



2010

4159.0

# GENERAL SOCIAL SURVEY: SUMMARY RESULTS

AUSTRALIA

EMBARGO: 11.30AM (CANBERRA TIME) FRI 30 SEP 2011

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## INQUIRIES

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

# NOTES

## ABOUT THIS PUBLICATION

This publication presents summary results from the third General Social Survey conducted from August to November 2010. The survey collected information from 15,028 adults aged 18 years and over living in private dwellings across Australia, excluding very remote areas.

The GSS is a multidimensional social survey providing information on a wide range of key areas of concern for Australians (see Data Items List in the User's Guide). It helps to build a picture of the social characteristics of the population and allows for better understanding of the relationships between different aspects of life and how these affect people, including the exploration of multiple advantage and disadvantage.

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The 2010 GSS builds on the previous surveys conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics in 2002 and 2006. Information on the comparability of these three surveys is provided in the Explanatory Notes. More detailed information is also provided in the User's Guide, planned for release on the ABS website in October 2011.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

ABS publications draw extensively on information provided freely by individuals, businesses, governments and other organisations. Their continued co-operation is 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.

Peter Harper  
Acting Australian Statistician

## INTRODUCTION .....

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The key findings from each broad topic group in the 2010 GSS include:

#### *Population characteristics*

- Four in five adults living in Australia were born in either Australia or another main English-speaking country;
- In 2010 59% of adults had a non-school qualification, up from 50% in 2002.

#### *Health and overall life satisfaction*

- Most adults living in Australia rated their health as good, very good or excellent (83%);
- Most adults were at least 'mostly satisfied' with their lives (78%) with 43% being pleased or delighted with their lives;
- Adults who had little or no contact with family and friends living outside their household, and those who were divorced or separated, were least likely to be satisfied with their lives.

#### *Work and family life*

- Most employed adults with family and community commitments (92%) had access to employment conditions, such as paid leave, that they could access to meet their family and community obligations.

#### *Community involvement and volunteering*

- 6.1 million adults (36%) in Australia had undertaken some form of voluntary work in the year prior to the survey;
- Volunteering was less common in major cities (34%) than elsewhere (42% in inner regional, 41% in other areas).

#### *Social networks, support and trust*

- Almost all adults (97%) had some form of contact with friends or family outside their immediate household in the week prior to the survey;
- In 2010, mobile phone and SMS style communication (84%) had overtaken fixed phone (83%) as the most common way for people to contact friends and family;
- Use of Internet facilities such as email and chat rooms to contact friends and family has increased significantly, from 47% of adults in 2006 to 60% in 2010;
- Generally people trusted their doctor (89%), local police (75%) and hospitals (73%) and agreed that it is 'a good thing for a society to be made up of people from different cultures' (80%).

#### *Crime and safety*

- The majority of people (85%) felt safe or very safe at home alone after dark although less than half (48%) felt safe or very safe walking alone in their local area at night;
- Women were much less likely (29%) than men (68%) to feel safe walking alone at night;
- 70% of people reported at least one type of social disorder problem in their local area - particularly dangerous or noisy driving;
- In 2010, 23% of men aged 18 to 24 years reported having been a victim of physical or threatened violence in the previous 12 months down from 31% in 2006.

*Access to services*

- In 2010 30% of adults experienced problems accessing some type of service provider;
- The most commonly reported services that people had trouble accessing were telecommunications (11%) and doctors (10%).

*Financial stress and income*

- In 2010 19% of adults reported living in a household that had one or more cash flow problems in the 12 months prior to interview;
- 41% of adults in one family lone parent households reported that their household could not raise \$2,000 in an emergency compared to 11% of adults in one family couple households with dependent children;
- In 2010 84% of adults lived in households that had undertaken some form of financial resilience action, such as paying extra off credit cards or mortgages or following a budget in the previous year. Adults in the highest income quintile were more likely (94%) to have taken such actions than were adults in lowest quintile (69%).

*Housing mobility and homelessness*

- Approximately 7 million adults (42%) had moved house in the 5 years prior to the survey;
- Young people, renters and unemployed people were the most likely to move;
- 4.6 million people (27%) reported that, for a wide range of reasons, they had been without a permanent place to live at some time in their lives. Reasons included recently moving to a new town, relationship breakdowns and financial problems.

*Transport and IT use*

- In 2010 the majority of adults living Australia (87%) had access to a motor vehicle and could easily get to places they needed to go (84%);
- In 2010 more people used computers (80%) and accessed the Internet (77%) at home than had in 2002 (55% and 43% respectively).

## ABBREVIATIONS .....

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ACT	Australian Capital Territory
Aust.	Australia
CAI	computer assisted interviewing
CURF	confidentialised unit record file
ERP	estimated resident population
GSS	General Social Survey
nfd	not further defined
no.	number
NSW	New South Wales
NT	Northern Territory
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
Qld	Queensland
RADL	Remote Access Data Laboratory
RSE	relative standard error
SA	South Australia
SE	standard error
SEIFA	Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas
Tas.	Tasmania
THM	Transitional Housing Management
Vic.	Victoria
WA	Western Australia

SECTION **1**

**POPULATION CONTEXT** .....

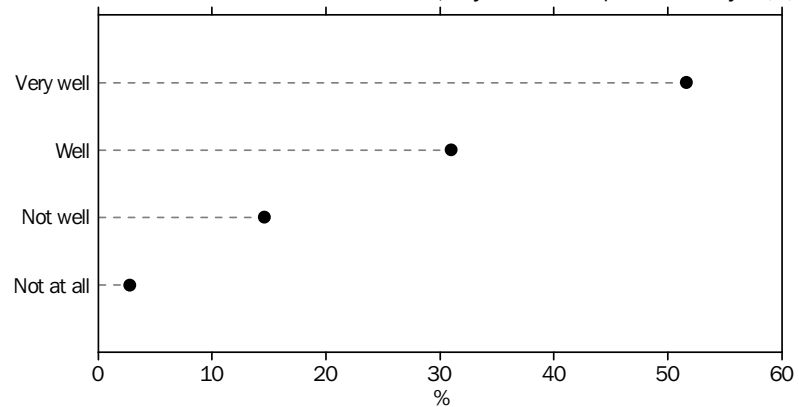
COUNTRY OF BIRTH

Australians come from a variety of backgrounds, helping to shape and enrich the nation through their varied contributions. In 2010, 31% of people aged 18 years or over living in Australia were born in another country. Of these 5.1 million people, one third (33%) were born in a main English-speaking country and the rest were born in another country. The proportion of people born in either Australia or in other main-English speaking countries has declined slightly across each of the three iterations of the survey (from 83% in 2002 to 82% in 2006 to 80% in 2010, table 1).

LANGUAGE

In 2010, 20% of adults were born in non-English speaking countries (table 1). Of these, 2.8 million people (83%) considered they spoke English either well or very well.

**1.1** ENGLISH LANGUAGE ABILITY, by level of proficiency (a)



(a) Of all people born in non-English speaking countries

VISA STATUS

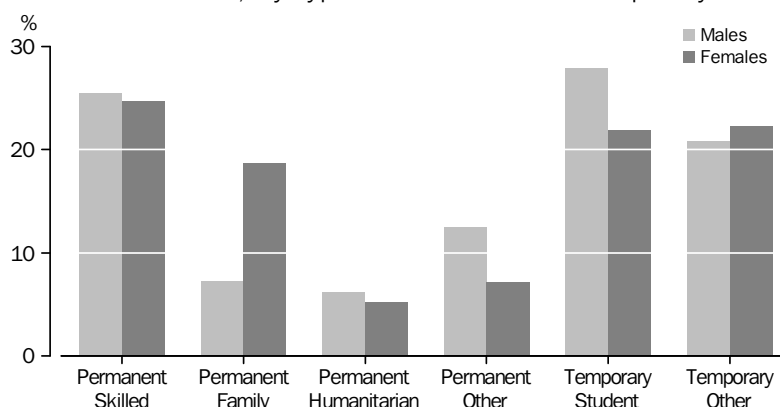
Foreign nationals who want to visit, work, study or live in Australia are required to obtain permission for their intended stay through application for a visa or travel permit. The 2010 GSS collected information on the visa status of people who were identified as:

- being born overseas; and
- having arrived in Australia in 1990 or later; and
- being long-term or permanent residents.

Of the 2.5 million people identified as having a visa, 61% entered Australia on a Permanent visa and 39% on a Temporary visa (table 44).

VISA STATUS *continued*

**1.2** VISA STATUS, by type of Permanent or Temporary visa (a)



(a) Excludes those for whom visa status could not be determined.

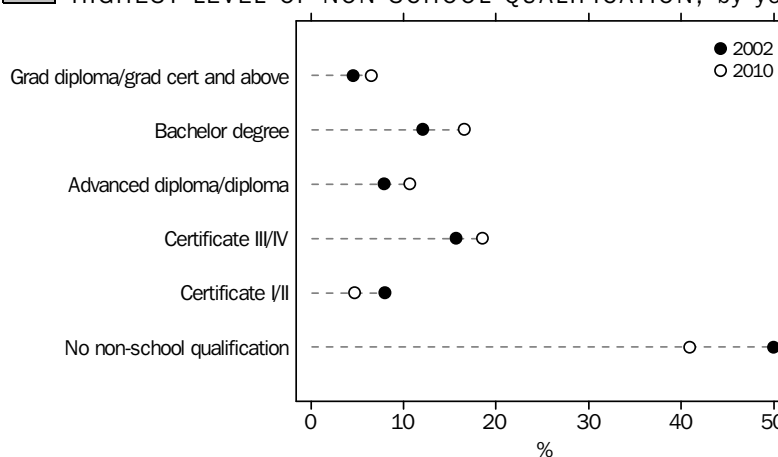
MARITAL STATUS

In 2010, just over half (53%) of adults reported being in a registered marriage. This is similar to the proportions who reported being in registered marriages in 2002 (55%) and 2006 (54%) (table 1). The proportions of people living in defacto marriage relationships has also remained steady at 10% for 2002 and 2006 and 11% in 2010.

EDUCATION

Having a vocational or higher education qualification allows individuals to engage with society and in many cases leads to fulfilling and rewarding careers. The proportion of adults living in Australia who have a non-school qualification has increased from 50% in 2002 to 59% in 2010. This increase is reflected across all types of non-school qualifications (graph 1.3) with the exception of Certificate I/II qualifications which fell from 8% of the population in 2002 to 5% in 2010.

**1.3** HIGHEST LEVEL OF NON-SCHOOL QUALIFICATION, by year



## SECTION 2

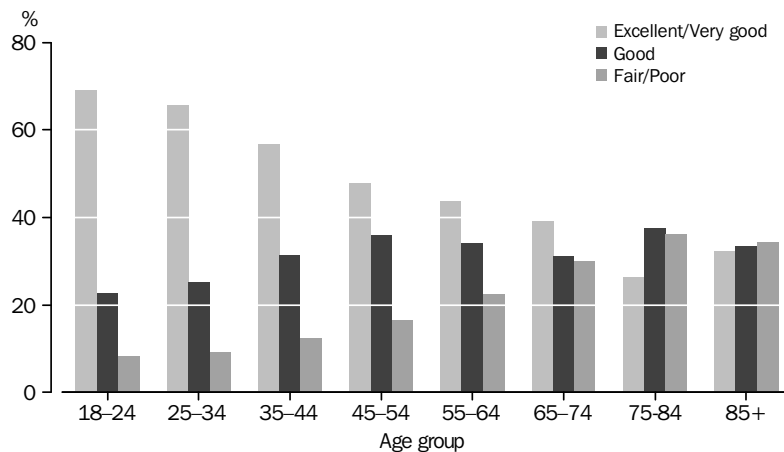
## HEALTH, DISABILITY AND WELLBEING .....

### GENERAL HEALTH

Self assessed health status provides an indicator of overall health, reflecting an individual's awareness and expectations of their own health and well-being. In 2010, just over half (53%) of people aged 18 years and over rated their health as excellent or very good, a further 31% rated their health as good, with only 17% rating their health as only fair or poor. Between 2006 and 2010, the overall proportion of people who rated their health as good or better did not change significantly (84% and 83% respectively, table 1).

Differences in health status occur across age groups, with younger people more likely to rate their health as excellent or very good compared to people in older age groups (graph 2.1).

**2.1** SELF ASSESSED HEALTH STATUS, By age group



### DISABILITY

A disability may be considered in a number of ways, including an impairment in body structure or function, a limitation in activities or a restriction in participation. Differing aspects of disability can exist in varying degrees and combinations. The GSS provides an assessment of the impact that a disability or long-term physical or mental health condition may have on a person's everyday life. A long-term health condition is any condition or disorder that has lasted, or is expected to last for six months or longer. Measurement of the nature and severity of limitation or restriction against a series of core activities provides a measure of disability status, ranging from 'mild' to 'profound'.

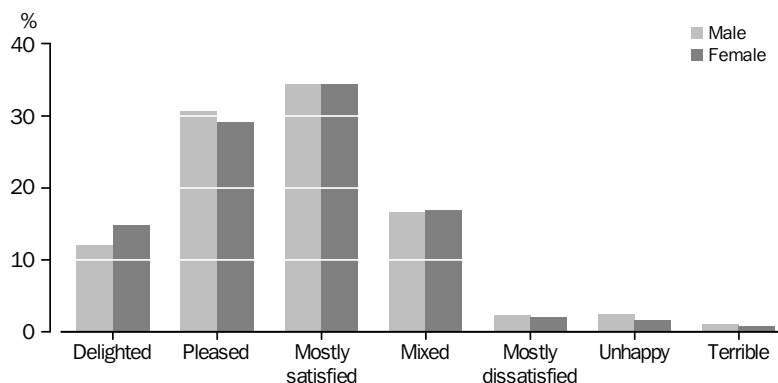
In the 2010 GSS, 40% of adults self-assessed themselves as having some form of disability or long-term health condition. Of these 6.8 million people, 29% had a core-activity limitation and 12% had a condition or disorder that impacted on their schooling or employment (table 1).



## LIFE SATISFACTION

The Overall Life Satisfaction measure provides an indication of how people regard their life as a whole, reflecting their experience in the 12 months preceding the survey interview and their expectations for the future. In 2010, 43% of people aged 18 years or over were pleased or delighted with their life and a further three in ten people (34%) were mostly satisfied and together, very similar to the 76% of Australians as reported in the 2001 ABS National Health Survey.

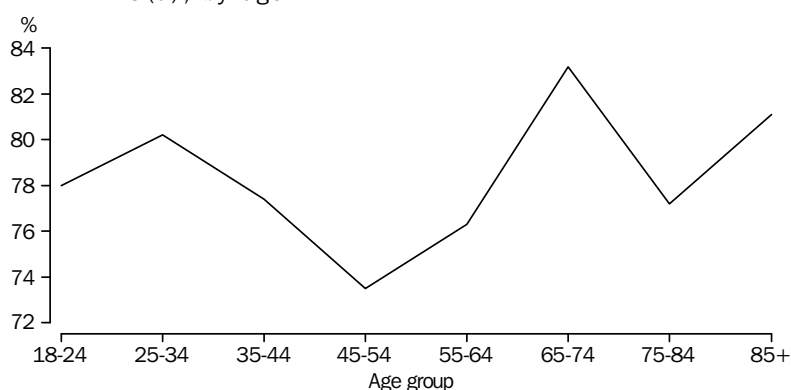
**2.2** OVERALL LIFE SATISFACTION (a)



(a) Excludes a small proportion of people (0.3%) did not provide a response or did not know how they felt.

Overall life satisfaction varied somewhat with age. People aged 65-74 years old were the most likely to be at least satisfied with their lives (83%) while those aged 45-54 years old were the least likely to be at least satisfied with their lives (73%).

**2.3** PROPORTION OF ADULTS AT LEAST SATISFIED WITH THEIR LIVES (a), by age



(a) Persons who felt Delighted, Pleased or Mostly satisfied with their lives based on a scale of Delighted, Pleased, Mostly satisfied, Mixed, Mostly dissatisfied, Unhappy and Terrible.

Aspects of people's lives such as health status and other differing socio-economic circumstances all have a strong influence on how satisfied people were likely to report being with their lives (see table below). People with poorer self-assessed health status were, on average, less likely to be satisfied with their lives. Similarly, fewer people who were separated from their partners or who had little or no contact with family or friends living outside the household reported being at least satisfied with their lives. Rates of

## LIFE SATISFACTION

*continued*

satisfaction with their lives were also lower, on average, for people who were unemployed, those living in government housing and those in lower income quintiles.

**2.4** PROPORTION OF PERSONS AGED 18 AND OVER WHO WERE AT LEAST SATISFIED WITH THEIR LIVES : SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS (a)

	%
<b>Registered marital status</b>	
Never married	76
Widowed	78
Married	82
Divorced	66
Separated	56
<b>Self-assessed Health Status</b>	
Excellent/Very good	87
Good	74
Poor	55
<b>Contact with family and friends living outside the household (b)</b>	
At least once a week	78
At least once a month	71
At least once in three months	69
No recent contact	33
No family and no friends	28
<b>Labour force status</b>	
Employed	81
Unemployed	58
Not in the labour force - Retired	76
Not in the labour force - Other	69
<b>Tenure type</b>	
Owner(c)	80
Renter with a private landlord	75
Renter with State/Territory housing authority	56
<b>Equivalent household gross weekly income (d)</b>	
Lowest quintile	66
Second quintile	72
Third quintile	78
Fourth quintile	82
Highest quintile	86

- (a) Persons who felt Delighted, Pleased or Mostly satisfied with their lives based on a scale of Delighted, Pleased, Mostly satisfied, Mixed, Mostly dissatisfied, Unhappy and Terrible.
- (b) Includes face-to-face contact and/or contact by other means such as telephone, email and mail, which a person has had with family or friends who do not live with them.
- (c) 'Owner' includes persons who lived in dwellings which are owner-occupied, both with and without a mortgage.
- (d) Excludes persons where household income was not known or was not adequately reported. See Appendix 2 for information on income equivalisation and quintile measures.

## PERSONAL STRESSORS

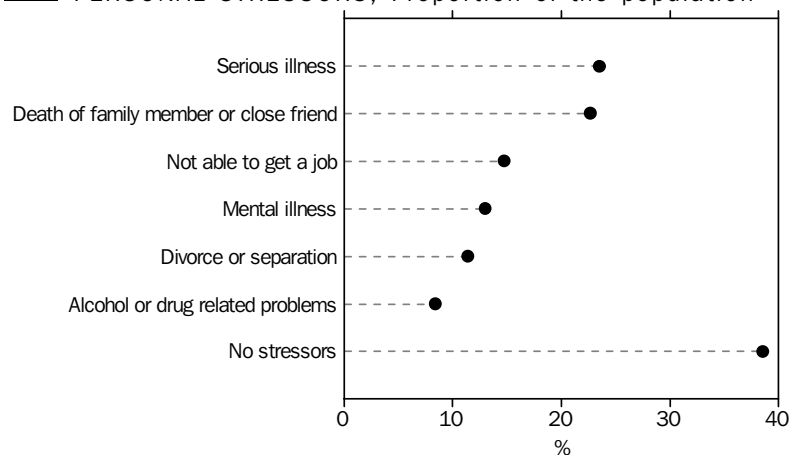
Personal stressors are events or conditions that occur in a person's life that may adversely impact on the individual's or their family's health or wellbeing. A stressor may occur directly, such as personally experiencing a serious illness, or indirectly, such as having a family member with a serious illness. In some instances, personal stressors may have an ongoing impact or limit the capacity of a person, or family, to live a satisfying and productive life.

PERSONAL STRESSORS  
*continued*

The 2010 GSS collected information on a variety of situations that people may have considered were a problem for themselves, their family member or their close friends. Types of situations included death, serious illness, mental health problems, not being able to get a job and divorce or separation. Information on the number of instances of each type of situation and the degree to which a person was affected were not collected. Financial stress is discussed separately in the Financial Stress and Income section of this publication.

61% of people aged 18 years or over in 2010 experienced at least one personal stressor during the year preceding the survey interview. The most common stressors experienced across all age groups were serious illness and the death of a family or a close friend (see graph 2.5). However, stressors varied between age groups, with people aged 18 to 24 years most commonly experiencing problems with not being able to get a job (26%), while people aged 85 years or over were more likely to experience problems related to a serious illness (27%) (table 35).

**2.5** PERSONAL STRESSORS, Proportion of the population



## SECTION 3

## WORK & FAMILY LIFE

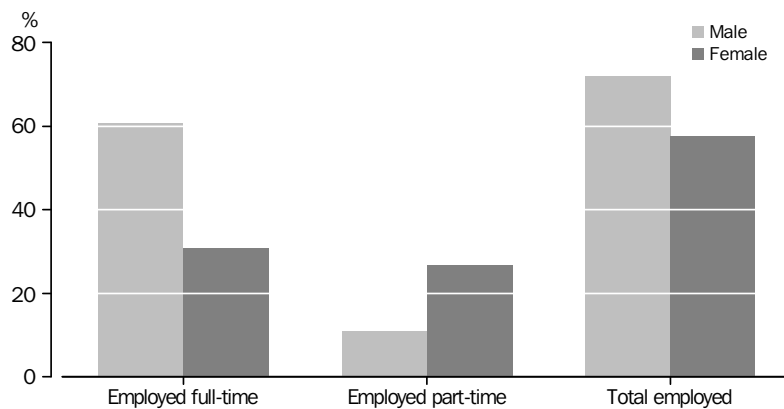
### LABOUR FORCE STATUS

In the 2010 GSS, there were 11.4 million people aged 18 years and over in the labour force (that is, employed or unemployed), a participation rate of 68%. This is very similar to the participation rates for 2002 (68%) and 2006 (69%).

### EMPLOYMENT

The employment to population ratio provides the number of people who were employed as a proportion of the total population of interest. In 2010, there were 10.9 million people aged 18 years or over who were employed, or 65% of adults. Of those employed, there is a diversity of arrangements, with Australians generally having access to flexible working time patterns, including part-time and casual employment. Of employed adults, 7.7 million usually worked full-time, that is 35 hours or more each week, and 3.2 million usually worked part-time, or fewer than 35 hours each week (tables 3 and 4).

**3.1** EMPLOYED PERSONS (a)



(a) Proportion of the population of interest aged 18 years or over.

### WORKING CONDITIONS TO ASSIST IN MEETING FAMILY OR COMMUNITY COMMITMENTS

In 2010, 6.2 million people aged 18 years or over had family or community commitments. These commitments included looking after children or other family members, volunteering or participating in community activities. In order to meet these commitments, employed persons were asked whether they had access to any work conditions that might help them to juggle their responsibilities. Types of conditions included various forms of paid or unpaid leave, part-time work, working from home or flexible hours, with some people having access to more than one type of employment condition.

WORKING CONDITIONS TO  
ASSIST IN MEETING  
FAMILY OR COMMUNITY  
COMMITMENTS  
*continued*

Of employed persons aged 18 years or over, 60% of women and 55% of men reported family or community commitments. Women employed part-time were more likely to have family or community commitments than those employed full-time (68% and 53% respectively). Conversely, men employed full-time were more likely to have family or community commitments than those employed part-time (56% and 47% respectively).

Most employed people who had family or community commitments (92%) had employment conditions available to meet their family and other community obligations. The most commonly available employment conditions were paid annual holiday or recreational leave (52%), flexible working hours (52%), sick leave (50%) and unpaid leave (43%). Carer's leave or long service leave were both available to 38% of employed people who had family or community commitments to assist in meeting those commitments (table 32).

SECTION **4**

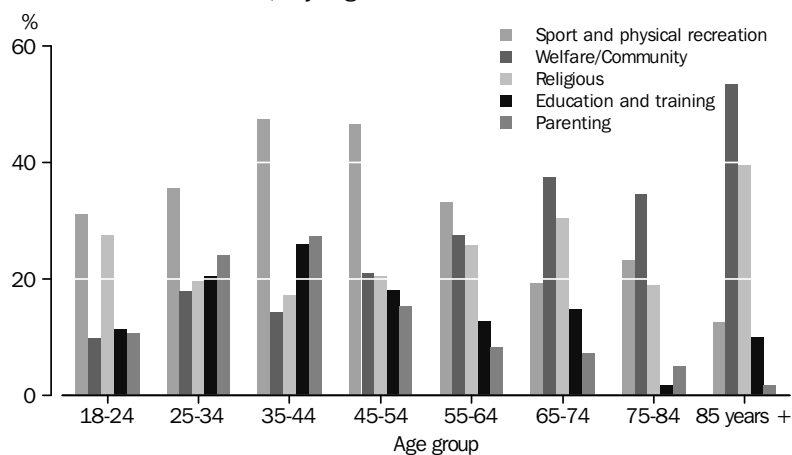
**COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AND VOLUNTEERING**

VOLUNTEERING

Many people provide support to the wider community by voluntary work through organisations. In 2010, 6.4 million people aged 18 years and more (38%) had undertaken some form of voluntary work in the previous 12 months, up from 34% in 2002 (table 2). The rate of volunteering differed between the sexes, with 37% of men doing volunteer work in 2010 compared to 40% of women (tables 3 and 4). The rate of volunteering also differed with age, life cycle and location. People aged 45 to 54 years reported the highest rate of volunteering (44%) (table 2). People in a couple relationship with dependent children were more likely (48% of such persons) to volunteer than those in a couple relationship with no dependent children, lone parents or lone persons (table 8). Volunteer rates were noticeably lower in the major capital cities (34%) than elsewhere (42% inner regional, 41% other areas) (table 7).

The types of groups that adults did unpaid volunteer work for also varied depending age (see graph 4.1). Younger age groups most commonly volunteered for groups related to sport and recreation. Volunteering for parenting groups is relatively common in the 25-34 and 35-44 year old groups while volunteering for welfare and community type groups is common in the older age groups.

**4.1** TYPES OF GROUPS DID UNPAID VOLUNTEER WORK FOR, in the last 12 months, by age of volunteer

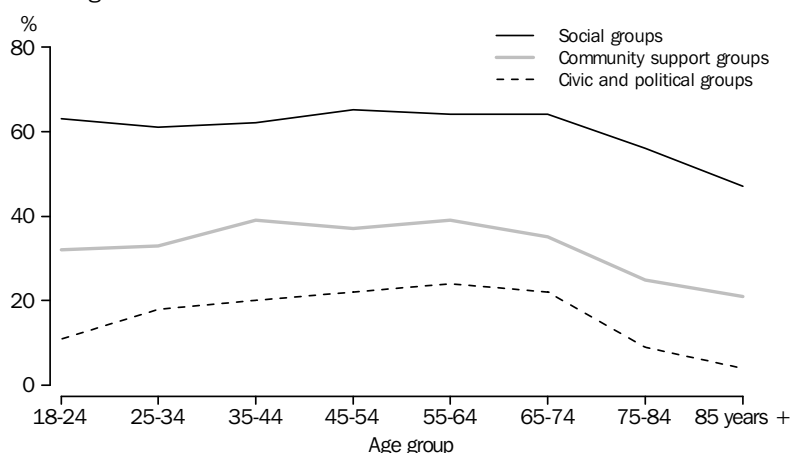


Whether a person does any voluntary work might be influenced by whether their parents have done voluntary work. In 2010, 52% of adults reported that their parents had done voluntary work. The volunteer rate among those whose parents had volunteered was 46% compared to 26% for those whose parents had not volunteered (tables 30 and 31).

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

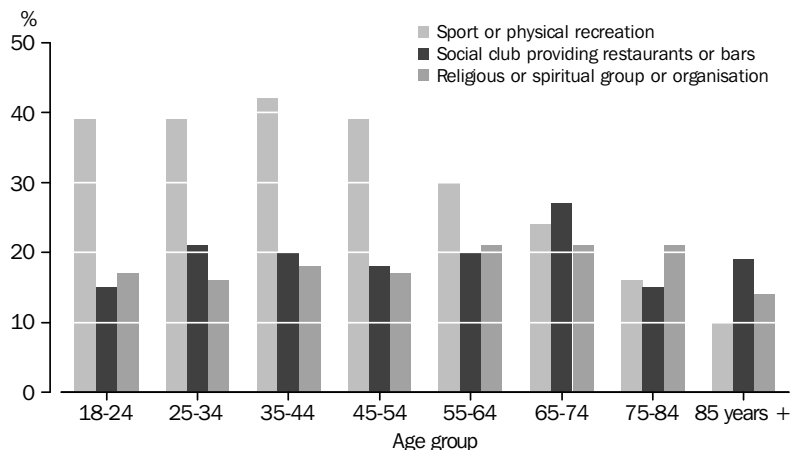
People also participate directly in the community through a wide range of social and other types of groups. In 2010, 63% of people had actively participated in one or more social groups during the last 12 months, 35% in community support groups and 19% in civic and population groups. There was some variation in participation according to age (see graph 4.2). The rate of participation in social groups was between 60% and 65% for all age groups up to 65-74 years, declining to 56% for those aged 75-84 and 47% of those aged 85 years and over. Participation in civic and political groups generally increased with age until the age group 55-64 years where participation peaked at 24% (table 29).

**4.2** ACTIVE PARTICIPATION IN GROUPS IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS, by age



The most popular types of social participation that adults took part in were sport and recreation groups (35%), followed by social clubs providing restaurants or bars (20%) and religious or spiritual groups (18%). Sport and recreation groups were the most common form of community participation in the younger age groups, with participation in clubs and religious groups increasing in relative significance for older age groups.

**4.3** TYPES OF GROUPS PARTICIPATED IN, IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS, by age



SECTION **5**

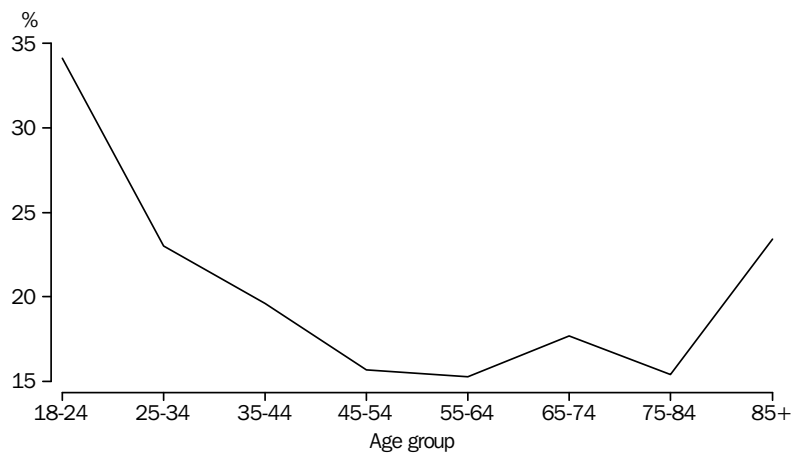
**SOCIAL NETWORKS, SUPPORT AND TRUST** .....

SOCIAL NETWORKS,  
SUPPORT AND TRUST  
*Social networks*

Relationships and networks are at the core of society and are essential to individual wellbeing. People are linked together with family and friends, and in wider communities characterised by shared interests, sympathies or living circumstances. Individuals may also form looser networks with people encountered through various activities and life situations. A person's networks may be concentrated in a local area, or be more dispersed and sustained by travel and communications systems. There is a growing exploration of the ways in which social networks may contribute to positive outcomes both for individuals, in areas such as health and employment, and for communities in broader opportunities for participation and safer environments.

In the 2010 GSS, 20% of people aged 18 years and over reported having daily face-to-face contact with family and friends with whom they did not live, and 79% reported having weekly face-to-face contact. There was little difference between age groups in the proportions who had weekly face-to-face contact but for daily contact, people either under 35 or over 85 years of age were more likely than other age groups to have face-to-face contact (table 2).

**5.1** DAILY FACE TO FACE CONTACT, with family or friends living outside the household



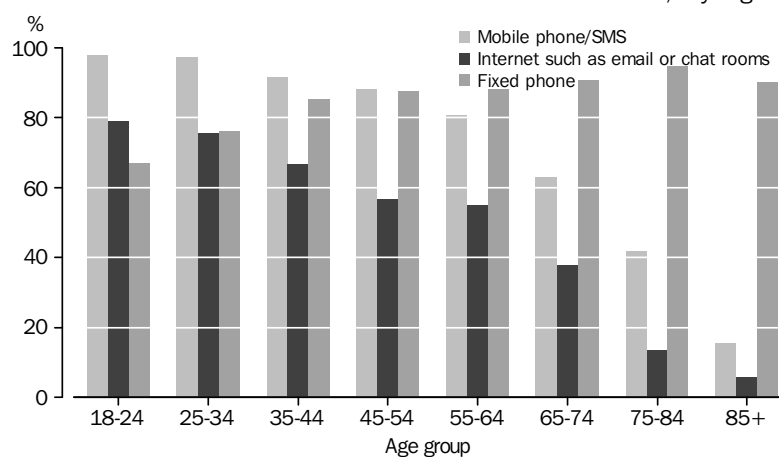
In 2010 97% of adults had had some form of contact with family or friends living outside their household in the week prior to the survey (table 1). Over a 3 month period, most people used a combination of methods to contact family and friends. The proportion of people using fixed phones for contacting friends and family dropped from 91% in 2006 to 83% in 2010, while mobile phone/SMS use for such contact increased from 77% to 84%. Use of Internet services, such as email and chat rooms, as a method of contact with family and friends increased from 47% in 2006 to 60% in 2010 while the use of postal services for maintaining such contact has fallen from 31% to 24% (table 33). The most



*Social networks  
continued*

common methods used to contact family and friends varied depending on age, with mobile phone and Internet the most common contact method used by younger age groups and fixed phone predominantly used by age groups older than 45-54 years (graph 5.2).

**5.2** TYPE OF CONTACT WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS, by age



In 2010 the levels of social attachment, as measured by weekly contact (in all its forms) with family and friends, or by the ability to either ask for small favours or to get support in a time of crisis, were similar to the levels reported in 2002 and 2006. Most (93%) adults reported being able to ask people outside of their household for small favours, such as looking after pets, collecting mail, watering gardens, minding a child for a brief period, or borrowing equipment. Similarly, most people (94%) reported that, in a time of crisis, they could get support from outside their household (table 1).

**SUPPORT FOR RELATIVES  
LIVING OUTSIDE THE  
HOUSEHOLD**

*Support for children living  
outside the household*

In 2010 there were 1.98 million adults whose own or whose partner's children aged 0 to 24 years were living in another household. At 12% of the adult population this represents a slight decline since 2002 (14%) and 2006 (13%). However, the proportion of parents with children living elsewhere who provided some form of support to those children was higher in 2010 (75%) than in either 2002 (66%) or 2006 (69%). The support arrangements included financial support (such as Child Support Payments, money to meet living or educational costs, or providing pocket money), and other forms of support (such as driving them places or lending them a car) (table 1).

*Support for other relatives  
living outside the  
household*

In 2010, 4.6 million people aged 18 years and over were providing some form of support to their relatives living elsewhere (excluding their own or their partner's children aged 0 to 24 years) (table 2). If partner support for other relatives (also excluding children aged 0 to 24 years of either partner) is included, the number of people providing support to relatives living elsewhere rises to 5.3 million people (31%), about the same as in 2006 (table 1).

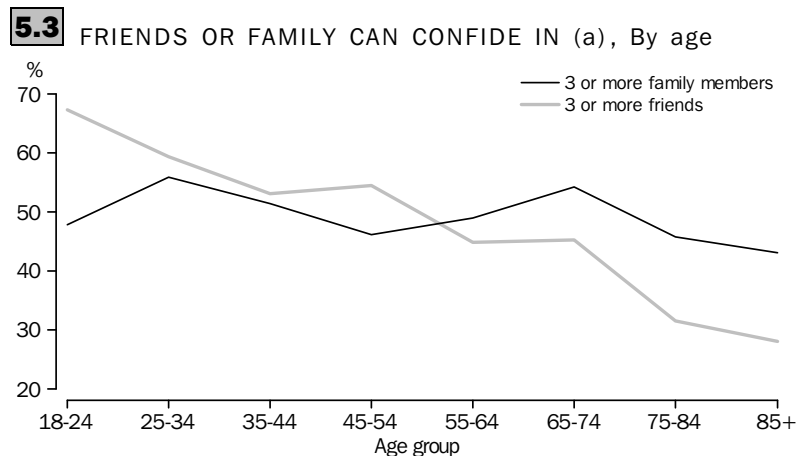
**NETWORK TYPES**

In addition to information relating to the composition and quality of an individual's social networks, the 2010 GSS also measured the diversity of people's social networks, in terms of similarity of friends in age, educational background and ethnicity.

NETWORK TYPES  
*continued*

Of people aged 18 years and over, 65% reported that all or most of their friends were of a similar age. The youngest age group (18 to 24 year olds) had a higher rate of similarity in the ages of their friends (75%) while the rate of similarity was lower (41%) for people aged 85 years or more. There was little variation in the rate of similarity for other age groups or by sex. Similarly, over half (57%) of the population reported that all or most of their friends had a similar educational background. This was much more common among younger age groups (61% for 18 to 24 year olds compared to 38% of persons aged 85 years or more). Overall, 73% of people reported that all or most of their friends were of similar ethnic background, with little difference across age groups (table 33).

In 2010, 50% of adults had three or more family members living outside their household that they could confide in, while 53% had three or more friends living outside their household that they could confide in. While the proportion of people with three or more family members living elsewhere who they could confide in did not vary particularly with age, the proportion of those with three or more friends who they could confide in decreased significantly with age.



(a) Living outside the household

LEVELS OF TRUST AND  
ACCEPTANCE

The 2010 GSS also assessed the levels of trust that respondents have in other people, including people in general and people associated with particular occupations and institutions. While 54% of people aged 18 years or over felt that 'most people' could be trusted, they were more likely to trust their doctor (89%), local police (75%) and hospitals (73%). The level of trust in hospitals had increased slightly from 69% in 2006 (table 25).

In 2010, (80%) adults agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that '*It is a good thing for a society to be made up of people from different cultures.*'

## SECTION 6

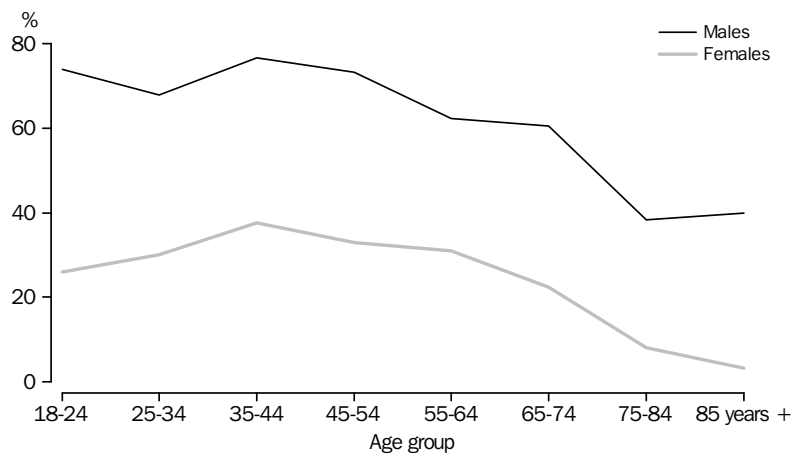
## CRIME AND SAFETY

### FEELINGS OF SAFETY

The feelings people have of safety or lack of safety when alone at home often relate to: crime levels in their local vicinity; previous experience as a victim of assault or household break-in; relationships with people living nearby; sense of their own strength and capacity to be in control; perceptions of crime levels generally; and their level of trust in their local community.

In 2010 and 2006, 85% of adults reported that they felt safe or very safe at home alone after dark, while 48% reported feeling safe or very safe walking alone in their local area at night (table 2). Men were more likely than women to feel safe/very safe both at home alone (92% compared to 78%) or walking alone at night (68% compared to 29%). Rates of feeling very safe or safe for both males and females decreased with age (tables 3 and 4 and graph 6.1).

**6.1** FEELING SAFE/VERY SAFE WALKING ALONE AT NIGHT IN LOCAL AREA, by age and sex

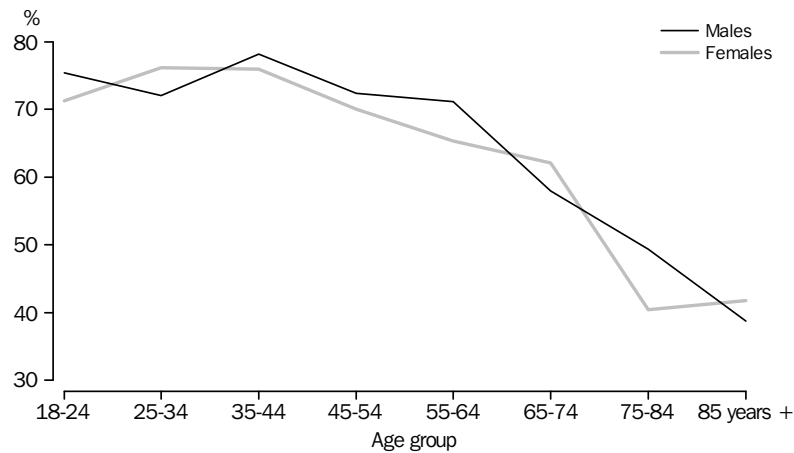


In 2010, people were more likely to feel unsafe at home alone after dark if: they were living in major cities; living in accommodation rented from state or territory housing authorities; not in the labour force; born overseas in a country other than main-English speaking ones and were not proficient in spoken English; or had fair to poor health; or were living as a member of a household with low income.

### SOCIAL DISORDER

The 2010 GSS collected information about people's perceptions of social disorder problems such as noisy driving, public drunkenness and so on in their local area. 70% of people reported at least one type of social disorder problem in their local area (table 2). Both men and women were likely to report social disorder problems at about the same rates, and people in younger age groups were much more likely to report these problems than were older people (see graph 6.2)

## SOCIAL DISORDER

*continued***6.2** AT LEAST ONE TYPE OF SOCIAL DISORDER PROBLEM IN LOCAL AREA, by age and sex

The most common types of social disorder problems reported were dangerous driving (34%) and noisy driving (17%). Other reported issues included: noisy neighbours (8%); public drunkenness (7%); graffiti (7%); and people hanging around in groups (6%) (table 37).

## CRIME VICTIMISATION

The level of crime is an indicator of community wellbeing that is of interest both to governments looking for solutions and to people trying to manage the daily circumstances of their lives. Readers should note, however, that the reported level of crime victimisation can differ depending on the way the information is collected. In particular, the results from the GSS differ from the results from the ABS's Crime Victimization Survey. Further details comparing GSS findings with those of the Crime Victimization Survey can be found in Appendix 1 of this publication.

The GSS collected information about the prevalence of physical or threatened violence against a person, and actual or attempted break-ins to homes, garages or sheds. For all persons aged 18 years and over, 10% reported being victims of physical or threatened violence in the last 12 months, about the same as in 2002 (9%) and 2006 (11%). However being a victim of actual or attempted break-in fell from 12% 2002 to 8% in 2010 (table 1).

In 2010 more men (12%) than women (9%) reported that they had been the victim of actual or threatened violence in the last 12 months. While less likely to report having been a victim of physical or threatened violence in 2010 than in 2006, men aged 18 to 24 years were still the most likely to have reported this type of experience (23% in 2010 compared with 31% in 2006) (table 3 and 4).

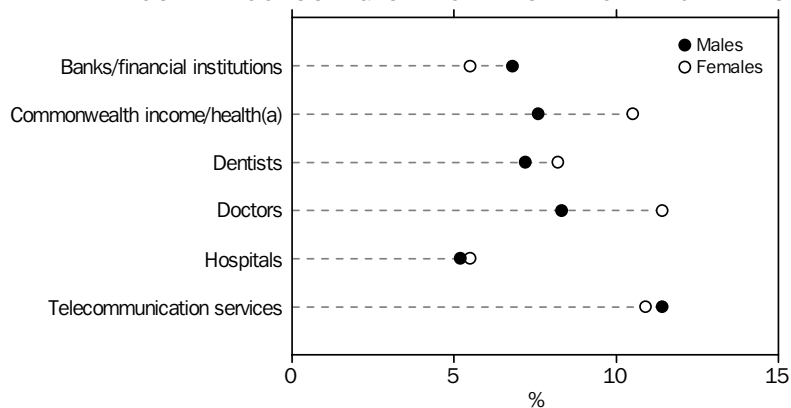
SECTION **7**

**ACCESS TO SERVICES** .....

ABILITY TO ACCESS SERVICES

The inability to access services when needed may lead to adverse impacts on an individual, particularly when the services relate to personal health or wellbeing. In 2010, 30% of adults experienced difficulty when trying to access a range of service providers. The most often reported types of services that people had difficulty accessing were telecommunications (11%), doctors (10%) and Commonwealth income support, health and related services (9%). A higher proportion of women reported difficulty accessing doctors and Commonwealth income support, health and related services than men (11% compared to 8% for each) (table 42).

**7.1** DIFFICULTY ACCESSING SELECTED SERVICE PROVIDERS, by sex



(a) Includes Centrelink, Medicare and Family Assistance Office.

Common reasons for having difficulty accessing services by the 5.1 million people who experienced difficulties included: having to wait too long for an appointment (61%); poor customer service (44%); and inadequate services in the local area (25%).

ACCESS TO SERVICES BY PERSONS WITH A DISABILITY

Accessing services can be a significant issue for those with a disability. People with a disability resulting in a core activity restriction were more likely to have had difficulty accessing services (40%) compared to those people without any disability or long term health condition (28%). Doctors (16%), dentists (15%), Commonwealth income support, health and related services (14%) and telecommunication services (12%) were the most common services that people with a core activity restriction had difficulty accessing (see table 43).

DELAYS TO TREATING  
MEDICAL NEEDS DUE TO  
COST

The GSS collected information about delays to obtaining medical services and medications due to cost. The survey found that 14% of adults reported that they had delayed getting a medical consultation, at some time in their lives, because they could not afford it while 11% reported that they had delayed purchasing prescribed medication because they could not afford it (see Table 2).

## FINANCIAL STRESS

The financial stress indicators and income data collected in the GSS can provide insights into the economic wellbeing of various groups in the Australian community. Some of the financial stress questions required objective answers, but the interpretation of the responses as indicators of financial stress are subjective. Other questions are inherently subjective in nature. While some of the indicators (such as seeking assistance from welfare/community organisations) appear to be more severe than others, such as 'could not pay electricity, gas or telephone bills on time', it is difficult to rank or weight them in order to derive a single measure of intensity of financial stress.

In 2010 19% of adults reported that their household had one or more cash flow problems in the 12 months prior to interview, slightly higher than in 2006 (18%). In 2010, more people reported that their household was unable to pay bills on time, such as electricity, gas, telephone or car registration and that they had to pawn something to raise cash than in 2006. In 2010 a higher proportion of people also reported that their household undertook one or more dissaving actions (23%) compared to 2006 (19%). This was mainly attributable to more households drawing down on their accumulated savings or term deposits (table 46).

Differing household composition was associated with different levels of financial stress. For example:

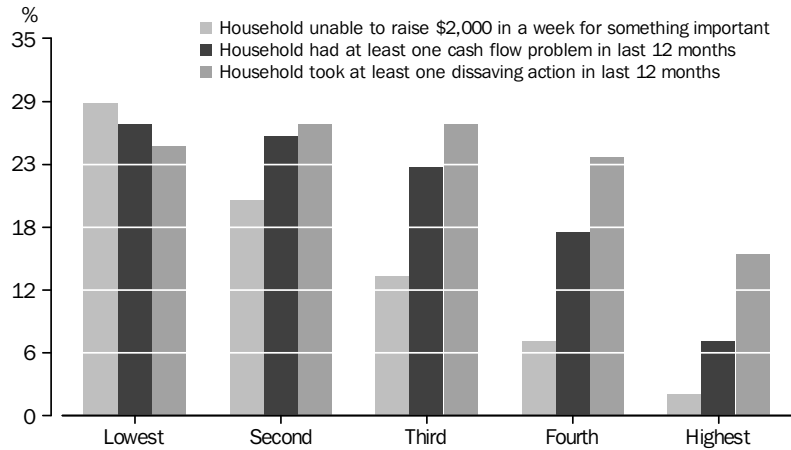
- of the 709,900 adults in one family lone parent households with dependent children, 41% reported that they lived in households that could not raise \$2,000 in an emergency, compared with 11% of the 4,977,400 adults in one family couple households with dependent children;
- 47% of adults living in one family lone parent households with dependent children reported that their households had at least one cash flow problem in the previous 12 months (21% for adults in couple households with dependent children); and
- 39% of adults living in one family lone parent households reported that their households took at least one dissaving action in the 12 months prior to the survey (27% for those in couple households with dependent children) (table 45).

The reporting of financial stress does not necessarily imply that a household has low income. Some high income households reported financial stressors. Nevertheless, comparing the income characteristics of those experiencing financial stress shows that those in the lowest income quintile (the bottom 20% of people ranked by equivalised household income) were: less likely than people in other households to be able to raise money quickly for something important; more likely to report that their household had experienced cash flow problems in the last 12 months; and more likely than people in the top income quintile to report that their household had taken a dissaving action in the past 12 months (table 46 and graph 8.1). These patterns and their magnitudes were similar between 2010 and 2006 except for the proportion of adults reporting that their

FINANCIAL STRESS  
*continued*

households had taken at least one dissaving action in the 12 months prior to the 2010 interview. In 2010 these rates were higher across all income quintiles than in 2006.

**8.1** SELECTED FINANCIAL STRESS INDICATORS, By equivalised household gross weekly income quintiles



FINANCIAL EXCLUSION

Of adults aged 18 years and over, around one in 20 people (7%) applying for some kind financial service or product reported that they had been excluded from that product. The most common product that people were unable to access were credit or store cards. The rate of people reporting this type of exclusion did not vary particularly across the income quintiles although those in lower quintiles were much less likely to report that their household had applied for a financial product or service in the first place (table 46).

People living in different types of households did report some differences in household experiences of financial exclusion (table 45). In particular, adults in one family lone parent households with dependent children (17%) were much more likely to live in a household that had experienced one or more types of financial exclusions in the last 12 months than adults in one family couple households with dependent children (6%).

FINANCIAL RESILIENCE

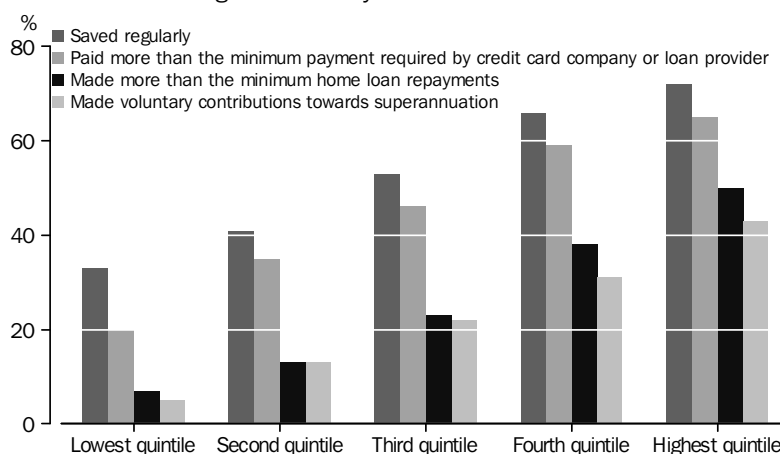
Information about the types of financial resilience actions taken by households was also collected for the first time in 2010. Those in higher income quintiles were much more likely to have undertaken at least one financial resilience action (94% of the highest quintile), such as paying off additional amounts on credit cards or home loans, than those in lower income quintiles (69% of the lowest quintile).



FINANCIAL RESILIENCE

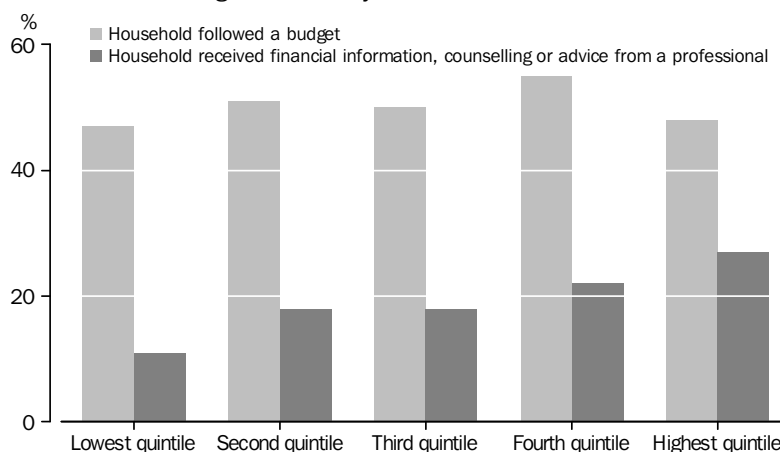
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**8.2** SELECTED FINANCIAL RESILIENCE ACTIONS, By equivalised household gross weekly income



In terms of non-monetary resilience actions undertaken by households, the survey found that people in lower income quintiles were about as likely to report that their household had followed a budget as were those in high income households, although less likely to have received financial advice.

**8.3** SELECTED FINANCIAL RESILIENCE ACTIONS, By equivalised household gross weekly income



## HOUSING MOBILITY

In 2010 7 million adults aged 18 years and over (42%) moved in the five years prior to the survey, compared to the 43% of adults who reported moving in the five years prior to the 2006 survey. Many factors influence a person's propensity and reasons to move. The younger age groups were more likely to have moved than were older age groups (72% of 25 to 34 year olds had moved compared to 16% of those aged 85 years or more - table 2). People renting through private landlords were much more mobile than the population on average (83% of such renters had moved- table 11), as were unemployed people (62% had moved - table 10). The states or territories with a higher mobile population, compared to the national average, were the Northern Territory (54%, although this measure excludes very remote areas); Queensland (49%); and Western Australia (45%) (table 6). Adults who reported poor health were less likely (33%) to have moved in the previous 5 years (table 15).

Overall, the most common main reason for moving was housing related (49% of movers), followed by family reasons (26%). When reporting all reasons for the latest move, the common types of housing reasons were wanting a bigger/better home (18% of movers) and purchasing own home (15%). Other reasons reported by people who have moved included: lifestyle change; migration to and within Australia; and issues with their previous neighbourhood (table 38).

## HOMELESSNESS

Homelessness is significant for both the individuals who either experience homelessness or are directly affected by it, and for society more widely. Homelessness is strongly associated with reduced opportunities for people who are, or have experienced being, homeless to engage with others or to participate in activities such as employment or education. These reduced opportunities may be only temporary, or they may continue to affect people even after the period of homelessness has ended.

There are many complex issues in measuring homeless, as outlined in the recently released *ABS Discussion Paper: Methodological Review of Counting the Homeless 2006* (cat. no. 2050.0.55.001) and the *ABS Position Paper - ABS Review of Counting the Homeless Methodology, Aug 2011* (cat. no. 2050.0.55.002). The GSS provides information on people who have been homeless in the past but who are now usual residents of private dwellings. As the GSS only enumerates usual residents of private dwellings, it will not include: people currently living in shelters; people sleeping rough; people 'couch surfing' (staying temporarily with other households); nor people staying in boarding houses. It may include some people staying in Transitional Housing Management (THM) properties, if the adult staying there at the time of the survey considered that it was their usual residence at that time (THMs have been included in researcher estimates of the homeless).

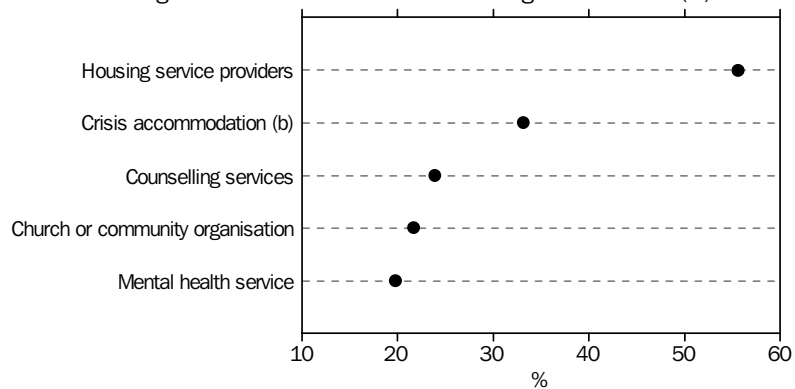
## HOMELESSNESS

*continued*

The GSS asked people about episodes in their lives where they had been without a permanent place to live, about the reasons for those circumstances and about their use of services in relation to periods of homelessness. In 2010, 4.6 million (27%) of adults (aged 18 years or over) reported that they had been without a permanent place to live at some time in their lives. Some of the reasons for not having a permanent place to live were not included in the derived homelessness estimates. These included not having a permanent place to live because the person was: saving money (3%); moving for work-related reasons (3%); building or renovating their home (3%); travelling (4%); house sitting (1%); or having recently moved to a new town or city (9%) (table 39). The remaining 2.1 million adults (13%) who had experienced a period without a permanent place to live were classified as having experienced homelessness at some time in their lives. Common reasons for homelessness included: family, friend or relationship problems (50%); tight housing or rental markets (23%); and financial problems (22%).

According to the 2010 GSS, just over 1.1 million people had experienced at least one episode of homelessness in the previous 10 years. Of these people, 40% sought assistance from a service provider while they were homeless. Of the people who sought assistance when they were homeless, most had approached housing service providers (graph 9.1). Of the 60% who did not seek assistance from service organisations, most (81%) did not seek assistance because they did not feel they needed it.

**9.1** SELECTED TYPES OF SERVICES USED, Proportion of homeless seeking assistance from service organisations (a)

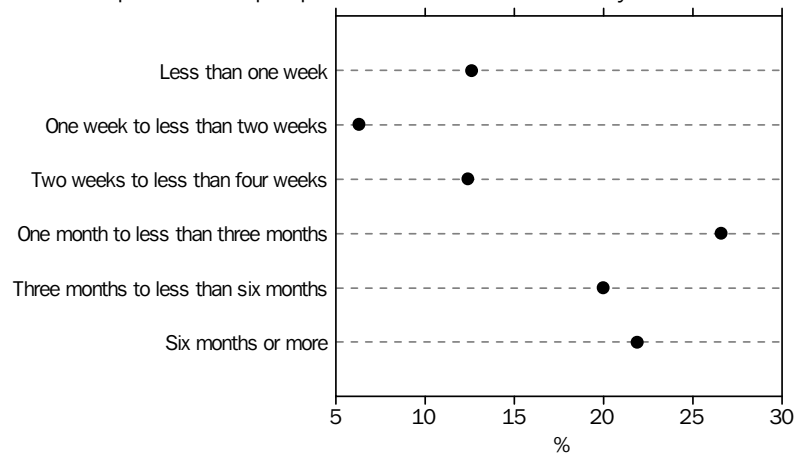


(a) Homeless in 10 years prior to 2010.

(b) Includes supported accommodation for the homeless.

For the most recent period of homelessness in the past 10 years, 13% were homeless for less than a week. A further 6% were homeless for less than 2 weeks, and another 12% were homeless for less than 4 weeks. However, 22% had spent 6 months or more without a permanent place to live.

## HOMELESSNESS

*continued***9.2** LENGTH OF TIME WITHOUT A PERMANENT PLACE TO LIVE,  
Proportion of people homeless in last 10 years

While the GSS cannot be used to directly derive a prevalence measure of homelessness (i.e., the number of people experiencing homelessness at a point in time), it can inform analysis of homelessness prevalence. In 2010, according to the GSS, 251,000 people aged 18 years or over were estimated to have experienced homelessness in the previous 12 months. This estimate excludes people who were homeless at the time of the survey, which, if they could be included, may increase the total number of people experiencing homelessness in that twelve month period by many tens of thousands. The ABS discussion paper noted above (cat. no. 2050.0.55.001) included an estimate of about 50,000 homeless people aged 18 years or over on a single (Census) night in 2006 (including several thousand homeless people in very remote areas of Australia). If that prevalence estimate were to hold for 2010, then these two sources, taken together, would suggest that there could have been over 300,000 adults experiencing homelessness in the 12 months prior to the 2010 GSS. This would suggest a ratio of about 6 to one between a prevalence measure of homelessness and the numbers of adults experiencing homelessness in a 12 month period. However, the ABS discussion paper noted that its prevalence measure was an underestimate. If the prevalence estimate should have been much higher, say at 70,000 homeless adults at any one time, the estimated number of people experiencing homelessness over the 12 month period would rise from about 300,000 to 320,000.

Understanding the estimates of the numbers of people experiencing homelessness in a year can be further refined when combined with the length of time for which the most recent period of reported homelessness lasted. The 31% of people experiencing homelessness periods of less than a month (and 13% for less than a week) suggests a relatively high ratio between a point in time prevalence measures and the total number of adults experiencing homelessness.

## SECTION 10

## TRANSPORT AND IT USE .....

### TRANSPORT

Lack of access to transport due to problems of affordability, safety, availability, convenience, and appropriateness of the type of transport available can act as a barrier to people's participation in the range of social, civic and economic activities of mainstream society.

In 2010 most people aged 18 years or over (84%) felt that they could easily get to the places where they needed to go, which may reflect the large majority of people (87%) with access to a motor vehicle. However, 12% felt that they sometimes had difficulty getting to such places and 4% felt that they either could not get to the places where they needed to go or often had difficulties in doing so (table 1).

Young adults aged 18 to 24 years old and the older age groups (75 years and over) were the least likely to have access to motor vehicles and more likely to experience difficulty in getting to the places they needed to go (table 2). Females were less likely than males to have access to motor vehicles and more likely to experience difficulties in getting to places they needed to go (tables 3 and 4).

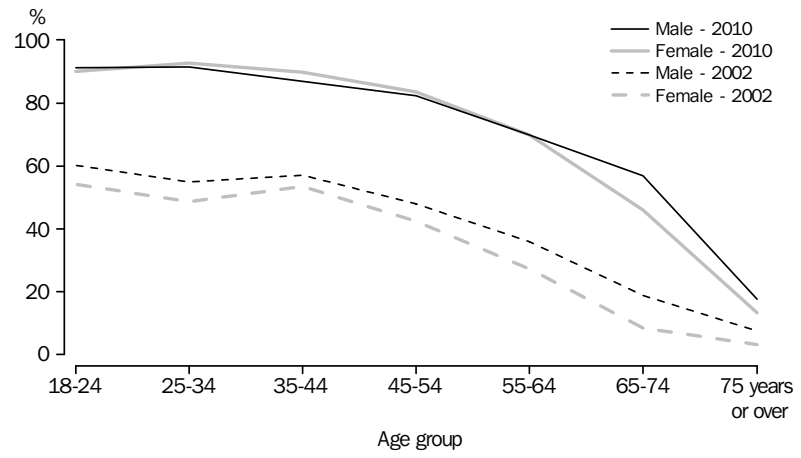
These patterns in transport and access to motor vehicles have remained largely unchanged between 2002, 2006 and 2010.

### INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Australian's use of computers and the internet increased substantially between 2002, 2006 and 2010. In 2002 55% of respondents reported using a computer at home in the 12 months prior to interview but by 2010 80% of adults had done so, with accessing the internet at home also increasing from 43% to 77% over that same period. While males remain more likely than females to use computers and access the internet, the increases in computer and internet use over this timeframe were greater for females. The proportion of females accessing the internet increased from 39% in 2002 to 76% in 2010, while use by males increased from 46% to 78% (Table 1).

INFORMATION  
 TECHNOLOGY *continued*

**10.1** INTERNET ACCESS, By age and sex



## EXPLANATORY NOTES .....

### INTRODUCTION

**1** This publication presents summary results on a range of social dimensions for people aged 18 years and over, compiled from the 2010 General Social Survey (GSS). The survey collected information about personal and household characteristics for people aged 18 years and over resident in private dwellings, throughout not very remote areas of Australia, from August to November 2010.

**2** The 2010 GSS collected data on a range of social dimensions from the same individual to enable analysis of the interrelationships in social circumstances and outcomes, including the exploration of multiple advantage and disadvantage experienced by that individual. The 2010 GSS is the third in the series, with the first GSS conducted in 2002, and again in 2006. It is planned to repeat the survey at regular intervals (currently four-yearly). Each cycle of the GSS collects comparable information to allow for analysis of changes over time. A cyclical component is also included to collect additional information on emerging or important topics of social concern. The cyclical component of the 2010 GSS included new topics relating to social inclusion, such as experience of homelessness and financial resilience and exclusion.

### DIMENSIONS INCLUDED IN THE 2010 GSS

**3** The 2010 GSS collected information about:

- demographic characteristics
- health, disability and wellbeing
- housing
- education
- employment
- experience of homelessness
- income
- financial stress, exclusion and resilience
- assets and liabilities
- information technology
- transport
- family and community involvement
- crime and feelings of safety
- attendance at culture and leisure venues
- sports attendance and participation
- social networks and social participation
- voluntary work
- visa category

**4** A full list of the data items from the 2010 GSS is contained in the *General Social Survey: User Guide* (cat. no. 4159.0.55.002) to be released in October 2011.

### SCOPE OF THE SURVEY

**5** Only people who were usual residents of private dwellings in Australia were covered by the General Social Survey (GSS). Private dwellings are houses, flats, home units and any other structures used as private places of residence at the time of the survey. People who usually reside in non-private dwellings such as hotels, motels, hostels, hospitals and short-stay caravan parks were not included in the survey. Usual residents are those who usually live in a particular dwelling and regard it as their own or main home. Visitors to private dwellings are not included in the interview for that dwelling. However, if they are a usual resident of another dwelling that is in the scope of the survey they have a chance

## SCOPE OF THE SURVEY

*continued*

of being selected in the survey or, if not selected, they will be represented by similar persons who are selected in the survey.

**6** The GSS was conducted in both urban and rural areas in all states and territories, except for very remote parts of Australia. This exclusion is unlikely to impact on national estimates, and will only have a minor impact on any aggregate estimates that are produced for individual states and territories, except the Northern Territory where the excluded population accounts for over 20% of persons.

**7** The Australian population at September 2010, after exclusion of people living in non-private dwellings and very remote areas of Australia, was 21,836,200, of which 16,788,159 were aged 18 years and over.

**8** The following non-residents were excluded from resident population estimates used to benchmark the survey results, and were not interviewed:

- diplomatic personnel of overseas governments
- members of non-Australian defence forces (and their dependants) stationed in Australia
- persons whose usual place of residence was outside Australia.

## SAMPLE DESIGN

**9** The GSS was designed to provide reliable estimates at the national level and for each State and Territory. The sample was therefore spread across the states and territories in order to produce estimates that have a relative standard error (RSE) of no greater than 10% for characteristics that are relatively common in the national population, say that at least 10% of the population would possess.

**10** For the 2010 cycle, the standard sampling methodology was adapted in order to provide better estimates of people experiencing disadvantage. Using Census 2006 data and a proxy indicator of disadvantage, areas with high concentrations of people experiencing disadvantage were given a higher probability of selection in the survey. Households were then randomly selected from each area selected to participate in the survey.

**11** The initial sample for the survey consisted of approximately 19,576 private dwellings. This number was reduced to approximately 17,158 dwellings due to the loss of households which had no residents in scope for the survey and where dwellings proved to be vacant, under construction or derelict. Of the eligible dwellings, 87.6% responded fully (or adequately) which yielded a total sample from the survey of 15,028 dwellings.

**12** Some survey respondents provided most of the required information, but were unable or unwilling to provide a response to certain data items. The records for these persons were retained in the sample and the missing values were recorded as 'don't know or not stated'. No attempt was made to deduce or impute for these missing values. Approximately 2,551 respondents (15%) did not provide one or more required answers but were deemed to have responded adequately. Details of missing values for data items are presented in paragraph 34.

## DATA COLLECTION

**13** ABS Interviewers conducted personal interviews using a Computer Assisted Interviewing (CAI) questionnaire at selected dwellings during the period August to November 2010. CAI involves the use of a notebook computer to record, store, manipulate and transmit the data collected during interviews.

**14** Much of the detail obtained from the GSS was provided by one person aged 18 years or over, randomly selected from each participating household. The random selection of this person was made once basic information had been obtained about all household members. Some financial and housing items collected in the GSS required the selected person to answer on behalf of other members of the household. In some cases, particularly where household information was not known by the selected person, a spokesperson for the household was nominated to provide household information.



DATA COLLECTION *continued*

**15** A copy of the 2010 GSS interview questions is available in the *General Social Survey: User Guide* (cat. no. 4159.0.55.002).

WEIGHTING, BENCHMARKING  
AND ESTIMATION*Weighting*

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

**17** 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*

**18** The initial weights are then 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 categories of persons which may occur due to either the random nature of sampling or non-response.

**19** The GSS was benchmarked to the in scope estimated resident population (ERP) and the estimated number of households in the population. The 2010 GSS used population and household benchmarks based on the 2006 Census.

**20** Given that the GSS heavily sampled areas of multiple social disadvantage, further analysis was undertaken to ascertain whether benchmark variables, in addition to geography, age, and sex, should be incorporated into the weighting strategy. Analysis showed that the standard weighting approach did not adequately compensate for differential undercoverage in the 2010 GSS sample for variables such as SEIFA and labour force status, when compared to other ABS surveys. As these variables were considered to have possible association with social characteristics, additional benchmarks were incorporated into the weighting process.

**21** The benchmarks used in the calibration of final weights for the 2010 GSS were:

- number of persons –
  - state by part of state by age by sex; and
  - SEIFA; and
  - state by labour force status.
- number of households–
  - state by part of state by household composition; and
  - SEIFA.

## ESTIMATION

**22** Survey estimates of counts of persons are obtained by summing the weights of persons or households with the characteristic of interest. Estimates for means, such as mean age of persons, are obtained by summing the weights of persons in each category (e.g. individual ages), multiplying by the value for each category, aggregating the results across categories, then dividing by the sum of the weights for all persons.

**23** The majority of estimates shown in this publication are based on benchmarked person weights. The estimates of mean incomes, mortgages and rents contained in tables 5 and 17-23 are based on benchmarked household weights. Means for the number of persons and the number of employed persons in table 5 are also based on benchmarked household weights.

RELIABILITY OF ESTIMATES

**24** 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*

**25** 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 notes'. 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*

**26** 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.

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

- Primary Approach Letters (PALS) were posted to households selected in the GSS prior to enumeration
- face-to-face interviews with respondents
- 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.

**28** Of the dwellings selected in the 2010 GSS, 12% did not respond fully or adequately. As the non-response to the GSS was low, the impact of non-response bias is considered to be negligible.

**29** 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.

**30** 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.

SEASONAL EFFECTS

**31** The estimates in this publication are based on information collected from August to November 2010, and due to seasonal effects they may not be fully representative of other time periods in the year. For example, the GSS asked standard ABS questions on labour force status to determine whether a person was employed. Employment is subject to

SEASONAL EFFECTS *continued*

seasonal variation through the year. Therefore, the GSS results for employment could have differed if the GSS had been conducted over the whole year or in a different part of the year.

## INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

**32** Care has been taken to ensure that the results of this survey are as accurate as possible. All interviews were conducted by trained ABS Interviewers. Extensive reference material was developed for use in the field enumeration and intensive training was provided to interviewers in both classroom and on-the-job environments. There remain, however, other factors which may have affected the reliability of results, and for which no specific adjustments can be made. The following factors should be considered when interpreting these estimates:

- Information recorded in this survey is essentially 'as reported' by respondents, and hence may differ from information available from other sources or collected using different methodologies. Responses may be affected by imperfect recall or individual interpretation of survey questions.
- Some respondents may have provided responses that they felt were expected, rather than those that accurately reflected their own situation. Every effort has been made to minimise such bias through the development and use of culturally appropriate survey methodology.

**33** Further information on the interpretation of results is contained in the *General Social Survey: User Guide* (cat. no. 4159.0.55.002).

**34** For a number of GSS data items, some respondents were unwilling or unable to provide the required information. No imputation was undertaken for this missing information. Where responses for a particular data item were missing for a person or household they were recorded in a 'not known or not stated' category for that data item. These 'not known or not stated' categories are not shown in the publication tables. However, the person or household has been included in the total for most data items. The exception is the equalised gross household income data item where it was more appropriate to calculate percentages excluding the missing values. Below is a table showing the number and proportion of missing values for key GSS data items.

KEY GSS DATA ITEMS WITH A  
'NOT KNOWN OR NOT STATED'  
CATEGORY

KEY GSS DATA ITEMS WITH A 'NOT KNOWN OR NOT STATED' CATEGORY *continued*

KEY GSS DATA ITEMS WITH A 'NOT KNOWN OR NOT STATED' CATEGORY

<i>Data Item</i>	<i>Estimated number of persons</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
	(000)	(%)
Landlord type	12	0.1
Weekly mortgage payments	689	4.1
Weekly rent payments	125	0.7
Personal gross weekly income	1 887	11.2
Equivalised household gross weekly income	3 091	18.4
Principal source of personal income	273	1.6
Principal source of household income(a)	224	1.3
Whether government support has been main source of income in last 2 years	5	*0.0
Time spent on government support as main source of income in last 2 years	89	0.5
Type(s) of cash flow problem(s) (and Number of different types of cash flow problems in last 12 months)	485	2.9
Types of dissaving actions taken in last 12 months (and Number of different types of dissaving actions taken in last 12 months)	435	2.6
Value of dwelling	528	3.1
Equity in dwelling	1 108	6.6
Type(s) of selected assets	440	2.6
Type of consumer debt	359	2.1
Type(s) of personal stressors experienced in last 12 months	2	*0.0

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

(a) Also see paragraph 35.

**35** For persons or households reporting nil or negative total income, or where the income amount was unknown, the principal source of income has been classified as 'undefined'. An estimated 330,000 people (2%) live in households where the principal source of income was 'undefined'.

CLASSIFICATIONS

**36** Occupation data were classified according to the *Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations, First Edition, 2006* (cat. no. 1220.0).

**37** Country of birth data were classified according to the *Standard Australian Classification of Countries (SACC), Second Edition, 2008* (cat. no. 1269.0).

**38** Area data (Capital city, Balance of state/territory; Remoteness areas) are classified according to the *Australian Standard Geographical Classification (ASGC), 2006*, (cat. no. 1216.0).

COMPARABILITY WITH 2006 GSS

**39** Selected summary results from the 2002 and 2006 GSS are presented in this publication to provide comparisons over time. The statistical significance of differences in estimates between 2006 and 2010 have been investigated and results that are statistically significant are indicated in Table 1. While the scope, content and data collection were largely the same in both collections, the sample design and weighting procedures were not. Some differences are noted below.

**40** The GSS is designed to collect information for a core set of topics in each cycle, to allow analysis of changes over time, and a cyclical component to collect additional information. Approximately 80% of the content of the 2006 GSS was repeated in the 2010 GSS. The differences in content between the surveys were in the cyclical component of the GSS. The cyclical component of the 2006 GSS included topics on household use of information technology, attendance at selected culture/leisure venues, participation in sport and recreational physical activities and volunteering. Summary indicators for these topics were also collected in the 2010 GSS to allow comparisons over time.

## COMPARABILITY WITH 2006

GSS *continued*

**41** The cyclical component of the 2010 GSS included more detailed indicators of family and community involvement (i.e. indicators of social network structure, types, qualities and transactions) which along with closely related items from the 2006 GSS is sometimes referred to as being the 'social capital' component of the survey. The cyclical component also included items related to topics of experience of homelessness, social disorder, visa category, access to service providers and reasons did not undertake study or training. Some of this data may be included in the next cycle of the GSS, however in less detail.

**42** The sample sizes differed between the 2010 and 2006 GSS. In 2010, the number of fully or adequately responding households achieved in the survey was 15,028 compared to approximately 13,375 for the 2006 cycle. The 2010 cycle had a larger initial sample size (19,576 possible dwellings) compared to the 2006 initial sample size (17,700 possible dwellings). In addition, the 2006 GSS experienced higher rates of sample loss because there were more households with no residents in scope for the survey or where dwellings proved to be vacant, under construction or derelict, and a higher rate of survey non-response from eligible households. These differences in the sample size for 2010 and 2006 should be considered when comparing results.

**43** For the 2010 cycle, a change in sample design was adopted to obtain more observations of people exhibiting multiple disadvantage, to provide a richer dataset of the characteristics of this subpopulation. The sample design involved using Census 2006 data to target areas with higher concentrations of households experiencing multiple disadvantage. To compensate for over sampling, the weighting process included additional benchmarks. These differences in the sample design for 2010 and 2006 should be considered when comparing results.

**44** The voluntary work estimates for 2010, and presented in tables 2 to 16 and table 30, exclude those persons who were compelled to do voluntary work because of employment or study commitments, for example, work for the dole. However, for time series comparison purposes, the voluntary work estimates presented in table 1 for 2002 and 2006 do not exclude these populations and therefore a higher rate of 'voluntary involvement' results. For further information on voluntary work, and for comparisons over time, refer to the publication *Voluntary Work, Australia* (cat. no. 4441.0).

**45** The 2010 GSS collected visa status information from migrants who arrived in Australia after 1989 (i.e. 1990 or later) who obtained permanent Australian resident status, as well as people who were temporary residents of Australia for 12 months or more, excluding those born in New Zealand, those holding New Zealand citizenship and those who held Australian citizenship prior to their arrival in Australia. Several changes to question wording were made to the Visa Status module for the 2010 survey. These changes were made to increase respondent understanding of the questions. For this reason the visa category estimates for 2010, presented in tables 2 to 4 and table 44, are not comparable to the 2006 data.

**46** A full list of the data items from the 2010 GSS is contained in the *General Social Survey: User Guide* (cat. no. 4159.0.55.002). The data item list contains information on the changes in content between the 2006 and 2010 collections. For published results from the 2006 GSS, refer to *General Social Survey: Summary Results, Australia, 2006* (cat. no. 4159.0).

*Appendix 1: Comparison of  
Data from GSS and Other ABS  
Sources*

**47** This presents comparisons between a number of key GSS data items and similar data items from other ABS sources. Where possible, results from other surveys have been adjusted to the scope and coverage of the GSS (or vice versa).

## GSS PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

**48** Below is information describing the range of data to be made available from the 2010 General Social Survey, both in published form and on request. Products available on the ABS web site are indicated accordingly.

*General Social Survey:  
Summary Results, Australia,  
2010 Datacubes*

**49** The tables released in this product are in spreadsheet format and are available on the ABS web site (cat. no. 4159.0). Estimates, proportions and the related RSEs are presented for each table.

*General Social Survey: User  
Guide 2010*

**50** The GSS User Guide will be released in conjunction with the Confidentialised Unit Record File (CURF). It provides detailed information about the survey content, methodology and data interpretation. It also contains the list of GSS data items, survey questions and prompt cards. It is expected that the User Guide will be available free-of-charge on the ABS web site in October 2011 (cat. no. 4159.0.55.002).

*State/territory tabulations*

**51** Versions of the GSS national results tables are also compiled separately for each state and territory will be available on the ABS web site in December 2011. These tables will be customised depending on the size of the sampling error. They will be released in spreadsheet format as *General Social Survey: New South Wales* (cat. no. 4159.1.55.001) to *General Social Survey: Northern Territory* (cat. no. 4159.8.55.001).

*Microdata*

**52** For users who wish to undertake more detailed analysis of the survey data, microdata from the 2010 GSS will be released in the form of two confidentialised unit record files (CURFs): *Microdata: General Social Survey, CURF, Australia, 2010* (cat. no. 4159.0.30.003). The expanded CURF will contain more detail than the basic CURF and will only be available via the Remote Access Data Laboratory (RADL), which is a secure Internet-based data query service. The basic CURF will be available via CD ROM or RADL. Technical information describing the content and use of the basic and expanded GSS CURFs will be available within the GSS User Guide. The GSS basic and expanded CURFs and Technical Manual are expected to be available in October 2011.

**53** Up-to-date information on the ABS RADL service, including information on pricing, 'Applications & Undertakings', and a training manual outlining obligations and responsibilities when accessing ABS microdata, is available on the ABS web site. Those wishing to access the 2010 GSS microdata should refer to the ABS Website <<http://www.abs.gov.au>> (see Services, ABS Microdata) and read the Microdata Entry Page, and other linked information, before downloading the appropriate Guide, Application and Undertaking forms and applying for access. University clients should refer to the ABS web site <[www.abs.gov.au](http://www.abs.gov.au)> (see Services, Services for Universities). The GSS basic and expanded CURFs can be accessed by universities participating in the ABS/Universities Australia Agreement for research and teaching purposes.

*Data available on request*

**54** Special tabulations of GSS data are available on request and for a fee. Subject to confidentiality and sampling variability constraints, tabulations can be produced from the survey incorporating data items, populations and geographic areas selected to meet individual requirements. These can be provided in printed or electronic form. Please refer to the contact details noted at the front of this publication.

## RELATED PUBLICATIONS

**55** Current publications and other products released by the ABS are available on the ABS web site. ABS publications which may be of interest are:

- *Australian Labour Market Statistics, July 2011* (cat. no. 6105.0)
- *Aspects of Social Capital, Australia, 2006* (cat. no. 4911.0).
- *Crime and Victimization 2009/10* (cat. no. 4530.0)
- *Disability, Ageing and Carers, Australia: Summary of Findings, 2009* (cat. no. 4430.0)
- *Education and Training Experience, Australia, 2009* (cat. no. 6278.0)
- *Employment Arrangements and Superannuation, Australia, April to June 2007* (cat. no. 6361.0)
- *Household Expenditure Survey, Australia: Summary of Results, 2009-10* (cat. no. 6530.0)
- *Household Income and Income Distribution, Australia, 2009-10* (cat. no. 6523.0)

## RELATED PUBLICATIONS

*continued*

- *Information Paper: Measuring Social Capital, an Australian Framework and Indicators* (cat. no. 1378.0)
- *Characteristics of Recent Migrants, November 2010* (cat. no. 6250.0)
- *Migration, Australia, 2009-10* (cat. no. 3412.0)
- *National Health Survey: Summary of Results, 2007-08* (cat. no. 4364.0)
- *Health Services: Patient Experiences in Australia, 2009* (cat. no. 4839.0.55.001)
- *Voluntary Work, Australia, 2006* (cat. no. 4441.0)

**DATA COMPARABILITY WITH OTHER ABS SOURCES** .....

DATA COMPARABILITY WITH OTHER ABS SOURCES

**1** The GSS collects data across a range of topics, many of which have been included in other ABS surveys. Where possible question modules from existing surveys have been used in the GSS collections. This practice ensures that statistics derived from the GSS are comparable with statistics from other ABS surveys. However, the breadth of topics included in the GSS does mean that, to keep the reporting load on survey respondents relatively low, it is not always possible to adopt the full question modules that are used in other surveys. In these situations, the GSS uses standard ABS 'short' question modules. For example, personal income was collected via 11 questions in the 2010 GSS, while the 2009-10 Survey of Income and Housing (SIH) used more than 40 questions to collect personal income data. The short question modules have been designed to maximise comparability with the full question modules and their use also ensures comparability with other surveys where the short modules have been used. However, in some cases there is no generally used short question module, and topics in GSS have used a shortened version which will have resulted in differences in the definition or scope of data items when compared to statistics derived from the full module. Users should refer to the Glossary of this publication for the definitions of GSS items and to the *General Social Survey: User Guide* (cat. no. 4159.0.55.002) for the survey questions.

**2** There are other reasons why results from the GSS may differ from other ABS surveys collecting information on the same topic, even where the questions used are the same. The GSS is a sample survey and its results are subject to sampling error. GSS results may therefore differ from other sample surveys, which are also subject to sampling error. Users should take account of the relative standard errors (RSEs) on GSS estimates and those of other survey estimates where comparisons are made.

**3** Differences in GSS estimates, when compared with the estimates of other surveys, may also result from:

- differences in scope and/or coverage;
- different reference periods reflecting seasonal variations;
- non-seasonal events that may have impacted on one period but not another; or
- because of underlying trends in the phenomena being measured.

**4** The GSS 2010 also used a different sampling methodology to that used in most other ABS sample surveys in order to obtain better estimates of people experiencing multiple social disadvantage (see Explanatory Notes for more information). The change in sampling methodology resulted in the selection of more geographic areas expected to have higher concentrations of people experiencing disadvantage than would have been the case with simple population proportional representation in the sample. The weights used to generate population level estimates from the survey will generally have compensated for this change in methodology and largely be reflected in slightly higher RSEs for some estimates at the national level.

**5** Differences in statistics from different surveys can occur as a result of using different collection methodologies. This is often evident in comparisons of similar data items reported from different ABS collections where, after taking account of definition and scope differences and sampling error, residual differences remain. These differences often have to do with: the mode of the collection, such as whether data are collected by an interviewer or self enumerated by the respondent; whether the answers to questions



DATA COMPARABILITY WITH  
OTHER ABS SOURCES *continued*

are provided by the person to whom the information relates or are from a proxy respondent answering on behalf of someone else; and the level of experience of interviewers undertaking the data collection. Differences may also result from the context in which questions are asked, i.e. where in the flow of the interview that particular questions are asked and the nature of questions that are asked beforehand. Because of the nature of such differences between statistical collections, the impacts on data are difficult to quantify. As a result, every effort is made to minimise such differences.

**6** The following table, *Comparison of Data from GSS and Other ABS Sources*, presents comparisons between a number of key GSS data items and similar data items from other ABS sources, and for most items the GSS data are broadly consistent with other ABS sources. However, there are some notable differences which are noted below.

## HEALTH

**7** The primary collections of general population health data conducted by the ABS are the Australian Health Survey, formerly the National Health Survey (for more detail see *National Health Survey: Summary of Results* (Cat No 4364.0)) and the Patient Experience Survey (see *Health Services: Patient Experiences in Australia*, 2009 (cat. no. 4839.0.55.001)). The National Health Survey has the same scope and general collection methodology as the GSS, and the results of the self-report health status question are similar.

**8** In comparison to the Patient Experience Survey, the GSS shows a greater proportion of people delayed seeking medical attention because of cost. This difference is mainly due to GSS asking respondents whether they have 'ever' delayed seeing a GP or other health professional because of cost, while the Patient Experience Survey asks about delays 'In the last 12 months'. Other differences in method (e.g., the Patient Experience Survey is collected via a telephone interview rather than in a face-to-face interview as for GSS) could also lead to some minor differences. Similarly, the GSS asks respondents whether they have 'ever' delayed buying a prescribed medication because of the cost rather than whether they have delayed such a purchase in 'the last 12 months'.

## DISABILITY

**9** Although both the Survey of Disability Ageing and Carers (SDAC) and GSS collect information about disability, the SDAC uses 149 questions to gather the information used to identify types of disability and the underlying conditions causing disability, compared to the 10 questions standard short module used in the GSS. The scope of the SDAC is also different in that the SDAC collects information from people living in special dwellings in addition to those in private dwellings. These differences are likely to account for most of the differences in estimates from these sources.

**10** Other ABS surveys, such as the National Health Survey, use the standard 'short' module of questions as used in the GSS to collect information about disability. The results from these two sources using the short disability module are similar. For a more detailed discussion of the range of disability statistics produced by the ABS, see *ABS Sources of Disability 2003-2008* cat no. 4431.0.55.002.

## LABOUR FORCE

**11** The primary source for labour force statistics produced by the ABS is the Labour Force Survey (LFS) (*Labour Force, Australia* (Cat. No. 6202.0)). GSS includes persons aged 18 years or over, living in private dwellings across Australia but excluding persons living in very remote areas. The LFS includes persons living in both private dwellings and non-private dwellings (institutions, hotels, etc.) in all areas of Australia. The data shown in the comparison table below have been adjusted to align the age groups, time period and scope of the two surveys. The results of the surveys were very similar.

## EDUCATION

**12** Both the GSS and the Survey of Education and Training (SET) include only persons living in private dwellings across Australia and exclude persons living in very remote areas. Within those geographic and dwelling type scope restrictions, both surveys include all persons aged 18 to 64 years. However, while the GSS also includes all persons aged 65 years and over, the SET only includes persons aged 65 to 74 years who were in, or were marginally attached, to the labour force, and excludes all persons aged 75 years or over. Adjustments were made to align the age groups to include only persons aged 18 - 64 years for both the SET and GSS data.

FEELINGS OF SAFETY AND  
CRIME VICTIMISATION

**13** The GSS estimates for people who reported feeling safe or very safe at home alone either during the day or after dark are much higher than as recorded in the 2008-09 ABS Crime Victimization Survey (CVS). This difference results from screener questions in the CVS that first asks people if they are ever alone. In the CVS 10% of people say they have never been alone during the day at home in the past 12 months, and 17% say they are never alone at home after dark in the past 12 months. The CVS does not ask these people about how safe they feel in such circumstances. It is highly unlikely that such large numbers of people are never alone at home, and in the GSS the much higher responses to feeling safe are likely to be people who in the CVS respond to never being alone - it is likely that when they are alone it does not make them feel unsafe and they respond accordingly when not screened out of the module. The GSS only recorded people as 'never being at home alone after dark' where the respondent gave this as an unprompted response to how safe they felt in such circumstances (0.5% during the day and 1.3% after dark). For more information on the Crime Victimization survey see *Crime Victimization, Australia, 2008-2009* (cat. no. 4530.0).

**14** The GSS records much higher rates of being victimised by physical or threatened violence in the past 12 months (10.3%) than does the CVS (5.5%). The rates of such victimisation in the GSS are likely to include indistinguishable sexual violence. Sexual violence is significantly under-reported when explicitly collected in the CVS telephone survey, and has been excluded from the CVS component of the comparison in the table below. The measure derived from the GSS is closer to level of violence measured in the ABS 2006 Personal Safety Survey.

SPORTS PARTICIPATION AND  
SPECTATOR ATTENDANCE

**15** In comparison to the 2009-10 Sports Participation survey the GSS recorded higher levels of sports participation. Part of the explanation for this is likely to be that GSS asked respondents to include participation in sports whether as a participant or in some other role such as a coach, referee or official while the related Sports Participation survey question did not specifically mention differing types of participation. So it is possible that people who only participated as a coach, referee or official may have excluded themselves. However, other questions in the Sports Participation and other similar surveys suggests that the proportion of people who only participate in sports as a coach, referee or official is around 3-4%, suggesting that this does not completely explain the difference between the two data sources.

**16** Similarly the GSS reported an attendance rate of fourteen percentage points higher for people who reported having attended a sporting event in the last 12 months than the Sports Participation survey. Part of the reason for this difference is likely to be that the question in the Sports Participation survey asks respondents to 'exclude school and junior competitions' while the GSS does not. Apart from the differences in the two question sets, the two surveys had different collection methods (face to face for GSS and telephone for Sports Participation), timing differences (Sports Participation was collected across 12 months from July 2009) and were asked in different contexts. It has not been possible to determine the extent to which these differences in methodologies may have contributed to the different results.

**A1.1** COMPARISON OF DATA ITEMS FROM GSS AND OTHER ABS SOURCES(a)

<i>Other ABS source/Data Item</i>	<i>Source of comparable statistics</i>	
	<i>2010</i>	<i>GSS</i>
	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>
<b>NATIONAL HEALTH SURVEY, 2007–08</b>		
<b>Self assessed health status</b>		
Excellent/very good	55.0	52.6
Good	29.4	30.5
Fair/poor	15.6	16.9
<b>Disability or long term health condition status(b)</b>		
Profound or severe core activity limitation	4.7	4.3
Moderate core activity limitation	5.4	5.8
Mild core activity limitation	1.6	1.8
Has a schooling/employment restriction	7.4	4.9
Has no specific restriction	22.6	23.5
No disability and no long term health condition	58.3	59.7
<b>PATIENT EXPERIENCE SURVEY, 2009</b>		
<b>Delayed seeing a doctor because of cost</b>		
Delayed seeing a doctor because of cost	8.3	14.4
Did not delay seeing a doctor because of cost	91.7	85.5
<b>Delayed buying prescribed medicines because of cost</b>		
Delayed buying prescribed medicines because of cost	9.1	11.2
Did not delay buying prescribed medicines because of cost	90.9	88.6
<b>SURVEY OF DISABILITY, AGEING AND CARERS, 2009</b>		
<b>Whether has disability or long term health condition(c)</b>		
Has disability or long term health condition	46.6	40.3
Has no disability or long term health condition	53.4	59.7
<b>LABOUR FORCE SURVEY, AUGUST TO NOVEMBER 2010</b>		
<b>Labour force status(c)</b>		
Employed	65.3	64.7
Unemployed	3.0	3.0
Not in labour force	31.7	32.3
<b>EDUCATION AND TRAINING EXPERIENCE, 2009(d)</b>		
<b>Level of highest educational attainment</b>		
Postgraduate degree	4.3	4.7
Graduate Diploma/Graduate Certificate	4.0	2.5
Bachelor Degree	15.0	18.5
Advanced Diploma/Diploma	11.0	11.0
Certificates III/IV	18.6	19.6
Certificates I/II	1.1	1.0
Certificate not further defined	0.1	0.1
Year 12	18.2	18.5
Year 11	6.1	5.4
Year 10 or below	20.3	17.2
Level not determined	1.1	1.5

- (a) Percentages shown relate to the total population of persons aged 18 years or over unless otherwise indicated.
- (b) GSS data has been collapsed to align with data from other ABS source.
- (c) Data from other source has been restricted to persons living in private dwellings to align with GSS data.
- (d) Both GSS and SET data have been restricted to persons aged 18 - 64 years.

**A1.1** COMPARISON OF DATA ITEMS FROM GSS AND OTHER ABS SOURCES(a) *continued*

<i>Other ABS source/Data Item</i>	<i>Source of comparable statistics</i>	<i>2010 GSS</i>
	%	%
<b>EDUCATION AND TRAINING EXPERIENCE, 2009(b) cont.</b>		
<b>Main field of highest educational attainment</b>		
Natural and physical sciences	1.8	1.9
Information technology	1.8	2.4
Engineering and related technologies	9.3	10.5
Architecture and building	3.1	3.4
Agriculture, environment and related studies	1.5	1.4
Health	5.4	6.0
Education	4.7	4.2
Management and commerce	13.5	14.1
Society and culture	7.6	7.8
Creative arts	2.7	2.3
Food, hospitality and personal services	2.9	3.2
Mixed field programs	44.6	41.1
Field not determined	0.9	1.5
<b>Highest year of school completed</b>		
Year 12	54.7	59.1
Year 11	11.3	10.3
Year 10	23.3	22.0
Year 9	5.9	5.2
Year 8 or below	4.5	3.2
Never attended school	0.2	0.2
<b>Full-time/part-time study</b>		
Full-time study	7.4	7.8
Part-time study	7.3	8.9
Not studying	85.3	83.4
<b>HOUSEHOLD EXPENDITURE SURVEY, 2009–10</b>		
<b>Ability to raise \$2000 in an emergency</b>		
Could raise \$2000 within a week	86.0	84.7
Could not raise \$2000 within a week	14.0	13.2
<b>Number of bedrooms</b>		
Bedsitter/One bedroom	3.8	3.8
Two bedrooms	18.0	19.1
Three bedrooms	46.0	46.1
Four bedrooms	26.9	25.1
Five or more bedrooms	5.2	5.9
<b>Dwelling structure</b>		
Separate house	78.9	80.2
Single storey semi-detached, row or terrace house or townhouse	5.5	5.4
Two or more storey semi-detached, row or terrace house or townhouse	4.5	4.5
Flat or apartment in a 1 or 2 storey block	5.3	4.0
Flat or apartment in a 3 storey block	3.1	3.5
Flat or apartment in a 4 or more storey block	2.3	2.2
Flat attached to a house	*0.2	0.1
Other dwelling: Caravan, cabin, houseboat	*0.1	0.0
Other dwelling: Improvised home, tent, sleepers out	**0.1	0.0
House or flat attached to shop or office	**0.1	0.0
<b>SURVEY OF INCOME AND HOUSING, 2009–10</b>		
<b>Tenure type</b>		
Owner without a mortgage	32.7	32.3
Owner with a mortgage	36.4	38.9
Renter	28.3	27.0
Other tenure types	2.5	1.9

\* 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) Percentages shown relate to the total population of persons aged 18 years or over unless otherwise indicated.

(b) Both GSS and SET data have been restricted to persons aged 18 - 64 years.

**A1.1** COMPARISON OF DATA ITEMS FROM GSS AND OTHER ABS SOURCES(a) *continued*

<i>Other ABS source/Data Item</i>	<i>Source of comparable statistics</i>	<i>2010 GSS</i>
	%	%
<b>SURVEY OF INCOME AND HOUSING, 2009–10</b> <i>cont.</i>		
<b>Landlord type(b)</b>		
Not applicable	71.7	73.0
Private landlord	23.5	21.9
State housing authority	3.8	3.4
Other landlord type	1.1	1.7
Total renters	28.3	27.0
<b>CRIME VICTIMISATION, 2008–09</b>		
<b>Feelings of safety at home alone during day(c)</b>		
Safe or very safe	85.2	94.2
Neither safe nor unsafe	3.2	3.3
Unsafe or very unsafe	2.2	2.0
Never home alone during the day	9.5	0.5
<b>Feelings of safety at home alone after dark(c)</b>		
Safe or very safe	71.6	85.3
Neither safe nor unsafe	7.1	6.9
Unsafe or very unsafe	4.5	6.6
Never home alone after dark	16.8	1.3
<b>CRIME VICTIMISATION, 2009–10</b>		
<b>Victim of physical or threatened violence in last 12 months(c)</b>		
Victim of physical or threatened violence	5.5	10.3
Not a victim of physical or threatened violence	94.5	89.7
<b>HOUSEHOLD USE OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY, 2008–09</b>		
<b>Frequency of Internet access at home in last 12 months(c)(d)</b>		
Everyday	58.0	63.2
At least weekly	36.0	30.5
At least monthly	6.0	4.5
At least yearly	1.0	1.8
<b>ATTENDANCE AT SELECTED CULTURAL VENUES AND EVENTS, 2009–10</b>		
<b>Whether has attended any selected cultural venues or events in last 12 months</b>		
Has attended selected culture and leisure activities in last 12 months	85.3	85.4
Has not attended any selected culture and leisure activities in last 12 months	14.7	14.6
<b>PARTICIPATION IN SPORT AND PHYSICAL RECREATION, 2009–10</b>		
<b>Whether has participated in sport or recreational physical activity in last 12 months</b>		
Participated in sport or recreational physical activity	62.8	74.2
Did not participate in sport or recreational physical activity	37.2	25.8
<b>SPECTATOR ATTENDANCE AT SPORTING EVENTS, 2009–10</b>		
<b>Whether has attended any sporting events in last 12 months</b>		
Has attended sporting events	42.4	56.2
Has not attended any sporting events	57.6	43.8

- (a) Percentages shown relate to the total population of persons aged 18 years or over unless otherwise indicated.  
 (b) Multiple response categories.  
 (c) GSS data has been collapsed to align with data from other ABS source.  
 (d) Percentages shown relate to the population of persons who had access and used Internet in last 12 months.

**EQUIVALISED GROSS HOUSEHOLD INCOME  
QUINTILES** .....

INTRODUCTION

**1** The economic wellbeing of individuals is largely determined by their command over economic resources. People's income and reserves of wealth provide access to many of the goods and services consumed in daily life. The amount of income to which they have access is an important component of these resources. And while income is usually received by individuals, it is normally shared between partners in a couple relationship and with any dependent children. To a lesser degree, there may be sharing with other members of the household. Even when there is no transfer of income between members of a household, nor provision of free or cheap accommodation, members are still likely to benefit from the economies of scale that arise from the sharing of dwellings. Therefore the income measures shown in this publication relate to household income.

**2** Gross household income can be used as an indicator of whether a person has a relatively high or low level of economic wellbeing. However, larger households normally require a greater level of income to maintain the same standard of living as smaller households, and the needs of adults are normally greater than the needs of children. Equivalised income estimates are estimates which have been adjusted by equivalence factors which standardise the income estimates with respect to household size and composition. Therefore estimates of equivalised gross household income are used in this publication as a more relevant indicator of relative economic wellbeing than non-equivalised income. Equivalised income is described in more detail in the next section of this Appendix.

**3** In order to enable the comparison of groups of the population classified by their relative level of income, each household in the survey is allocated to an income quintile. More detail is provided in the last section of this note.

EQUIVALISED INCOME  
EQUIVALENCE SCALES

**4** Equivalence scales have been devised to make adjustments to the actual incomes of households in a way that enables analysis of the relative wellbeing of households of different size and composition. For example, it would be expected that a household comprising two people would normally need more income than a lone person household if the two households are to enjoy the same standard of living.

**5** One way of adjusting for this difference in household size might be simply to divide the income of the household by the number of people within the household so that all income is presented on a per capita basis. However, such an adjustment assumes that all individuals have the same resource needs if they are to enjoy the same standard of living and that there are no economies derived from living together.

**6** Various calibrations, or scales, have been devised to make adjustments to the actual incomes of households in a way that recognises differences in the needs of individuals within those households and the economies that flow from sharing resources. The scales differ in their detail and complexity but commonly recognise that the extra level of resources required by larger groups of people living together is not directly proportional to the number of people in the group. They also typically recognise that children have fewer needs than adults.

## EQUIVALENCE SCALES

*continued*

**7** When household income is adjusted according to an equivalence scale, the equivalised income can be viewed as an indicator of economic resources available to a standardised household. For a lone person household it is equal to household income. For a household comprising more than one person, it is an indicator of the household income that would need to be received by a lone person household to enjoy the same level of economic wellbeing as the household in question.

**8** Alternatively, equivalised household income can be viewed as an indicator of economic resources available to each individual in a household. The latter view underpins the calculation of income distribution measures based on numbers of people, rather than numbers of households.

## CHOICE OF SCALE

**9** While there has been considerable research by statistical and other agencies trying to estimate appropriate values for equivalence scales, no single standard has emerged. In theory, there are many factors which might be taken into account when devising equivalence scales, such as recognising that people in the labour force are likely to face transport and other costs that do not contribute to their standard of living. It might also be desirable to reflect the different needs of children at different ages, and the different cost levels faced by people living in different geographic areas. On the other hand, the tastes and preferences of people vary widely, resulting in markedly different expenditure patterns between households with similar income levels and similar composition. Furthermore, it is likely that equivalence scales that appropriately adjust incomes of low income households are not as appropriate for higher income households, and vice versa. This is because the proportion of total income spent on housing tends to fall as incomes rise, and cheaper per capita housing is a major source of economies of scale that flow from people living together.

**10** It is therefore difficult to define, estimate and use equivalence scales which take all relevant factors into account. As a result, analysts tend to use simple equivalence scales which are chosen subjectively but are nevertheless consistent with the quantitative research that has been undertaken. A major advantage of simpler scales is that they are more transparent to the user, that is, it is easier to evaluate the assumptions being made in the equivalising process.

**11** In this publication, the 'modified OECD' equivalence scale is used. It has been used in more recent research work undertaken for the OECD and has wide acceptance among Australian analysts of income distribution.

## DERIVATION OF EQUIVALISED INCOME

**12** Equivalised income is derived by calculating an equivalence factor according to the chosen equivalence scale, and then dividing income by the factor.

**13** The equivalence factor derived using the 'modified OECD' equivalence scale is built up by allocating points to each person in a household. Taking the first adult in the household as having a weight of 1 point, each additional person who is 15 years or older is allocated 0.5 points, and each child under the age of 15 years is allocated 0.3 points. Equivalised household income is derived by dividing total household income by a factor equal to the sum of the equivalence points allocated to the household members. The equivalised income of a lone person household is the same as its unequivalised income. The equivalised income of a household comprising more than one person lies between the total value and the per capita value of its unequivalised income.

**14** When unequivalised income is negative, such as when losses incurred in a household's unincorporated business or other investments are greater than any positive income from any other sources, equivalised income has been set to zero.

**15** The following table shows the relationship between gross household income and equivalised gross household income for various household compositions shown elsewhere in this publication.

DERIVATION OF EQUIVALISED  
INCOME *continued***A2.1** IMPACT OF EQUIVALISING GROSS HOUSEHOLD INCOME

	Mean gross household income	Mean equivalised gross household income per week	Aged 0 to 14 years	Aged 15 years or over	Total
	\$	\$	no.	no.	no.
Couple only, one family households	1 573	1 044	—	2.0	2.0
One family households with dependent children					
Couple family	2 296	1 052	1.5	2.5	4.0
One parent family	1 018	629	1.2	1.6	2.9
Lone person households	809	807	—	1.0	1.0
Other households	1 949	967	0.2	3.0	3.2
All households	1 585	949	0.5	2.0	2.5

— nil or rounded to zero (including null cells)

## INCOME QUINTILES

**16** When persons (or any other units) are ranked from the lowest to the highest on the basis of some characteristic such as their household income, they can then be divided into equal sized groups. When the population is divided into five equally sized groups, the groups are called quintiles. The quintiles can be described in terms of the highest level of the characteristic that falls within each of the first four quintiles, that is, their upper boundaries.

**17** Equivalised gross household income quintiles are used in this publication to compare groups of the population according to their relative income levels. The population used for this purpose includes all people living in private dwellings, including children and other persons under the age of 18 years. The upper boundaries set for each quintile for this population are shown in the table below. However, as the scope of this publication is restricted to only those persons 18 years of age and over living in private dwellings, the distribution of this smaller population across the quintiles is not necessarily the same as it is for all people living in private dwellings. The differences in these distributions are illustrated in the table below.

**18** It should also be noted that household income is not known for about 18% of persons in the survey. These persons and their households are excluded from the calculation of equivalised gross household income and from the analysis of the population by income quintile. See the Data Interpretation section in the Explanatory Notes for more detail.



INCOME QUINTILES *continued***A2.2** DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION ACROSS EQUIVALISED GROSS HOUSEHOLD INCOME QUINTILES

	QUINTILE					Total (a)
	Lowest quintile	Second quintile	Third quintile	Fourth quintile	Highest quintile	
Equivalised gross household weekly income per week at upper boundary of quintiles (('\$))	403	639	931	1 356	—	—
Persons from 0 years of age						
Number ('000)	3 346	3 486	3 486	3 638	3 509	17 466
Proportion (%)	19.2	20.0	20.0	20.8	20.1	100.0
Persons 18 years and over						
Number ('000)	2 673	2 605	2 633	2 831	2 956	13 697
Proportion (%)	19.5	19.0	19.2	20.7	21.6	100.0
Households						
Number ('000)	1 599	1 364	1 271	1 369	1 441	7 044
Proportion (%)	22.7	19.4	18.0	19.4	20.5	100.0

— nil or rounded to zero (including null cells)

(a) Total for whom household income is known.

RELIABILITY OF THE ESTIMATES

**1** Since the estimates in this publication are based on information obtained from a sample of persons, they are subject to sampling variability. That is, they may differ from those that would have been produced had all persons 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 persons was included. There are about two chances in three that the sample estimate will differ by less than one SE from the number that would have been obtained if all persons had been surveyed, and about 19 chances in 20 that the difference will be less than two SEs.

**2** Another measure of the likely difference 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** Space does not allow for the separate indication of the SEs and/or RSEs of all the estimates in this publication. However, RSEs for all these estimates are available free-of-charge on the ABS web site <www.abs.gov.au>, released in spreadsheet format as an attachment to this publication, *General Social Survey: Summary Results, Australia, 2010* (cat. no. 4159.0).

**4** In the tables in this publication, only estimates (numbers, percentages, means and medians) 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. \*3.4) 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 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:

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

SIGNIFICANCE TESTING

*continued*

**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 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 of questionnaires, intensive training and supervision of interviewers, and efficient operating procedures.

CALCULATING STANDARD  
ERRORS FOR PROPORTIONS  
AND PERCENTAGES

**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>Ability to raise \$2,000 within a week for something important</b>	A person's perception of whether they or other members of the household could obtain \$2,000 for something important within a week.
<b>Acceptance of other cultures</b>	A new question has been included in the 2010 GSS that is designed to gauge community acceptance of diverse cultures. The question asks the respondent the extent to which they agree or disagree with the statement that 'It is a good thing for a society to be made up of people from different cultures.'
<b>Access to motor vehicle(s) to drive</b>	Access that a person has to any motor vehicle to drive. Such motor vehicles include vehicle(s) which they wholly or jointly own, vehicle(s) belonging to another member of the household, and company or government vehicle(s) which they have access to for personal use.
<b>Age</b>	The age of a person on their last birthday.
<b>Child</b>	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 his/her own usually resident in the household.
<b>Consumer debt</b>	Debt or liabilities usually associated with the purchase of consumables, such as clothing, electrical goods or cars, incurred by way of credit or store card and which are not completely paid off, car or personal loans, interest free purchases and hire purchase agreements.  Investment loans, lines of credit, overdue bills for telephone/electricity etc., outstanding fines or Higher Education Contribution Scheme (HECS)/Higher Education Loan Program (HELP) debts are excluded.
<b>Contact with family or friends living outside the household</b>	Refers to face to face contact, or other types of contact such as telephone, mail and email, which a person has had with family or friends who do not live with them.
<b>Couple</b>	Two people in a registered or de facto marriage, who usually live in the same household.
<b>Dependent child/ren/Dependants</b>	All persons aged under 15 years; and people aged 15–24 years who are full-time students, have a parent in the household and do not have a partner or child of their own in the household.
<b>Disability or long-term health condition</b>	A disability or long-term health condition exists if a limitation, restriction, impairment, disease or disorder, had lasted, or was likely to last for at least six months, and which restricted everyday activities.  It is classified by whether or not a person has a specific limitation or restriction. Specific limitation or restriction is further classified by whether the limitation or restriction is a limitation in core activities or a schooling/employment restriction only.  There are four levels of core activity limitation (profound, severe, moderate, and mild) which are based on whether a person needs help, has difficulty, or uses aids or equipment with any of the core activities (self care, mobility or communication). A person's overall level of core activity limitation is determined by their highest level of limitation in these activities.  The four levels are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ profound – always needs help/supervision with core activities</li> <li>■ severe – does not always need help with core activities</li> <li>■ moderate – has difficulty with core activities</li> <li>■ mild – uses aids to assist with core activities.</li> </ul>

<b>Disability or long-term health condition</b> <i>continued</i>	Persons are classified as having only a schooling/employment restriction if they have no core activity limitation and are aged 18 to 20 years and have difficulties with education, or are less than 65 years and have difficulties with employment.
<b>Dissaving action</b>	Any action where spending is greater than income thereby reducing already accumulated savings or leading to borrowing to finance the expenditure. Examples of dissaving actions include: reducing home loan repayments, increasing balance owed on credit cards, selling shares or other assets, taking out a personal loan etc.
<b>Equity in dwelling</b>	Calculated as the value of the dwelling less the amount owing on mortgages or secured loans against the dwelling.
<b>Equivalised gross household income</b>	Gross household income adjusted using an equivalence scale. For a lone person household it is equal to gross household income. For a household comprising more than one person, it is an indicator of the gross household income that would need to be received by a lone person household to enjoy the same level of economic well-being as the household in question. For further information see Appendix 2 in this publication.
<b>Equivalised gross household income quintiles</b>	These are groupings of 20% of the total population when ranked in ascending order according to equivalised gross household income. The population used for this purpose includes all people living in private dwellings, including children and other persons under the age of 18 years. For further information see Appendix 2 in this publication.
<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>Feelings of safety</b>	How safe a person feels in various circumstances (i.e. when home alone during the day, when home alone after dark, or when walking alone through their local area after dark) was reported on a five point scale, from very safe to very unsafe. If the respondent indicated that they were never home alone or never walked alone after dark this response was recorded.
<b>Financial exclusion</b>	The extent to which a person is excluded from mainstream banking and financial services, for example being denied an application for a credit card.
<b>Financial stress</b>	Three measures aimed at identifying households that may have been constrained in their activities because of shortage of money. The measures are the ability to raise 'emergency money', whether had cash flow problems and whether had taken dissaving actions. One person in the household was asked to provide these assessments of the household's financial situation.
<b>Financial resilience</b>	This includes actions taken to improve a person's ability to control their current financial situation or manage in a situation involving a major loss of income. Actions covered included: paying off more than the minimum required on loans or credit cards; following a budget; obtaining financial advice or making additional contributions to superannuation.
<b>Gross household income</b>	All current receipts that are usually or regularly received by the household or by individual members of the household, and which are available for, or intended to support, current consumption. This includes receipts from wages and salaries (including salary sacrificed income), profit or loss from own unincorporated business (including partnerships), net investment income (e.g. interest, rent, dividends), government pensions and allowances, and private transfers (e.g. superannuation, workers' compensation, income from annuities, child support and financial support from family members not living in the same household). Gross household income is the sum of the income from all these sources before income tax, the Medicare levy and the Medicare levy surcharge are deducted.
<b>Government support</b>	Cash support from the government in the form of pensions, benefits or allowances.

<b>Highest year of school completed</b>	The highest level of primary or secondary education which a person has completed, irrespective of the type of institution or location where that education was undertaken.
<b>Healthcare delays</b>	Ever delayed seeking medical attention or buying prescribed medicines for own health because of cost.
<b>Household</b>	One or more persons usually resident in the same private dwelling.
<b>Household composition</b>	<p>This publication presents information for a selection of household composition categories which are based on various family and household compositions, and sometimes, the age of the selected person (the survey respondent). Categories presented are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ couple only, one family household – a household consisting of a couple with no other related or unrelated persons usually resident.</li> <li>■ couple family with dependent children – a household consisting of a couple and at least one dependent child usually resident in the household. Related non-dependent children may also be present in the household. Households which also have other related or unrelated residents are not included.</li> <li>■ other couple, one family households – all couple households not included in the two previous categories. It includes for example, households consisting of a couple and non-dependent children.</li> <li>■ one parent family with dependent children – a household consisting of a lone parent and at least one dependent child usually resident in the household. Non-dependent children may also be present in the household. Households which also have other related or unrelated usual residents are not included.</li> <li>■ lone person household – a household consisting of a person living alone</li> <li>■ other households – comprises all other households, including multi-family households, and households consisting of unrelated adults.</li> </ul>
<b>Household tenure type</b>	<p>The nature of a household's legal right to occupy the dwelling in which they usually reside. In this publication, households are grouped into one of four broad tenure categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ owner without a mortgage – the dwelling is owned by a resident of the household and there are no outstanding mortgages or loans secured against the dwelling</li> <li>■ owner with a mortgage – a household where an outstanding mortgage or loan amount secured against the dwelling, for the purposes of housing, is greater than zero</li> <li>■ renter – a household who pays rent to reside in the dwelling. In this publication, renters are further classified into one of three broad types according to whom rent is paid: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ state or territory housing authority</li> <li>■ private landlord – a real estate agent, parent or other relative not in the same household, or another person not in the same household</li> <li>■ other renter – a parent or other relative in the same household, the owner/manager of a caravan park, an employer (including a government authority), a housing cooperative, community or church group, or any other landlord not included elsewhere</li> </ul> </li> <li>■ other tenure – includes households which are participants of a life tenure scheme, participants in a rent/buy (or shared equity) scheme, living rent-free, or are in a tenure arrangement not included elsewhere (e.g. house-sitting, payment in kind for a specific service).</li> </ul>
<b>Index of relative socio-economic disadvantage</b>	One of five of the Socio–Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFAs) compiled by the ABS following each population census. Each of the indexes summarise different aspects of the socio–economic status of the people living in those areas; the index of relative socio–economic disadvantage includes attributes such as low income, low educational attainment, high unemployment and jobs in relatively unskilled occupations. The index refers to population of the area (the Census Collector's District) in which a person lives, not to the socio–economic situation of the particular individual. The index used in this

<b>Index of relative socio-economic disadvantage</b> <i>continued</i>	publication was compiled following the 2006 Census. For further information about the SEIFAs see Information Paper: <i>Census of Population and Housing — An Introduction to Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas, Australia</i> (cat. no. 2039.0).
<b>Informal social activities</b>	Refers to recreational activities undertaken with others which have not been organised by an organisation or group with a formal structure. The most common examples are where family and/or friends come together to enjoy themselves.
<b>Jobless households</b>	A jobless household is one in which no usual resident of the household aged 15 years or over is currently employed.
<b>Labour force status</b>	Refers to the situation of respondents in relation to the labour force at the time of the survey. Categories are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ employed – had a job or business, or undertook work without pay in a family business in the week prior to the survey, including being absent from a job or business they had.</li> <li>■ full-time – persons who usually work 35 hours or more per week.</li> <li>■ part-time – persons who usually work at least one hour, but less than 35 hours, per week.</li> <li>■ unemployed – not employed and actively looked for work in the four weeks prior to the survey and available to start work in the week prior to the survey</li> <li>■ not in the labour force.</li> <li>■ retired from work – persons over the age of 44 years who were no longer working and did not intend to work in the future.</li> <li>■ other – other persons who were neither employed nor unemployed. Such persons may have never worked and never intend to work, persons keeping house (unpaid), voluntarily inactive and permanently unable to work.</li> </ul>
<b>Main English-speaking countries</b>	Refers to the main countries from which Australia receives, or has received, significant numbers of overseas settlers who are likely to speak English. These countries comprise the United Kingdom, the Republic of Ireland, New Zealand, Canada, the United States of America and South Africa.
<b>Marital status</b>	The marital status of couples within households. This item includes Married in a registered marriage, Married in a de facto marriage, and Not married.
<b>Mean</b>	The sum of values divided by the number of values.
<b>Mortgage</b>	A mortgage is a loan which is secured against a dwelling.
<b>Non-dependent child/ren</b>	All persons aged 15 years or over (except those aged 15–24 years who are full-time students) who have a parent in the household and do not have a partner or child of their own in the household.
<b>Non-school qualifications</b>	Non-school qualifications are awarded for educational attainments other than those of pre-primary, primary or secondary education. They include qualifications at the Post graduate degree level, Master degree level, Graduate diploma and Graduate certificate level, Bachelor degree level, Advanced diploma and Diploma level, and Certificates I, II, III and IV levels. Non-school qualifications may be attained concurrently with school qualifications.
<b>Organisation or group</b>	An organisation or group is any body with a formal structure. It may be as large as a national charity or as small as a local book club. Purely ad hoc, informal and temporary gatherings of people do not constitute an organisation.
<b>Organised sport or physical recreational activities</b>	Those sport and physical recreational activities which were organised by a club, association or other organisation. The organisation did not need to be a sporting body; for example, it may have been a work social club, church group or gymnasium.

<b>Overall Life Satisfaction</b>	Overall life satisfaction is a summary measure of subjective well-being against a scale ranging from delighted through to terrible. It measures a person's perceived level of life satisfaction in general and doesn't take into account specific illnesses or problems the person may have.
<b>Participants in sport and physical recreational activities</b>	Participants comprise those people who physically undertook a sport or physical recreational activity in the last 12 months, as well as people involved in 'non-playing roles', such as coaches, officials, umpires and administrators.
<b>Participation rate</b>	For any group, the number of persons who participated in the activity or event at least once in the specified reference period (usually the last 12 months), expressed as a percentage of the population of that group.
<b>Permanent place to live</b>	For the purposes of GSS, a permanent place to live was left up to the respondent's interpretation. However, if the respondent sought clarification it was defined as a usual address which consists of a self contained residence, i.e. the respondent had their own kitchen, bathroom and entrance and some sort of security of tenure.
<b>Permanent visa</b>	The permission or authority granted by Australia for foreign nationals to live in Australia permanently.
<b>Personal stressors</b>	Any of the following events or circumstances which the person considers have been a problem for themselves or someone close to them in the last 12 months: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ serious accident</li> <li>■ mental illness</li> <li>■ serious disability</li> <li>■ death of family member or close friend</li> <li>■ divorce or separation</li> <li>■ not able to get a job</li> <li>■ involuntary loss of job</li> <li>■ alcohol or drug related problems</li> <li>■ gambling problem</li> <li>■ abuse or violent crime</li> <li>■ witness to violence</li> <li>■ trouble with the police</li> </ul>
<b>Previous experience of homelessness</b>	As the GSS only enumerates usual residents of private dwellings, it will not include: people currently living in shelters; people sleeping rough; people 'couch surfing' (staying temporarily with other households); nor people staying in boarding houses. It may include some people staying in Transitional Housing Management (THM) properties, if the adult staying there at the time of the survey considered that it was their usual residence at that time (THMs have been included in researcher estimates of the homeless). The GSS does not attempt to measure the prevalence of homelessness in Australia. Instead the survey sought information about a person's previous experience of being without a permanent place to live. That is, whether a person has ever experienced being without a permanent place to live at some point in their lives. <p>People were defined as having had an 'experience of homelessness' if they had ever previously been without a 'permanent place to live' for reasons other than one (or more) of the following only: saving money; work related reasons; building or renovating their home; travelling/on holiday; house-sitting or having just moved back to a town or city. For the GSS, people in these circumstances were not asked further questions about their experiences without a permanent place to live. People who had ever previously been without a permanent place to live for other reasons (eg family/relationship breakdowns, financial problems, tight rental/property markets etc) were counted in the survey as having had an experience of homelessness.</p>
<b>Principal source of household income</b>	The source of income from which the most positive income for the household is received. If total income is nil or negative the principal source is undefined. The household's principal source of income comes from:



<b>Principal source of household income</b> <i>continued</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ employee income – cash income received as an employee, i.e. person who works for a public or private employer and receives remuneration in wages or salary, or is paid a retainer fee by his/her employer and works on a commission basis, or works for an employer for tips, piece rates or payment in kind; or, is a person who operates his or her own incorporated enterprise with or without hiring employees</li> <li>■ unincorporated business income – the profit or loss from own unincorporated enterprise in the previous financial year. Profit or loss consists of the value of the gross output of the enterprise after the deduction of operating expenses (including depreciation). Losses occur when operating expenses are greater than gross receipts and are treated as negative income</li> <li>■ government cash pensions and allowances – regular payments from government to persons under social security and related government programs. Included are pensions and allowances received by aged, disabled, unemployed and sick persons, families and children, veterans or their survivors, and study allowances for students</li> <li>■ other sources of household income – income received from sources such as superannuation and annuity funds, property, interest or dividends, child support, and workers' compensation.</li> </ul>
<b>Proficiency in spoken English</b>	A self assessment by persons who speak a language other than English at home, of whether they speak English very well, well, not well, or not at all.
<b>Remoteness areas</b>	Broad geographical regions which share common characteristics of remoteness based on the Remoteness Structure of the ABS's Australian Standard Geographical Classification (ASGC). In this publication the categories Major Cities of Australia, and Inner Regional Australia from the Remoteness Structure are presented along with a residual category labelled 'Other areas'. As the GSS did not cover very remote areas of Australia, 'Other Areas', encompasses most of Outer Regional Australia, part of Remote Australia, and only a small proportion of Very Remote Australia.
<b>Rent</b>	A payment made periodically by a tenant to an owner or landlord in return for lodgement.
<b>Selected assets</b>	Any of the following type of assets: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ over \$1,000 in cash or deposited in financial institutions</li> <li>■ own incorporated business</li> <li>■ shares, stocks and bonds</li> <li>■ investment property (i.e. land and buildings other than the dwelling in which the household resides).</li> </ul>
<b>Selected person</b>	In the GSS only one adult (aged 18 years or over) in each dwelling was selected for the survey. This person was randomly chosen after all usual residents of the household were listed.
<b>Self assessed health status</b>	The selected person's general assessment of their own health, against a five point scale from excellent through to poor.
<b>Small favours</b>	Assistance which a person may seek from other people in their day to day lives. Examples of small favours include looking after pets or watering the garden, collecting mail or checking the house, minding a child for a brief period, helping with moving or lifting objects, and borrowing equipment.
<b>Social attachment</b>	'Social attachment' refers to the nature and strength of relationships that people have with each other. It includes the more intimate relationships with family and friends as well as people's associations with individuals and organisations in the wider community.
<b>Social disorder</b>	Social disorder includes antisocial behaviour and refers to issues which may or may not be criminal offences such as public drunkenness, noisy neighbours and offensive language or behaviour. It is an important topic because if people feel unsafe in their neighbourhood this then impacts on their daily lives and they are less likely to take part in community activities, or venture out of their house.

<b>Support in a time of crisis</b>	Refers to whether there is someone outside the person's household that could be asked for support in a time of crisis. Support could be in the form of emotional, physical or financial help. Potential sources of support could be family members, friends, neighbours, work colleagues and various community, government and professional organisations.
<b>Support for children living outside the household</b>	Support provided by a person (or where specified by a person and their partner) to their child(ren) (under the age of 25 years) who do not live with them. Support may be provided to the other parent/carer for the child(ren), or to the child themselves. Types of support may be financial, such as child support payments, paying for educational costs, or providing pocket money or an allowance, or non-financial, such as driving them places, letting them borrow the car, or providing food or clothing.
<b>Support for other relatives living outside the household</b>	Any of the following types of support provided to relatives, such as elderly parents, children aged 25 years or over, or grandchildren who live outside the household: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ give money to pay rent and/or other housing costs</li> <li>■ give money to pay bills or meet debt</li> <li>■ provide or pay for food</li> <li>■ provide or pay for clothing</li> <li>■ let them borrow the car</li> <li>■ drive them places</li> <li>■ pay for educational costs or textbooks</li> <li>■ provide pocket money or an allowance</li> <li>■ buy or give them money to buy big cost items such as a car, computer, sound system etc.</li> </ul>
<b>Temporary resident</b>	A person who was born overseas, who arrived in Australia after 1989, was not an Australian citizen on arrival, was not born in New Zealand, does not hold New Zealand citizenship, and has a temporary visa.
<b>Temporary visa</b>	The permission or authority granted by Australia for foreign national to travel to Australia and stay up to a specified period of time. Temporary entrants for this survey include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ tourists</li> <li>■ students</li> <li>■ business people</li> <li>■ people with specialist skills, such as managers, academics and medical practitioners</li> <li>■ people who make a social or cultural contribution to the community, such as entertainers, media and film staff, sports people, religious workers, visiting academics and public lecturers</li> <li>■ people who contribute to the development of international relations, such as participants in exchange programs and working holiday makers.</li> </ul>
<b>Type of visa as at August 2010</b>	The visa the respondent held at the time of interview, that allowed them to stay in Australia. Categories for type of visa as at August 2010 are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Permanent Skilled - Skilled migrants are selected on the basis of their age, skills and their ability to quickly make a contribution to the Australian economy. Includes Independent, Australian sponsored, Employer/State sponsored and Business skills visas.</li> <li>■ Permanent Family - Includes partner, child and parent visas.</li> <li>■ Permanent Humanitarian - Includes humanitarian and refugee visas.</li> <li>■ Permanent Other - Includes all other permanent visa categories or where the type of permanent visa could not be determined.</li> <li>■ Temporary Student - Temporary student visas are granted to people studying or seeking study, training or skills development in Australia and planning to stay in Australia for 12 months or more.</li> <li>■ Temporary Long-term business - Includes Temporary Business (Long stay) - standard business sponsorship visa, Educational visa and Medical practitioner visa.</li> </ul>

<b>Type of visa as at August 2010</b> <i>continued</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Temporary Other - Includes tourists, working holiday makers and visitors planning to stay in Australia for 12 months or more or where the type of temporary visa could not be determined.</li> </ul>
<b>Transitional Housing Management</b>	For people in crisis, this can be the most secure type of accommodation that is available. Rent is normally 25 percent of income, and includes a lease. Transitional Housing Management is the dominant model of government funded housing for homeless people in Victoria.
<b>Transport difficulties</b>	<p>The person's assessment of how difficult it is for them to travel to places they may need to go to in normal circumstances. Four options were provided:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ can easily get to the places needed</li> <li>■ sometimes have difficulty getting to the places needed</li> <li>■ often have difficulty getting to the places needed</li> <li>■ can't get to the places needed.</li> </ul> <p>If they indicated that they never go out or are housebound this response was recorded. Difficulties which may have been taken into account are traffic problems, parking and distances, as well as those difficulties not directly related to transport such as poor health or lack of finances.</p>
<b>Trust</b>	<p>To ascertain peoples feelings of trust in others, and in some major institutions, they were asked how strongly they agreed or disagreed with the following statements, giving a rating on a 5-point scale:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ That most people can be trusted?</li> <li>■ That your doctor can be trusted?</li> <li>■ That hospitals can be trusted?</li> <li>■ That police in your local areas can be trusted?</li> <li>■ That police outside your local area can be trusted?</li> </ul> <p>The response categories in the five point scale were: 'strongly agree', 'somewhat agree', 'neither agree nor disagree', 'somewhat disagree', and 'strongly disagree'.</p> <p>The phrase 'most people' is based on the respondent's interpretation – there is no specific definition. The idea is whether people can go about their affairs confidently, expecting that others will generally deal fairly with them and act in the ways normally expected in our society.</p>
<b>Victim of actual or attempted break-in</b>	A person who had experienced a break-in or attempted break-in at any place they had lived in the last 12 months. Break-ins to homes, garages or sheds are included. However, break-ins to cars or gardens are excluded.
<b>Victim of physical or threatened violence</b>	A person who in the last 12 months had physical force or violence used against them or threatened in person to be used against them. It includes violence or threats made by persons known to the respondent.
<b>Voluntary work</b>	<p>The provision of unpaid help willingly undertaken in the form of time, service or skills, to an organisation or group, excluding work done overseas.</p> <p>Some forms of unpaid work, such as student placements or work under a Community Service Order, that were not strictly voluntary have been excluded.</p>

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