



### Footprints in Time - The Longitudinal Study of Indigenous Children (LSIC)

From 2008, the LSIC has been following a cohort of Indigenous children, interviewing their families each year as they grow up. The initial sample comprised of 1,671 children from two age groups: from 6 months to 2 years and 3½ years to 5 years.

This factsheet looks at some aspects of their housing experiences. Unless otherwise stated, figures reported are based on data from Waves 1 to 13 of the LSIC. This factsheet focusses on housing circumstances of families renting in the public and community housing sectors.

### Key Points

- **Most Indigenous families in Remote and Very Remote Australia rent their home from a government housing authority (public housing) or community housing organisation. In contrast, most families in urban areas own their own home or rent privately.**
- **Public and community housing shields parents from housing affordability problems.**
- **Homes in the public and community housing sectors tend to have more occupants, are more likely to require major repairs, and to have facilities which are shared between families.**
- **Parents living in community housing report relatively high levels of satisfaction with their home and the communities they live in.**

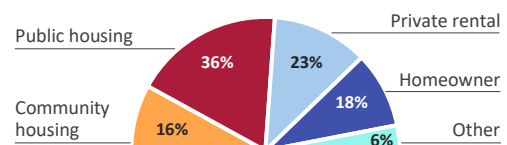
### Housing Tenures 2008 - 2020

In 2008, most LSIC families were living in a home rented from a public or community housing authority: 41 per cent in public housing and 19 per cent in community housing<sup>1</sup>. A further 20 per cent rented privately, and 14 per cent owned their own home<sup>2</sup>.

- When families changed address, there was substantial movement between public and community housing, and from those tenures into private rental.
- Very few families moved from public or community housing to homeownership.

As shown in Figure 1, those proportions are much the same if we look at tenures observed over the period 2008-2020.

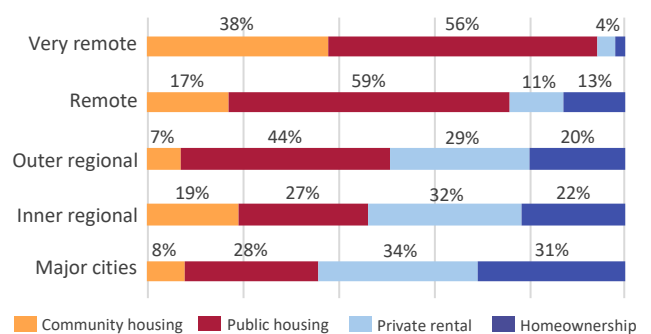
Figure 1: Housing Tenures 2008 - 2020



### Housing tenure by remoteness, 2008 - 2020

- For families living in community housing, the vast majority were renting from Indigenous Community Housing Organisations
- The proportion of families living in public housing and community housing increases sharply with remoteness (Figure 2).
- The proportion of families who are private renters and homeowners drops off sharply with remoteness.
- In Very Remote Australia, 56 per cent of the families lived in public housing and 38 per cent in community housing.

Figure 2: Housing Tenures by remoteness



Notes: Excludes a small number of 'other' tenures

### Study families' living arrangements

- Indigenous children in public and community housing were more likely to be in sole-parent families (56 per cent and 48 per cent, respectively). This compares to 44 per cent of those in private rental and just 20 per cent of homeowners.
- The public housing and community housing homes each had around 5.5 reported occupants on average, although this ranged from 2 to a maximum just over 20.
- Dwellings within each of the rental sectors typically had 3 to 4 bedrooms (an average of 3.3 bedrooms).
- Homes in public and community housing had an average of 3 children living in them, which is higher than for private renters and homeowners at 2.5 children.
- Average occupant density was slightly higher in public and community housing, both with around 1.7 occupants per bedroom, compared to around 1.5 occupants per bedroom in other tenures.

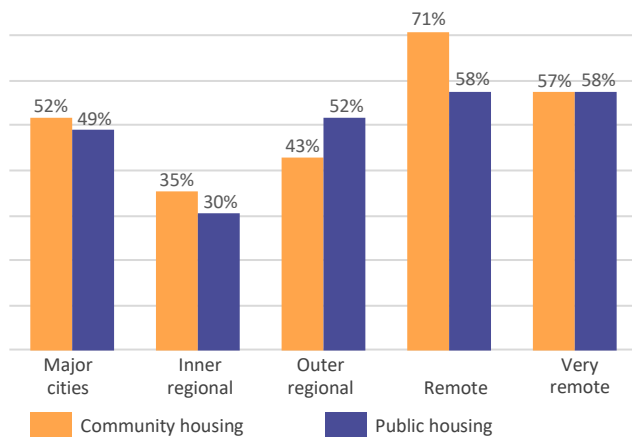
<sup>1</sup> Community housing is defined here to include a co-operative housing group.

<sup>2</sup> Homeownership includes owned outright or being purchased by the family or another household member. In three-quarters of cases in this category the family themselves were purchasing the home.

# Indigenous children living in public and community housing

## Need for repairs and sharing facilities

Figure 3: Proportion of homes needing major repairs, Wave 1 (2008)



In Wave 1 (2008), around half of the parents of the study children living in public and community housing reported that their property needed major repairs. This is markedly higher than for private rental properties. Homes in more remote areas were also more likely to need repairs (Figure 3).

In Wave 3 (2010), parents were asked if they shared the facilities in their home with other families, such as their stove, fridge or washing machine. Families in community housing were the most likely to report that they shared facilities (21 per cent), compared to those in public housing (12 per cent). Sharing facilities primarily occurred in remote areas, and was rare among private renters or homeowners.

## Money and housing affordability

From Wave 3 (2010) onwards parents and carers were asked if they had experienced a range of problems due to being short of money, of which one was being unable to make housing payments.

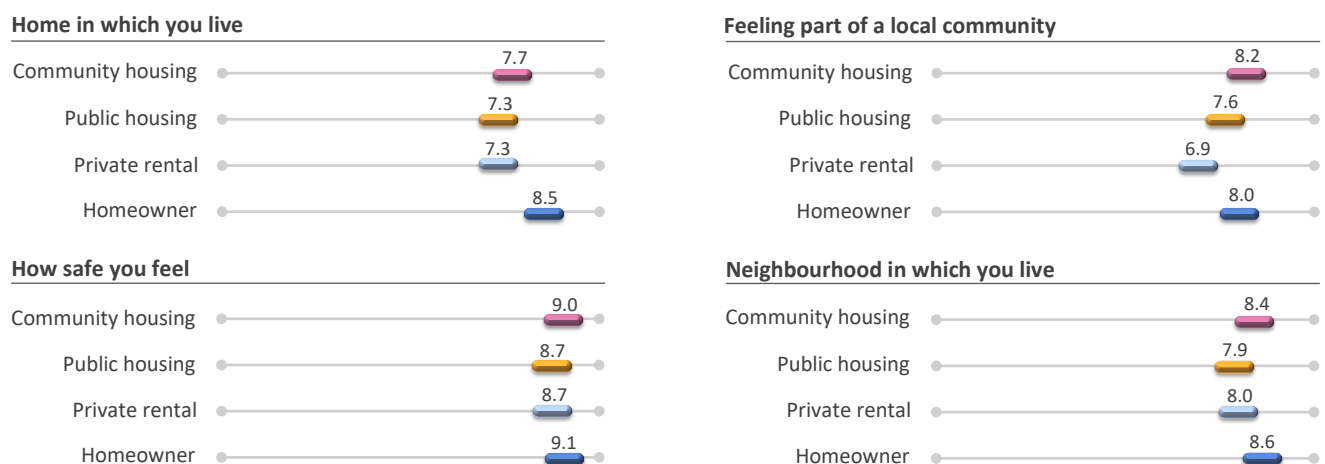
- Close to 40 per cent of public, community and private renters reported some form of money problems, compared to 25 per cent of homeowners.
- However, public and community housing shields parents from housing affordability problems. Parents in public housing (7 per cent) and community housing (9 per cent) reported being unable to meet housing costs much less often than private renters (14 per cent), and at a similar rate to homeowners (9 per cent).

## Satisfaction with aspects of housing

In Wave 5 (2012), families were asked how satisfied they were with their home and aspects of their neighbourhood using a scale from 0 (least satisfied) to 10 (most satisfied).

On average, parents in community housing report a high level of satisfaction with their housing while homeowners generally report the highest level of satisfaction. However, parents of children living in community sector housing had higher satisfaction than either public housing tenants or private renters in terms of their home, feeling safe, and their neighbourhood. They were the most satisfied of all tenures, including homeowners, with their sense of feeling part of the local community.

Figure 4: Satisfaction with aspects of home and community in which families lived



The LSIC Housing Research Report identified associations between children’s educational achievement and aspects of their housing circumstances, and these housing effects appear to be more pronounced than in other outcome domains, such as children’s physical health and social and emotional wellbeing.