

**FAMILY CHARACTERISTICS AND  
TRANSITIONS**

AUSTRALIA

EMBARGO: 11.30AM (CANBERRA TIME) TUE 15 JULY 2008

**C O N T E N T S**

	<i>page</i>
Notes .....	2
Abbreviations .....	3
Summary of findings .....	4

**T A B L E S**

List of tables .....	14
Demographic information .....	15
Labour force .....	22
Family structure .....	24
Contact arrangements .....	27
Non-resident parents .....	30
Family transitions and history .....	31

**A D D I T I O N A L I N F O R M A T I O N**

Explanatory Notes .....	40
Technical Note .....	47
Glossary .....	49

**I N Q U I R I E S**

For further information about these and related statistics, contact the National Information and Referral Service on 1300 135 070.

## NOTES

**ABOUT THIS PUBLICATION** The statistics in this publication were compiled from Family Characteristics and Family Transitions and History topics (the Family Characteristics and Transitions Survey) in the Multi-Purpose Household Survey (MPHS), which was conducted as a supplement to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Monthly Population Survey (MPS). The MPHS was conducted in both urban and rural areas in all states and territories, excluding very remote parts of Australia, from July 2006 to June 2007.

**ABOUT THIS SURVEY** The Family Characteristics topic has been conducted before, in 1982, 1992, 1997 and 2003 and the content is largely repeated, allowing comparisons over time. The Family Transitions and History topic is new for 2006–07.

The Family Characteristics topic collected information on household and family composition including demographic, labour force, and family types. A particular focus is families with children aged 0–17 years. The additional information collected for families with children included information about family structure, the social marital status of the parents, and contact arrangements for children with non-resident parents. Comparison with data obtained from the 1997 and 2003 Family Characteristics topics helps to show how the number and proportions of various family types have changed over the last decade. The Family Transitions and History topic collected information for persons aged 18 years and over about the family transitions they have experienced in their lives, such as the death or divorce of their parents, their experiences of leaving the family home, the forming of marital relationships, children born and their expectations of having children in the future.

**ROUNDING** As estimates have been rounded, discrepancies may occur between sums of the component items and totals.

**ABOUT THIS REISSUE** This publication is being reissued on 15 July 2008 to correct estimates and proportions in table 15 for "Couple relationship history" and "Number of couple relationships" data items. Other data items in table 15 are correct. Graph 5 on page 10, and associated text on pages 9 and 10 of the Summary of Findings have been updated to reflect the corrections to table 15. Table 10 has also been corrected to include 125,000 children aged under 18 years of age living with both their natural parents and in a blended family. These children were previously included in the total numbers of children presented in the table.

Brian Pink  
Australian Statistician

## ABBREVIATIONS

---

<b>ABS</b>	Australian Bureau of Statistics
<b>ACT</b>	Australian Capital Territory
<b>Aust.</b>	Australia
<b>CAI</b>	computer assisted interviewing
<b>CURF</b>	confidentialised unit record file
<b>ERP</b>	estimated resident population
<b>FCS</b>	Family Characteristics Survey
<b>FCTS</b>	Family Characteristics and Transitions Survey
<b>MPHS</b>	Multi-Purpose Household Survey
<b>MPS</b>	Monthly Population Survey
<b>no.</b>	number
<b>NSW</b>	New South Wales
<b>NT</b>	Northern Territory
<b>Qld</b>	Queensland
<b>RADL</b>	Remote Access Data Laboratory
<b>RSE</b>	relative standard error
<b>SA</b>	South Australia
<b>SE</b>	standard error
<b>Tas.</b>	Tasmania
<b>Vic.</b>	Victoria
<b>WA</b>	Western Australia

## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

### INTRODUCTION

This publication presents results from the 2006–07 Family Characteristics and Transitions Survey (FCTS) and compares them to results from the 2003 and 1997 Family Characteristics Surveys (FCS), providing information about changing patterns of family and household composition in contemporary Australia. Information on family transitions such as relationship history, relationship expectations, children born and fertility expectations is also presented in this publication.

Information is presented for the Australian population living in private dwellings, excluding very remote parts of Australia.

### HOUSEHOLDS

In 2006–07 there were 8.1 million households in Australia, of which 72% (5.8 million) contained one or more families. Families, as counted in the survey, are defined as:

- two or more persons, one of whom is at least 15 years of age, who are related by blood, marriage (registered or de facto), adoption, step or fostering; and
- who are usually resident in the same household.

Family households contained 17.7 million people, or 87% of the Australian population living in private dwellings (excluding very remote parts of Australia). The vast majority of family households contained only one family (97% of all family households in 2006–07) (table 1).

Lone person households comprised 25% of Australian households in 2006–07, with 2 million people, or 10% of the Australian population (in private dwellings) living alone. There were more women than men living alone. Neither the proportion of lone person households, nor the greater proportion of lone women compared to lone men, has changed over the last decade (table 1).

The proportion of people living in group households has declined over the past decade, with group households comprising 3% of total population living in private dwellings in Australia in 2006–07, down from 5% in 1997 and 4% in 2003 (table 1).

### FAMILIES

Families may be comprised of:

- couples with or without co-resident children of any age;
- lone parents with co-resident children of any age; or
- other families of related adults, such as brothers or sisters living together, where no couple or parent-child relationship exists.

Of the 5.9 million families in Australia in 2006–07, 85% (5.0 million) were couple families, 14% (808,000) were one parent families and 1% (81,000) were other families (table 1).

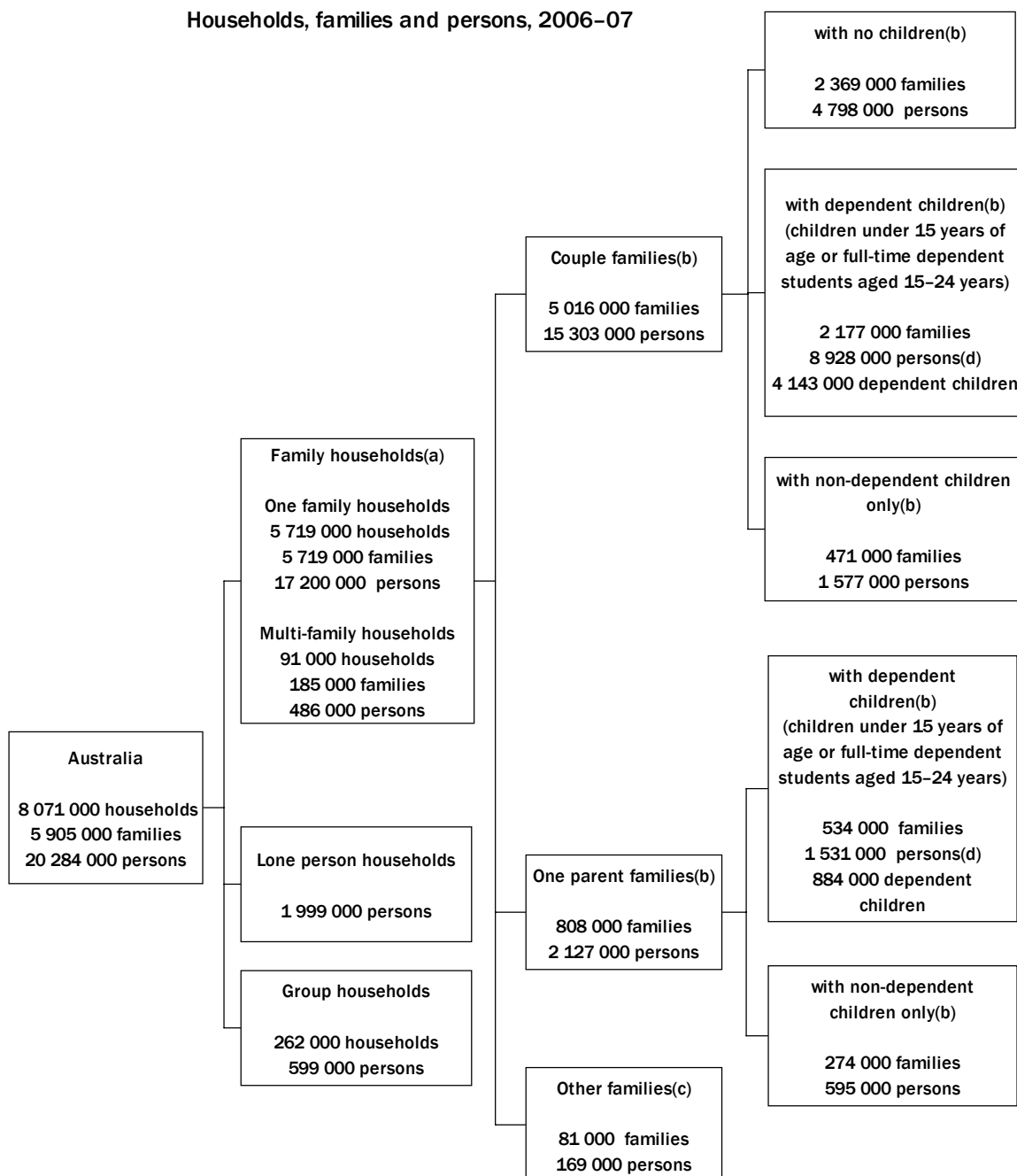
For couple families, those with co-resident children of any age outnumbered those without children of any age. The proportion of couple families with children has been decreasing over the last 10 years (was 48% of total families in 1997, 46% in 2003 and 45% in 2006–07), while the proportion of couple families without children of any age has been increasing over time (was 35% of total families in 1997, 38% in 2003 and 40% in 2006–07) (table 1). Around Australia, those states or territories with a higher than average proportion of couple families without children of any age were Queensland (42%), South Australia (42%), Western Australia (42%) and Tasmania (44%) (table 2).

## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS *continued*

### FAMILIES *continued*

The proportion of one parent families with children of any age declined slightly in 2006–07 compared to previous years (14% in 2006–07 down from 15% in both 2003 and 1997) (table 1).

### Households, families and persons, 2006–07



- (a) In addition to couples, parents, children and other family members, family households may also include unrelated individuals. Therefore, the number of persons in family households will not equal the number of persons in families.
- (b) These families may include 'other related individuals', but excludes 'unrelated individuals', as defined in the Glossary.
- (c) Refers to families where there are no partners or children (e.g. adult siblings living together without a parent), but excludes unrelated individuals.
- (d) Includes non-dependent children in families with dependent children as well as other related individuals and unrelated individuals.

## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS *continued*

### *Families with co-resident children of any age*

Families with co-resident children of any age (3.5 million) made up 59% of all families in 2006–07. Of all families with children of any age, 78% had dependent children (aged less than 15 years or a full-time dependent student aged 15 to 24 years), while 22% had non-dependent children only. In 2006–07, there were 2.6 million families with at least one child aged 0 to 17 years (44% of all families) (table 1).

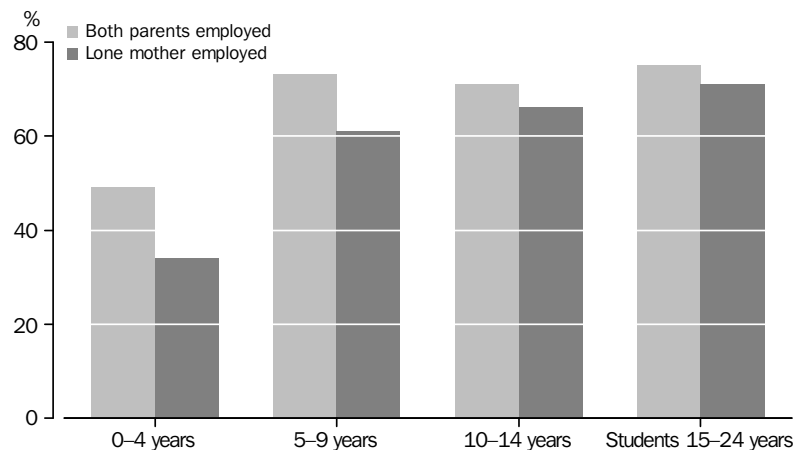
The proportion of one parent families where the youngest co-resident child was aged 0 to 4 has decreased over the last decade, to 15% (of all one parent families) in 2006–07 down from 21% in 2003 (table 4).

### EMPLOYMENT STATUS OF PARENTS

Both parents were employed in 63% of the 2.2 million couple families with co-resident dependent children. The proportion of couple families with dependent children where both parents were employed generally increased with the age of the youngest dependent child, from 49% of families where the youngest child was aged 0 to 4 years, to 75% of families where the youngest dependent child was a full-time student aged 15 to 24 years (table 6).

Of all couple families with co-resident dependent children, 5% had neither parent employed in 2006–07. Of all one parent families with dependent children, 41% had a co-resident parent who was not employed (table 6). There were 607,000 dependent children (12%) living in families without an employed co-resident parent, although in some cases other people in these households were employed. There were 508,000 dependent children (10%) living in a household where no one was employed (table 7).

**1** FAMILIES WITH DEPENDENT CHILDREN, Whether parent(s) employed by age of youngest dependent child



For lone mothers with co-resident dependent children, 34% of those whose youngest child was aged 0 to 4 years were employed, mostly on a part-time basis. This proportion increased to 71% of lone mothers where their youngest dependent child was a full-time student aged 15 to 24 years, with most then employed on a full-time basis (table 6).

## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS *continued*

### EMPLOYMENT STATUS OF PARENTS *continued*

**2** FAMILIES WITH DEPENDENT CHILDREN, Whether mother employed full-time or part-time



### FAMILY STRUCTURES

Of all families in 2006–07 with co-resident children aged 0 to 17 years (2.6 million), 80% were couple families and 20% were one parent families (table 1). The proportion of families with children aged 0 to 17 years that were couple families has increased since 2003 (up from 78%), while the proportion of one parent families with children aged 0 to 17 years has declined since 2003 (down from 22%) (table 8).

The majority of all couple and one parent families in 2006–07 with co-resident children aged 0 to 17 years were intact couple families (1.9 million or 73% of all families with children aged 0 to 17 years). These are families in which the children are the natural or adopted children of both parents and there are no step children. The remaining couple families with children aged 0 to 17 years were step or blended families. Step families are those formed when parents re-partner following separation or death of their partner and there is at least one step child of either member of the couple, but no natural or adopted child of this couple. There were 94,000 step families with co-resident children aged 0 to 17 years in 2006–07 (4% of all families with children aged 0 to 17 years). A blended family contains a step child but also a natural or adopted child of both parents. There were 80,000 blended families with co-resident children aged 0 to 17 years in 2006–07 (3% of all families with children aged 0 to 17 years). There has been little change in the proportions of intact, step or blended couple families since 1997 (table 8).

In 2006–07, the majority of one parent families with co-resident children aged 0 to 17 years were lone mother families (17% of all families with children aged 0 to 17 years) compared to lone father families (3% of all families with children aged 0 to 17 years) (table 8).

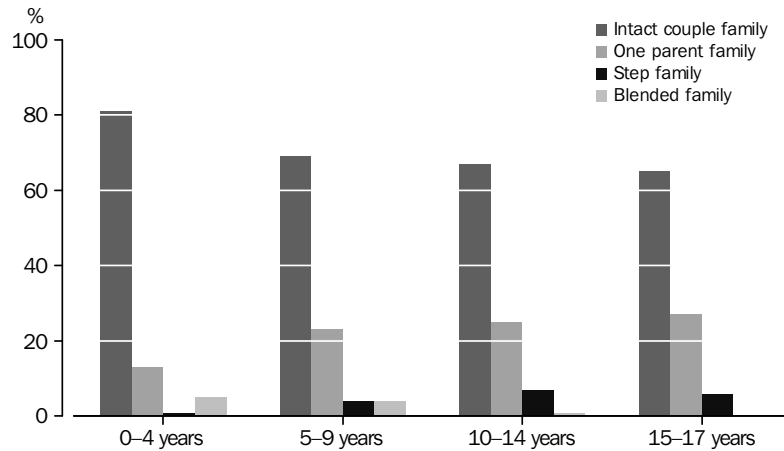
Most families in which the youngest co-resident child was aged 0 to 4 years were intact couple families (81% of all families with the youngest child aged 0 to 4 years). The proportions for intact families with older co-resident children were lower - 69% of all families with the youngest child aged 5 to 9 years, 67% of all families with the youngest child aged 10 to 14 years and 65% of all families with the youngest child aged 15 to 17 years were intact families (table 9).

## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS *continued*

### FAMILY STRUCTURES

*continued*

**3** FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN AGED 0–17 YEARS, Family structure by age of youngest child



In 2006–07, there were:

- 14,000 grandparent families in which the grandparents were guardians or main carers of co-resident children aged 0 to 17 years. The number of grandparent families has decreased since 2003 when there were 23,000 grandparent families with children aged 0 to 17 years;
- 7,000 foster families in which there was one or more co-resident foster child; and
- 27,000 same-sex couple families. The majority of these couples had no children.

These families contribute to total couple families in publication tables, but are not separately identified.

### CHILDREN WITH PARENTS LIVING ELSEWHERE

Of the 4.8 million children aged 0 to 17 years in 2006–07, just over 1 million (22%) had a natural parent living elsewhere, compared to 21% in 1997 and 23% in 2003. Of these children, 75% lived in one parent families, 12% in step families and 10% in blended families. Children were more likely to live with their mother than their father after parents separated. The vast majority of natural parents living elsewhere were fathers (82% of these children had a father living elsewhere) (table 10).

### Contact arrangements

Of the children aged 0 to 17 years with a natural parent living elsewhere, 43% (444,000) saw this parent at least once per fortnight, while 28% rarely saw their other natural parent (less than once per year or never). Of children with a natural parent living elsewhere, 4% spent half their nights or more per year living with that other parent, while 19% of children spent less than 10% of their nights per year (for example, less than 3 nights per month) staying overnight with the parent living elsewhere. Fourteen percent of children spent between 10% and 20% of their nights (for example, between 3 and 6 nights per month) with that parent. Almost half (47%) never stayed overnight with their parent living elsewhere (table 11).

In 2006–07, 47% of children aged 0 to 4 years saw their parent living elsewhere at least once a fortnight, compared with 50% of children aged 5 to 9 years, 42% of children aged 10 to 14 years and 35% of children aged 15 to 17 years. For overnight stays, 50% of all children aged 5 to 9 years and 52% of all children aged 10 to 14 years with a natural parent living elsewhere stayed overnight with that parent. The proportions were lower

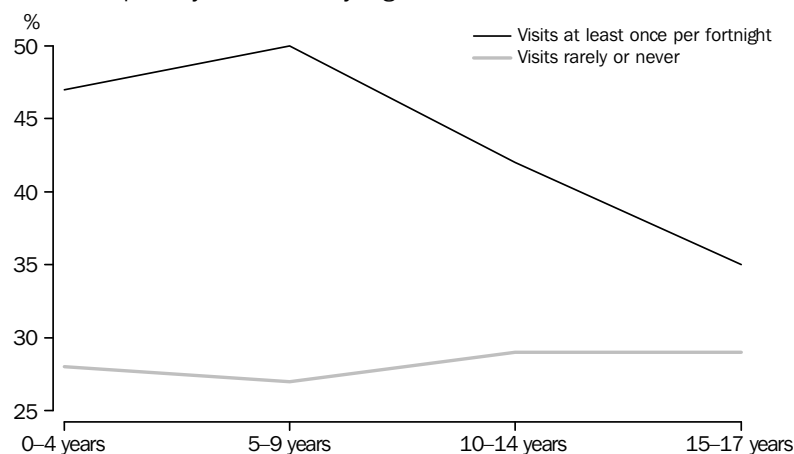


## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS *continued*

### Contact arrangements *continued*

for younger children aged 0 to 4 years (33%), and older children 15 to 17 years (38%) (table 13).

#### **4** CHILDREN SEEING NATURAL PARENT LIVING ELSEWHERE, Frequency of visits by age of child



### NON-RESIDENT PARENTS

Non-resident parents are those people who do not usually live with their children aged 0 to 17 years (their children usually live with the other natural parent). In 2006–07, there were 470,000 non-resident parents. Most non-resident parents were fathers (82%). Almost half (49%) of the fathers were members of a couple family, while 36% of them lived alone. Other non-resident fathers lived in group households (4%) or as lone parents (10%). Of non-resident mothers, 56% were members of a couple family, 28% were lone parents, and 10% lived alone (table 14).

### COUPLE RELATIONSHIPS

Of the 15.5 million people in Australia aged 18 years and over living in private dwellings (excluding those in very remote parts of Australia) in 2006–07, 65% were currently married, either in a registered marriage (55% or 8.5 million people), or a de facto marriage (10% or 1.6 million people) (table 15).

### Relationship history

Information on a person's marriages (either registered or de facto), including current and past relationships, was collected in 2006–07. When asked about the number of marriages they have had, some people may have reported a registered marriage preceded by cohabitation as one relationship (i.e. one registered marriage), while others may have counted the period of cohabitation as a de facto marriage separate to the registered marriage. Therefore people who had been in a registered marriage preceded by a period of cohabitation may be included either in the category 'Registered marriage(s) only' or in the category 'Both registered and de facto marriages'.

Sixty percent (9.3 million) of adults reported that they had only been in a registered marriage, while 13% of adults reported that they had only been in a de facto marriage. Nine percent of people reported that they had been in both at least one registered marriage and at least one de facto marriage (this may include some who cohabited prior to entering into a registered marriage). Around 2.4 million adults (16%) had never been married (either registered or de facto). Most people in the 18–24 year age

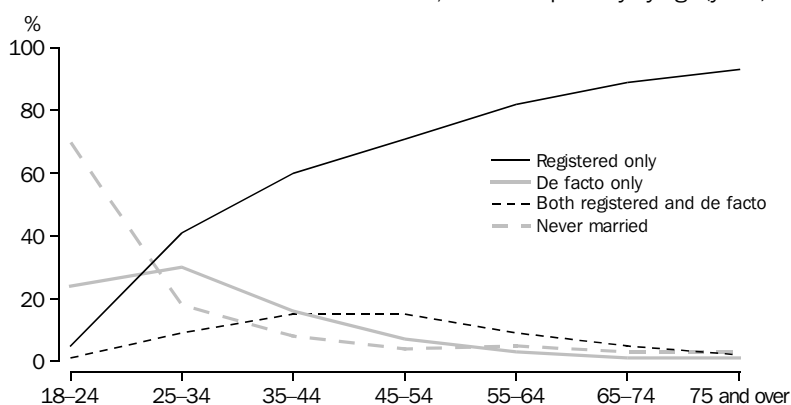
## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS *continued*

### *Relationship history continued*

group (70%) had never been married, while only 3% of people over the age of 64 years had never been married (either registered or defacto) (table 15).

Experiences of partnering varied with age. Compared with older people, a higher proportion of people aged below 35 years had been in a de facto marriage and had not entered into any registered marriages (24% of those aged 18–24 years and 30% of those aged 25–34 years). Over the age of 34 years, most people reported that they had been in a registered marriage, but had not been in any de facto marriage relationships (60% or more in each age group 35–44 and over). The proportion of adults reporting that they had been in both a registered marriage and a de facto marriage (which may have included some people who cohabited before registered marriage) increased with age, from 9% of 25 to 34 year olds, to 15% for those people aged 35–54 years. Over half of those aged 75 years and over (51%) reported that they were currently in a registered marriage, and a further 41% were widows/widowers. Thirty-six percent of people aged 75 years and over reported that they had been with their partner for 50 years or more (table 15).

**5** PERSONS AGED 18 YEARS AND OVER, Relationship history by age (years)



### *Characteristics of registered marriage*

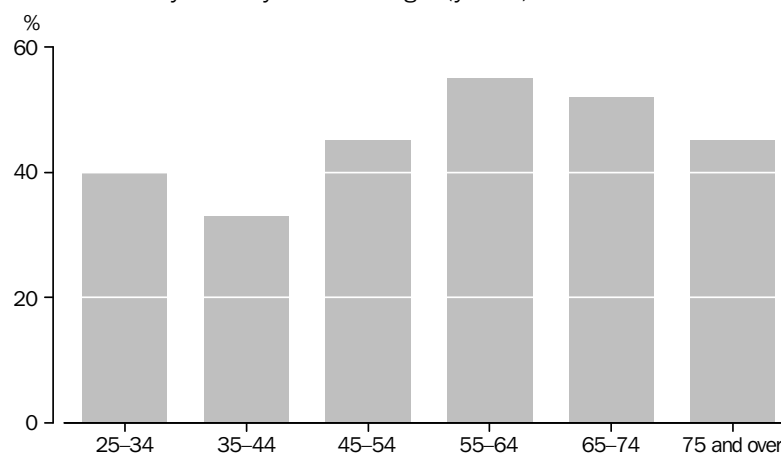
In 2006–07, 11% of couples aged 65 to 74 years and 5% of couples aged 75 years or more who were currently in a registered marriage reported that they cohabited before getting married. In comparison, 67% of those aged 25–34 years who were currently in a registered marriage reported that they cohabited before getting married. Of the 25–34 year olds who cohabited before marrying, more of them lived together for 3 or more years (46%) than for shorter periods (only 14% lived together for less than 1 year before marrying) (table 16).

Of all people currently in a registered marriage, 45% were aged between 18 to 24 years at the time of their registered marriage. The proportions of people entering into a registered marriage at this age were higher for persons aged 55 years or more (table 16).

## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS *continued*

### *Characteristics of registered marriage continued*

**6** PERSONS AGED 25 YEARS AND OVER, Proportion married at age 18–24 years by current age (years)



### *Expectations for registered marriage*

Of the 1.6 million people over the age of 18 years who were in a de facto marriage in 2006–07, 42% stated that they expected to enter into a registered marriage with their current partner. Most of those aged 34 years or less in a de facto marriage (60%) reported that they expected to enter into a registered marriage with their current partner (table 15).

Twenty-eight percent or 437,000 people over the age of 18 currently in a de facto marriage reported that they did not expect to enter into a registered marriage with their current de facto partner, with most of these persons aged between 35 and 54 years. 392,000 or 25% of those people in a de facto marriage reported that they did not know whether they would enter into a registered marriage with their partner (table 15).

## FAMILY TRANSITIONS

### *Parental transitions in childhood*

Fifteen percent of adults surveyed in 2006–07 reported that during their childhood (before they turned 18) their parents or guardians had divorced or separated. Younger people (aged 18 to 34) were more likely to report that their parents had separated. Nine percent of adults reported that during their childhood (before they turned 18) a parent or guardian had died. The reported rate of parental death during childhood was higher for those people currently aged 65 years and over (16%) (table 20).

### *Leaving home*

In 2006–07, of males and females aged 18 to 24 years, 49% of males and 45% of females had never left the parental home. These proportions decreased for those adults aged 25 to 34 years, where 13% of males and 15% of females had never left home. Of all males and females aged 18 to 34 years still living at their parental home, 15% of males and 28% of females nevertheless lived separately from their parents (including those whose parents died or left the parental home). The reason most frequently given by young adults for still living with their parents was financial reasons (33%), followed closely by the convenience and/or enjoyment of living at home (29%) (table 19).

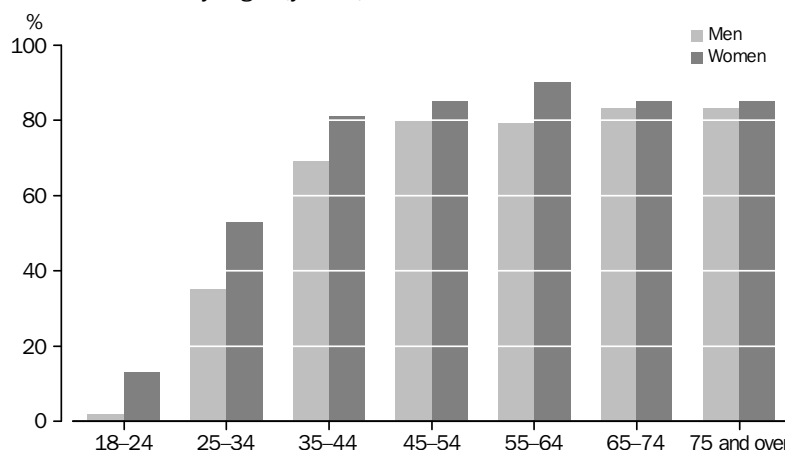
Of the 3.5 million people aged 18 to 34 years old who had left the parental home, 32% moved out so they could be independent. Other common reasons for moving out of home were to live with their partner or to get married (18%), to study (17%) or because of their employment or career (11%) (table 19).

## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS *continued*

### Children born

In 2006–07, 10.1 million or 65% of the adult population in Australia (in private dwellings, excluding very remote parts of Australia) reported that they have had natural children. Of these people, 41% reported that they have had two children, and 39% reported that they have had three or more (table 17).

**7** PERSONS AGED 18 YEARS AND OVER, Proportion who have had children by age (years)



People in the older age groups were more likely to report that they had larger families. Thirty-four percent of parents aged 35 to 54 who have had natural children reported that they have had three or more children, compared with 61% of parents aged 75 and over (table 17). Of those people aged 18 years and over who reported that they have not had children, 64% were aged 18 to 34 years, compared to 7% of those aged 65 years and over.

Of those adults who reported that they have had natural children, 69% were aged less than 30 years when they had their first child. This proportion increases to 75% for those people who are currently aged 65 years or more. Less than 10% of parents were aged 35 years or more when their first child was born. Females were more likely to have been aged less than 25 years when they had their first child (45%) than males (24%). This proportion increases to 56% for females aged between 55 and 74 years, compared to 30% of males; and decreases to 27% for females aged 35 to 44 years, compared to 16% for males of that age (table 17).

### FERTILITY EXPECTATIONS

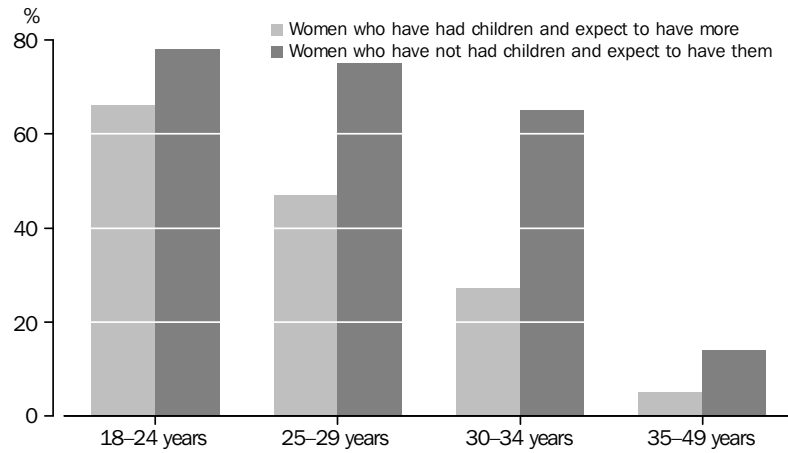
Women aged 18 to 49 years were asked in the survey about their future expectations of bearing children. The proportions who expected to bear children in the future varied according to age.

## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS *continued*

### FERTILITY EXPECTATIONS

*continued*

**8** WOMEN AGED 18–49 YEARS, Expectations for having children by age



Of those women who have already had children, the proportions who expected to have more children decreased from 66% of those aged 18 to 24 years to 5% of those aged 35 years and over. Of those women who had not yet had children, 78% of those aged 18 to 24 years and 75% of those aged 25 to 29 years expected to have children. For those aged 35 to 49 who had never had children, 14% expected to have children in the future (table 18). The main reason for women not expecting to bear any children, was because the women considered themselves or their partner to be too old.

## LIST OF TABLES

*page*

### DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

<b>1</b>	Households, Families and Persons, Selected characteristics, 1997, 2003, 2007 . . . . .	15
<b>2</b>	Households, Families and Persons, Selected characteristics by state . . . . .	17
<b>3</b>	All Families, Family composition, 1997, 2003, 2007 . . . . .	19
<b>4</b>	All Families, Family life stage type, 1997, 2003, 2007 . . . . .	20
<b>5</b>	All Children, Family type by age of child, 1997, 2003, 2007 . . . . .	21

### LABOUR FORCE

<b>6</b>	Families with children, Employment status of parents by family type by age of youngest child . . . . .	22
<b>7</b>	All Children, Employment status of parents by family type by age of child . . . . .	23

### FAMILY STRUCTURE

<b>8</b>	Families with children aged 0–17 years, Family structure for families, persons and children, 1997, 2003, 2007 . . . . .	24
<b>9</b>	Families with children aged 0–17 years, Family structure by age of youngest child . . . . .	25
<b>10</b>	Children aged 0–17 years, Whether has natural parent living elsewhere by age and family structure . . . . .	26

### CONTACT ARRANGEMENTS

<b>11</b>	Children aged 0–17 years with a natural parent living elsewhere, Contact arrangements, 1997, 2003, 2007 . . . . .	27
<b>12</b>	Children aged 0–17 years with a natural parent living elsewhere, Contact arrangements by family type . . . . .	28
<b>13</b>	Children aged 0–17 years with a natural parent living elsewhere, Contact arrangements by age of child . . . . .	29

### NON-RESIDENT PARENTS

<b>14</b>	Non-resident parents of children aged 0–17 years, Selected characteristics by sex . . . . .	30
-----------	---	----

### FAMILY TRANSITIONS AND HISTORY

<b>15</b>	Persons aged 18 years and over, Couple relationships by age . . . . .	31
<b>16</b>	Persons aged 18 years and over who are currently in a registered marriage, Characteristics of registered marriage by age . . . . .	33
<b>17</b>	Persons aged 18 years and over who have had natural children, by age and sex . . . . .	34
<b>18</b>	Females aged 18–49 years, Expectations of having children by age and marital status . . . . .	36
<b>19</b>	Persons aged 18–34 years, Main reason for not leaving parental home and main reason for first leaving parental home . . . . .	38
<b>20</b>	Persons aged 18 years and over, Parental transitions in childhood by age . . . . .	39

	1997		2003		2007	
	'000	%	'000	%	'000	%
HOUSEHOLDS						
Household composition						
Family households						
One family households	4 860	69	5 319	70	5 719	71
Multi-family households	74	1	106	1	91	1
<i>Total family households</i>	4 934	(a)70	5 425	(a)(b)71	5 810	(b)72
Non-family households						
Lone person households	1 730	25	1 924	25	1 999	25
Group households	391	6	292	4	262	3
<i>Total non-family households</i>	2 121	(a)30	2 216	(a)(b)29	2 261	(b)28
<b>Total households</b>	<b>7 054</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>7 640</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>8 071</b>	<b>100</b>
FAMILIES						
Families						
In one family households	4 860	97	5 319	96	5 719	97
In multi-family households	150	3	214	4	185	3
Family composition						
Couple families without children(c)(d)	1 769	35	2 088	38	2 369	40
Couple families with children(c)						
with dependent children	1 988	40	2 069	37	2 177	37
with non-dependent children only	416	(a)8	477	(a)(b)9	471	(b)8
<i>Total couple families with children(d)</i>	2 404	48	2 546	46	2 647	45
One parent families(c)						
with dependent children	517	10	561	10	534	9
with non-dependent children only	223	(a)5	239	(a)(b)4	274	(b)5
<i>Total one parent families</i>	740	15	800	15	808	14
Other families(e)	97	2	99	2	81	1
<b>Total families</b>	<b>5 010</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>5 532</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>5 905</b>	<b>100</b>
Families with children aged 0–17 years						
Intact families(f)	1 741	72	1 776	71	1 871	73
Step and blended families						
with children with a natural parent elsewhere	147	6	161	6	155	6
with no children with a natural parent elsewhere	17	1	16	1	19	1
<i>Total step and blended families</i>	164	7	177	7	174	7
One parent families						
with children with a natural parent elsewhere	451	19	496	20	473	18
with no natural parent elsewhere	52	2	47	2	44	2
<i>Total one parent families</i>	503	(a)21	543	(a)22	517	20
<i>Total families with children aged 0–17 years(g)</i>	2 414	100	2 510	100	2 576	100

(a) Difference between the 1997 and 2003 proportion is not statistically significant, see Technical Note.

(b) Difference between the 2003 and 2007 proportion is not statistically significant, see Technical Note.

(c) These families may also include 'other related individuals' as defined in the Glossary.

(d) Includes same-sex couples.

(e) Refers to families where there were no partners or children (e.g. adult siblings living together without a parent).

(f) Includes a small number of families where one or more children had a natural parent elsewhere (e.g. a foster child living in an intact family).

(g) Includes 'other' couple families which are not classified as intact, step or blended, for example, grandparent families or families with only foster children present.

continued

	1997		2003		2007	
	'000	%	'000	%	'000	%
PERSONS						
Persons						
In one family households	15 115	83	16 248	84	17 200	85
In multi-family households	417	2	568	(a)3	486	(a)2
In lone person households	1 730	10	1 924	10	1 999	10
women living alone	918	5	1 004	5	1 033	5
men living alone	813	5	920	5	966	5
In group households	888	5	684	4	599	3
<b>Total persons</b>	<b>18 149</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>19 424</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>20 284</b>	<b>100</b>
Children aged 0–17 years						
In intact families(b)	3 397	74	3 334	(a)72	3 484	(a)73
In step and blended families						
with a natural parent elsewhere	223	5	242	5	229	5
with no natural parent elsewhere(c)	141	3	141	3	162	3
Total in step and blended families	364	8	383	8	390	8
In one parent families						
with a natural parent elsewhere	756	16	824	(a)18	780	(a)16
with no natural parent elsewhere(c)	90	2	80	2	76	2
Total in one parent families	846	18	904	20	855	18
<b>Total children aged 0–17 years(d)</b>	<b>4 615</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>4 642</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>4 753</b>	<b>100</b>

(a) Difference between the 2003 and 2007 proportion is not statistically significant, see Technical Note.

(b) Includes children in a small number of families where one or more children had a natural parent elsewhere (e.g. a foster child living in an intact family).

(c) Includes children for whom it is not known whether they have a natural parent living elsewhere.

(d) Includes children in 'other' couple families which are not classified as intact, step or blended, for example, grandparent families or families with only foster children present.



## HOUSEHOLDS, FAMILIES AND PERSONS, Selected characteristics by state

<i>Selected characteristics</i>	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT(a)	ACT	Aust.
NUMBER ('000)									
<b>Households</b>									
Household composition									
Family households	1 899	1 455	1 166	441	576	140	42	92	5 810
Non-family households									
Lone person households	696	469	337	192	203	54	16	32	1 999
Group households	79	61	63	18	27	5	*4	6	262
<i>Total non-family households</i>	775	530	399	210	230	59	19	38	2 261
<b>Total households</b>	<b>2 674</b>	<b>1 985</b>	<b>1 565</b>	<b>651</b>	<b>806</b>	<b>199</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>8 071</b>
<b>Families</b>									
Family composition									
Couple families without children(b)(c)	752	573	497	189	245	63	14	37	2 369
Couple families with children(b)									
with dependent children	732	551	421	154	218	50	16	35	2 177
with non-dependent children only	160	128	90	33	40	10	*4	7	471
<i>Total couple families with children(c)</i>	891	679	511	187	258	60	20	42	2 647
One parent families(b)									
with dependent children	178	129	111	46	43	12	*5	10	534
with non-dependent children only	103	68	43	21	27	5	*2	*4	274
<i>Total one parent families</i>	281	197	154	67	70	18	7	14	808
Other families(d)	17	25	18	*5	12	*2	**2	*2	81
<b>Total families</b>	<b>1 940</b>	<b>1 475</b>	<b>1 180</b>	<b>448</b>	<b>584</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>5 905</b>
Families with children aged 0–17 years									
Intact families(e)	643	471	371	127	176	40	14	29	1 871
Step and blended families	34	37	43	13	33	8	**2	*3	174
One parent families	175	118	108	46	45	12	*4	10	517
<i>Total families with children aged 0–17 years(f)</i>	857	629	524	188	255	61	20	43	2 576
<b>Persons</b>									
In family households	5 870	4 453	3 513	1 293	1 733	415	131	279	17 686
In lone person households	696	469	337	192	203	54	16	32	1 999
women living alone	358	257	170	92	102	31	*6	18	1 033
men living alone	337	213	167	101	102	24	10	14	966
In group households	185	144	138	38	61	13	*8	14	599
<b>Total persons</b>	<b>6 751</b>	<b>5 066</b>	<b>3 987</b>	<b>1 523</b>	<b>1 997</b>	<b>481</b>	<b>155</b>	<b>324</b>	<b>20 284</b>
Children aged 0–17 years									
In intact families(e)	1 189	888	701	231	326	72	27	51	3 484
In step and blended families	90	77	89	30	72	20	**6	*7	390
In one parent families	287	192	178	77	73	23	*8	17	855
<i>Total children aged 0–17 years(g)</i>	1 571	1 166	970	340	476	115	41	76	4 753

\* estimate has a relative standard error of 25% to 50% and should be used with caution

\*\* estimate has a relative standard error greater than 50% and is considered too unreliable for general use

(a) Refers to mainly urban areas only. See paragraph 6 of the Explanatory Notes for more information.

(b) These families may also include 'other related individuals' as defined in the Glossary.

(c) Includes same-sex couples.

(d) Refers to families where there were no partners or children (e.g. adult siblings living together without a parent).

(e) Includes a small number of families where one or more children had a natural parent elsewhere (e.g. a foster child living in an intact family).

(f) Includes 'other' couple families which are not classified as intact, step or blended, for example, grandparent families or families with only foster children present.

(g) Includes children in 'other' couple families which are not classified as intact, step or blended.

<i>Selected characteristics</i>	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT(a)	ACT	Aust.
PROPORTION (%)									
<b>Households</b>									
Household composition									
Family households	71	73	75	68	71	70	69	71	72
Non-family households									
Lone person households	26	24	22	30	25	27	26	25	25
Group households	3	3	4	3	3	3	*6	4	3
<i>Total non-family households</i>	29	27	26	32	29	30	31	29	28
<b>Total households</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Families</b>									
Family composition									
Couple families without children(b)(c)	39	39	42	42	42	44	33	40	40
Couple families with children(b)									
with dependent children	38	37	36	34	37	35	38	37	37
with non-dependent children only	8	9	8	7	7	7	*9	7	8
<i>Total couple families with children(c)</i>	46	46	43	42	44	42	47	44	45
One parent families(b)									
with dependent children	9	9	9	10	7	9	12	10	9
with non-dependent children only	5	5	4	5	5	4	*5	*4	5
<i>Total one parent families</i>	15	13	13	15	12	12	16	15	14
Other families(d)	1	2	2	*1	2	*1	**4	*2	1
<b>Total families</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
Families with children aged 0–17 years									
Intact families(e)	75	75	71	68	69	67	70	69	73
Step and blended families	4	6	8	7	13	13	**10	*8	7
One parent families	20	19	21	25	17	20	*20	23	20
<i>Total families with children aged 0–17 years(f)</i>	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
<b>Persons</b>									
In family households	87	88	88	85	87	86	85	86	87
In lone person households	10	9	8	13	10	11	10	10	10
women living alone	5	5	4	6	5	6	*4	6	5
men living alone	5	4	4	7	5	5	6	4	5
In group households	3	3	3	3	3	3	*5	4	3
<b>Total persons</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
Children aged 0–17 years									
In intact families(e)	76	76	72	68	68	63	65	68	73
In step and blended families	6	7	9	9	15	17	**14	*10	8
In one parent families	18	17	18	23	15	20	*21	22	18
<i>Total children aged 0–17 years(g)</i>	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

\* estimate has a relative standard error of 25% to 50% and should be used with caution

\*\* estimate has a relative standard error greater than 50% and is considered too unreliable for general use

(a) Refers to mainly urban areas only. See paragraph 6 of the Explanatory Notes for more information.

(b) These families may also include 'other related individuals' as defined in the Glossary.

(c) Includes same-sex couples.

(d) Refers to families where there were no partners or children (e.g. adult siblings living together without a parent).

(e) Includes a small number of families where one or more children had a natural parent elsewhere (e.g. a foster child living in an intact family).

(f) Includes 'other' couple families which are not classified as intact, step or blended, for example, grandparent families or families with only foster children present.

(g) Includes children in 'other' couple families which are not classified as intact, step or blended.

	1997		2003		2007	
	'000	%	'000	%	'000	%
Couple families without children(a) (b)	1 769	35	2 088	38	2 369	40
Couple families with children(a)						
with children under 15 years and non-dependent children	75	(c)2	74	(c)1	85	1
with children under 15 years without non-dependent children	1 327	27	1 354	(d)25	1 411	(d)24
with dependent students 15–24 years and non-dependent children	117	2	135	(d)2	162	(d)3
with dependent students 15–24 years without non-dependent children	168	(c)3	195	(c)4	211	4
with children under 15 years and dependent students and non-dependent children	48	1	55	1	45	1
with children under 15 years and dependent students without non-dependent children	255	5	256	5	263	5
with non-dependent children	416	(c)8	477	(c)(d)9	471	(d)8
<i>Total couple families with children(b)</i>	2 404	48	2 546	46	2 647	45
One parent families(a)						
with children under 15 years and non-dependent children	21	—	23	—	25	—
with children under 15 years without non-dependent children	360	7	382	7	333	6
with dependent students 15–24 years and non-dependent children	21	—	22	(d)—	35	(d)1
with dependent students 15–24 years without non-dependent children	63	1	73	1	78	1
with children under 15 years and dependent students and non-dependent children	11	—	7	—	*8	—
with children under 15 years and dependent students without non-dependent children	41	1	55	1	56	1
with non-dependent children	223	(c)5	239	(c)(d)4	274	(d)5
<i>Total one parent families</i>	740	15	800	15	808	14
Other families(e)	97	2	99	2	81	1
<b>Total families</b>	<b>5 010</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>5 532</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>5 905</b>	<b>100</b>

\* estimate has a relative standard error of 25% to 50% and should be used with caution

— nil or rounded to zero (including null cells)

(a) These families may also include 'other related individuals' as defined in the Glossary.

(b) Includes same-sex couples.

(c) Difference between the 1997 and 2003 proportion is not statistically significant, see Technical Note.

(d) Difference between the 2003 and 2007 proportion is not statistically significant, see Technical Note.

(e) Refers to families where there were no partners or children (eg. adult siblings living together without a parent).

## ALL FAMILIES, Family life stage type, 1997, 2003, 2007

Family life stage type	1997		2003		2007	
	'000	%	'000	%	'000	%
<b>Couple families without children(a)</b>						
Age of female partner (years)						
15-24	124	7	178	(b)9	193	(b)8
25-34	288	16	369	18	380	16
35-44	138	8	156	8	150	6
45-54	341	19	356	17	343	15
55-64	417	(c)24	512	(c)25	629	27
65 and over	462	26	518	25	649	27
<i>Total couple families without children(d)</i>	1 769	100	2 088	100	2 369	100
<b>Couple families with children(a)</b>						
Age of youngest child (years)						
0-4	820	34	789	31	860	33
5-9	463	19	503	20	488	18
10-14	421	18	446	(b)18	455	(b)17
Dependent student 15-24	284	12	331	(b)13	373	(b)14
Non-dependent child 15-24	260	11	262	10	251	10
25 and over	155	(c)7	216	(c)(b)9	220	(b)8
<i>Total couple families with children(d)</i>	2 404	100	2 546	100	2 647	100
<b>One parent families(a)</b>						
Age of youngest child (years)						
0-4	168	(c)23	167	(c)21	124	15
5-9	144	(c)20	154	(c)(b)19	146	(b)18
10-14	121	(c)16	145	(c)(b)18	152	(b)19
Dependent student 15-24	84	(c)11	94	(c)(b)12	112	(b)14
Non-dependent child 15-24	81	11	87	(b)11	99	(b)12
25 and over	142	19	152	(b)19	175	(b)22
<i>Total one parent families</i>	740	100	800	100	808	100
<b>Lone mother families(a)</b>						
Age of youngest child (years)						
0-4	160	26	153	23	114	17
5-9	126	20	136	(b)20	121	(b)18
10-14	94	15	120	(b)18	128	(b)19
Dependent student 15-24	68	11	73	11	96	14
Non-dependent child 15-24	57	9	61	9	73	11
25 and over	117	19	123	(b)19	140	(b)21
<i>Total lone mother families</i>	623	100	666	100	674	100
<b>Lone father families(a)</b>						
Age of youngest child (years)						
0-14	52	(c)45	58	(c)(b)43	58	(b)44
Dependent student 15-24	16	(c)14	21	(c)(b)16	16	(b)12
Non-dependent child 15-24	24	20	27	(b)20	26	(b)19
25 and over	26	(c)22	29	(c)(b)21	35	(b)26
<i>Total lone father families</i>	117	100	134	100	134	100
<b>All families(e)</b>	<b>5 010</b>	<b>..</b>	<b>5 532</b>	<b>..</b>	<b>5 905</b>	<b>..</b>

.. not applicable

(a) These families may also include 'other related individuals' as defined in the Glossary.

(b) Difference between the 2003 and 2007 proportion is not statistically significant, see Technical Note.

(c) Difference between the 1997 and 2003 proportion is not statistically significant, see Technical Note.

(d) Total for 2007 includes same-sex couples.

(e) Includes 'other families' where there were no partners or children (e.g. adults siblings living together without a parent).

## ALL CHILDREN(a), Family type by age of child, 1997, 2003, 2007

	1997		2003		2007	
	'000	%	'000	%	'000	%
<b>Children in couple families</b>						
Age of child (years)						
0-4	1 088	23	1 043	21	1 133	22
5-9	1 055	22	1 048	21	1 061	21
10-14	1 055	22	1 047	21	1 079	21
Dependent student 15-24	737	15	849	17	870	17
Non-dependent child 15-24	588	(b)12	628	(b)13	657	13
25 and over	260	5	349	7	320	6
<i>Total children in couple families(c)</i>	4 783	100	4 963	100	5 120	100
<b>Children in one parent families</b>						
Age of child (years)						
0-4	204	(b)17	199	(b)16	150	12
5-9	258	(b)22	261	(b)20	235	18
10-14	246	21	292	23	290	23
Dependent student 15-24	160	(b)13	188	(b)(d)15	209	(d)16
Non-dependent child 15-24	152	(b)13	152	(b)12	196	15
25 and over	180	15	190	(d)15	202	(d)16
<i>Total children in one parent families</i>	1 199	100	1 281	100	1 282	100
<b>Children in lone mother families</b>						
Age of child (years)						
0-4	196	19	183	17	139	13
5-9	232	(b)23	234	(b)22	200	19
10-14	201	20	246	23	248	23
Dependent student 15-24	134	(b)13	154	(b)14	179	17
Non-dependent child 15-24	119	(b)12	115	(b)11	152	14
25 and over	148	14	149	(d)14	160	(d)15
<i>Total children in lone mother families</i>	1 030	100	1 081	100	1 079	100
<b>Children in lone father families</b>						
Age of child (years)						
0-4	8	5	16	(d)8	*11	*(d)5
5-9	25	(b)15	27	(b)(d)13	35	(d)17
10-14	45	(b)27	46	(b)(d)23	42	(d)21
Dependent student 15-24	26	(b)15	35	(b)(d)17	30	(d)15
Non-dependent child 15-24	34	(b)20	37	(b)(d)19	43	(d)21
25 and over	32	(b)19	40	(b)(d)20	42	(d)21
<i>Total children in lone father families</i>	169	100	201	100	202	100
<b>All children</b>	<b>5 982</b>	<b>..</b>	<b>6 245</b>	<b>..</b>	<b>6 402</b>	<b>..</b>

\* estimate has a relative standard error of 25% to 50% and should be used with caution

.. not applicable

(a) For a definition of child, refer to the Glossary.

(b) Difference between the 1997 and 2003 proportion is not statistically significant, see Technical Note.

(c) Includes same-sex couples.

(d) Difference between the 2003 and 2007 proportion is not statistically significant, see Technical Note.

# FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN(a), Employment status of parents by family type by age of youngest child

Employment status of parents	AGE OF YOUNGEST DEPENDENT CHILD				Total families with dependent children	FAMILIES WITH NON-DEPENDENT CHILDREN ONLY		Total
	Dependent child aged 0-4 years	Dependent child aged 5-9 years	Dependent child aged 10-14 years	Dependent student aged 15-24 years		Youngest non-dependent child aged 15-24 years	Youngest non-dependent child aged 25 years and over	
NUMBER OF FAMILIES ('000)								
<b>Couple families with children(b)</b>								
At least one parent employed(c)	821	474	431	352	2 078	227	120	2 425
Both parents employed	422	354	325	281	1 381	164	69	1 614
Mother employed full-time	130	142	138	149	560	88	38	686
Mother employed part-time	292	212	187	131	822	76	31	928
Mother only employed	16	11	16	17	60	19	*14	93
Mother employed full-time	10	*4	11	*7	31	*13	*7	51
Mother employed part-time	*6	*8	*5	*10	29	*6	*7	42
Father only employed	382	109	91	54	636	44	38	717
Neither parent employed	39	14	24	21	98	24	99	221
Other person in household employed	**3	**3	**3	*9	18	17	75	110
No persons in household employed	36	*11	21	12	80	*7	24	112
<b>Total couple families with children(d)</b>	<b>860</b>	<b>488</b>	<b>455</b>	<b>373</b>	<b>2 177</b>	<b>251</b>	<b>220</b>	<b>2 647</b>
<b>One parent families(b)</b>								
Lone mother families								
Lone mother employed(c)	39	74	84	68	265	52	32	349
Lone mother employed full-time	*10	32	39	42	123	35	21	179
Lone mother employed part-time	29	43	44	26	141	18	*11	170
Lone mother not employed	76	47	45	29	196	21	108	325
Other person in household employed	*8	**3	*8	14	32	17	65	114
No persons in household employed	68	44	37	15	164	*4	44	211
<b>Total lone mother families</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>460</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>674</b>
Lone father families								
Lone father employed(c)	*5	17	20	*9	51	20	*12	84
Lone father not employed	*5	*7	*4	*6	23	*5	22	50
Other person in household employed	—	—	**1	**3	*4	**1	16	22
No persons in household employed	*5	*7	*3	**3	19	**4	*6	28
<b>Total lone father families</b>	<b>*10</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>134</b>
<b>Total one parent families</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>534</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>175</b>	<b>808</b>
<b>Total families with children</b>	<b>984</b>	<b>634</b>	<b>608</b>	<b>485</b>	<b>2 711</b>	<b>349</b>	<b>395</b>	<b>3 455</b>

\* estimate has a relative standard error of 25% to 50% and should be used with caution

\*\* estimate has a relative standard error greater than 50% and is considered too unreliable for general use

— nil or rounded to zero (including null cells)

(a) For a definition of child, refer to the Glossary.

(b) These families may also include 'other related individuals' as defined in the Glossary.

(c) May include households where other persons in household are employed.

(d) Total includes same-sex couples with children.

## ALL CHILDREN(a), Employment status of parents by family type by age of child

Employment status of parents	AGE OF CHILD							Total
	0-4 years	5-9 years	10-14 years	Dependent student aged 15-24 years	Total dependent children	Non-dependent children aged 15-24 years	25 years and over	
NUMBER OF CHILDREN ('000)								
Children in couple families								
At least one parent employed(b)	1 082	1 022	1 016	817	3 937	612	195	4 744
Both parents employed	525	666	720	618	2 529	441	110	3 081
Mother employed full-time	151	237	280	296	964	227	60	1 250
Mother employed part-time	374	429	440	323	1 566	215	50	1 830
Mother only employed	22	22	33	31	108	39	*23	170
Mother only employed part-time	*7	*12	*13	*18	51	*15	*12	78
Mother only employed full-time	14	*10	20	*13	57	24	*12	93
Father only employed	535	334	263	168	1 300	132	62	1 494
Neither parent employed	51	39	62	52	203	44	124	372
Other person in household employed	**4	*6	*12	*18	*40	32	96	168
No persons in household employed	47	33	50	34	164	*12	29	204
<b>Total children in couple families(c)</b>	<b>1 133</b>	<b>1 061</b>	<b>1 079</b>	<b>870</b>	<b>4 143</b>	<b>657</b>	<b>320</b>	<b>5 120</b>
Children in one parent families								
Lone mother families								
Lone mother employed(b)	42	103	143	112	401	108	44	552
Lone mother employed full-time	*10	40	60	63	173	69	29	271
Lone mother employed part-time	32	64	83	49	227	39	*15	281
Mother not employed	97	97	105	67	366	44	117	527
Other person in household employed	*9	*4	*13	27	54	36	73	162
No persons in household employed	87	93	92	40	312	*9	44	365
<b>Total children in lone mother families</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>248</b>	<b>179</b>	<b>766</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>1 079</b>
Lone father families								
Lone father employed(b)	*6	22	33	20	80	35	*17	132
Father not employed	*5	*13	*9	*10	38	*8	25	71
Other person in household employed	—	—	**1	**4	**5	*3	*18	27
No persons in household employed	*5	*13	*8	*6	32	**5	*7	44
<b>Total children in lone father families</b>	<b>*11</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>202</b>
<b>Total children in one parent families</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>235</b>	<b>290</b>	<b>209</b>	<b>884</b>	<b>196</b>	<b>202</b>	<b>1 282</b>
Children in families with no parent employed	153	149	176	129	607	96	266	969
Children in households where no-one is employed	139	139	151	79	508	26	79	613
<b>Total children</b>	<b>1 283</b>	<b>1 297</b>	<b>1 369</b>	<b>1 079</b>	<b>5 027</b>	<b>852</b>	<b>523</b>	<b>6 402</b>

\* estimate has a relative standard error of 25% to 50% and should be used with caution

\*\* estimate has a relative standard error greater than 50% and is considered too unreliable for general use

— nil or rounded to zero (including null cells)

(a) For a definition of child, refer to Glossary.

(b) May include households where other persons in household are employed.

(c) Total includes children in same-sex couple families.

Family structure	1997			2003			2007		
	Families	Persons	Children	Families	Persons	Children	Families	Persons	Children
NUMBER ('000)									
Couple families(b)									
Intact(c)	1 741	7 227	3 397	1 776	7 322	3 334	1 871	7 653	3 484
Step	89	339	145	99	376	158	94	358	153
Blended	75	375	219	78	388	224	80	407	238
Total in couple families(d)	1 911	7 964	3 770	1 967	8 141	3 738	2 059	8 474	3 898
One parent families									
Lone mother	438	1 263	745	466	1 338	786	442	1 281	740
Lone father	65	176	100	76	210	118	74	210	115
Total in one parent families	503	1 439	846	543	1 547	904	517	1 490	855
<b>Total families with children aged 0–17 years</b>	<b>2 414</b>	<b>9 403</b>	<b>4 615</b>	<b>2 510</b>	<b>9 688</b>	<b>4 642</b>	<b>2 576</b>	<b>9 964</b>	<b>4 753</b>
PROPORTION (%)									
Couple families(b)									
Intact(c)	72	77	74	71	(e)76	(e)72	73	(e)77	(e)73
Step	4	4	3	4	4	3	4	4	3
Blended	3	4	5	3	4	5	3	4	5
Total in couple families(d)	(f)79	85	82	(f)78	84	81	80	85	82
One parent families									
Lone mother	(f)18	(f)13	16	(f)19	(e)(f)14	17	17	(e)13	16
Lone father	3	2	(f)2	3	2	(e)(f)3	3	2	(e)2
Total in one parent families	(f)21	15	18	(f)22	(e)16	20	20	(e)15	18
<b>Total families with children aged 0–17 years</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

(a) For a definition of child, refer to the Glossary.

(b) Includes same-sex couple families.

(c) Includes a small number of families where one or more children had a natural parent elsewhere (e.g. a foster child living in an intact family).

(d) Includes 'other' couple families which are not classified as intact, step or blended, for example, grandparent families or families with only foster children present.

(e) Difference between the 2003 and 2007 proportion is not statistically significant, see Technical Note.

(f) Difference between the 1997 and 2003 proportion is not statistically significant, see Technical Note.



Family structure	AGE OF YOUNGEST CHILD (YEARS)				Total
	0–4	5–9	10–14	15–17	
NUMBER OF FAMILIES ('000)					
Couple families(b)					
Intact(c)	795	439	409	228	1 871
Step	10	22	40	22	94
Blended	53	24	*3	—	80
Total couple families(d)	860	488	455	256	2 059
One parent families					
Lone mother	114	121	128	79	442
Lone father	*10	25	24	16	74
Total one parent families	124	146	152	95	517
<b>Total families with children aged 0–17 years</b>	<b>984</b>	<b>634</b>	<b>608</b>	<b>350</b>	<b>2 576</b>

PROPORTION OF FAMILIES (%)					
Couple families(b)					
Intact(c)	81	69	67	65	73
Step	1	4	7	6	4
Blended	5	4	*1	—	3
Total couple families(d)	88	77	75	73	80
One parent families					
Lone mother	12	19	21	23	17
Lone father	*1	4	4	5	3
Total one parent families	13	23	25	27	20
<b>Total families with children aged 0–17 years</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

\* estimate has a relative standard error of 25% to 50% and should be used with caution

— nil or rounded to zero (including null cells)

(a) For a definition of child, refer to the Glossary.

(b) Includes same-sex couple families.

(c) Includes a small number of families where one or more children had a natural parent elsewhere (e.g. a foster child living in an intact family).

(d) Includes 'other' couple families which are not classified as intact, step or blended, for example, grandparent families or families with only foster children present.

	CHILDREN WITH A NATURAL PARENT LIVING ELSEWHERE			CHILDREN WITH NO NATURAL PARENT LIVING ELSEWHERE			Total children aged 0–17 years
	Father living elsewhere	Mother living elsewhere	Total(b)	Living with one natural parent	Living with both natural parents	Total(b)	
NUMBER OF CHILDREN ('000)							
Age of child (years)							
0–4	142	*9	156	*12	1 114	1 127	1 283
5–9	235	40	284	16	995	1 012	1 297
10–14	300	49	367	44	957	1 002	1 369
15–17	177	38	228	39	536	577	806
Family structure							
Children in couple families(c)							
In intact families(d)	..	..	*7	..	3 478	3 478	3 484
In step families	106	21	128	*25	..	*25	153
In blended families	83	*18	101	*12	125	137	238
Total children in couple families(e)	189	39	255	37	3 602	3 643	3 898
Children in one parent families							
In lone mother families	664	..	681	58	..	60	740
In lone father families	..	96	99	*15	..	*16	115
Total children in one parent families	664	96	780	74	..	76	855
<b>Total children aged 0–17 years</b>	<b>853</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>1 035</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>3 602</b>	<b>3 718</b>	<b>4 753</b>

\* estimate has a relative standard error of 25% to 50% and should be used with caution

.. not applicable

(a) For a definition of child, refer to the Glossary.

(b) Includes children with no natural parent living in the household.

(c) Includes children in same-sex couple families.

(d) Includes children in a small number of families where one or more children had a natural parent elsewhere (e.g. a foster child living in an intact family).

(e) Includes children in 'other' couple families which are not classified as intact, step or blended, for example, grandparent families or families with only foster children present.

	1997		2003		2007	
	'000	%	'000	%	'000	%
Frequency of face to face contact						
Daily	47	(b)5	63	(b)(c)6	45	(c)4
Not daily but at least once a week	227	23	298	28	234	23
Not weekly but at least once a fortnight	153	(b)16	183	(b)(c)17	165	(c)16
Not fortnightly but at least once a month	73	7	64	(c)6	72	(c)7
Not monthly but at least once every 3 months	83	(b)9	84	(b)(c)8	67	(c)7
Not every 3 months but at least once every 6 months	50	5	51	(c)5	44	(c)4
Not every 6 months but at least once a year	51	5	56	(c)5	42	(c)4
Less than once a year/never	291	30	283	(c)26	292	(c)28
Proportion of nights per year spent with a natural parent living elsewhere(a)						
Never stays overnight	532	54	537	(c)50	486	(c)47
1–9%(d)	228	23	223	(c)21	198	(c)19
10–19%	150	15	193	18	146	14
20–29%	44	5	64	(c)6	55	(c)5
30–49%	24	2	44	(c)4	35	(c)3
50% or more	2	—	21	2	38	4
<b>Total children aged 0–17 years with a natural parent living elsewhere</b>	<b>978</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1 082</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>(e)1 035</b>	<b>(e)100</b>

— nil or rounded to zero (including null cells)

- (a) There is a break in time series between 2003 and 2007 for data on proportion of nights per year that the child spends with a natural parent living elsewhere. This break is due to changes in data processing methods and relates mainly to those children who spend 50% or more of their nights elsewhere. See paragraph 24 of the Explanatory Notes for more information.
- (b) Difference between the 1997 and 2003 proportion is not statistically significant, see Technical Note.

(c) Difference between the 2003 and 2007 proportion is not statistically significant, see Technical Note.

(d) Includes children who stayed overnight at least 1 night per year with the parent living elsewhere. In some cases, the proportion of nights was less than 1% for these children.

(e) Contact arrangements with their parent living elsewhere were not known for 7% of children in 2007. These children are included in the total. See paragraph 24 of the Explanatory Notes for more information.

	<i>In couple families</i>	<i>In one parent families</i>	<i>Total</i>
..... NUMBER OF CHILDREN ('000) .....			
Frequency of face to face contact			
Daily	**2	43	45
Not daily by at least once a week	43	191	234
Not weekly by at least once a fortnight	39	126	165
Not fortnightly by at least once a month	*14	58	72
Not monthly but at least once every 3 months	19	48	67
Not every 3 months but at least once every 6 months	13	30	44
Not every 6 months but at least once a year	11	31	42
Less than once a year/never	83	209	292
Proportion of nights per year spent with a natural parent living elsewhere			
Never stays overnight	108	378	486
1–9%(a)	48	150	198
10–19%	38	108	146
20–29%	*12	43	55
30–49%	*10	25	35
50% or more	*8	30	38
<b>Total children aged 0–17 years with a natural parent living elsewhere(b)</b>	<b>255</b>	<b>780</b>	<b>1 035</b>

..... PROPORTION OF CHILDREN (%) .....			
Frequency of face to face contact			
Daily	**1	6	4
Not daily by at least once a week	17	25	23
Not weekly by at least once a fortnight	15	16	16
Not fortnightly by at least once a month	*6	7	7
Not monthly but at least once every 3 months	8	6	7
Not every 3 months but at least once every 6 months	5	4	4
Not every 6 months but at least once a year	4	4	4
Less than once a year/never	33	27	28
Proportion of nights per year spent with a natural parent living elsewhere			
Never stays overnight	42	48	47
1–9%(a)	19	19	19
10–19%	15	14	14
20–29%	*5	6	5
30–49%	*4	3	3
50% or more	*3	4	4
<b>Total children aged 0–17 years with a natural parent living elsewhere(b)</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

\* estimate has a relative standard error of 25% to 50% and should be used with caution

\*\* estimate has a relative standard error greater than 50% and is considered too unreliable for general use

(a) Includes children who stayed overnight at least 1 night per year with the parent living elsewhere. In some cases, the proportion of nights was less than 1% for these children.

(b) Contact arrangements with their parent living elsewhere were not known for 7% of children. These children are included in the total. See paragraph 24 of the Explanatory Notes for more information.

	AGE OF CHILD (YEARS)				Total
	0–4	5–9	10–14	15–17	
NUMBER OF CHILDREN ('000)					
Frequency of face to face contact					
Daily	11	13	*11	*10	45
Not daily but at least once a week	44	70	79	41	234
Not weekly but at least once a fortnight	18	55	62	29	165
Not fortnightly but at least once a month	*16	*14	27	16	72
Not monthly but at least once every 3 months	*6	18	24	20	67
Not every 3 months but at least once every 6 months	**2	12	16	14	44
Not every 6 months but at least once a year	*3	*8	16	14	42
Less than once a year/never	44	77	105	67	292
Proportion of nights per year spent with a natural parent living elsewhere					
Never stays overnight	91	121	149	125	486
1–9%(a)	17	52	80	50	198
10–19%	18	47	59	23	146
20–29%	*8	20	20	*7	55
30–49%	*5	*12	15	*3	35
50% or more	*5	15	*14	**4	38
<b>Total children aged 0–17 years with a natural parent living elsewhere(b)</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>284</b>	<b>367</b>	<b>228</b>	<b>1 035</b>

PROPORTION OF CHILDREN (%)					
Frequency of face to face contact					
Daily	7	5	*3	*4	4
Not daily but at least once a week	28	25	22	18	23
Not weekly but at least once a fortnight	12	20	17	13	16
Not fortnightly but at least once a month	*10	*5	7	7	7
Not monthly but at least once every 3 months	*4	6	7	9	7
Not every 3 months but at least once every 6 months	**1	4	4	6	4
Not every 6 months but at least once a year	*2	*3	4	6	4
Less than once a year/never	28	27	29	29	28
Proportion of nights per year spent with a natural parent living elsewhere					
Never stays overnight	58	43	41	55	47
1–9%(a)	11	18	22	22	19
10–19%	11	16	16	10	14
20–29%	5	7	6	*3	5
30–49%	*3	*4	4	*1	3
50% or more	*3	5	*4	**2	4
<b>Total children aged 0–17 years with a natural parent living elsewhere(b)</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

\* estimate has a relative standard error of 25% to 50% and should be used with caution

\*\* estimate has a relative standard error greater than 50% and is considered too unreliable for general use

(a) Includes children who stayed overnight at least 1 night per year with the parent living elsewhere. In some cases, the proportion of nights was less than 1% for these children.

(b) Contact arrangements with their parent living elsewhere were not known for 7% of children. These children are included in the total. See paragraph 24 of the Explanatory Notes for more information.

	Males	Females	Persons
NUMBER OF PERSONS ('000)			
Household type			
In family households	229	72	301
In lone person households	139	9	148
In group households	17	*4	21
Family composition			
In couple families with children	118	35	153
In couple families without children	69	*13	82
In one parent families	37	24	61
In other families(a)	**3	—	**3
Total family members	227	71	298
Relationship in household			
Family member	227	71	298
Non-family member			
Person in lone person household	139	9	148
Person in group household	17	*4	21
Total non-family members(b)	158	14	172
Age (years)			
15–24	*7	*5	*11
25–44	237	51	289
45 and over	141	29	170
Labour force status			
Employed	316	54	370
Full-time	293	26	318
Part-time	24	29	52
Unemployed	18	*6	24
Not in the Labour Force	51	25	76
<b>Total non-resident parents of children aged 0–17 years</b>	<b>385</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>470</b>

\* estimate has a relative standard error of 25% to 50% and should be used with caution

\*\* estimate has a relative standard error greater than 50% and is considered too unreliable for general use

— nil or rounded to zero (including null cells)

(a) Refers to families where there are no partners or children (e.g. adult siblings living together without a parent).

(b) Includes non-resident parents living as unrelated individuals in a family household.

	AGE GROUPS (YEARS)							Total
	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 and over	
NUMBER OF PERSONS ('000)								
Couple relationship history(a)								
Registered marriage(s) only(b)	104	1 170	1 801	2 024	1 880	1 269	1 071	9 320
De facto marriage(s) only	469	857	470	195	61	*12	*6	2 070
Both registered and de facto marriages(c)	*14	248	458	426	211	69	26	1 452
Has never been in a couple relationship	1 375	519	230	125	106	41	33	2 429
Number of couple relationships(a)								
None	1 375	519	230	125	106	41	33	2 429
One	495	1 736	1 891	1 832	1 641	1 116	969	9 681
Two	82	405	588	569	378	194	117	2 332
Three	*5	99	179	176	89	33	*12	593
Four or more	**5	35	71	71	45	*10	*5	242
Whether currently in a couple relationship(a)								
Currently in a registered marriage	114	1 312	1 918	1 908	1 643	972	583	8 450
Currently in a de facto marriage								
Expects to have registered marriage with partner	177	311	115	40	*15	**2	—	659
Does not expect to have registered marriage with partner(d)	*34	64	123	119	66	*21	*9	437
Not known whether will have registered marriage with partner	89	124	96	52	*24	*5	**2	392
Total currently in a de facto marriage(e)	306	514	349	235	109	30	*11	1 553
Total currently in a couple relationship(a)	420	1 826	2 266	2 143	1 752	1 003	594	10 004
Not currently in a couple relationship	1 553	997	740	694	541	420	561	5 505
Length of current relationship(a) (f)								
Under 5 years	367	679	273	133	32	*12	—	1 497
5 and under 10 years	45	729	393	140	56	*11	**12	1 384
10 and under 15 years	—	329	609	175	70	*18	**6	1 207
15 and under 20 years	—	44	602	263	91	*24	**5	1 029
20 and under 25 years	—	—	290	401	70	28	*13	802
25 and under 30 years	—	—	37	538	114	47	*7	742
30 and under 35 years	—	—	—	369	349	38	*7	762
35 and under 40 years	—	—	—	50	613	63	*12	737
40 and under 45 years	—	—	—	—	282	223	*27	531
45 and under 50 years	—	—	—	—	*34	316	56	406
50 years and over	—	—	—	—	—	173	412	585
<b>Total (g)</b>	<b>1 972</b>	<b>2 823</b>	<b>3 007</b>	<b>2 836</b>	<b>2 293</b>	<b>1 423</b>	<b>1 155</b>	<b>15 509</b>

\* estimate has a relative standard error of 25% to 50% and should be used with caution

\*\* estimate has a relative standard error greater than 50% and is considered too unreliable for general use

— nil or rounded to zero (including null cells)

(a) Includes both registered marriages and de facto marriages.

(b) May include couples who lived together before their registered marriage. See paragraph 26 of the Explanatory Notes for more information.

(c) May include people who reported time spent living together before their registered marriage as a separate de facto marriage. See paragraph 26 of the Explanatory Notes for more information.

(d) Includes persons who had been in a long-term de facto marriage and did not expect to have a registered marriage with their partner, and those who reported that they do not expect to stay in their current relationship.

(e) Includes those in same-sex de facto marriages who were not asked about, and those who did not state, their expectations for registered marriage.

(f) The length of current relationship includes any periods of cohabitation before registered marriage.

(g) On average, 2% of persons aged 18 years and over did not provide details about their couple relationships (the actual proportion varied from 0.1% to 2.3% depending on age group). These persons are included in the total.

	AGE GROUPS (YEARS)							Total
	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 and over	
PROPORTION OF PERSONS (%)								
Couple relationship history(a)								
Registered marriage(s) only(b)	5	41	60	71	82	89	93	60
De facto marriage(s) only	24	30	16	7	3	*1	*1	13
Both registered and de facto marriages(c)	*1	9	15	15	9	5	2	9
Has never been in a couple relationship	70	18	8	4	5	3	3	16
Number of couple relationships(a)								
None	70	18	8	4	5	3	3	16
One	25	62	63	65	72	78	84	62
Two	4	14	20	20	16	14	10	15
Three	—	4	6	6	4	2	*1	4
Four or more	—	1	2	3	2	*1	—	2
Whether currently in a couple relationship(a)								
Currently in a registered marriage	6	47	64	67	72	68	51	55
Currently in a de facto marriage								
Expects to have registered marriage with partner	9	11	4	1	*1	—	—	4
Does not expect to have registered marriage with partner(d)	*2	2	4	4	3	*2	*1	3
Not known whether will have registered marriage with partner	5	4	3	2	*1	—	—	3
Total currently in a de facto marriage(e)	16	18	12	8	5	2	*1	10
Total currently in a couple relationship(a)	21	65	75	76	76	71	51	65
Not currently in a couple relationship	79	35	25	25	24	30	49	36
Length of current relationship(a) (f)								
Under 5 years	19	24	9	5	1	*1	—	10
5 and under 10 years	2	26	13	5	2	*1	**1	9
10 and under 15 years	—	12	20	6	3	*1	**1	8
15 and under 20 years	—	2	20	9	4	*2	—	7
20 and under 25 years	—	—	10	14	3	2	*1	5
25 and under 30 years	—	—	1	19	5	3	*1	5
30 and under 35 years	—	—	—	13	15	3	*1	5
35 and under 40 years	—	—	—	2	27	4	*1	5
40 and under 45 years	—	—	—	—	12	16	*2	3
45 and under 50 years	—	—	—	—	*2	22	5	3
50 years and over	—	—	—	—	—	12	36	4
<b>Total (g)</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

\* estimate has a relative standard error of 25% to 50% and should be used with caution

\*\* estimate has a relative standard error greater than 50% and is considered too unreliable for general use

— nil or rounded to zero (including null cells)

(a) Includes both registered marriages and de facto marriages.

(b) May include couples who lived together before their registered marriage. See paragraph 26 of the Explanatory Notes for more information.

(c) May include people who reported time spent living together before their registered marriage as a separate de facto marriage. See paragraph 26 of the Explanatory Notes for more information.

(d) Includes persons who had been in a long-term de facto marriage and did not expect to have a registered marriage with their partner, and those who reported that they do not expect to stay in their current relationship.

(e) Includes those in same-sex de facto marriages who were not asked about, and those who did not state, their expectations for registered marriage.

(f) The length of current relationship includes any periods of cohabitation before registered marriage.

(g) On average, 2% of persons aged 18 years and over did not provide details about their couple relationships (the actual proportion varied from 0.1% to 2.3% depending on age group). These persons are included in the total.



	AGE GROUPS (YEARS)							Total
	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 and over	
NUMBER OF PERSONS ('000)								
Whether cohabited before registered marriage								
Cohabited before marriage	63	877	1 089	751	364	109	31	3 285
Did not cohabit before marriage	49	418	811	1 124	1 263	845	541	5 051
Length of cohabitation before registered marriage								
Less than 1 year	**3	126	211	181	75	*30	**6	632
1 to less than 2 years	*15	166	257	179	92	*18	**7	733
2 to less than 3 years	*13	180	215	133	67	25	**3	635
3 to less than 5 years	*25	233	195	126	63	*10	**3	656
5 years or more	**8	171	203	125	66	23	*9	603
Did not cohabit before marriage	49	418	811	1 124	1 263	845	541	5 051
Age at time of registered marriage (years)								
Less than 18	**4	*9	*16	34	32	*16	*7	117
18-24	108	530	631	850	901	509	264	3 793
25-34	—	736	980	620	410	246	198	3 191
35-44	—	—	243	253	142	79	35	751
45-54	—	—	—	95	95	46	*11	247
55 and over	—	—	—	—	28	37	34	99
<b>Total(a)</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>1 312</b>	<b>1 918</b>	<b>1 908</b>	<b>1 643</b>	<b>972</b>	<b>583</b>	<b>8 450</b>

	PROPORTION OF PERSONS (%)							Total
	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 and over	
Whether cohabited before registered marriage								
Cohabited before marriage	56	67	57	39	22	11	5	39
Did not cohabit before marriage	43	32	42	59	77	87	93	60
Length of cohabitation before registered marriage								
Less than 1 year	**3	10	11	10	5	*3	**1	8
1 to less than 2 years	*13	13	13	9	6	*2	**1	9
2 to less than 3 years	*11	14	11	7	4	3	*1	8
3 to less than 5 years	*22	18	10	7	4	*1	**1	8
5 years or more	**7	13	11	7	4	2	*2	7
Did not cohabit before marriage	43	32	42	59	77	87	93	60
Age at time of registered marriage (years)								
Less than 18	**4	*1	*1	2	2	*2	*1	1
18-24	95	40	33	45	55	52	45	45
25-34	—	56	51	33	25	25	34	38
35-44	—	—	13	13	9	8	6	9
45-54	—	—	—	5	6	5	*2	3
55 and over	—	—	—	—	2	4	6	1
<b>Total(a)</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

\* estimate has a relative standard error of 25% to 50% and should be used with caution

\*\* estimate has a relative standard error greater than 50% and is considered too unreliable for general use

— nil or rounded to zero (including null cells)

(a) On average, 3% of persons aged 18 years and over who were currently in a registered marriage did not provide details about cohabitation before, or age at time of, registered marriage (the actual proportion varied from 0.9% to 5.8% depending on age group). The proportions were largest for persons in older age groups. The persons who did not state their details about cohabitation before, or age at time of registered marriage are included in the totals.

	AGE GROUPS (YEARS)							Total
	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 and over	
NUMBER OF PERSONS ('000)								
<b>Males</b>								
Number of natural children ever born(a)								
One	*11	228	254	223	129	56	54	955
Two	**9	200	469	472	378	206	118	1 850
Three or more	—	70	311	425	402	316	241	1 764
Age at first birth								
Less than 25 years	*18	150	160	255	272	180	80	1 115
25 to less than 30 years	..	216	346	326	345	226	180	1 639
30 to less than 35 years	..	124	333	288	169	89	87	1 090
35 years and over	..	..	179	228	88	50	36	581
<i>Total males aged 18 years and over who have had natural children(b)</i>	*20	497	1 034	1 120	908	577	413	4 569
<b>Females</b>								
Number of natural children ever born(a)								
One	83	256	252	260	116	53	70	1 090
Two	36	347	585	517	439	200	133	2 257
Three or more	*10	148	384	437	482	366	353	2 181
Age at first birth								
Less than 25 years	127	341	330	526	571	356	253	2 503
25 to less than 30 years	..	311	432	318	287	181	159	1 688
30 to less than 35 years	..	98	341	208	100	39	77	862
35 years and over	..	..	110	122	35	*10	27	304
<i>Total females aged 18 years and over who have had natural children(b)</i>	129	752	1 221	1 214	1 037	620	556	5 528
<b>Persons</b>								
Number of natural children ever born(a)								
One	94	484	506	483	245	109	124	2 045
Two	*44	547	1 054	989	816	406	251	4 107
Three or more	*10	218	695	863	884	682	594	3 945
Age at first birth								
Less than 25 years	144	492	489	781	843	535	333	3 619
25 to less than 30 years	..	526	778	644	633	407	339	3 327
30 to less than 35 years	..	222	674	496	268	128	164	1 952
35 years and over	..	..	289	350	123	60	63	885
<b>Total persons aged 18 years and over who have had natural children(b)</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>1 249</b>	<b>2 254</b>	<b>2 334</b>	<b>1 945</b>	<b>1 197</b>	<b>969</b>	<b>10 097</b>

\* estimate has a relative standard error of 25% to 50% and should be used with caution

\*\* estimate has a relative standard error greater than 50% and is considered too unreliable for general use

.. not applicable

— nil or rounded to zero (including null cells)

(a) Refers to any natural children born alive to the person, either as the mother or the father, regardless of whether that child is still living.

(b) On average, 3% of persons aged 18 years and over who have had children did not state their age at the birth of their first child (the actual proportion varied from 0.2% to 11% depending on age group and sex). The proportions were largest for persons in older age groups. The persons who did not state their age at the birth of their first child are included in the totals.

	AGE GROUPS (YEARS)							Total
	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 and over	
PROPORTION OF PERSONS (%)								
<b>Males</b>								
Number of natural children ever born(a)								
One	*57	46	25	20	14	10	13	21
Two	*44	40	45	42	42	36	29	41
Three or more	—	14	30	38	44	55	59	39
Age at first birth								
Less than 25 years	89	30	16	23	30	31	19	24
25 to less than 30 years	..	43	34	29	38	39	44	36
30 to less than 35 years	..	25	32	26	19	16	21	24
35 years and over	..	..	17	20	10	9	9	13
<b>Total males aged 18 years and over who have had natural children(b)</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Females</b>								
Number of natural children ever born(a)								
One	65	34	21	21	11	9	13	20
Two	28	46	48	43	42	32	24	41
Three or more	*8	20	32	36	47	59	63	40
Age at first birth								
Less than 25 years	99	45	27	43	55	57	46	45
25 to less than 30 years	..	41	35	26	28	29	29	31
30 to less than 35 years	..	13	28	17	10	6	14	16
35 years and over	..	..	9	10	3	*2	5	6
<b>Total females aged 18 years and over who have had natural children(b)</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Persons</b>								
Number of natural children ever born(a)								
One	64	39	22	21	13	9	13	20
Two	30	44	47	42	42	34	26	41
Three or more	*7	18	31	37	45	57	61	39
Age at first birth								
Less than 25 years	97	39	22	34	43	45	34	36
25 to less than 30 years	..	42	35	28	33	34	35	33
30 to less than 35 years	..	18	30	21	14	11	17	19
35 years and over	..	..	13	15	6	5	7	9
<b>Total persons aged 18 years and over who have had natural children(b)</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

\* estimate has a relative standard error of 25% to 50% and should be used with caution

.. not applicable

— nil or rounded to zero (including null cells)

(a) Refers to any natural children born alive to the person, either as the mother or the father, regardless of whether that child is still living.

(b) On average, 3% of persons aged 18 years and over who have had children did not state their age at the birth of their first child (the actual proportion varied from 0.2% to 11% depending on age group and sex). The proportions were largest for persons in older age groups. The persons who did not state their age at the birth of their first child are included in the totals.

	AGE GROUPS (YEARS)				Total
	18–24	25–29	30–34	35–49	
NUMBER OF PERSONS ('000)					
<b>Married(b)</b>					
Has had natural children					
Expects to have more children	69	108	122	83	382
Does not expect to have more children	*20	67	222	1 373	1 681
Don't know whether expects to have more children	**4	27	55	54	140
Has never had natural children					
Expects to have children	142	172	91	*29	434
Does not expect to have children	*13	*15	*18	152	197
Don't know whether expects to have children	*10	*17	*11	*12	50
<b>Total married(c)</b>	<b>261</b>	<b>406</b>	<b>521</b>	<b>1 713</b>	<b>2 900</b>
<b>Not married</b>					
Has had natural children					
Expects to have more children	16	*22	*11	*7	55
Does not expect to have more children	*10	32	61	315	418
Don't know whether expects to have more children	*10	*17	*17	23	66
Has never had natural children					
Expects to have children	512	140	59	29	740
Does not expect to have children	49	*25	20	135	229
Don't know whether expects to have children	107	45	32	40	225
<b>Total not married(c)</b>	<b>705</b>	<b>282</b>	<b>199</b>	<b>555</b>	<b>1 741</b>
<b>Total women</b>					
Has had natural children					
Expects to have more children	85	129	133	89	437
Does not expect to have more children	30	99	282	1 688	2 099
Don't know whether expects to have more children	*14	44	72	76	206
Has never had natural children					
Expects to have children	654	312	150	58	1 174
Does not expect to have children	63	40	37	287	427
Don't know whether expects to have children	118	62	44	52	275
<b>Total women aged 18–49 years(c)</b>	<b>966</b>	<b>688</b>	<b>720</b>	<b>2 268</b>	<b>4 642</b>

\* estimate has a relative standard error of 25% to 50% and should be used with caution

\*\* estimate has a relative standard error greater than 50% and is considered too unreliable for general use

(a) Refers to expectation of bearing natural children in the future. Refer to the Glossary for a definition of a natural child.

(b) Includes persons in a registered marriage or a de facto marriage.

(c) On average, 0.5% of women aged 18 to 49 years did not state their intentions for having children (the actual proportion varied from 0.1% to 1.3% depending on age group and marital status). These women are included in the totals.

	AGE GROUPS (YEARS)				Total
	18–24	25–29	30–34	35–49	
PROPORTION OF PERSONS (%)					
<b>Married(b)</b>					
Has had natural children					
Expects to have more children	27	27	23	5	13
Does not expect to have more children	*8	17	43	80	58
Don't know whether expects to have more children	**2	7	11	3	5
Has never had natural children					
Expects to have children	55	42	18	*2	15
Does not expect to have children	*5	*4	*3	9	7
Don't know whether expects to have children	*4	*4	*2	*1	2
<b>Total married(c)</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Not married</b>					
Has had natural children					
Expects to have more children	2	*8	*6	*1	3
Does not expect to have more children	*2	11	31	57	24
Don't know whether expects to have more children	*1	*6	*8	4	4
Has never had natural children					
Expects to have children	73	50	30	5	43
Does not expect to have children	7	*9	10	24	13
Don't know whether expects to have children	15	16	16	7	13
<b>Total not married(c)</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Total women</b>					
Has had natural children					
Expects to have more children	9	19	19	4	9
Does not expect to have more children	3	15	39	74	45
Don't know whether expects to have more children	*1	6	10	3	4
Has never had natural children					
Expects to have children	68	45	21	3	25
Does not expect to have children	7	6	5	13	9
Don't know whether expects to have children	12	9	6	2	6
<b>Total women aged 18–49 years(c)</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

\* estimate has a relative standard error of 25% to 50% and should be used with caution

\*\* estimate has a relative standard error greater than 50% and is considered too unreliable for general use

(a) Refers to expectation of bearing natural children in the future. Refer to the Glossary for a definition of a natural child.

(b) Includes persons in a registered marriage or a de facto marriage.

(c) On average, 0.5% of women aged 18 to 49 years did not state their intentions for having children (the actual proportion varied from 0.1% to 1.3% depending on age group and marital status). These women are included in the totals.

	MALES			FEMALES			PERSONS		
	18–24 years	25–34 years	Total	18–24 years	25–34 years	Total	18–24 years	25–34 years	Total
NUMBER OF PERSONS ('000)									
Main reason never left home									
Financial reason	216	40	256	167	*15	182	383	55	438
Convenience/enjoy living at home	182	*31	214	149	*21	170	331	52	383
Other reason	82	*17	99	80	*27	107	161	45	206
Has never left home, but lives separately from parents(a)	*13	89	102	39	143	182	52	232	284
<b>Total who never left home</b>	<b>493</b>	<b>177</b>	<b>671</b>	<b>434</b>	<b>206</b>	<b>641</b>	<b>928</b>	<b>384</b>	<b>1 311</b>
Main reason first left home(b)									
Family conflict	48	70	118	77	117	194	125	188	313
Employment or career reason	80	172	251	*35	105	140	114	277	391
To study	127	167	294	117	190	307	245	356	601
To be independent	154	460	613	137	369	506	291	828	1 119
To live with partner or get married	*45	203	248	103	278	381	148	481	629
Travel	**12	43	55	*16	44	60	*27	87	114
Housing reason	*20	37	*56	*16	19	35	*36	55	91
Moving interstate or overseas	*18	59	76	*7	56	63	*24	115	139
Other reason/reason not stated	*11	*28	39	24	25	49	35	53	88
<b>Total who left home</b>	<b>513</b>	<b>1 238</b>	<b>1 751</b>	<b>531</b>	<b>1 202</b>	<b>1 733</b>	<b>1 045</b>	<b>2 439</b>	<b>3 484</b>
<b>Total persons aged 18–34 years</b>	<b>1 007</b>	<b>1 415</b>	<b>2 422</b>	<b>966</b>	<b>1 408</b>	<b>2 373</b>	<b>1 972</b>	<b>2 823</b>	<b>4 795</b>

PROPORTION OF PERSONS (%)									
Main reason never left home									
Financial reason	44	23	38	39	*7	28	41	14	33
Convenience/enjoy living at home	37	*18	32	34	*10	27	36	14	29
Other reason	17	*10	15	18	*13	17	17	12	16
Has never left home, but lives separately from parents(a)	*3	50	15	9	69	28	6	60	22
<b>Total who never left home</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
Main reason first left home(b)									
Family conflict	9	6	7	15	10	11	12	8	9
Employment or career reason	16	14	14	7	9	8	11	11	11
To study	25	14	17	22	16	18	23	15	17
To be independent	30	37	35	26	31	29	28	34	32
To live with partner or get married	9	16	14	19	23	22	14	20	18
Travel	**2	4	3	*3	4	4	*3	4	3
Housing reason	*4	3	3	*3	*2	2	*3	2	3
Moving interstate or overseas	*3	5	4	*1	5	4	*2	5	4
Other reason/reason not stated	*2	*2	2	5	2	3	3	2	3
<b>Total who left home</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Total persons aged 18–34 years</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

\* estimate has a relative standard error of 25% to 50% and should be used with caution

(a) Includes persons whose parents may have died or moved away.

\*\* estimate has a relative standard error greater than 50% and is considered too unreliable for general use

(b) Includes persons who moved out of their parental home but have subsequently returned.



AGE GROUPS (YEARS)

18-24 25-34 35-44 45-54 55-64 65-74 75 and over Total



NUMBER OF PERSONS ('000)

Whether experienced divorce or separation of parents before the age of 18 years								
Experienced the divorce or separation of parents(a)	471	674	544	327	176	105	73	2 371
Did not experience the divorce or separation of parents	1 500	2 141	2 446	2 500	2 110	1 307	1 072	13 075
Whether experienced death of parent before the age of 18 years								
Experienced the death of a parent	100	147	265	297	226	203	216	1 455
Did not experience the death of a parent	1 872	2 672	2 730	2 531	2 060	1 209	927	14 002
<b>Total(b)</b>	<b>1 972</b>	<b>2 823</b>	<b>3 007</b>	<b>2 836</b>	<b>2 293</b>	<b>1 423</b>	<b>1 155</b>	<b>15 509</b>

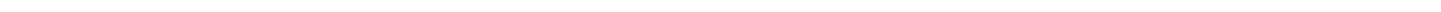


PROPORTION OF PERSONS (%)

Whether experienced divorce or separation of parents before the age of 18 years								
Experienced the divorce or separation of parents(a)	24	24	18	12	8	7	6	15
Did not experience the divorce or separation of parents	76	76	81	88	92	92	93	84
Whether experienced death of parent before the age of 18 years								
Experienced the death of a parent	5	5	9	11	10	14	19	9
Did not experience the death of a parent	95	95	91	89	90	85	80	90
<b>Total(b)</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>



- (a) Includes temporary and permanent separations.
- (b) On average, 0.7% of persons aged 18 years and over did not state whether, before they turned 18, their parents had divorced, separated or died (the actual proportion varied from 0.1% to 1.0% depending on age group). These people are included in the totals.



## EXPLANATORY NOTES

### INTRODUCTION

**1** The statistics in this publication were compiled from data collected in the Multi-Purpose Household Survey (MPHS), which was conducted throughout Australia in the 2006–07 financial year as a supplement to the Monthly Population Survey (MPS). The MPHS is designed to provide statistics annually for labour, social and economic topics.

**2** The topics collected in the 2006–07 MPHS, in addition to household and person socio-demographic characteristics, were:

- Family Characteristics
- Family Transitions and History
- Barriers and Incentives to Labour Force Participation
- Retirement and Retirement Intentions
- Adult Learning
- Household Use of Information Technology

**3** Data from both family topics have been presented in this publication. The Family Characteristics topic has been collected before, in 1982, 1992, 1997 and 2003, and the content is largely repeated allowing comparisons over time. The Family Transitions and History topic is new to 2007. It collected information on couple relationship history, relationship expectations, children ever born, reasons for leaving home and fertility expectations. Selected demographic, labour force and income data are also available for both family topics. A full list of data items available for the Family Characteristics and Family Transitions and History topics is available on the ABS web site entry for this publication (see [www.abs.gov.au](http://www.abs.gov.au), cat. no. 4442.0).

**4** Data from the 2006–07 MPHS topics, other than the family topics, are available as an expanded Confidentialised Unit Record File (CURF) (cat. no. 4100.0.55.001). A separate expanded CURF is available for the family topics (cat. no. 4442.0.55.001).

### SCOPE OF THE SURVEY

**5** The scope of the 2006–07 MPHS included all usual residents in private dwellings, except:

- households where at least one person was a member in the Australian permanent defence forces
- diplomatic personnel of overseas governments, and their dependants, excluded from censuses and surveys of Australian residents
- members of non-Australian defence forces stationed in Australia, and their dependants
- persons living in private dwellings in very remote parts of Australia
- persons living in non-private dwellings such as hotels and university residences, students at boarding schools, patients in hospitals, residents of homes (e.g. retirement homes, homes for people with disabilities), and inmates of prisons.

**6** The 2006–07 MPHS was conducted in both urban and rural areas in all states and territories, but excluded persons living in very remote parts of Australia who would otherwise have been within the scope of the survey. The exclusion of these persons is expected to have only a minor impact on any aggregate estimates that are produced for states and territories, except for the Northern Territory where such persons account for approximately 23% of the population.

### DATA COLLECTION

**7** ABS interviewers conducted personal interviews by either telephone or at selected dwellings, from July 2006 to June 2007, excluding the months of August and September 2006 when the 2006 Census of Population and Housing was conducted. Each month a sample of dwellings were selected for the MPHS from the responding households in the last rotation group for the MPS. In these dwellings, after the MPS had been fully completed for each person, a usual resident aged 15 years and over was selected at random and asked the additional MPHS questions in a personal interview. Information was collected using Computer Assisted Interviewing (CAI), whereby responses are recorded directly onto an electronic questionnaire in a notebook computer.



## EXPLANATORY NOTES *continued*

### DATA COLLECTION *continued*

**8** The Family Characteristics topic collected information from the randomly selected person about the household and about every person in the household, including all children in the household. The Family Transitions and History topic questions were only asked about the randomly selected persons aged 18 years and over, with some sub-topics having additional age restrictions. Therefore, the sample for Family Characteristics is much larger than for Family Transitions and History. There were 31,300 person records for the Family Characteristics topic, and 12,200 person records for the Family Transitions and History topic.

**9** Where the randomly selected respondent was aged 15–17 years, and a parent/guardian or other responsible adult aged 18 years and over was resident in the household, permission was sought from the parent or other adult to interview the young person. Regardless of whether permission was granted, the Family Characteristics topic and details of household income (excluding the income of the selected respondent) was collected from the parent or other adult.

**10** The Family Characteristics topic collected information about parent-child relationships beyond the usual residence of the child. The survey collected information about resident children aged 0–17 years in the household who had a natural parent living in another household. In addition, the Family Characteristics topic identified whether respondents were parents who had natural children aged 0–17 years living elsewhere with the child's other natural parent.

### WEIGHTING, BENCHMARKING AND ESTIMATION

#### *Weighting*

**11** Weighting is the process of adjusting results from a sample survey to infer results for the total in-scope population. To do this, a 'weight' is allocated to each sample unit (i.e. a person, a family or a household). The weight is a value which indicates how many population units are represented by the sample unit.

**12** The first step in calculating weights for each person or household is to assign an initial weight, which is equal to the inverse of the probability of being selected in the survey. For example, if the probability of a person being selected in the survey was 1 in 600, then the person would have an initial weight of 600 (that is, they represent 600 people).

#### *Benchmarking*

**13** The initial weights were calibrated to align with independent estimates of the population of interest, referred to as 'benchmarks'. Weights calibrated against population benchmarks ensure that the survey estimates conform to the independently estimated distribution of the population rather than to the distribution within the sample itself. Calibration to population benchmarks helps to compensate for over or under-enumeration of particular groups of persons which may occur due to either the random nature of sampling or non-response.

**14** The 2006–07 Family Characteristics data and Family Transitions and History data were benchmarked to the estimated resident population (ERP) living in private dwellings in each state and territory, excluding the ERP living in very remote areas of Australia, as at 31st March 2007. The ERP estimates were based on results from the 2001 Census of Population and Housing. Therefore the estimates from this survey do not (and are not intended to) match estimates for the total Australian resident population (which include persons and households living in non-private dwellings, such as hotels and boarding houses, and in very remote parts of Australia) from other ABS sources.

**15** The survey estimates conform to person benchmarks by State, part-of-State, age and sex, and to household benchmarks by State, part-of-State and household composition (number of adults and children usually resident in the household). These benchmark variables are the same as those used in the 2003 and 1997 Family Characteristics surveys. The only change has been in the age groups for which some

## EXPLANATORY NOTES *continued*

### *Benchmarking continued*

collapsing was required for each collection. The impact of this change on estimates not involving age is minimal.

### *Estimation*

**16** Survey estimates (e.g. counts of persons, families or households) are obtained by summing the relevant weight (for persons, families or households) with the characteristic of interest.

## RELIABILITY OF ESTIMATES

**17** All sample surveys are subject to error which can be broadly categorised as either sampling error or non-sampling error. Sampling error occurs because only a small proportion of the total population is used to produce estimates that represent the whole population. Sampling error can be reliably measured as it is calculated based on the scientific methods used to design surveys. Non-sampling errors occur when survey processes work less effectively than intended. For example, some persons selected for the survey may not respond (non-response); some survey questions may not be clearly understood by the respondent; and occasionally errors can be made in processing data from the survey.

### *Sampling error*

**18** Sampling error is the difference between the published estimates, derived from a sample of persons, and the value that would have been produced if all persons in scope of the survey had been included. For more information refer to the 'Technical Note'. Sampling error is measured for this survey by relative standard errors (RSEs). In this publication estimates with RSEs of 25% to 50% are preceded by an asterisk (e.g. \*3.4) to indicate that the estimate should be used with caution. Estimates with RSEs over 50% are indicated by a double asterisk (e.g. \*\*0.6) and should be considered unreliable for most purposes.

### *Non-sampling error*

**19** One of the main sources of non-sampling error is non-response by persons selected in the survey. Non-response can affect the reliability of results and can introduce bias. The magnitude of any bias depends upon the level of non-response and the extent of the difference between the characteristics of those people who responded to the survey and those who did not.

**20** To reduce the level and impact of non-response, the following methods were adopted in this survey:

- face-to-face interviews with some respondents who were not available for telephone interview
- the use of interviewers who could speak languages other than English where necessary
- follow-up of respondents if there was initially no response
- ensuring the weighted file is representative of the population by aligning the estimates with population benchmarks.

**21** Every effort was made to minimise other non-sampling error by careful design and testing of questionnaires, intensive training and supervision of interviewers, and extensive editing and quality control procedures at all stages of data processing.

**22** An advantage of the CAI technology used in conducting interviews for this survey is that it potentially reduces non-sampling errors by enabling edits to be applied as the data are being collected. The interviewer is alerted immediately if information entered into the computer is either outside the permitted range for that question, or contradictory to information previously recorded during the interview. These edits allow the interviewer to query respondents and resolve issues during the interview. CAI sequencing of questions is also automated such that respondents are asked only relevant questions and only in the appropriate sequence, eliminating interviewer sequencing errors.

## EXPLANATORY NOTES *continued*

### COMPARABILITY WITH PREVIOUS SURVEYS

**23** Family Surveys were conducted by the ABS in 1982 and 1992, and the Family Characteristics Survey (FCS) was previously conducted in 1997 and 2003. The Family Surveys, and to a lesser extent the 1997 FCS, differed from the 2003 FCS and 2006–07 Family Characteristics topic in some areas. Nevertheless, these differences do not preclude useful comparisons between them for certain data items. Some data from the 1997 and 2003 surveys have been included in this publication to show changes over time.

**24** Changes listed below were made to the content of the FCS between 1997 and 2003, and between 2003 and 2006–07. These changes should be noted when making comparisons over time.

- Information was collected in 1997 and 2003 for children who did not live with either natural parent (e.g. grandchildren, otherwise related and unrelated children), about whether they had a natural parent living elsewhere. In 2006–07, this information was not obtained for those children who were adopted, or for those for whom the relationship to either parent was unknown.
- In 2003 and 2006–07 the definition of step families includes families where there were children who were the natural child of one parent, and otherwise related or unrelated to the other parent. In 1997, step families were defined only where children were reported as step children.
- The 2003 FCS collected detailed information for up to three children aged 0–17 years in a family. In families with four or more children aged 0–17 years, only limited information (age, sex and relationship to parents) was collected for the fourth and subsequent children, up to a maximum of nine children. The remaining details for these children were imputed from information already collected for the first three children. In 2006–07, these details were collected for all children in the household (i.e. there was no upper limit on the number of children about which information was directly collected).
- Child support data collected in 2003 was not collected in 2006–07.
- There have been some changes between 2003 and 2006–07 in collection and processing methods for data relating to children aged 0–17 years who had a natural parent living elsewhere, in particular for data on contact arrangements with the other parent. In 2006–07, there were approximately 74,000 cases where contact arrangements with the parent living elsewhere were not known. Those data have been excluded from the detailed 'Frequency of contact' and 'Proportion of nights' data in the contact arrangements publication tables, although these children contribute to the total (footnotes are included in the relevant tables). There were no cases in 1997 and 2003 where contact arrangements with the parent living elsewhere were not known.
- There has also been changes in the calculation of the number of overnight stays per year with their non-resident parent by children aged 0–17 years. In 2003 adjustments were made to the reported data where the child stayed 50% or more nights with the non-resident parent. This adjustment affected published proportions for 30–49% and 50% or more. No such adjustments have been made to reporting in 2006–07. This difference in approach has meant that there is a higher number of children in 2006–07 reported as staying 50% or more nights with the non-resident parent. These changes may not reflect a real world change, and constitute a break in series.
- Additional information was collected in 2006–07 about whether persons aged 15 years and over have any natural children aged 0–17 years living elsewhere, but not with the other natural parent.

**25** The Family Transitions and History topic is new in 2006–07, but covers some data collected in earlier surveys. There are five sub-topics:

## EXPLANATORY NOTES *continued*

### COMPARABILITY WITH PREVIOUS SURVEYS *continued*

- Relationship History which included a person's registered marriages and de facto marriages, number of registered or de facto marriage relationships, cohabitation before current registered marriage, age at time of current registered marriage, and expectations of registered marriage for those currently in a de facto marriage.
- Parental Transitions in Childhood which included whether or not a person had experienced, before the age of 18, their parents' divorce or separation, or the death of a parent.
- Leaving Home which included reasons for leaving the parental home, reasons for not having left home, and number of times left the parental home or returned. This sub-topic was collected for persons aged 18–34 years.
- Children Ever Born which included whether or not the respondent had natural children, number of natural children ever born, and age at birth of first child.
- Fertility Expectations which included whether or not the respondent expects to have (more) natural children and reasons for not expecting to have (more) natural children. This sub-topic was collected for women aged 18–49 years and men aged 18–59 as long as their female partner was under 50 years of age.

**26** Information on relationships in the Family Transitions and History topic is 'as reported' by respondents. For example, when people were asked about the number of relationships (registered or de facto) they have had, some people may have reported a registered marriage preceded by a period of cohabitation as one relationship (i.e. one registered marriage), while others may have reported the period of cohabitation as a de facto marriage followed by a registered marriage (i.e. two marriages). Therefore people who had been in a registered marriage preceded by a period of cohabitation may be included as either having had a registered marriage only for their relationship history, or as having had both registered and de facto marriages, depending on how they answered the survey questions.

### FAMILY CODING PRACTICES

**27** Data items such as 'family composition' in household surveys are based on initial information gathered about the members of the household and their relationships to each other. Family coding is the process of allocating household members to families, where appropriate, based on their spousal, parent-child, and other familial relationships to other members of the household. All children aged 0–14 years are assigned a parent or nominal parent, for example a grandchild living with only his/her grandparents will have the grandparents allocated as nominal parents.

**28** The families topics in the 2006–07 FCTS Survey are designed to capture more accurate information about the composition of families than that collected in other ABS surveys. In 2006–07, as was the case in 2003, a number of populations and data items have been modified to more accurately classify persons and families where there was a parent/guardian and child/ward relationship. Prior to the 2003 FCS, children aged 15–17 years whose relationship fell outside the standard parent-child classifications (e.g. grandchildren living with grandparents, children living with other related or unrelated adults in a guardian-ward relationship) were classified as 'other related individuals' or 'unrelated individuals'.

**29** For example, in the 1997 FCS a 15–17 year old child living with his or her grandparents would have resulted in the grandparents being coded to 'couple family without children' and the child would be an 'other related individual'. For the 2003 and 2006–07 surveys, the family classification allows for inclusion of people with this relationship in the same family. For the example outlined above, the family would be classified as a 'couple family with children'.

### FUTURE SURVEY

**30** The ABS plans to repeat the Family Characteristics topic three yearly as part of MPHS. It will next be collected in 2009–10. The Family Transitions and History topic will be collected 6 yearly and will next be collected in 2012–13.

## EXPLANATORY NOTES *continued*

### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

**31** ABS surveys draw extensively on information provided by individuals, businesses, governments and other organisations. Their continued cooperation is very much appreciated: without it, the wide range of statistics published by the ABS would not be available. Information received by the ABS is treated in strict confidence as required by the *Census and Statistics Act 1905*.

### PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

#### *Publication datacubes*

**32** An electronic version of the tables released in this publication, in spreadsheet format, will be available on the ABS web site (see [www.abs.gov.au](http://www.abs.gov.au), cat. no. 4442.0). The spreadsheets present the estimates, proportions and related RSEs for each publication table.

#### *Data item list*

**33** A full list of data items available for the survey is available on the ABS web site entry for this publication (see [www.abs.gov.au](http://www.abs.gov.au), cat. no. 4442.0).

#### *State/territory tabulations*

**34** Selected tables from this publication, compiled at the state and territory level will be available as spreadsheets on the ABS web site. These tables will be customised depending on the size of the sampling error (see [www.abs.gov.au](http://www.abs.gov.au), cat. no. 4442.0).

#### *Microdata*

**35** For users who wish to undertake more detailed analysis of the survey data, microdata is available in the form of a confidentialised unit record file (CURF) (cat. no. 4442.0.55.001). The CURF is only available via the Remote Access Data Laboratory (RADL), which is a secure Internet-based data query service. Technical information describing the content and use of the CURF is available in a Technical Manual (cat. no. 4442.0.55.002).

**36** A full range of up-to-date information about the availability of ABS CURFs and about applying for access to CURFs is available via this web site <[www.abs.gov.au](http://www.abs.gov.au)> (see Services We Provide, Confidentialised Unit Record Files (CURFs)). Inquiries to the ABS Microdata Access Strategies Section should be made by e-mail: [microdata.access@abs.gov.au](mailto:microdata.access@abs.gov.au), or telephone (02) 6252 7714.

#### *Special data services*

**37** The ABS offers specialist consultancy services to assist clients with more complex statistical information needs. Clients may wish to have the unit record data analysed according to their own needs, or require tailored tables incorporating data items and populations as requested by them. Tables and other analytical outputs can be made available electronically or in printed form. However, as the level of detail or disaggregation increases with detailed requests, the number of contributors to data cells decreases. This may result in some requested information not being able to be released due to confidentiality or sampling variability constraints. All specialist consultancy services attract a service charge, and clients will be provided with a quote before information is supplied. For further information, contact ABS information consultants on 1300 135 070.

#### *Related products*

**38** Current publications and other products released by the ABS are available on the ABS web site <[www.abs.gov.au](http://www.abs.gov.au)>. Other ABS products which may be of interest include:

- *Australian Social Trends, 2007*, cat. no. 4102.0
- *Australia's Families - Selected Findings from the Survey of Families in Australia, March to May 1992*, cat. no. 4418.0
- *Child Care, Australia, June 2005*, cat. no. 4402.0
- *Family Characteristics, Australia, June 2003*, cat. no. 4442.0
- *Household and Family Projections, Australia, 2001 to 2026*, cat. no. 3236.0
- *How Australians Use Their Time, 2006*, cat. no. 4153.0
- *Household Income and Income Distribution, Australia, 2005–06*, cat. no. 6523.0
- *Labour Force, Australia*, cat. no. 6202.0, issued monthly
- *Labour Force, Australia, Detailed - Electronic Delivery, issued monthly*, cat. no. 6291.0.55.001, (Family Data cubes FM1-FM4)

## EXPLANATORY NOTES *continued*

---

*Related products continued*

■ *Working Time Arrangements, Australia, November 2006*, cat. no. 6342.0

**39** Current publications and other products released by the ABS are listed on the ABS web site <[www.abs.gov.au](http://www.abs.gov.au)>.

## TECHNICAL NOTE DATA QUALITY

### RELIABILITY OF ESTIMATES

**1** Since the estimates in this publication are based on information obtained from persons and households in a sample of dwellings, they are subject to sampling variability. That is, they may differ from those that would have been produced if all dwellings had been included in the survey. One measure of the likely difference is given by the standard error (SE), which indicates the extent to which an estimate might have varied by chance because only a sample of dwellings was included. There are about two chances in three (67%) that a sample estimate will vary by less than one SE from the number that would have been obtained if all dwellings had been included, and about 19 chances in 20 (95%) that the difference will be less than two SEs.

**2** Another measure of the sampling variability is the relative standard error (RSE), which is obtained by expressing the SE as a percentage of the estimate.

$$RSE\% = \left( \frac{SE}{estimate} \right) \times 100$$

**3** Due to space limitations, it is impractical to present the RSE of each estimate in the publication. However, RSEs for estimates (with the exception of 1997 data) are in the spreadsheet version of the publication tables, available on the ABS web site <www.abs.gov.au> as an attachment to this publication, *Family Characteristics and Transitions, Australia, 2006–07* (cat. no. 4442.0). SEs for 1997 data are available in the 1997 edition of the publication (see 'Past and Future Releases' on the ABS web site for cat. no. 4442.0).

**4** In the tables in this publication, only estimates (numbers and proportions) with RSEs less than 25% are considered sufficiently reliable for most purposes. However, estimates with larger RSEs have been included and are preceded by an asterisk (e.g. \*13.5) to indicate they are subject to high SEs and should be used with caution. Estimates with RSEs greater than 50% are preceded by a double asterisk (e.g. \*\*2.1) to indicate that they are considered too unreliable for general use.

### COMPARISON OF ESTIMATES

**5** Published estimates may also be used to calculate the difference between two survey estimates. Such an estimate is subject to sampling error. The sampling error of the difference between two estimates depends on their SEs and the relationship (correlation) between them. An approximate SE of the difference between two estimates (x-y) may be calculated by the following formula:

$$SE(x-y) = \sqrt{[SE(x)]^2 + [SE(y)]^2}$$

**6** While the above formula will be exact only for differences between separate and uncorrelated (unrelated) characteristics of subpopulations, it is expected that it will provide a reasonable approximation for all differences likely to be of interest in this publication.

### SIGNIFICANCE TESTING

**7** The statistical significance test for any of the comparisons between estimates over time was performed to determine whether it is likely that there is a difference between the corresponding population characteristics. The standard error of the difference between two corresponding estimates (x and y) can be calculated using the formula in paragraph 5. This standard error is then used to calculate the following test statistics:

$$\frac{[x-y]}{SE(x-y)}$$

**8** If the value of this test statistic is greater than 1.96 then we may say there is good evidence of a real difference in the two populations with respect to that characteristic. Otherwise, it cannot be stated with confidence that there is a real difference between the populations.

**9** The selected tables in this publication that show the results of significance testing are annotated to indicate whether or not the estimates which have been compared are

SIGNIFICANCE TESTING  
*continued*

significantly different from each other with respect to the test statistic. In all other tables which do not show the results of significance testing, users should take account of RSEs when comparing estimates for different populations.

**10** The imprecision due to sampling variability, which is measured by the SE, should not be confused with inaccuracies that may occur because of imperfections in reporting by respondents and recording by interviewers, and errors made in coding and processing data. Inaccuracies of this kind are referred to as non-sampling error, and they occur in any enumeration, whether it be a full count or sample. Every effort is made to reduce non-sampling error to a minimum by careful design or questionnaires, intensive training and supervision of interviewers, and efficient operating procedures.

CALCULATING STANDARD  
ERRORS FOR PROPORTIONS

**11** Proportions and percentages formed from the ratio of two estimates are also subject to sampling errors. The size of the error depends on the accuracy of both the numerator and the denominator. For proportions where the denominator is an estimate of the number of persons in a group and the numerator is the number of persons in a sub-group of the denominator group, the formula to approximate the RSE is given by:

$$RSE\left(\frac{x}{y}\right) = \sqrt{[RSE(x)]^2 - [RSE(y)]^2}$$



## GLOSSARY

<b>Adopted child</b>	A child permanently placed with a parent or parents other than their birth mother or father, by a formal legal arrangement. In this survey, a child classified as being adopted is as reported by the respondent.
<b>Blended family</b>	A couple family containing two or more children aged 0–17 years, of whom at least one is the natural or adopted child of both members of the couple, and at least one is the step child of either member of the couple. Blended families may also include other children who are not the natural children of either parent.
<b>Child</b>	A child is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ any person under 15 years old in the household.</li><li>■ a person of any age who is a natural, adopted, step or foster son or daughter of a couple or lone parent, usually resident in the same household, and who does not have a child or partner of their own usually resident in the household.</li><li>■ in the 2003 and 2006–07 surveys, a person aged 15–17 years who was reported as being under the guardianship (see guardian) or care of another person aged 15 years and over in the household.</li></ul>
<b>Cohabitation</b>	Cohabitation refers to members of a couple, both aged at least 15 years, who are in a registered or de facto marriage and are usually resident in the same household.
<b>Contact arrangement</b>	An arrangement concerning the frequency and duration of a child's contact with a natural parent who is not usually resident in the same household.
<b>Couple family</b>	A family based on two persons who are in a registered or de facto marriage and who are usually resident in the same household. The family may include any number of dependent children, non-dependent children and other related or unrelated individuals. It is not necessary for a parent-child relationship to be formed, thus a couple family can consist of a couple without children present in the household.
<b>De facto marriage</b>	The relationship between two people who live together in a consensual union who are not registered as married to each other. A de facto marriage may exist between a couple of the opposite sex or of the same sex.
<b>Dependent child</b>	A dependent child is a person who is a child (see child) aged under 15 years, or aged 15–24 years and a full-time dependent student (see dependent student).
<b>Dependent student</b>	A child who is 15–24 years of age and who attends a secondary or tertiary educational institution as a full-time student and who has no partner or child of his or her own usually resident in the same household.
<b>Employed</b>	Employed persons comprise all those aged 15 years and over who, during the reference week: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ worked for one hour or more for pay, profit, commission or payment in kind, in a job or business or on a farm (comprising 'Employees', 'Employers' and 'Own account workers'); or</li><li>■ worked for one hour or more without pay in a family business or on a farm (i.e. contributing family workers) or were employees who had a job but were not at work and were:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ away from work for less than four weeks up to the end of the reference week; or</li><li>■ away from work for more than four weeks up to the end of the reference week and received pay for some or all of the four week period to the end of the reference week; or</li><li>■ away from work as a standard work or shift arrangement; or</li><li>■ on strike or locked out; or</li><li>■ on workers' compensation and expected to return to their job; or</li><li>■ were employers or own account workers who had a job, business or farm, but were not at work.</li></ul></li></ul>

## GLOSSARY *continued*

<b>Employed full-time</b>	Persons who usually worked 35 hours or more a week (in all jobs) and those who, although usually working less than 35 hours a week, worked 35 hours or more during the reference week.
<b>Employed part-time</b>	Persons who usually worked less than 35 hours a week (in all jobs) and either did so during the reference week, or were not at work in the reference week.
<b>Family</b>	Two or more persons, one of whom is at least 15 years of age, who are related by blood, marriage (registered or de facto), adoption, step or fostering; and who are usually resident in the same household. The basis of a family is formed by identifying the presence of a couple relationship, lone parent-child relationship or other blood relationship. Some households will, therefore, contain more than one family.
<b>Family composition</b>	The differentiation of families based on the presence or absence of couple relationships, parent-child relationships, child dependency relationships or other blood relationships, in that order of preference.
<b>Family structure</b>	The classification of families according to whether they are either intact families, step families, blended families, other couple families, or lone parent families. In this publication family structure is only presented for families with children aged 0–17 years.
<b>Foster child</b>	A person who lives with a person or persons who are not his or her natural, adoptive or step parent(s). The definition of foster child includes dependent and non-dependent children. If the foster child is no longer dependent, but still regards his or her relationship with appropriate members of the household as a parent-child relationship, then he or she remains a foster child.
<b>Foster family</b>	A family which has at least one foster child. There may be other children in the family who are the natural, adoptive or step children of the parent(s).
<b>Grandparent family</b>	A family in which the guardians (see guardian) or main carers of children aged 0–17 years are the grandparents of the children.
<b>Group household</b>	A group household is a household consisting of two or more unrelated people where all persons are aged 15 years or over. There are no reported couple relationships, parent-child relationships or other blood relationships in these households.
<b>Guardian</b>	A person aged 15 years and over who is reported as being the guardian or main carer of any child(ren) aged 0–17 years, regardless of the existence of any legal arrangement. Throughout this publication, the use of the term 'parent' also refers to guardians.
<b>Household</b>	A person living alone or a group of related or unrelated people who usually live in the same private dwelling.
<b>Intact family</b>	A couple family containing at least one child aged 0–17 years who is the natural or adopted child of both members of the couple, and no child aged 0–17 years who is the step child of either member of the couple. Intact families may also include other children who are not the natural or adopted children of either parent, such as foster children.
<b>Labour force status</b>	A classification of the civilian population aged 15 years and over into employed, unemployed or not in the labour force.
<b>Lone parent</b>	A person who has no spouse or partner usually resident in the household but who forms a parent-child relationship with at least one child usually resident in the household.
<b>Marital status</b>	For this survey, a person's marital status refers to their current living arrangements, that is whether or not they are living with another person in a couple relationship either in a registered marriage (see registered marriage) or a de facto marriage (see de facto marriage).
<b>Natural child</b>	A child who is related to his or her parents by birth.
<b>Natural parent</b>	A parent who is related to his or her child(ren) by birth.

## GLOSSARY *continued*

<b>Natural parent living elsewhere</b>	One of a child's natural parents who is not usually resident in the same household as the child.
<b>Non-dependent child</b>	A natural, step, adopted or foster child of a couple or lone parent usually resident in the household, aged 15 years and over and who is not a full-time student aged 15–24 years, and who has no partner or child of his or her own usually resident in the household.
<b>Non-family households</b>	<p>A household that consists of unrelated persons only. Non-family households are classified to one of the following categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Group household – a household consisting of two or more unrelated persons where all persons are aged 15 years and over. There are no reported couple relationships, parent-child relationships or other blood relationships in these households.</li><li>■ Lone person household – a household consisting of a person living alone.</li></ul>
<b>Non-family member</b>	A person for whom there is no identified couple relationship, parent-child relationship, or other blood relationship with any of the other usual residents of the household. They may live within a family household, or they may form a non-family household either as a lone person or a group household.
<b>Non-resident parent</b>	Persons aged 15 years and over who have one or more natural children aged 0–17 years living elsewhere.
<b>One parent family</b>	<p>A family consisting of a lone parent with at least one dependent or non-dependent child (regardless of age) who is also usually resident in the household.</p> <p>Examples of one parent families include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ a 25-year-old parent with dependent children; and</li><li>■ an 80-year-old parent living with a 50-year-old child.</li></ul>
<b>Other family</b>	A family of other related individuals residing in the same household. These individuals do not form a couple or parent-child relationship with any other person in the household and are not attached to a couple or one parent family in the household. For example, if two brothers are living together and neither is a spouse, a lone parent or a child, then they are classified as an 'other family'. However, if the two brothers share the household with the daughter of one of the brothers and her husband, then both brothers are classified as other related individuals and are attached to the couple family.
<b>Other related individual</b>	<p>An individual who is related to members of the household, but who does not form a couple relationship or parent-child relationship (see child). He or she can be related through blood, step and in-law relationships and include any direct ancestors or descendants. Relatives beyond first cousin are excluded.</p> <p>Other related individuals can form their own family type or can be attached to an already existing family. Those related individuals who reside in the same household and who do not form a couple or parent-child relationship with any other person in the household are classified as an 'other family'.</p> <p>In cases where a couple family or one parent family has been formed, any persons who are related to members of these families and are usual residents of the household are other related individuals.</p>
<b>Parent</b>	<p>A natural, step, adoptive or foster mother or father of a child usually resident in the same household.</p> <p>In the 2003 and 2006–07 surveys, any individual aged 15 years and over who was identified as being a guardian (see guardian) of a child aged 0–17 years was also classified as being a parent.</p>
<b>Partner</b>	A person in a couple relationship with another person usually resident in the same household. The couple relationship may be either a registered or a de facto marriage.

## GLOSSARY *continued*

---

<b>Proportion of nights with other parent</b>	The proportion of nights a child stays with their non-resident parent is derived from information on how often a child stays overnight with this other parent (e.g. weekly, fortnightly, etc.) and the number of nights the child usually stays overnight with the other parent during that period. For example, if a child stays overnight once a week with the other parent and usually stays for 2 nights when they visit, this would equal two sevenths, or 29% of nights with the other parent.
<b>Registered marriage</b>	A marriage between two people, usually resident in the same household, that has been registered.
<b>Same sex couple</b>	Two persons of the same sex who report a de facto partnership, and who are usually resident in the same household.
<b>Spouse</b>	A marital or de facto partner.
<b>Step child</b>	In a couple family, a child who is either the natural child of one partner but not of the other, or who was reported as being the step child of both parents. As a consequence of relationship breakdown or the death of a spouse, some one parent families may also have children reported as step children.
<b>Step family</b>	A couple family containing one or more children aged 0–17 years, none of whom is the natural or adopted child of both members of the couple, and at least one of whom is the step child of either member of the couple. A step family may also include other children who are not the natural children of either parent.
<b>Unrelated individual living in a family household</b>	A person who lives in a family household, but who is not related to any person in any of the families in the household.







## FOR MORE INFORMATION . . .

*INTERNET*      **www.abs.gov.au** the ABS website is the best place for data from our publications and information about the ABS.

### INFORMATION AND REFERRAL SERVICE

Our consultants can help you access the full range of information published by the ABS that is available free of charge from our website. Information tailored to your needs can also be requested as a 'user pays' service. Specialists are on hand to help you with analytical or methodological advice.

*PHONE*                      1300 135 070

*EMAIL*                      [client.services@abs.gov.au](mailto:client.services@abs.gov.au)

*FAX*                              1300 135 211

*POST*                            Client Services, ABS, GPO Box 796, Sydney NSW 2001

## FREE ACCESS TO STATISTICS

All statistics on the ABS website can be downloaded free of charge.

*WEB ADDRESS*      [www.abs.gov.au](http://www.abs.gov.au)