



# LSIC Housing Research Report Factsheet

## Housing transitions for Indigenous children

### 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 how the study children’s housing circumstances evolved over 13 waves (2008-2020), to when the children were aged from 13 to 18 years.

### Key Points

- The study children moved house approximately once every 5 years. Being a sole parent, renting privately, and living in Outer Regional and Remote Australia (but not Very Remote Australia) are associated with moving house more often.
- Over the 13 waves there were small net movements out of more remote areas to urban and regional areas, and out of public and community housing. Private renters were the most likely to move into homeownership.
- Housing instability was found to adversely affect children’s educational achievement, but not their health and social and emotional wellbeing. The most common reasons given for moving are in fact positive, including wanting a bigger or better home and to be close to family and friends.

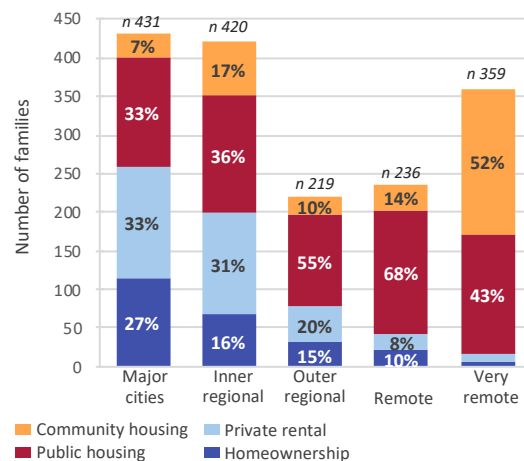
### Wave 1 (2008) family locations

The address where each child lived was classified by the Accessibility/Remoteness Index of Australia (ARIA) into one of five categories: Major Cities, Inner Regional, Outer Regional, Remote, or Very Remote Australia.

The sample is not representative of all Indigenous children, but provides good coverage of each of those areas (Figure 1).

In Wave 1, the proportion of families living in public and community housing was higher in more remote areas, while private renting and homeownership decrease with remoteness.

Figure 1: Number of families in 5 ARIA categories - by tenure



### Frequency of moving house

The survey records whether or not a child had changed address between each wave.

- On average from Waves 1 to 13, around one-fifth of the study children moved each year, equating to a move every five years<sup>1</sup>.
- When families did move house, they tended to stay in the same ARIA category. Of those initially living in a major city who changed address, 86 per cent moved to another house in a capital city. In Very Remote Australia, 79 per cent of families who moved house remained in Very Remote Australia.
- Over the 13 years there were small net movements into urban and outer regional areas, and net movements out of Remote and Very Remote Australia.
- There was substantial movement between the three rental tenures (community housing, public housing and private rental), and a net movement out of community housing and state housing and into the private rental market and homeownership.

Private renters were the most likely to move into homeownership. For families interviewed in both Wave 1 (2008) and Wave 12 (2019), almost one quarter of private renters in Wave 1 were in homeownership in Wave 12, compared to less than 5 per cent of community and public housing tenants.

The families with following characteristics were more likely to move house:

- Being in private rental housing (homeowners are the least likely to move)
- Living in Outer Regional and Remote Australia (but not Very Remote Australia)
- Being a sole parent household, as opposed to a couple household.

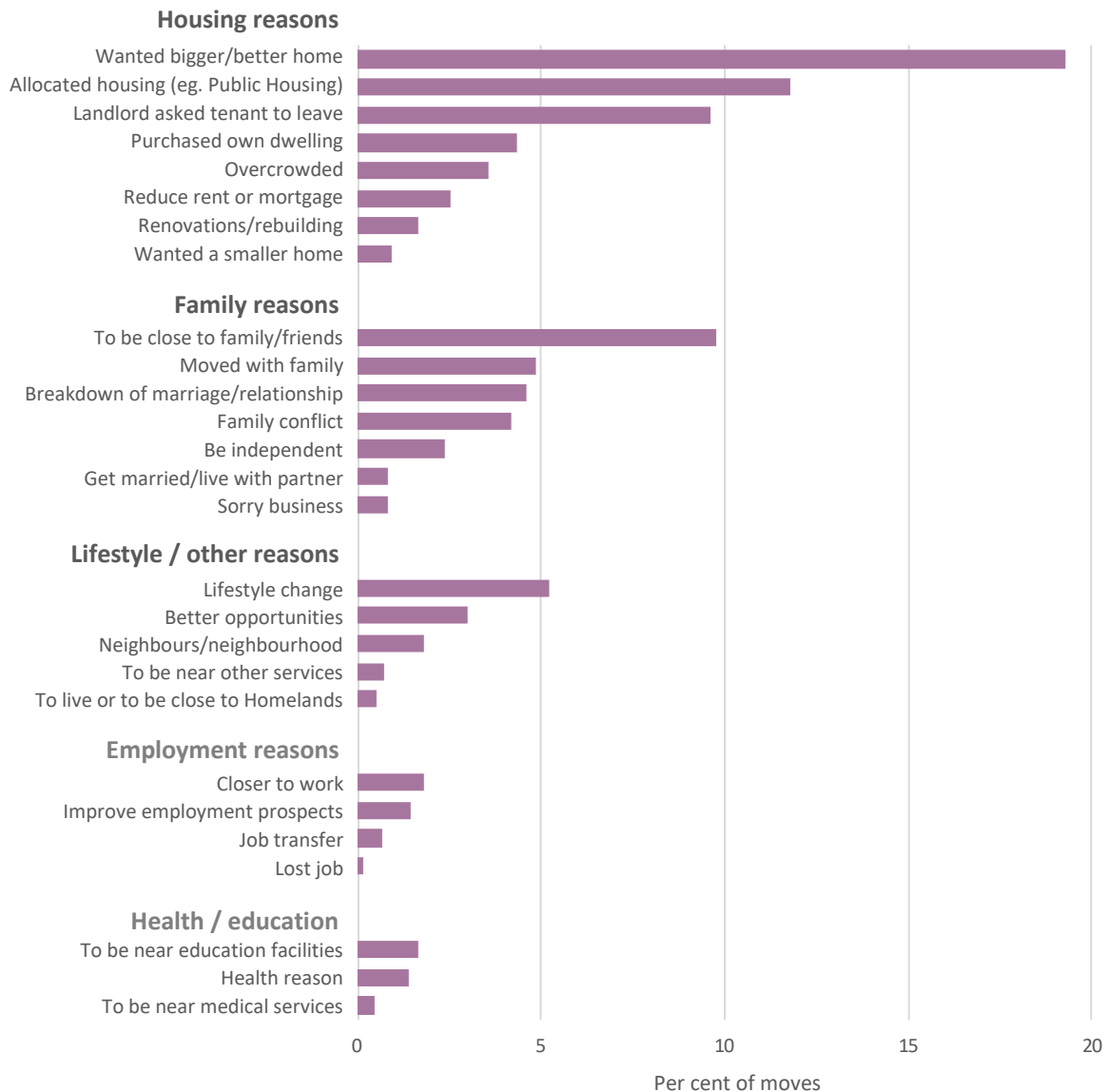
<sup>1</sup> Potentially families may have moved multiple times between interviews, which will not be captured by this measure. To the extent this occurred, the figures will underestimate the number of moves.

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## Housing instability and reasons for moving

There was no evidence that more frequent moves had a negative effect on the children’s health or social and emotional wellbeing. However, changing address does appear to be disruptive for children’s schooling: a higher number of moves in the past two waves was associated with lower NAPLAN<sup>2</sup> scores.

Figure 2: Main reason for moving: pooled data for moves from Wave 2 to Wave 13 (2009-2020)



## Experiences of homelessness

- In Waves 3 (2010) and 10 (2017), the parents and carers were asked about experiences of homelessness. Around 8 per cent reported they had been homeless at some time in the previous 5 years.
- In most cases (82 per cent), the study child had been with them while they were homeless.
- The incidence of homelessness was similar across remoteness categories. People mostly reported staying with friends and relatives while they were homeless (60 per cent).

<sup>2</sup> National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy.