

# Summary

This report is based on the following three national child protection data collections:

- child protection notifications, investigations and substantiations;
- children on care and protection orders; and
- children in out-of-home care.

These data are collected each year by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) from the community service departments in each State and Territory. The data in this report cover the 1999–00 financial year. Each State and Territory has its own legislation, policies and practices in relation to child protection, so there are differences between jurisdictions in the data provided. Australian totals have not been provided for those data that are not consistent across the States and Territories.

The main points of interest in the report are:

- Between 1998–99 and 1999–00 the number of child protection substantiations decreased significantly in New South Wales, Tasmania and the Australian Capital Territory and increased in Queensland.
- Rates of children who were the subjects of child protection substantiations in 1999–00 ranged from 0.7 per 1,000 children aged 0–16 years in Tasmania to 6.3 per 1,000 in Victoria.
- The number of child protection notifications in 1999–00 was higher than in 1998–99 in Victoria, Queensland, Western Australia and South Australia.
- The majority of notifications in 1999–00 were subject to investigations. Although the outcomes of investigations varied across States and Territories, in all jurisdictions a large proportion of investigations was not substantiated: that is, there was no reasonable cause to believe that the child was being, or was likely to be, abused, neglected or otherwise harmed. For example, 54% of finalised investigations in New South Wales and 58% in South Australia were not substantiated.
- While the quality of data on Indigenous status varies between States and Territories, Indigenous children were clearly over-represented in child protection substantiations. For example, the rate of Indigenous children who were the subjects of substantiations was more than seven times the rate for other children in Western Australia and South Australia.
- There were 8,472 children admitted to care and protection orders and arrangements across Australia during 1999–00.
- Of those children admitted to orders in 1999–00, 44% were aged under 5 years, with 14% aged less than 1 year.
- There were 4.1 children per 1,000 aged 0–17 years on care and protection orders in Australia at 30 June 2000.
- The rate of children on care and protection orders varied across States and Territories, ranging from 2.3 per 1,000 in Western Australia to 4.8 per 1,000 in New South Wales. In

all jurisdictions the rate of Indigenous children on care and protection orders was higher than the rate for other children.

- There were 16,923 children in out-of-home care at 30 June 2000. Most of these children (90%) were in home-based care arrangements, with a further 7% in facility-based care.
- The rate of children in out-of-home care at 30 June 2000 was 3.6 per 1,000 aged 0–17 years. This rate ranged from 2.6 per 1,000 in the Australian Capital Territory to 4.6 per 1,000 in Tasmania.
- Indigenous children were also over-represented among children in out-of-home care. For example, in New South Wales Indigenous children were over nine times more likely to be in out-of-home care than other children.