

## 2.12 Single-parent families

Household composition, in particular single-parent families, in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population

### Data sources

Data for this measure come from the ABS 2006 Census of Population and Housing and the 2004–05 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey.

#### National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey (NATSIHS)

The 2004–05 NATSIHS collected information from 10,439 Indigenous Australians of all ages. This sample was considerably larger than the supplementary Indigenous samples in the 1995 and 2001 National Health Surveys. The survey was conducted in remote and non-remote areas of Australia and collected a range of information from Indigenous Australians about health-related issues including health-related actions, health risk factors, health status, socioeconomic circumstances and women's health. It is planned to repeat the NATSIHS at 6-yearly intervals, with the next NATSIHS to be conducted in 2010–11. Selected non-Indigenous comparisons are available through the 2004–05 National Health Survey (NHS).

#### Census of Population and Housing

The Census of Population and Housing is conducted by the ABS at 5-yearly intervals with 2006 being the most recent and is designed to include all Australian households. The Census uses the ABS standard Indigenous status question and it is asked for each household member.

Although the Census data are adjusted for undercounts at the person level to arrive at the estimated resident population, no such adjustment is done at the household level. This affects the accuracy of the person counts at the household level to provide adjusted household estimates.

The Census collects data on family type, household type, household composition and relationships in the household. Indigenous households are defined as households with at least one Indigenous person of any age resident on Census night. One-parent (single-parent) families are defined as families containing a person who has no spouse or partner usually resident in the household but who forms a parent-child relationship with at least one child usually resident in the household. The child may be either dependent or non-dependent. Care should be taken in interpreting information on relationships among people in a household, because the standard Census relationship classifications may not fully represent the complexity of family relationships in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures.

### Data analyses

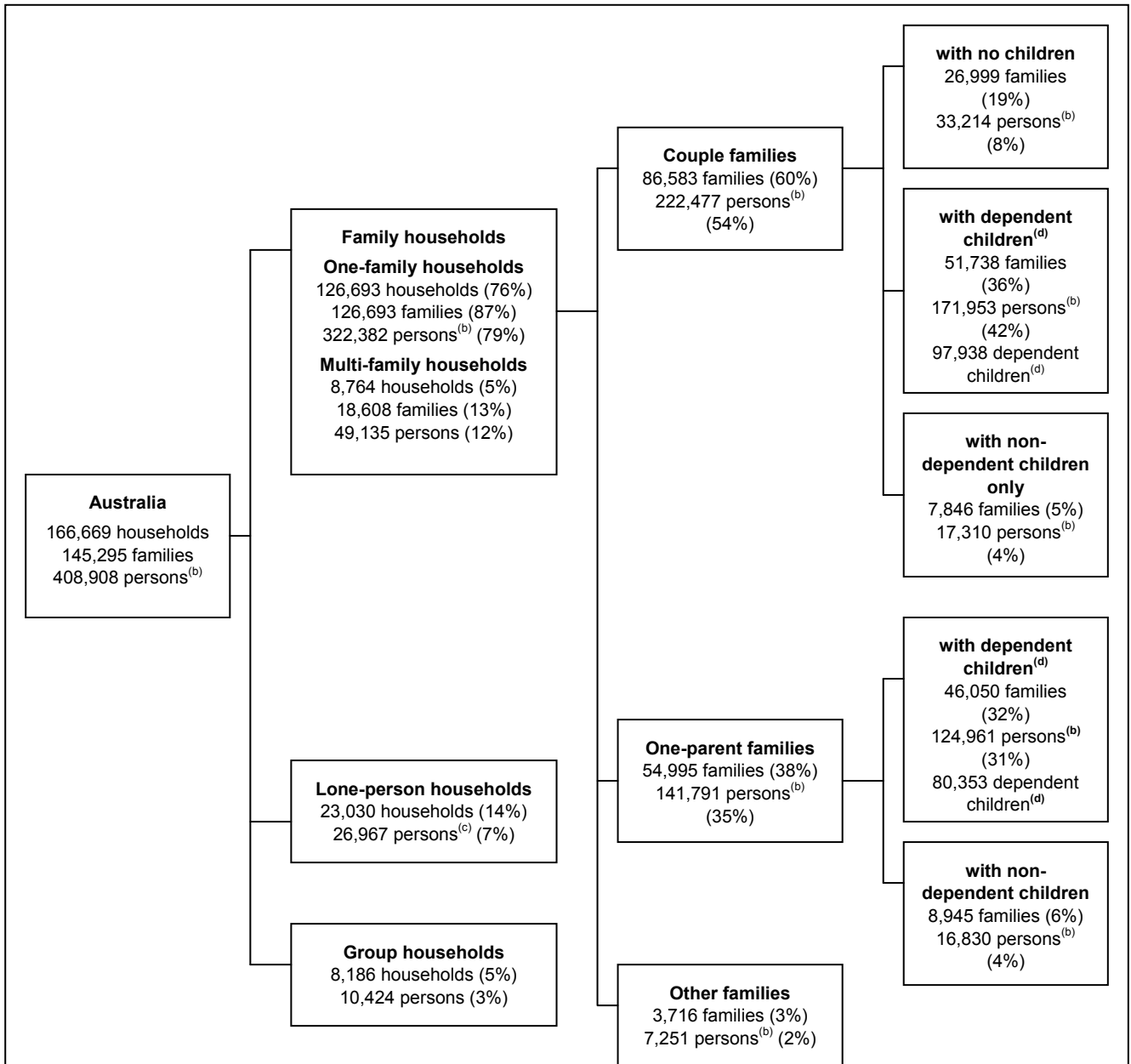
#### Household composition, family composition and persons

Figures 2.12.1 and 2.12.2 show the household composition, family composition and number of persons in Indigenous households and total households.

- In 2006, of the 166,669 Indigenous households, 126,693 (76%) were one-family households, 23,030 (14%) were lone-person households, 8,186 (5%) were group households and 8,764 (5%) were multi-family households (Figure 2.12.1). The proportions for total households in Australia were 70%, 24%, 3% and 1% respectively (Figure 2.12.2).
- Of the 135,457 Indigenous family households, 86,583 (60%) were couple families, 54,995 (38%) were one-parent families and 3,716 (3%) were other families (Figure 2.12.1). The proportions for total family households in Australia were 83%, 16% and 2% respectively (Figure 2.12.2).

### **One-parent families**

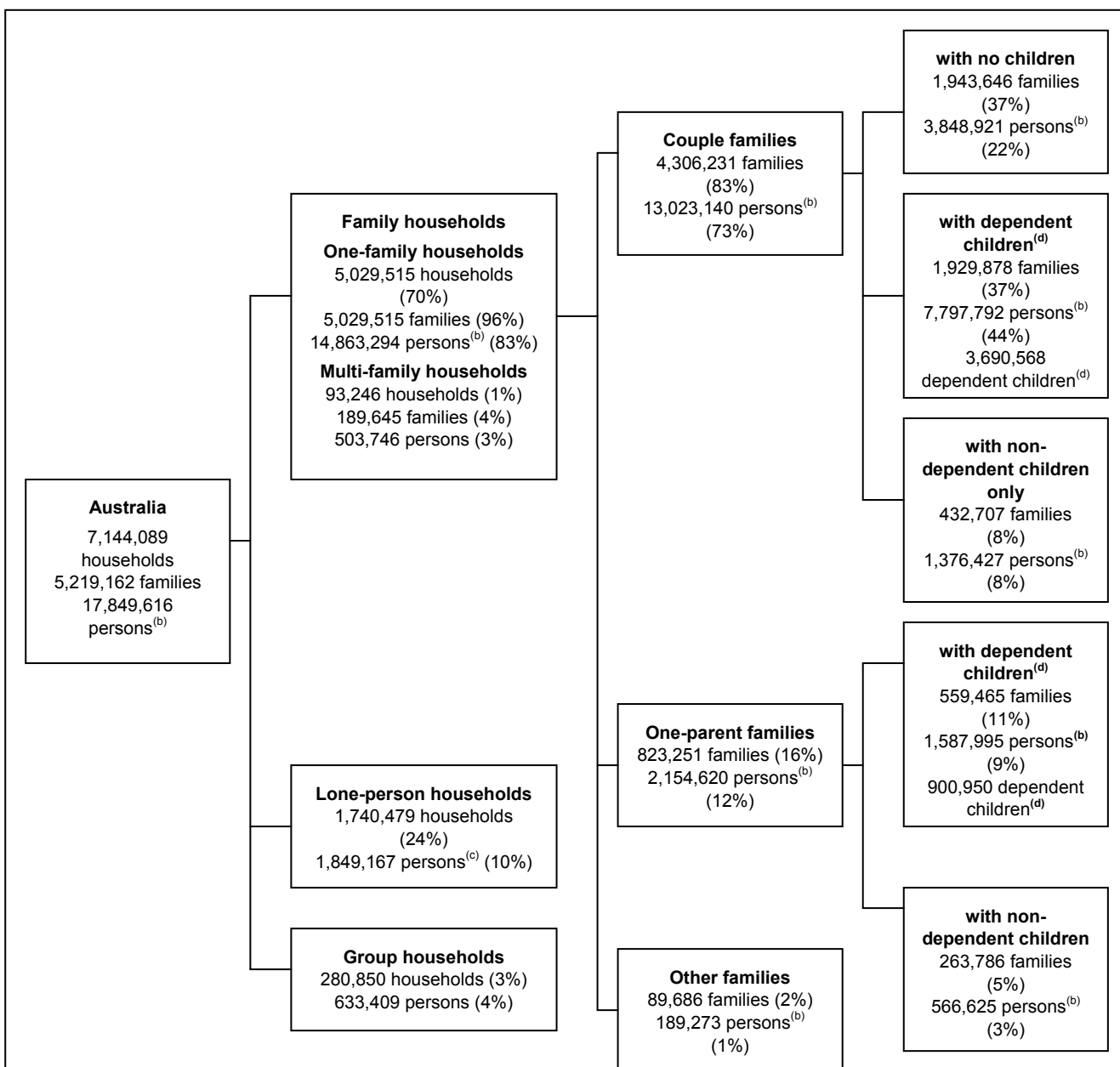
- In 2006, there were 52,300 Indigenous households containing Indigenous one-parent families (31%), representing 54,995 families (38%) and 141,791 persons (35%). In comparison there were 759,370 other households containing non-Indigenous/other one-parent families (11%), representing 768,256 families (15%) and 2,012,830 persons (12%) (Table 2.12.1).
- Approximately 32% (46,050) of Indigenous families were one-parent families with dependent children, representing 124,961 persons (31%). Around 6% of Indigenous families (8,945) were one-parent families with non-dependent children, representing 16,830 persons (4%) (Figure 2.12.1). In comparison, 11% of total families were one-parent families with dependent children and 5% were one-parent families with non-dependent children (Figure 2.12.2).



- (a) Excludes Visitors only and Other not classifiable households.
- (b) Excludes unrelated individuals living in the family household.
- (c) Includes persons not enumerated at home.
- (d) Children under 15 years of age and full-time dependent students aged 15–24 years.

Source: ABS and AIHW analysis of 2006 Census data.

**Figure 2.12.1: Household composition, family composition and persons<sup>(a)</sup>, Indigenous population, 2006**



- (a) Excludes Visitors only and Other not classifiable households.
- (b) Excludes unrelated individuals living in the family household.
- (c) Includes persons not enumerated at home.
- (d) Children under 15 years of age and full-time dependent students aged 15–24 years.

Source: ABS and AIHW analysis of 2006 Census data.

**Figure 2.12.2: Household composition, family composition and persons<sup>(a)</sup>, total population, 2006**

**Table 2.12.1: One-parent families by Indigenous status, 2006**

|            | Indigenous one-parent families <sup>(a)</sup> | Non-Indigenous/other one-parent families <sup>(b)</sup> | Total one-parent families |
|------------|---|---|---------------------------|
|            |   | <b>Number</b>   |                           |
| Households | 52,300  | 759,370   | 811,677                   |
| Families   | 54,995  | 768,256   | 823,251                   |
| Persons    | 141,791                                       | 2,012,830   | 2,154,620                 |
|            |   | <b>Per cent<sup>(c)</sup></b>                           |                           |
| Households | 31.4  | 10.9  | 11.4                      |
| Families   | 37.9  | 15.1  | 15.8                      |
| Persons    | 34.7  | 11.5  | 12.1                      |

(a) One-parent families where the parent and/or child(ren) are Indigenous

(b) One parent families where neither the parent nor child(ren) is Indigenous

(c) Proportion of Indigenous households, families and persons; proportion of non-Indigenous households, families and persons; total one-parent families as a proportion of all households, families and persons.

Source: ABS and AIHW analyses of 2006 Census data.

### Relationship in household

- In 2006, among Indigenous persons in occupied private dwellings, approximately 39% were children under the age of 15 years. This compared with 20% among non-Indigenous persons. Indigenous persons were also almost twice as likely as non-Indigenous persons to be classified as a lone parent (9% compared with 5%) and half as likely to be classified as a husband, wife or partner in a couple relationship (24% compared with 48%) (Table 2.12.2).
- Approximately 6% of Indigenous persons were classified as extended family members (other related individual) living with relatives other than their spouse/partner or children compared with 2% of non-Indigenous persons (Table 2.12.2).
- There was little change in the relationship composition in Indigenous households between 2001 and 2006 (Figure 2.12.3).

**Table 2.12.2: Relationship in household<sup>(a)</sup>, persons in occupied private dwellings, 2006**

|   | Indigenous persons |              | Non-Indigenous persons |              | All persons <sup>(b)</sup> |              |
|---|--------------------|--------------|------------------------|--------------|----------------------------|--------------|
|   | No.                | %            | No.                    | %            | No.                        | %            |
| Husband, wife or partner <sup>(c)</sup> | 99,396             | 24.2         | 8,209,643              | 47.8         | 8,401,489                  | 47.0         |
| Lone parent                             | 36,646             | 8.9          | 776,987                | 4.5          | 823,253                    | 4.6          |
| Child under 15 years                    | 161,115            | 39.2         | 3,446,995              | 20.1         | 3,685,435                  | 20.6         |
| Dependent student (15–24 years)         | 17,177             | 4.2          | 876,873                | 5.1          | 906,122                    | 5.1          |
| Non-dependent child                     | 33,219             | 8.1          | 1,104,538              | 6.4          | 1,159,209                  | 6.5          |
| Other related individual                |                    |              |                        |              |                            |              |
| Brother/sister                          | 7,403              | 1.8          | 178,877                | 1.0          | 188,961                    | 1.1          |
| Father/mother                           | 2,950              | 0.7          | 92,077                 | 0.5          | 96,631                     | 0.5          |
| Grandchild                              | 2,898              | 0.7          | 19,259                 | 0.1          | 22,655                     | 0.1          |
| Grandfather/grandmother                 | 677                | 0.2          | 10,969                 | 0.1          | 11,855                     | 0.1          |
| Cousin                                  | 2,135              | 0.5          | 12,988                 | 0.1          | 15,370                     | 0.1          |
| Uncle/aunt                              | 1,368              | 0.3          | 7,434                  | 0.0          | 8,928                      | 0.0          |
| Nephew/niece                            | 3,767              | 0.9          | 18,552                 | 0.1          | 22,748                     | 0.1          |
| Other                                   | 2,763              | 0.7          | 19,024                 | 0.1          | 24,392                     | 0.1          |
| Total                                   | 23,961             | 5.8          | 359,180                | 2.1          | 391,540                    | 2.2          |
| Unrelated individual                    | 6,348              | 1.5          | 146,111                | 0.9          | 156,447                    | 0.9          |
| Group household member                  | 9,211              | 2.2          | 563,699                | 3.3          | 581,600                    | 3.3          |
| Lone person                             | 23,484             | 5.7          | 1,697,431              | 9.9          | 1,770,464                  | 9.9          |
| <b>Total<sup>(d)</sup></b>              | <b>410,557</b>     | <b>100.0</b> | <b>17,181,457</b>      | <b>100.0</b> | <b>17,875,559</b>          | <b>100.0</b> |

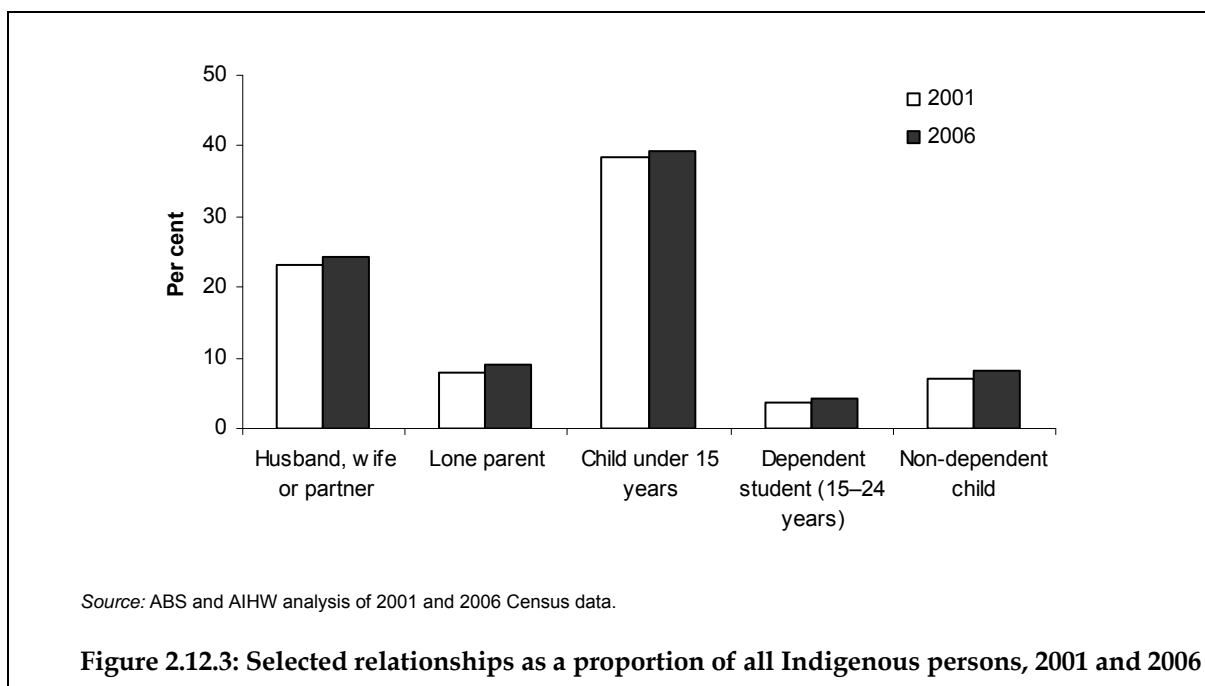
(a) Based on place of enumeration, includes usual residents enumerated at home and excludes visitors and usual residents temporarily absent.

(b) Includes Indigenous status not stated.

(c) Includes people in tribal marriages and same-sex couples.

(d) Includes persons not at home on Census night, and those in other not classifiable households.

Source: ABS and AIHW analysis of 2006 Census data.



## Lone parents

Information on lone parents is available from the 2004-05 NATSIHS and is presented below.

- In 2004-05, an estimated 46,600 Indigenous persons aged 15 years and over were lone parents (16%).
- Around three-quarters of Indigenous lone parents were living in one-family households with only the family members present (Table 2.12.3).
- Indigenous lone parents were around four times as likely as non-Indigenous lone parents to be living in households with two or more families with only the family members present.

**Table 2.12.3: Lone parents, by number of families in household and Indigenous status, 2004-05**

|  | Indigenous   | Non-Indigenous | Rate ratio |
|--|--------------|----------------|------------|
|  | %            | %              |            |
| One-family household with only family members present <sup>(a)</sup> | 75.2         | 90.4           | 0.8        |
| One or more family household with non-family members present         | 1.5          | 4.1            | 0.4        |
| Two or more family household with only family members present        | 23.3         | 5.6            | 4.2        |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>100.0</b> | <b>100.0</b>   | <b>1.0</b> |
| Total number   | 46,635       | 810,581        | 857,216    |

(a) Including lone-person households.

Source: AIHW analysis of 2004-05 NATSIHS and 2004-05 NHS.

Tables 2.12.4a and 2.12.4b present lone parents by selected population characteristics (for Indigenous persons aged 15 years and over). Table 2.12.4a presents the proportion of lone parents in the Indigenous population who have each of the selected characteristics. Table 2.12.4b presents the proportion of Indigenous persons with each of the selected characteristics who are lone parents.

- A higher proportion of Indigenous lone parents (25%) reported fair/poor health status than other Indigenous persons (21%) (Table 2.12.4a).
- A higher proportion of lone parents (61%) were unable to raise \$2,000 within a week than other Indigenous persons (49%).
- Lone parents were less likely to have completed Year 12 than other Indigenous persons (16% compared with 21%) and more likely to not be in the labour force (61% compared with 39%).
- A higher proportion of lone parents were renters (85%) than other Indigenous persons (69%).
- Approximately 82% of Indigenous lone parents had experienced stressors in the previous 12 months compared with 76% of other Indigenous persons (Table 2.12.4a).
- A higher proportion of Indigenous persons whose highest year of school completed was Year 11 or below were lone parents (19%) than were Indigenous persons who completed Year 12 (12%) (Table 2.12.4b).
- Approximately 10% of Indigenous persons who were employed were lone parents whereas 23% of Indigenous persons who were not in the labour force were lone parents.
- A higher proportion of renters than home owners were lone parents (19% and 8% respectively) (Table 2.12.4b).

**Table 2.12.4a: Lone parents, by selected population characteristics: Indigenous persons aged 15 years and over<sup>(a)</sup>, 2004–05**

|   | Lone parent  | Other Indig. persons | Total        |
|---|--------------|----------------------|--------------|
|   | Per cent     |                      |              |
| <b>Self-assessed health status</b>  |              |                      |              |
| Excellent/very good/good  | 74.9         | 78.7                 | 78.1         |
| Fair/poor   | 25.1         | 21.3                 | 21.9         |
| <b>Financial stress—unable to raise \$2,000 within a week for something important</b> |              |                      |              |
|   | 60.9         | 48.6                 | 50.6         |
| <b>Location</b>   |              |                      |              |
| Remote  | 22.6         | 28.2                 | 27.3         |
| Non-remote  | 77.4         | 71.8                 | 72.7         |
| <b>Highest year of school completed</b>   |              |                      |              |
| Year 12   | 15.7         | 21.1                 | 20.3         |
| Year 11 or below  | 84.3         | 69.4                 | 71.8         |
| <b>Whether has non-school qualification</b>   |              |                      |              |
| Has a non-school qualification  | 30.9         | 29.4                 | 29.6         |
| Does not have a non-school qualification  | 69.1         | 61.1                 | 62.4         |
| <b>Employment</b>   |              |                      |              |
| Employed  | 31.2         | 52.3                 | 49.0         |
| Unemployed  | 7.8          | 9.1                  | 8.9          |
| Not in the labour force   | 61.0         | 38.5                 | 42.1         |
| <b>Housing</b>  |              |                      |              |
| Owner   | 12.6         | 27.2                 | 24.9         |
| Renter  | 84.6         | 69.3                 | 71.7         |
| <b>Stressors in last 12 months</b>  |              |                      |              |
| Serious illness or disability   | 25.6         | 29.0                 | 28.4         |
| Other stressors   | 56.6         | 46.7                 | 48.4         |
| <i>Total experienced stressors</i>  | <i>82.2</i>  | <i>75.7</i>          | <i>76.9</i>  |
| No stressors  | 17.2         | 23.5                 | 22.4         |
| <i>Total</i>  | <i>100.0</i> | <i>100.0</i>         | <i>100.0</i> |
| Total number of persons aged 15 years and over  | 46,635       | 247,006              | 293,641      |

(a) Proportion of Indigenous lone parents who have each of the selected characteristics.

Source: AIHW analysis of 2004–05 NATSIHS.

**Table 2.12.4b: Lone parents, by selected population characteristics: Indigenous persons aged 15 years and over<sup>(a)</sup>, 2004–05**

|   | Lone parent | Other Indig.<br>persons | Total        |
|---|-------------|-------------------------|--------------|
|   | Per cent    |                         |              |
| <b>Self-assessed health status</b>  |             |                         |              |
| Excellent/very good/good  | 15.2        | 84.8                    | 100.0        |
| Fair/poor   | 18.2        | 81.8                    | 100.0        |
| <b>Financial stress—unable to raise \$2,000 within a week for something important</b> |             |                         |              |
|   | 19.1        | 80.9                    | 100.0        |
| <b>Location</b>   |             |                         |              |
| Remote  | 13.2        | 86.8                    | 100.0        |
| Non-remote  | 16.9        | 83.1                    | 100.0        |
| <b>Highest year of school completed</b>   |             |                         |              |
| Year 12   | 12.3        | 87.7                    | 100.0        |
| Year 11 or below  | 18.6        | 81.4                    | 100.0        |
| <b>Whether has non-school qualification</b>   |             |                         |              |
| Has a non-school qualification  | 16.6        | 83.4                    | 100.0        |
| Does not have a non-school qualification  | 17.6        | 82.4                    | 100.0        |
| <b>Employment</b>   |             |                         |              |
| Employed  | 10.1        | 89.9                    | 100.0        |
| Unemployed  | 13.8        | 86.2                    | 100.0        |
| Not in the labour force   | 23.0        | 77.0                    | 100.0        |
| <b>Housing</b>  |             |                         |              |
| Owner   | 8.1         | 91.9                    | 100.0        |
| Renter  | 18.7        | 81.3                    | 100.0        |
| <b>Stressors in last 12 months</b>  |             |                         |              |
| Serious illness or disability   | 16.1        | 83.9                    | 100.0        |
| Other stressors   | 19.6        | 80.4                    | 100.0        |
| <i>Total experienced stressors</i>  | <i>19.1</i> | <i>80.9</i>             | <i>100.0</i> |
| No stressors  | 13.8        | 86.2                    | 100.0        |
| <i>Total</i>  | <i>17.9</i> | <i>82.1</i>             | <i>100.0</i> |
| <b>Total persons aged 15 years and over</b>   | <b>15.9</b> | <b>84.1</b>             | <b>100.0</b> |
| Total number of persons aged 15 years and over  | 46,635      | 247,006                 | 293,641      |

(a) Proportion of Indigenous persons with each of the selected characteristics who are lone parents.

Source: AIHW analysis of 2004–05 NATSIHS.

## **Dependent children**

- In 2006, approximately 38,394 families in Indigenous households were one-parent families with dependent children. This was 41.6% of all Indigenous families with dependent children. Approximately 19.9% of other Australian families (non-Indigenous and status not stated) with dependent children were one-parent families (Table 2.12.5).
- Approximately 15% of Indigenous families with dependent children had four or more children compared with 5% of other households. Indigenous one-parent families with dependent children were 2.6 times as likely to have four children and 8.4 times as likely to have seven or more children as other one-parent families (Table 2.12.5).

**Table 2.12.5: Number and percentage of households<sup>(a)</sup> in occupied private dwellings, by number of dependent children<sup>(b)</sup> and Indigenous status, 2006**

| Number of households                        |                                 |   |                  |                       |                         |  |
|---|---------------------------------|---|------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|--|
| Number of dependent children                | One-family households           |   |                  | Two-family households | Three-family households | All households with dependent children |
|   | Couples with dependent children | One-parent families with dependent children | Total            |                       |                         |  |
| <b>Households with Indigenous person(s)</b> |                                 |   |                  |                       |                         |  |
| 1   | 14,609                          | 15,485                                      | 30,094           | 1,543                 | 33                      | 31,670                                 |
| 2   | 16,396                          | 11,952                                      | 28,348           | 1,851                 | 100                     | 30,299                                 |
| 3   | 9,204                           | 6,395                                       | 15,599           | 1,192                 | 155                     | 16,946                                 |
| 4   | 4,324                           | 2,999                                       | 7,323            | 708                   | 183                     | 8,214                                  |
| 5   | 1,466                           | 1,068                                       | 2,534            | 366                   | 134                     | 3,034                                  |
| 6   | 587                             | 324   | 911              | 212                   | 101                     | 1,224                                  |
| 7 or more                                   | 374                             | 171   | 545              | 223                   | 211                     | 979                                    |
| <b>Total</b>                                | <b>46,960</b>                   | <b>38,394</b>                               | <b>85,354</b>    | <b>6,095</b>          | <b>917</b>              | <b>92,366</b>                          |
| <b>Percentage</b>                           | <b>50.8</b>                     | <b>41.6</b>                                 | <b>92.4</b>      | <b>6.6</b>            | <b>1.0</b>              | <b>100.0</b>                           |
| <b>Rate ratio<sup>(c)</sup></b>             | <b>0.7</b>                      | <b>2.1</b>                                  | <b>0.9</b>       | <b>2.7</b>            | <b>15.9</b>             | <b>1.0</b>                             |
| <b>Other households</b>                     |                                 |   |                  |                       |                         |  |
| 1   | 631,632                         | 242,889                                     | 874,521          | 25,377                | 309                     | 900,207                                |
| 2   | 798,694                         | 157,329                                     | 956,023          | 20,910                | 454                     | 977,387                                |
| 3   | 311,046                         | 53,687                                      | 364,733          | 7,570                 | 345                     | 372,648                                |
| 4   | 77,606                          | 14,061                                      | 91,667           | 2,501                 | 203                     | 94,371                                 |
| 5   | 14,574                          | 3,759                                       | 18,333           | 809                   | 86                      | 19,228                                 |
| 6   | 4,189                           | 764   | 4,953            | 280                   | 48                      | 5,281                                  |
| 7 or more                                   | 2,041                           | 250   | 2,291            | 210                   | 33                      | 2,534                                  |
| <b>Total</b>                                | <b>1,839,782</b>                | <b>472,739</b>                              | <b>2,312,521</b> | <b>57,657</b>         | <b>1,478</b>            | <b>2,371,656</b>                       |
| <b>Percentage</b>                           | <b>77.6</b>                     | <b>19.9</b>                                 | <b>97.5</b>      | <b>2.4</b>            | <b>0.1</b>              | <b>100.0</b>                           |
| <b>All households</b>                       |                                 |   |                  |                       |                         |  |
| 1   | 646,241                         | 258,374                                     | 904,615          | 26,920                | 342                     | 931,877                                |
| 2   | 815,090                         | 169,281                                     | 984,371          | 22,761                | 554                     | 1,007,686                              |
| 3   | 320,250                         | 60,082                                      | 380,332          | 8,762                 | 500                     | 389,594                                |
| 4   | 81,930                          | 17,060                                      | 98,990           | 3,209                 | 386                     | 102,585                                |
| 5   | 16,040                          | 4,827                                       | 20,867           | 1,175                 | 220                     | 22,262                                 |
| 6   | 4,776                           | 1,088                                       | 5,864            | 492                   | 149                     | 6,505                                  |
| 7 or more                                   | 2,415                           | 421   | 2,836            | 433                   | 244                     | 3,513                                  |
| <b>Total</b>                                | <b>1,886,742</b>                | <b>511,133</b>                              | <b>2,397,875</b> | <b>63,752</b>         | <b>2,395</b>            | <b>2,464,022</b>                       |
| <b>Percentage</b>                           | <b>76.6</b>                     | <b>20.7</b>                                 | <b>97.3</b>      | <b>2.6</b>            | <b>0.1</b>              | <b>100.0</b>                           |

(continued)

Table 2.12.5 (continued): Number and percentage of households<sup>(a)</sup> in occupied private dwellings, by number of dependent children<sup>(b)</sup> and Indigenous status, 2006

| Percentages and rate ratio                  |                                 |   |              |       |                       |                         |  |
|---|---------------------------------|---|--------------|-------|-----------------------|-------------------------|--|
| Number of dependent children                | One-family households           |   |              | Total | Two-family households | Three-family households | All households with dependent children |
|   | Couples with dependent children | One-parent families with dependent children |              |       |                       |                         |  |
| <b>Households with Indigenous person(s)</b> |                                 |   |              |       |                       |                         |  |
| 1   | 31.1                            | 40.3  | 35.3         |       | 25.3                  | 3.6                     | 34.3                                   |
| 2   | 34.9                            | 31.1  | 33.2         |       | 30.4                  | 10.9                    | 32.8                                   |
| 3   | 19.6                            | 16.7  | 18.3         |       | 19.6                  | 16.9                    | 18.3                                   |
| 4   | 9.2                             | 7.8   | 8.6          |       | 11.6                  | 20.0                    | 8.9                                    |
| 5   | 3.1                             | 2.8   | 3.0          |       | 6.0                   | 14.6                    | 3.3                                    |
| 6   | 1.3                             | 0.8   | 1.1          |       | 3.5                   | 11.0                    | 1.3                                    |
| 7 or more                                   | 0.8                             | 0.4   | 0.6          |       | 3.7                   | 23.0                    | 1.1                                    |
| <b>Total</b>                                | <b>100.0</b>                    | <b>100.0</b>                                | <b>100.0</b> |       | <b>100.0</b>          | <b>100.0</b>            | <b>100.0</b>                           |
| <b>Other households</b>                     |                                 |   |              |       |                       |                         |  |
| 1   | 34.3                            | 51.4  | 37.8         |       | 44.0                  | 20.9                    | 38.0                                   |
| 2   | 43.4                            | 33.3  | 41.3         |       | 36.3                  | 30.7                    | 41.2                                   |
| 3   | 16.9                            | 11.4  | 15.8         |       | 13.1                  | 23.3                    | 15.7                                   |
| 4   | 4.2                             | 3.0   | 4.0          |       | 4.3                   | 13.7                    | 4.0                                    |
| 5   | 0.8                             | 0.8   | 0.8          |       | 1.4                   | 5.8                     | 0.8                                    |
| 6   | 0.2                             | 0.2   | 0.2          |       | 0.5                   | 3.2                     | 0.2                                    |
| 7 or more                                   | 0.1                             | 0.1   | 0.1          |       | 0.4                   | 2.2                     | 0.1                                    |
| <b>Total</b>                                | <b>100.0</b>                    | <b>100.0</b>                                | <b>100.0</b> |       | <b>100.0</b>          | <b>100.0</b>            | <b>100.0</b>                           |
| <b>Rate ratio<sup>(c)</sup></b>             |                                 |   |              |       |                       |                         |  |
| 1   | 0.9                             | 0.8   | 0.9          |       | 0.6                   | 0.2                     | 0.9                                    |
| 2   | 0.8                             | 0.9   | 0.8          |       | 0.8                   | 0.4                     | 0.8                                    |
| 3   | 1.2                             | 1.5   | 1.2          |       | 1.5                   | 0.7                     | 1.2                                    |
| 4   | 2.2                             | 2.6   | 2.2          |       | 2.7                   | 1.5                     | 2.2                                    |
| 5   | 3.9                             | 3.5   | 3.7          |       | 4.3                   | 2.5                     | 4.1                                    |
| 6   | 5.5                             | 5.2   | 5.0          |       | 7.2                   | 3.4                     | 6.0                                    |
| 7 or more                                   | 7.2                             | 8.4   | 6.4          |       | 10.0                  | 10.3                    | 9.9                                    |
| <b>Total</b>                                | <b>1.0</b>                      | <b>1.0</b>                                  | <b>1.0</b>   |       | <b>1.0</b>            | <b>1.0</b>              | <b>1.0</b>                             |

(a) Persons enumerated at home.

(b) Under 15 years of age. Includes up to three temporarily absent children.

(c) Rate ratio Indigenous:other.

Source: ABS and AIHW analysis of 2006 Census data.

## **Data quality issues**

### **National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey (NATSIHS)**

*The NATSIHS uses the standard Indigenous status question. The NATSIHS sample was specifically designed to select a representative sample of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians and thus overcome the problem inherent in most national surveys with small and unrepresentative Indigenous samples. As with other surveys, the NATSIHS is subject to sampling and non-sampling errors. Calculations of standard errors and significance testing help to establish the accuracy of the estimates and differences.*

*Information recorded in this survey is essentially 'as reported' by respondents. The ABS makes every effort to collect accurate information from respondents, particularly through careful questionnaire design, pre-testing of questionnaires, use of trained interviewers and assistance from Indigenous facilitators. Nevertheless, some responses may be affected by imperfect recall or individual interpretation of survey questions.*

*Non-Indigenous comparisons are available through the National Health Survey (NHS). The NHS was conducted in Major Cities, Inner and Outer Regional areas and Remote areas, but Very Remote areas were excluded from the sample. Time series comparisons are available through the 1995 and 2001 National Health Surveys.*

*In remote communities there were some modifications to the NATSIHS content in order to accommodate language and cultural appropriateness in traditional communities and help respondents understand the concepts. Some questions were excluded and some reworded. Also, paper forms were used in communities in remote areas and computer-assisted interview (CAI) instruments were used in non-remote areas. The CAI process included built-in edit checks and sequencing.*

*Further information on NATSIHS data quality issues can be found in the 2004–05 NATSIHS publication (ABS 2006).*

### **Census of Population and Housing**

*The Census uses the National health data dictionary standard Indigenous status question and it is asked for each household member. Measures that are drawn from Census data are subject to broad data concerns relating to the unexplainable growth in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population since the 1991 Census, and limitations of self-identification. Other Census data issues relate to the accuracy of the Census count itself, for example whether people are counted more than once or are undercounted (ABS 1996).*

#### **Population data**

*The Census questions were designed to elicit population data according to Western social categories. Care should be taken when interpreting information as the standard Census relationship classifications used do not fully represent the complexity of family relationships in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures (ABS 2003).*

## **References**

ABS (Australian Bureau of Statistics) 1996. Occasional paper: Population issues, Indigenous Australians. ABS cat. no. 4708.0. Canberra: ABS.

ABS 2003. Population characteristics: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, 2001. ABS cat. no. 4713.0. Canberra: ABS.

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