 1 2019**

	Government		Non-government		Total
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	
Kindergarten	24,397	71.1	9,899	28.9	34,296
Pre-primary	25,839	74.6	8,796	25.4	34,635
Years 1 to 6	150,816	72.8	56,326	27.2	207,142
Years 7 to 12	110,147	59.9	73,815	40.1	183,962
<b>Total</b>	<b>311,199</b>	<b>67.6</b>	<b>148,836</b>	<b>32.4</b>	<b>460,035</b>

Source: WA Department of Education 2019, *Summary Statistics of Schools and Full-Time Students*

## Family, childcare and education

In 2019, there were 812 government schools (809 in 2018) and 309 non-government schools (307 in 2018) operating in WA.<sup>18</sup>

The largest proportion of students (79%) was enrolled in the metropolitan area comprising the North and South metropolitan education regions, with a total of 364,770 students. The remaining 95,265 students were enrolled in schools in regional and remote education regions, with a high proportion (9.6%) attending schools in the South West education region (Table 11).

**Table 11: Primary and secondary students by education region, number and per cent, WA, Semester 1 2019**

	Primary <sup>a)</sup>	Secondary	Total students	Proportion of all students	Change 2018 to 2019
Education region	Number	Number	Number	Per cent	Per cent
North metropolitan	105,225	75,342	180,567	39.3	1.0
South metropolitan	112,130	72,073	184,203	40.0	1.8
<b>Total metropolitan</b>	<b>217,355</b>	<b>147,415</b>	<b>364,770</b>	<b>79.3</b>	<b>1.4</b>
Goldfields	6,492	3,787	10,279	2.2	-3.6
Kimberley	5,001	2,639	7,640	1.7	-0.8
Mid West	7,412	4,570	11,982	2.6	-1.2
Pilbara	7,288	3,255	10,543	2.3	2.5
South West	25,686	18,645	44,331	9.6	0.5
Wheatbelt	6,839	3,651	10,490	2.3	-2.9
<b>Total regional/remote</b>	<b>58,718</b>	<b>36,547</b>	<b>95,265</b>	<b>20.7</b>	<b>-0.4</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>276,073</b>	<b>183,962</b>	<b>460,035</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>

Source: WA Department of Education 2019, *Students by Education Region and Education Level*

a) Primary includes pre-kindergarten, kindergarten, pre-primary students and primary students

From 2018 to 2019, student numbers increased by a combined total of 1.4 per cent in the two metropolitan education regions while regional and remote education regions recorded a combined total decrease of 0.4 per cent. The Pilbara and South West regions recorded increases of 2.5 and 0.5 per cent respectively.

<sup>18</sup> WA Department of Education 2019, *School information – statistical reports*, Summary Statistics of Schools and Full-Time Students, WA Government.

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There were 31,007 Aboriginal students enrolled in Semester 1 2019, representing 6.7 per cent of all students.<sup>19</sup> There are significant differences across the regions with Aboriginal students representing 64.7 per cent of students in the Kimberley region (highest proportion of all education regions in WA) and 3.3 per cent of students in the North metropolitan education region (highest and lowest proportion in WA (Table 12)). At March 2019, 3,720 WA students were registered to be educated at home.<sup>20</sup>

**Table 12: Students by education region and Aboriginal status, number and per cent, WA, Semester 1 2019**

Education region	Aboriginal		Non-Aboriginal		Total
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	
North metropolitan	5,900	3.3	174,667	96.7	180,567
South metropolitan	8,354	4.5	175,849	95.5	184,203
<b>Total metropolitan</b>	<b>14,254</b>	<b>3.9</b>	<b>350,516</b>	<b>96.1</b>	<b>364,770</b>
Goldfields	2,079	20.2	8,200	79.8	10,279
Kimberley	4,942	64.7	2,698	35.3	7,640
Mid West	2,747	22.9	9,235	77.1	11,982
Pilbara	2,955	28.0	7,588	72.0	10,543
South West	2,484	5.6	41,847	94.4	44,331
Wheatbelt	1,546	14.7	8,944	85.3	10,490
<b>Total regional/remote</b>	<b>16,753</b>	<b>17.6</b>	<b>78,512</b>	<b>82.4</b>	<b>95,265</b>
<b>All regions</b>	<b>31,007</b>	<b>6.7</b>	<b>429,028</b>	<b>93.3</b>	<b>460,035</b>

Source: WA Department of Education 2019, *Students by Education Region and Education Level (CSV file)*

### Early development

According to the 2018 Australian Early Development Census (AEDC),<sup>21</sup> 6,369 WA children were assessed as vulnerable on one or more developmental domains upon entering primary school.<sup>22</sup>

19 WA Department of Education 2019, *School information – statistical reports*, Aboriginal student numbers by Education Sector and Education Region, WA Government.

20 WA Department of Education 2019, *Annual Report 2018–19*, WA Government, p. 189.

21 The Australian Early Development Census measures the development of children in Australia in their first year of full-time school. Data is collected using an adapted version of the Early Development Instrument which consists of approximately 100 questions across five key domains which are closely linked to child health, education and social outcomes. Children receive a score between zero and ten for each domain and children falling below the 10<sup>th</sup> percentile are categorised as ‘developmentally vulnerable’. AEDC scores are calculated for each domain for each individual child where enough valid responses have been recorded.

22 Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) 2019, *Australian Early Development Census National Report 2018*, AEDC.

## Family, childcare and education

This represents 19.4 per cent of children assessed in 2018, which is a decrease from 23.0 per cent of children assessed in 2012.

**Table 13: Children developmentally vulnerable on one or more domains, number and per cent, WA and Australia, 2012 and 2015**

	WA		Australia	
	Number*	Per cent	Number*	Per cent
<b>2012</b>	7,048	23.0	59,933	22.0
<b>2015</b>	6,895	21.3	62,960	22.0
<b>2018</b>	6,369	19.4	63,448	21.7

Source: Australian Early Development Census, *Data Explorer*

\* Total number of children with a valid AEDC score. WA had an overall participation rate of 99.3 per cent in 2018. Source: Social Research Centre 2019, *2018 AEDC Data Collection Technical Report*, Social Research Centre p. 70.

The proportion of children developmentally vulnerable on one or more domains is lower in WA (19.4%) than in Australia overall (21.7%) (Table 13).

Almost one-half of Aboriginal children (45.2%) were developmentally vulnerable on one or more domains. This figure has decreased since 2015 (47.5%) but is almost three times the incidence for non-Aboriginal children (17.6%).<sup>23</sup>

In WA, 38.5 per cent of children living in very remote areas are developmentally vulnerable on one or more domains compared to 18.4 per cent of children who live in the metropolitan area.<sup>24</sup>

Over the last decade, the percentage of children who are developmentally vulnerable on one or more domains has decreased in the Perth metropolitan area by 5.1 percentage points from 23.5 per cent to 18.4 per cent but has increased in very remote areas by 3.2 percentage points from 35.3 per cent to 38.5 per cent.<sup>25</sup>

In 2018, almost one-tenth (9.4%) of WA children and young people were developmentally vulnerable on two or more domains. This is a reduction of 1.1 percentage points from 2015 (10.5%). A number of areas across WA have recorded reductions in the proportion of children who are developmentally vulnerable on two or more domains since 2015.

23 WA Department of Education 2019, WA AEDC data - source Australian Early Development Census 2009–2018, Custom report provided to the Commissioner for Children and Young people (unpublished).

24 Ibid.

25 Ibid.

# Family, childcare and education

## Developmentally vulnerable children on two or more domains – WA (2018)

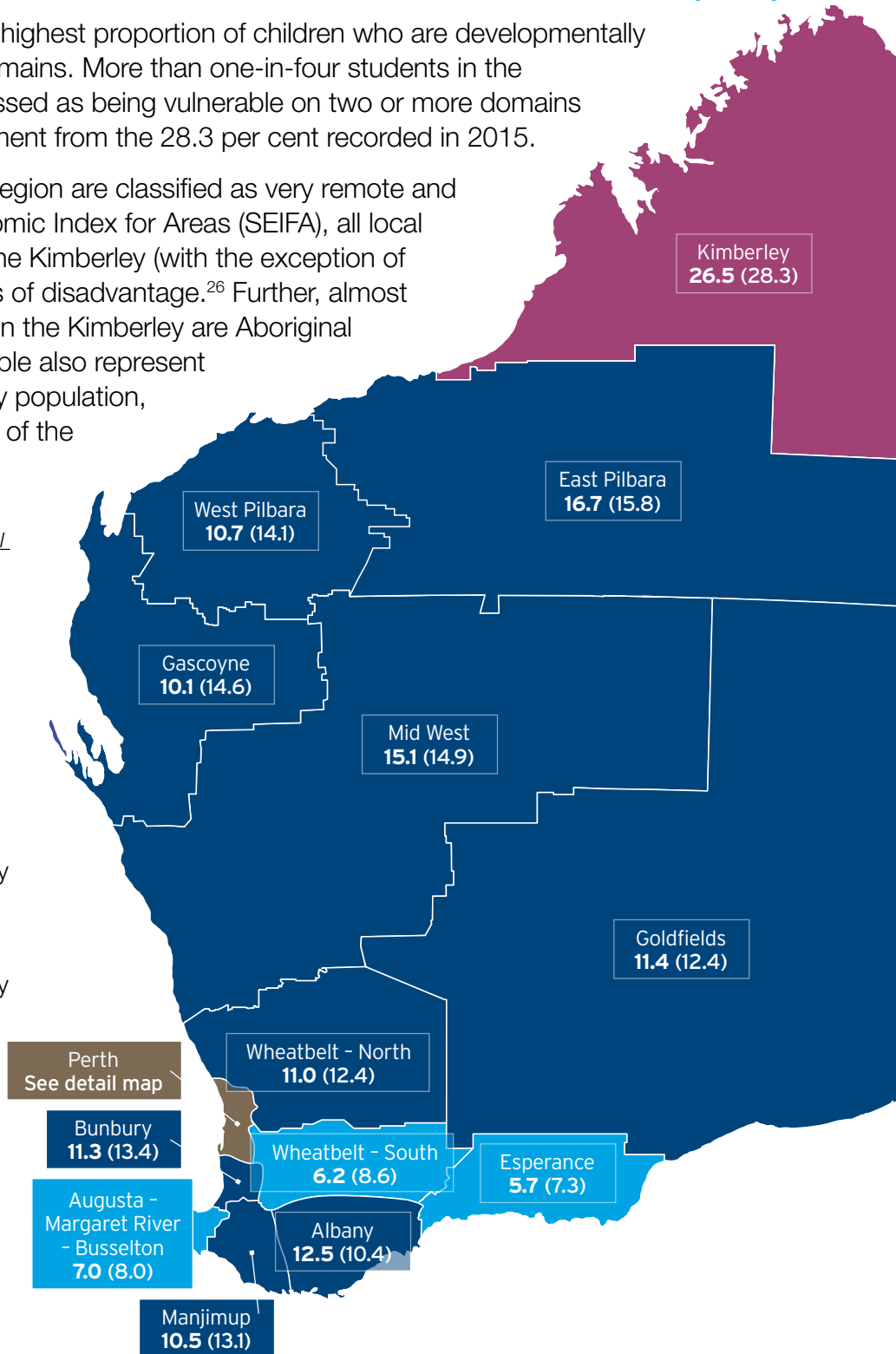
The Kimberley region has the highest proportion of children who are developmentally vulnerable on two or more domains. More than one-in-four students in the Kimberley (26.5%) were assessed as being vulnerable on two or more domains in 2018, which is an improvement from the 28.3 per cent recorded in 2015.

Large parts of the Kimberley region are classified as very remote and according to the Socio-Economic Index for Areas (SEIFA), all local government areas (LGAs) in the Kimberley (with the exception of Broome LGA) have high levels of disadvantage.<sup>26</sup> Further, almost two-thirds of school entrants in the Kimberley are Aboriginal (see Table 12). Aboriginal people also represent 41.6 per cent of the Kimberley population, in comparison to 3.1 per cent of the WA population overall.<sup>27</sup>

Source: Australian Early Development Census 2019, *Public table by Statistical Area Level (SA3) 2009–2018*

\* Data for Christmas Island and Cocos (Keeling) Islands is not included due to the relatively small number of children with valid scores.

- Below 10 per cent of children are developmentally vulnerable
  - 10 to 20 per cent of children are developmentally vulnerable
  - Greater than 20 per cent of children are developmentally vulnerable
- ( ) Data in brackets is 2015 result

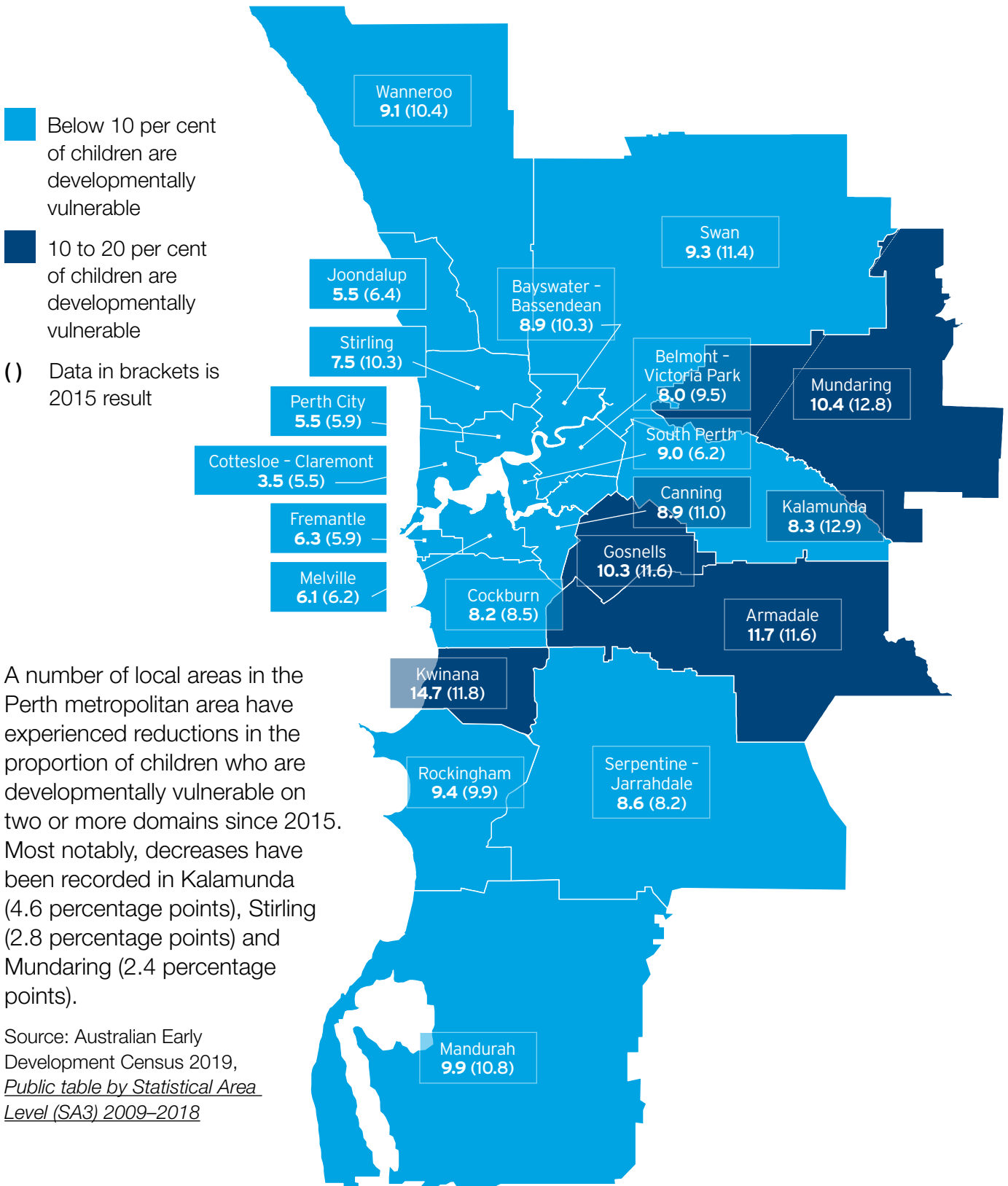


26 Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2018, *2033.0.55.001 Socio-Economic Indexes for Australia (SEIFA), 2016*, Table 1 Local Government Area (LGA) SEIFA Summary, 2016, ABS.

27 Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2018, *2016 Census QuickStats: Kimberley*, ABS.

# Family, childcare and education

## Developmentally vulnerable children on two or more domains – metropolitan area (2018)



A number of local areas in the Perth metropolitan area have experienced reductions in the proportion of children who are developmentally vulnerable on two or more domains since 2015. Most notably, decreases have been recorded in Kalamunda (4.6 percentage points), Stirling (2.8 percentage points) and Mundaring (2.4 percentage points).

Source: Australian Early Development Census 2019, *Public table by Statistical Area Level (SA3) 2009-2018*



# Vulnerability

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At 30 June 2019, 6,824 children and young people were on the public housing wait list.

## Housing and homelessness

More than two-thirds (69.8%) of WA households live in an owner-occupied dwelling and less than one-third (27.8%) of households live in a rented dwelling.<sup>28</sup>

In 2017–18, 16.8 per cent of WA households spent more than 30 per cent of their gross household income on housing costs. This proportion has increased by 3.5 percentage points since 2007–08 (13.3%).<sup>29</sup>

At 30 June 2019, there were 23,254 applicants on the public housing wait list including 6,824 applicants (29.3%) aged 0 to 17 years (Table 14).

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28 Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2019, *4130.0 Housing Occupancy and Costs: 2017-18*, Table 17.3 Household Estimates, Selected household characteristics, Western Australia, 1994–95 to 2017–18, ABS.

29 Ibid.

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# Vulnerability

**Table 14: Children and young people aged 0 to 17 years on public housing wait list by number of applications and applicants, number and per cent, WA, 2016 to 2019**

	Total applicants (all ages)	Applicants (0 to 17 years)	Proportion of all applicants	Applications (0 to 17 years)
	Number	Number	Per cent	Number
30 June 2016	36,167	11,963	33.1	6,058
30 June 2017	29,544	9,070	30.7	4,532
30 June 2018	23,637	6,892	29.2	3,311
30 June 2019	23,254	6,824	29.3	3,325

Source: Department of Communities (Housing), custom reports (unpublished)

Note: Children and young people under 18 are considered applicants when their parent(s) or guardians are applying for housing to accommodate them.<sup>30</sup> In a small number of cases the young person (aged 16 to 17 years) can be applying in their own right.

There has been a significant decrease in the number of children and young people on the public housing wait list over the last four years from 11,963 at 30 June 2016 to 6,824 children and young people at 30 June 2019 (Table 14).

During 2018–19, 2,786 WA households were accommodated in public housing (3,511 in 2017–18). On average, households waited 95 weeks to be housed.<sup>31</sup>

According to the ABS 2016 Census, at least 1,949 WA children and young people are homeless.<sup>32</sup> This figure is known to be underestimated due to the often hidden nature of youth homelessness.<sup>33</sup>

30 It is generally recommended that children less than five years of age of different sexes may reasonably share a bedroom and children less than 18 years of age and of the same sex may reasonably share a bedroom. There should be no more than two persons per bedroom. Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2019, *6553.0 - Survey of Income and Housing, User Guide, Australia, 2017–18 Housing Statistics*, ABS.

31 Department of Communities 2019, *Housing Authority 2018–19 Annual Report*, WA Government.

32 Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2018, *2049.0 - Census of Population and Housing: Estimating homelessness, 2016*, Homelessness Operational Groups and other Marginal Housing, Western Australia–Sex by age of person–2016, ABS.

33 Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2018, *2049.0 - Census of Population and Housing: Estimating homelessness, 2016*, Explanatory Notes, ABS.

# Vulnerability

**Table 15: Children and young people aged 0 to 18 years reported as homeless by age group and gender, number, WA, 2016**

	0 to 11 years	12 to 18 years	Total
Male	636	350	986
Female	576	398	974
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,208</b>	<b>741</b>	<b>1,949</b>

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics 2016, *Census of Population and Housing: Estimating homelessness*, Table 4.6 Homeless Operational Groups and Other Marginal Housing, Western Australia–Sex by age of person–2016

Note: Cells in this table have been randomly adjusted to avoid the release of confidential data. As a result cells may not add to the totals.

In 2018–19, 7,169 children and young people aged 0 to 17 years presented at WA specialist homelessness services.<sup>34</sup>

The single most common reason for children and young people to be seeking housing and homelessness assistance is family and domestic violence.<sup>35</sup>

## Child poverty

Up to 17 per cent of children and young people in WA are estimated to be living below the poverty line.

Based on analysis by the National Centre for Social and Economic Modelling (NATSEM), the child poverty rate in WA in 2015–16 was 17.0 per cent, compared to 17.2 per cent Australia-wide.<sup>36</sup>

This equates to approximately 86,000 children and young people in WA aged 0 to 14 years who are living in poverty.

34 Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) 2019, *Specialist Homelessness Services Collection data cubes 2011–18*, SHSC Geographical Location of client, AIHW.

35 Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) 2019, *Specialist Homelessness Services Collection data cubes 2011–18*, SHSC Demographics data cube, AIHW.

36 Miranti R et al. 2018, *Child Social Exclusion, Poverty And Disadvantage In Australia*, National Centre for Social and Economic Modelling, Institute for Governance and Policy Analysis (IGPA), University of Canberra. The poverty line is set at half the median equivalised household disposable income, adjusted for housing costs. This definition was applied to the ABS Survey of Income and Housing 2015/2016 to reveal the patterns of child poverty at the national, state and capital cities/outside capital cities.

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**Table 16: Poverty rates for children and young people under 15 years of age by jurisdiction, per cent, Australia, 2015–16**

	Percentage
<b>NSW</b>	17.9
<b>VIC</b>	18.6
<b>QLD</b>	15.7
<b>SA</b>	17.3
<b>WA</b>	<b>17.0</b>
<b>TAS</b>	14.7
<b>NT*</b>	10.8
<b>ACT</b>	11.2
<b>Australia</b>	<b>17.2</b>

Source: NATSEM, *Child Social Exclusion, Poverty And Disadvantage In Australia*

Note: Calculated based on 50 per cent of the Australian median disposable income (after housing costs)

\* Northern Territory estimates are mainly representative of urban areas only. Remote and sparsely settled areas are excluded.

There is significant variation in poverty rates across WA with 69.7 per cent of children and young people in the East Pilbara estimated to be living in poverty compared to 3.3 per cent of children and young people in the Perth suburb of City Beach.<sup>37</sup>

Children in single parent families have a significantly higher risk of poverty than children living in couple families (39% compared to 13%).<sup>38</sup>

It is important to note that measures of poverty are varied and contested. Previous releases of the *Profile of Children and Young People in WA* relied on poverty rates calculated from the Household, Income and Labour Dynamics survey (HILDA). According to these calculations, the proportion of WA children and young people under 15 years who are living below the poverty line was estimated to be 7.2 per cent or 44,000.<sup>39</sup>

37 Miranti R et al. 2018, *Child Social Exclusion, Poverty And Disadvantage In Australia*, Table Appendix 2 – Child Social Exclusion and Child Poverty, Table A6. Child Social Exclusion and Child Poverty, National Centre for Social and Economic Modelling, Institute for Governance and Policy Analysis (IGPA), University of Canberra.

38 Davidson P et al 2018, *Poverty in Australia, 2018*, ACOSS/UNSW Poverty and Inequality Partnership Report No 2, ACOSS, p. 40.

39 Duncan A 2017, Child Poverty in Australia and WA, Presentation to the Commissioner for Children and Young People, Bankwest Curtin Economics Centre.

# Vulnerability

The marked difference between these two child poverty measures (17.0% versus 7.2%) for broadly the same reference period (2015/2015–16) is explained by the use of different methodologies and source data and demonstrates the need for continued development of a robust poverty measure. At this point in time, the NATSEM child poverty rate is the most robust publicly available measure of the prevalence of child poverty in WA and nationally.

## Children and young people in the child protection system

Aboriginal children and young people continue to be over-represented in both the child protection and youth justice systems.

At 30 June 2019, there were 5,379 children and young people in out-of-home care in WA, more than half of whom (54.7%) were Aboriginal. From 30 June 2018 to 30 June 2019, the total number of children and young people in care increased by 350, or 7.0 per cent (Table 17). The number of Aboriginal children and young people in care increased by 6.6 per cent and non-Aboriginal children and young people increased by 7.4 per cent.

**Table 17: Children and young people in out-of-home care by age group and Aboriginal status, number, WA, 30 June 2018 and 30 June 2019**

	30 June 2019			30 June 2018		
	Aboriginal	Non-Aboriginal	Total	Aboriginal	Non-Aboriginal	Total
Less than 1 year	109	96	<b>205</b>	113	82	<b>195</b>
1 to 4 years	653	483	<b>1,136</b>	600	434	<b>1,034</b>
5 to 9 years	891	727	<b>1,618</b>	885	675	<b>1,560</b>
10 to 14 years	900	764	<b>1,664</b>	829	719	<b>1,548</b>
15 years and older	389	367	<b>756</b>	333	359	<b>692</b>
<b>Total children and young people in care</b>	<b>2,942</b>	<b>2,437</b>	<b>5,379</b>	<b>2,760</b>	<b>2,269</b>	<b>5,029</b>

Source: Department of Communities 2019, *Annual Report 2018–19* and *Child Protection Activity Performance Report 2017–18*

Aboriginal children and young people in WA are subject to substantiated child protection notifications at a rate of 53.7 per 1,000 children and young people compared to 4.5 per 1,000 non-Aboriginal children and young people in WA.<sup>40</sup>

40 Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) 2019, *Child Protection Australia 2017–18*, Table S13: Children aged 0–17 who were the subjects of substantiations of notifications received during 2017–18, by Indigenous status, states and territories, AIHW.

# Vulnerability

## Children and young people in the youth justice system

On an average day<sup>41</sup> in 2017–18, there were 741 children and young people aged 10 to 17 years under youth justice supervision with the majority (594 or 80.2%) being supervised in the community (Table 18).

From 2016–17 to 2017–18, the number of children and young people under youth justice supervision on an average day in WA increased marginally from 732 to 741 children and young people.

The increase for the period is due to an increase in the number of children and young people in detention on an average day between 2016–17 and 2017–18 (147 up from 137). For the year 2018–19, the WA Department of Justice reported that the number of children and young people in detention on an average day has decreased again to 137.<sup>42</sup>

**Table 18: Children and young people aged 10 to 17 years under youth justice supervision in the community or detention on an average day, number and per cent, WA, 2015–16 to 2017–18**

	2017–18		2016–17		2015–16	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
Community	594	80.2	596	81.4	561	81.3
Detention	147	19.8	137	18.7	131	19.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>741</b>		<b>732</b>		<b>690</b>	

Source: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW), *Youth Justice in Australia 2017–18*, *Youth Justice in Australia 2016–17* and *Youth Justice in Australia 2015–16*

\* Children and young people in detention are held in Banksia Hill Detention Centre in Canning Vale, which is WA's only youth detention facility.

Note: The number of young people on an average day may not sum due to rounding, and because some young people may have been moved between community-based supervision and detention on the same day. Caution is to be applied when interpreting trends among small populations such as these.

A total of 1,630 children and young people were under youth justice supervision in WA in 2017–18.<sup>43</sup> This included 25 children under 12 years of age who were held in detention at some time during the year.<sup>44</sup>

41 The 'average day' measure is calculated by summing the number of days each young person spends under supervision during the financial year, and dividing this by the total number of days in the year. It reflects the number under supervision on any given day during the year, and indicates the average number of young people supported by the supervision system at any time. This summary measure reflects both the number of young people supervised, and the amount of time they spent under supervision. Source: AIHW 2019, *Youth Justice in Australia 2017–18*, p. 44, AIHW.

42 Department of Justice WA 2019, *Annual Report 2018/19*, WA Government, p. 27

43 Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) 2019, *Youth Justice in Australia 2017–18*, Cat. no. JUV 116, Table S1b: Young people under supervision during the year by age, states and territories, 2017–18, AIHW.

44 Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) 2019, *Youth Justice in Australia 2017–18*, Cat. no. JUV 116, Table S74b: Young people in detention during the year by age, states and territories, 2017–18, AIHW.

# Vulnerability

The rate of children and young people aged 10 to 17 years under youth justice supervision (in the community and detention) on an average day in WA has decreased from 37.9 per 10,000 children and young people in 2008–09 to 29.5 in 2017–18.<sup>45</sup> The rate of young people aged 10 to 17 years in detention on an average night in WA has also decreased, although less markedly from 6.5 to 5.9 per 10,000 children and young people.<sup>46</sup>

In 2017–18, Aboriginal children and young people in WA were 27 times more likely than non-Aboriginal children and young people to be under community supervision or in detention (293 Aboriginal children and young people per 10,000 compared with 11 non-Aboriginal children and young people per 10,000).<sup>47</sup> Furthermore, WA Aboriginal children and young people were 37 times more likely to be in detention than non-Aboriginal children and young people.<sup>48</sup>

Female children and young people are significantly less likely to be under youth justice supervision than male children and young people. On an average day in 2017–18, 16.5 per cent of children and young people under community supervision and 5.4 per cent of children and young people in detention were female.<sup>49</sup>

In 2019, AIHW released an analysis of children and young people in child protection<sup>50</sup> and under youth justice supervision. The report found that young people in the youth justice system were nine times more likely to have received child protection services than the general population.<sup>51</sup>

45 Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) 2019, *Youth Justice in Australia 2017–18*, Cat. no. JUV 116, Table S12a: Young people aged 10–17 under supervision on an average day by Indigenous status, states and territories, 2008–09 to 2017–18 (rate), AIHW.

46 Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) 2019, *Youth Justice in Australia 2017–18*, Cat. no. JUV 116, Table S85a: Young people aged 10–17 in detention on an average day by Indigenous status, states and territories, 2008–09 to 2017–18 (rate), AIHW.

47 Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) 2019, *Youth Justice in Australia 2017–18*, Cat. no. JUV 116, Table S12a: Young people aged 10–17 under supervision on an average day by Indigenous status, states and territories, 2008–09 to 2017–18 (rate), AIHW.

48 Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) 2019, *Youth Justice in Australia 2017–18*, Cat. no. JUV 116, Table S85a: Young people aged 10–17 in detention on an average day by Indigenous status, states and territories, 2008–09 to 2017–18 (rate), AIHW.

49 Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) 2019, *Youth Justice in Australia 2017–18*, Table S76a: Young people aged 10–17 in detention on an average day(a) by sex and Indigenous status, states and territories, 2017–18 and Table S38a: Young people aged 10–17 under community-based supervision on an average day(a) by sex and Indigenous status, states and territories, 2017–18, AIHW.

50 Child protection data includes investigated notifications, children under care and protection orders and children in out-of-home care (AIHW, *Youth Justice in Australia 2016–2017*, p. 2-3).

51 Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) 2019, *Young people in child protection and under youth justice supervision: 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2018*, AIHW, p. 19.



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