

# 2 Notifications, investigations and substantiations

## Overview

### Scope of the data collection

The notification, investigation and substantiation process is broadly outlined in Chapter 1. The data in this report on child protection notifications, investigations and substantiations relate to those notifications received by community services departments between 1 July 2002 and 30 June 2003. Only child protection matters that were notified to community services departments are included in this national collection. Notifications made to other organisations, such as the police or non-government welfare agencies, are included only if these notifications were also referred to community services departments.

As well as reporting on the number of notifications, investigations and substantiations, this report also includes data on the number of children in notifications, investigations and substantiations. As a child can be the subject of more than one notification, investigation or substantiation in a year, there are fewer children than there are total notifications, investigations and substantiations.

### Categories used for notifications and investigations

In this report, notifications are classified according to the 'type of action' taken by the community services department to respond to them. The categories used are:

- *Investigation* – the process whereby the community services department obtains more detailed information about a child who is the subject of a notification received between 1 July 2002 and 30 June 2003, and makes an assessment about the harm or degree of harm to the child and his or her protective needs. An investigation includes the interviewing or sighting of the subject child where it is practical to do so.
  - *Finalised investigation* – a notification received between 1 July 2002 and 30 June 2003 which was investigated and the investigation was completed and an outcome recorded by 31 August 2003.
  - *Investigation not finalised* – a notification received between 1 July 2002 and 30 June 2003 which was investigated but where the investigation was not completed and an investigation outcome was not recorded by 31 August 2003.
- *Dealt with by other means* – a notification that was responded to by means other than investigation, such as the provision of advice or referral to services.
- *Not investigated/not dealt with by other means* – includes all other notifications, such as those where no investigation or other action was possible.

The 'outcomes of finalised investigations' are classified as follows:

- *Substantiation* – where there was reasonable cause to believe that the child has been, was being or was likely to be abused, neglected or otherwise harmed. Substantiation does not necessarily require sufficient evidence for a successful prosecution and does not imply that treatment or case management was provided.
- *Carer/family issues* (New South Wales) – where it was determined that no actual harm occurred but carer/family issues were involved. This category was initially used for part of the year but was phased out during 2002–03.
- *Not substantiated* – where an investigation concluded that there was no reasonable cause to suspect prior, current or future abuse, neglect or harm to the child.

Definitions of other terms used in this report are in the glossary.

## Data and analysis

This section includes the national data on child protection notifications, investigations and substantiations for the 2002–03 financial year. For most tables, Australian totals have not been provided because the data from the states and territories are not strictly comparable. The legislation, policies and procedures of each state and territory should be taken into account when interpreting these data.

The number of child protection notifications, investigations and substantiations in New South Wales in 2002–03 differs significantly from the numbers in previous years. This difference is a direct result of changes to the Department of Community Services client information system which were implemented to reflect amendments to legislation and associated practice changes. For this reason, New South Wales child protection data for this year is not comparable with the data for previous years published in this report.

### Number of notifications, investigations and substantiations

The number of child protection notifications received between 1 July 2002 and 30 June 2003 for each state and territory is shown in Table 2.1. The number of notifications ranged from 109,498 in New South Wales to 741 in Tasmania.

The proportion of notifications that were investigated ranged from 96% in Western Australia to 34% in Victoria (Table 2.1). This broad range reflects differences in the way in which jurisdictions both define and deal with notifications and investigations. In Victoria, for example, the definition of a notification is very broad and may include family issues that are responded to without the need for a formal investigation process. In contrast, in Western Australia and Tasmania, reports to the departments are screened before being classified as a notification. Only those reports where maltreatment is indicated are classified as a notification and the majority of these are subsequently investigated.

**Table 2.1: Notifications, by type of action and state and territory, 2002–03**

Type of action	NSW <sup>(a)</sup>	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT <sup>(b)</sup>
	<b>Number</b>							
Investigations finalised <sup>(c)</sup>	26,463	12,400	17,542	1,835	6,128	548	795	745
Investigations not finalised <sup>(d)</sup>	18,802	369	8,645	373	47	93	452	145
<i>Total investigations</i>	<i>45,265</i>	<i>12,769</i>	<i>26,187</i>	<i>2,208</i>	<i>6,175</i>	<i>641</i>	<i>1,247</i>	<i>890</i>
Dealt with by other means <sup>(e)</sup>	64,233	24,866	3,850	—	7,267	24	49	—
No investigation possible/no action <sup>(f)</sup>	—	—	1,031	85	—	76	828	664
<b>Total notifications</b>	<b>109,498</b>	<b>37,635</b>	<b>31,068</b>	<b>2,293</b>	<b>13,442</b>	<b>741</b>	<b>2,124</b>	<b>1,554</b>
	<b>Per cent</b>							
Investigations finalised <sup>(c)</sup>	24	33	56	80	46	74	37	48
Investigations not finalised <sup>(d)</sup>	17	1	28	16	—	13	21	9
<i>Total investigations</i>	<i>41</i>	<i>34</i>	<i>84</i>	<i>96</i>	<i>46</i>	<i>87</i>	<i>59</i>	<i>57</i>
Dealt with by other means <sup>(e)</sup>	59	66	12	—	54	3	2	—
No investigation possible/no action <sup>(f)</sup>	—	—	3	4	—	10	39	43
<b>Total notifications</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

(a) The data provided relate to all notifications where the primary reported issue involved harm/injury or risk. The data for 2002–03 and previous years should not be compared. New South Wales implemented a modification to the data system to support legislation and practice changes during 2002–03 which would make any comparison inaccurate.

(b) In the Northern Territory, notifications dealt with by other means could not be separately identified and were included in the category 'no investigations possible/no action'.

(c) 'Investigations finalised' are investigations that were completed and outcomes recorded by 31 August 2003.

(d) 'Investigations not finalised' are investigations that were begun but not completed by 31 August 2003.

(e) Includes notifications that were responded to by means other than an investigation, such as referral to police, referral to family services or provision of advice.

(f) 'No investigation possible/no action' includes notifications where there were no grounds for an investigation or insufficient information was available to undertake an investigation. It may also include some cases that were referred on or where advice was given which cannot be disaggregated from cases with insufficient reason to investigate.

## Outcomes of investigations

Although the outcomes of investigations varied across the states and territories, in all jurisdictions a large proportion of investigations were 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, 41% of finalised investigations in Victoria and 60% in South Australia were not substantiated (Table 2.2).

The proportion of investigations that were substantiated ranged from 39% in Tasmania and the Australian Capital Territory to 70% in Queensland.

**Table 2.2: Outcomes of finalised investigations, by state and territory, 2002–03**

Outcome	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT
	<b>Number</b>							
Substantiation	16,765	7,287	12,203	888	2,423	213	310	327
Carer/family issues <sup>(a)</sup>	628	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Not substantiated	9,070	5,113	5,339	947	3,705	335	485	418
<b>Total finalised investigations</b>	<b>26,463</b>	<b>12,400</b>	<b>17,542</b>	<b>1,835</b>	<b>6,128</b>	<b>548</b>	<b>795</b>	<b>745</b>
	<b>Per cent</b>							
Substantiation	63	59	70	48	40	39	39	44
Carer/family issues <sup>(a)</sup>	2	..	..	..	..	—	..	..
Not substantiated	34	41	30	52	60	61	61	56
<b>Total finalised investigations</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

(a) In New South Wales this category comprises investigations where no actual harm occurred but there were carer/family issues. This category was initially used for part of the year but was phased out during 2002–03.

## Recent trends in notifications and substantiations

In Australia, the number of child protection notifications increased by over 60,000 in the last year, rising from 137,938 in 2001–02 to 198,355 in 2002–03 (Table 2.3). The number of notifications increased in all jurisdictions except Victoria, Western Australia and the Northern Territory. The number of substantiations also increased over the last 4 years from 24,732 in 1999–00 to 40,416 in 2002–03 (Table 2.4).

**Table 2.3: Number of notifications, by state and territory, 1999–00 to 2002–03**

Year	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Total
1999–00	30,398	36,805	19,057	2,645	15,181	422	1,189	1,437 <sup>(a)</sup>	107,134
2000–01	40,937	36,966	22,069	2,851	9,988 <sup>(b)</sup>	315	794	1,551	115,471
2001–02	55,208	37,976	27,592	3,045	11,203	508	801	1,605	137,938
2002–03	109,498 <sup>(c)</sup>	37,635	31,068	2,293 <sup>(d)</sup>	13,442	741	2,124 <sup>(e)</sup>	1,554	198,355

(a) The number of notifications in 1999–00 in the Northern Territory was higher than in previous years due to the introduction of a new information system that enabled improved reporting of all reports received.

(b) In 2000–01 the classification of notifications in South Australia was changed to exclude reports that did not meet the criteria of reasonable suspicion of child abuse or neglect.

(c) The data for 2002–03 and previous years should not be compared. New South Wales implemented a modification to the data system to support legislation and practice changes during 2002–03 which would make any comparison inaccurate.

(d) The decline in the number of notifications for 2002–03 is associated with organisational and practice changes.

(e) In 2002–03 the number of notifications was higher than in previous years due to changed arrangements for recording reports of concern about children and young people.

Sources: AIHW 2003; Table 2.1.

Increases in the number of notifications and substantiations may be due to changes in legislation, policies and practices within jurisdictions and may not necessarily reflect real increases in the incidence of child abuse. Much of the increase in the number of notifications and substantiations in New South Wales over the last 2 years was likely to be due to the introduction of new legislation which came into effect in 2000–01. This expanded the categories of risk of harm, extended the number of professionals and agencies mandated to report, and introduced a centralised intake system. In 2002–03, a new data system was introduced which supports the policy and procedures of the department and this has affected the data provided. Similarly, the increase in notifications and substantiations in

Queensland coincided with the trial of a centralised intake system in three departmental regions which began in 2001–02.

The increase in the numbers of notifications and substantiations may also indicate an increase in the number of children who require a child protection response. This may be due to an increase in the incidence of child abuse and neglect in the community or inadequate parenting causing harm to a child. It may also indicate a better awareness of child protection concerns in the wider community and more willingness to report problems to the child protection departments.

**Table 2.4: Number of substantiations, by state and territory, 1999–00 to 2002–03**

Year	NSW <sup>(a)</sup>	Vic	Qld	WA <sup>(b)</sup>	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Total
1999–00	6,477	7,359	6,919	1,169	2,085	97	233	393	24,732
2000–01	7,501	7,608	8,395	1,191	1,998	103	222	349	27,367
2001–02	8,606	7,687	10,036	1,187	2,230	158	220	349	30,473
2002–03	16,765	7,287	12,203	888	2,423	213	310	327	40,416

(a) The data for 2002–03 and previous years should not be compared. New South Wales implemented a modification to the data system to support legislation and practice changes during 2002–03 which would make any comparison inaccurate.

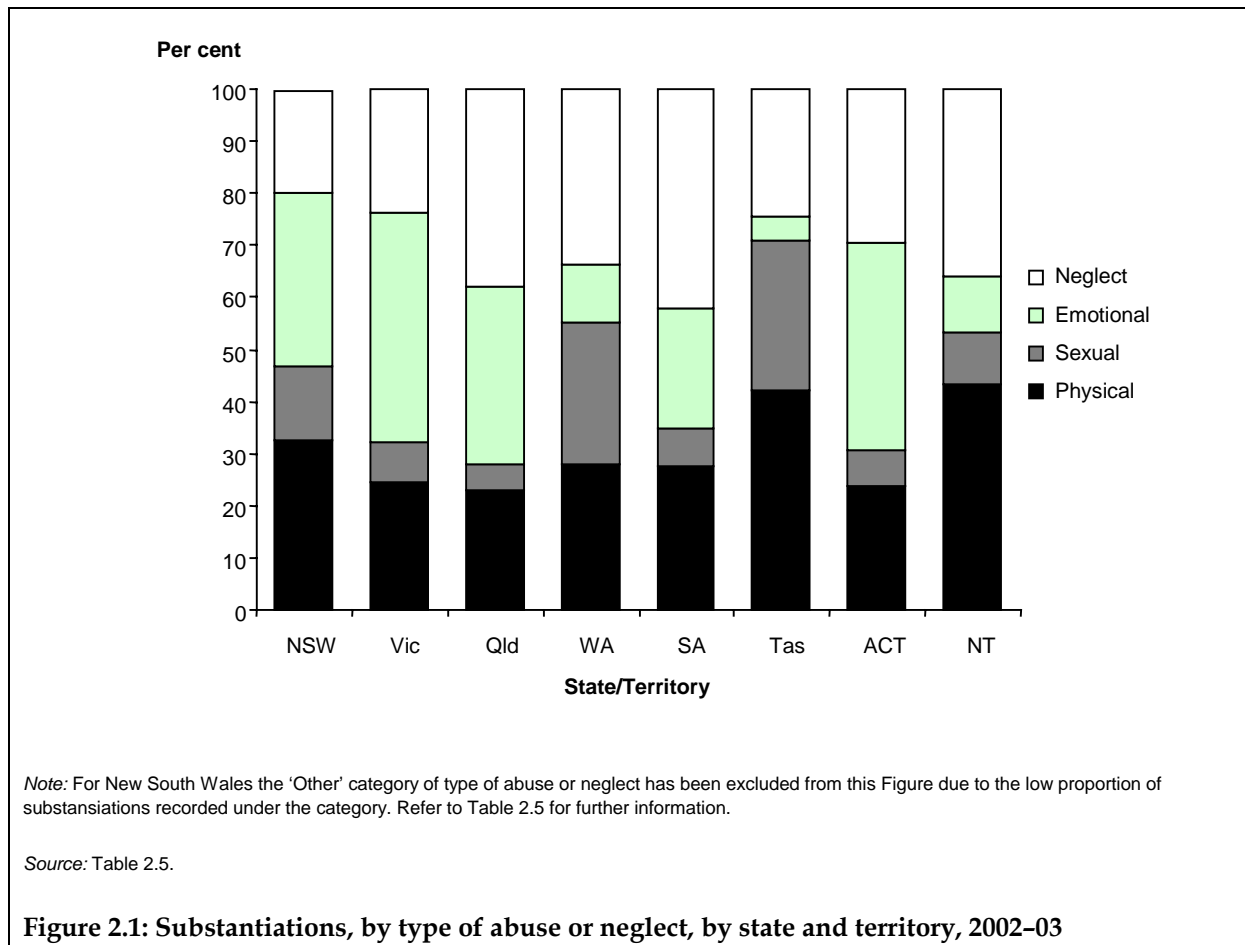
(b) The decrease in substantiations in 2002–03 reflects the decrease in notifications.

Sources: AIHW 2003; Table 2.2.

## Substantiations and type of abuse and neglect

Substantiations are classified into one of the following four categories depending on the main type of abuse or neglect that has occurred: physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, or neglect. It is not always clear what type of abuse, neglect or harm has occurred, and how a substantiation is classified varies according to the policies and practices of the different jurisdictions. New South Wales has an additional category of ‘other’ that includes children identified as being at high risk but with no identifiable harm or injury.

In New South Wales, physical and emotional abuse were the most common type of substantiation; in Tasmania and the Northern Territory, physical abuse was the most common type; in Queensland, Western Australia and South Australia, the most common was neglect; and in Victoria and the Australian Capital Territory, it was emotional abuse (Figure 2.1 and Table 2.5).



**Table 2.5: Substantiations, by main type of abuse or neglect and state and territory, 2002-03**

Type of abuse or neglect substantiated	NSW <sup>(a)</sup>	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT
<b>Number</b>								
Physical	5,435	1,787	2,806	247	667	90	74	141
Sexual	2,427	562	610	243	180	61	21	33
Emotional	5,582	3,202	4,135	98	553	10	123	35
Neglect	3,263	1,736	4,652	300	1,023	52	92	118
Other <sup>(a)</sup>	58	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
<b>Total substantiations</b>	<b>16,765</b>	<b>7,287</b>	<b>12,203</b>	<b>888</b>	<b>2,423</b>	<b>213</b>	<b>310</b>	<b>327</b>
<b>Per cent</b>								
Physical	32	25	23	28	28	42	24	43
Sexual	14	8	5	27	7	29	7	10
Emotional	33	44	34	11	23	5	40	11
Neglect	19	24	38	34	42	24	30	36
Other <sup>(a)</sup>	—	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
<b>Total substantiations</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

(a) The category 'other' used for New South Wales comprises children identified as being at high risk but with no identifiable injury or harm.

These variations in the distribution of types of abuse or neglect across jurisdictions are likely to be the result of differences in what is classified as a substantiation as well as differences in the types of incidents that are substantiated. In Western Australia and Tasmania, a relatively high proportion of substantiations were classified as either ‘physical abuse’ or ‘sexual abuse’, as the child protection data from these two states include only child maltreatment cases; cases which require a family support response are dealt with and counted separately.

Victoria, on the other hand, had a relatively high proportion of substantiations that were classified as ‘emotional abuse’, reflecting the broader range of incidents that are included in child protection notifications and substantiations. The relatively low rate of emotional abuse in New South Wales reflects the policy of classifying many of these matters as carer/ family issues rather than as a substantiation of harm.

## Characteristics of children

### Number of children

The number of child protection notifications and substantiations is greater than the number of children who were the subject of a notification or substantiation. This is because some children are the subject of more than one notification and/or substantiation in any one year. For example, in 2002–03 in New South Wales there were 109,498 notifications compared with 66,503 children who were the subject of a notification, and 16,765 substantiations compared with 11,534 children who were the subject of a substantiation (Table 2.6).

These data indicate that a number of children across Australia were the subject of more than one substantiation during 2002–03. It is not possible to calculate the exact proportion of children who were the subject of more than one notification or substantiation, however, as some children may be the subject of more than two notifications or substantiations in the year.

**Table 2.6: Number of notifications and substantiations and number of children who were the subject of a notification and/or substantiation, by state and territory, 2002–03**

	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT
Children in notifications	66,503	28,421	22,027	2,152	9,288	540	1,512	1,340
Total notifications	109,498	37,635	31,068	2,293	13,442	741	2,124	1,554
Children in substantiations	11,534	6,846	9,032	847	1,908	208	266	312
Total substantiations	16,765	7,287	12,203	888	2,423	213	310	327

*Note:* Includes children aged 0–17 years and children of unknown age.

### Sex and age

In all jurisdictions, except the Australian Capital Territory, girls were more likely to be the subject of a substantiation of sexual abuse (Table A1.1). There were about three times as many girls as boys who were the subject of a substantiation of sexual abuse. This is consistent with victimisation studies of sexual assault (Cook, David & Grant 2001; Carmody & Carrington 2000). On the other hand, boys were more likely to be the subject of a substantiation of physical abuse, again except in the Australian Capital Territory (caution should be taken with the Australian Capital Territory figures due to the small numbers of children involved).

In relation to age, the number of children who were the subject of a substantiation was larger in the younger age categories and there were fewer children aged 15 years and over (Table A1.2). Rates of children by age are discussed in the following section.

## Rates of children in substantiations

There were significant differences between states and territories in the rates of children who were the subject of a child protection substantiation. In 2002–03, Queensland and New South Wales had the highest rates of children who were the subject of a substantiation: 10.1 per 1,000 children in Queensland and 7.5 per 1,000 in New South Wales (Table 2.7). The rates of children who were the subject of a substantiation were lowest in Western Australia and Tasmania: 1.9 and 1.8 per 1,000 respectively.

Much of the variation in rates across jurisdictions is likely to be due to differences in policies and approaches to child protection matters. The relatively low rates of children in substantiations in Western Australia and Tasmania is because reports relating to concerns about children that do not involve maltreatment are screened out of the child protection system and dealt with separately. The high rates in New South Wales and Queensland are in part related to the broader definition of child abuse and neglect or harm used in these jurisdictions.

**Table 2.7: Rates of children aged 0–16 years who were the subject of a substantiation, per 1,000 children, by state and territory, 1996–97 to 2002–03**

Year	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA <sup>(a)</sup>	SA	Tas	ACT	NT
1996–97	n.a. <sup>(b)</sup>	6.2	4.2 <sup>(c)</sup>	2.1	6.2	1.9	4.1	4.4
1997–98	5.0	5.9	5.1	2.4	4.7	1.1	4.7	5.6
1998–99	4.5	6.3	5.1	2.5	5.2	1.1	5.2	n.a. <sup>(d)</sup>
1999–00	3.9	6.3	5.6	2.3	5.1	0.7	2.6	6.2
2000–01	4.4	6.6	7.4	2.5	5.0	0.9	2.8	5.8
2001–02	4.8	6.5	8.3	2.4	5.3	1.4	2.7	5.8
2002–03	7.5 <sup>(e)</sup>	6.3	10.1	1.9 <sup>(f)</sup>	5.8	1.8	3.6	3.9

(a) The decrease in substantiations between 2001–02 and 2002–03 would partly be due to the decrease in notifications. It is also due to a more rigorous application of the Department's standards for substantiation.

(b) Data for the 1996–97 financial year were not available from New South Wales.

(c) Data refer to the calendar year 1996, rather than the financial year.

(d) Data for the 1998–99 financial year were not available from the Northern Territory.

(e) The data for 2002–03 and previous years should not be compared. New South Wales implemented a modification to the data system to support legislation and practice changes during 2002–03 which would make any comparison inaccurate.

(f) The decline in the number of notifications for 2002–03 is associated with organisational and practice changes..

Sources: AIHW 2003; Table 2.9.



## Trends in rates of children in substantiations

The trends in rates of children in substantiations also varied across jurisdictions. In the period 1996–97 to 2002–03, in almost all the jurisdictions the rates of children in substantiations have fluctuated. A steady increase in rates has occurred only in Queensland where the rates increased from 4.2 to 10.1 per 1,000 (Table 2.7). Some of this increase could be due to a number of factors including a greater community willingness to report cases of suspected abuse.

### Rates by age

Rates of children who were the subjects of substantiations generally decreased with age. In all jurisdictions, children aged under 1 year were the most likely to be the subject of a substantiation and children aged 15–16 years the least likely (Table 2.8). In Victoria, for instance, the rate for children aged under 1 year was 15.5 per 1,000 compared with 3.6 per 1,000 for young people aged 15–16 years.

Age is one of the factors that child protection workers take into consideration when determining the time taken to respond to a notification, the type of response and whether a notification will be substantiated, with younger children being regarded as the most vulnerable. The High Risk Infants Service Quality Initiatives Project in Victoria, for example, was developed to better identify and respond to children aged under 2 years who were regarded as being at high risk of child abuse and neglect (VDHS 1999). Other jurisdictions also have special procedures in place to protect younger children.

**Table 2.8: Children aged 0–16 years in substantiations: rates per 1,000 children, by age and state and territory, 2002–03**

Age (years)	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT
< 1 year	15.1	15.5	18.7	5.5	10.0	4.4	8.7	12.3
1–4 years	7.7	6.9	11.4	1.8	6.3	1.7	4.5	8.4
5–9 years	7.2	5.9	10.5	1.8	6.7	1.7	3.4	4.5
10–14 years	7.4	5.6	9.5	1.7	5.1	1.2	2.9	4.1
15–16 years	4.5	3.6	4.2	0.9	2.2	0.7	2.0	1.3

#### Notes

1. Refer to Table A1.2 for numbers for this table.
2. Due to the small numbers involved, children aged 17 years were not included in this table.

## Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children

### Rates of children in substantiations

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are more likely to be the subject of a substantiation than other Australian children. In 2002–03 in all jurisdictions, the substantiation rate for Indigenous children was higher than the rate for other children (Table 2.9). The rate ratio provides a summary measure of the rate of Indigenous children who were the subject of a substantiation compared with the rate for other children. In Victoria, for example, the rate of Indigenous children who were the subject of a substantiation was nearly ten times higher than the rate for other children, whereas in Queensland the rate was nearly two times higher.

**Table 2.9: Children aged 0–16 years who were the subjects of substantiations: number and rates per 1,000 children, by Indigenous status and state and territory, 2002–03**

State/territory	Number of children			Rate per 1,000 children			Rate ratio Indigenous /other
	Indigenous	Other	Total	Indigenous	Other	Total	
New South Wales	1,910	9,524	11,434	32.0	6.5	7.5	4.9:1
Victoria	667	6,177	6,844	55.6	5.7	6.3	9.7:1
Queensland	881	8,104	8,985	15.9	9.7	10.1	1.6:1
Western Australia	275	571	846	9.7	1.3	1.9	7.2:1
South Australia	351	1,545	1,896	32.2	4.8	5.8	6.6:1
Tasmania	19	186	205	2.5	1.8	1.8	1.4:1
Australian Capital Territory	33	230	263	19.7	6.8	7.4	2.9:1
Northern Territory	198	113	311	8.7	1.6	3.3	5.5:1

*Notes*

1. Due to the small numbers involved, children aged 17 years were not included in this table.
2. The Indigenous rates for 2003 were calculated using 2001 Census data. These rates should not be compared with the Indigenous rates published for previous years.

The reasons for the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in child protection substantiations are complex. The report *Bringing Them Home* (National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from their Families (HREOC 1997)) examined the effect of child welfare policies on Indigenous people. It noted that some of the underlying causes of the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the child welfare system include:

- the legacy of past policies of the forced removal of Aboriginal children from their families
- intergenerational effects of previous separations from family and culture
- poor socioeconomic status
- cultural differences in child-rearing practices.

## Types of abuse and neglect

The pattern of substantiated abuse and neglect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children differs from the pattern for other children. Indigenous children were much more likely to be the subject of a substantiation of neglect than other children. For example, in Western Australia, 50% of Indigenous children in substantiations were the subject of a substantiation of neglect, compared with 28% of other children. In Tasmania, the corresponding percentages were 47% and 21% respectively (Table 2.10). This difference is attributed to the quality of the data collected on Indigenous status in that there are a significant proportion of unsubstantiated cases where the Indigenous status was unknown. Because many of these cases were then included in the category 'other', the proportion of Indigenous children who were the subject of a substantiation increased accordingly. Consequently the differences in the pattern of substantiated abuse and neglect for Indigenous children and other children in Tasmania should be interpreted with care.

**Table 2.10: Children who were the subject of a substantiation: type of abuse or neglect, by Indigenous status and state and territory, 2002-03 (per cent)**

Type of abuse or neglect	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT
<b>Indigenous children</b>								
Physical abuse	32	18	26	24	28	53	18	39
Sexual abuse	9	6	5	15	5	0	3	11
Emotional abuse	33	44	25	11	25	0	48	10
Neglect	25	32	44	50	42	47	30	39
Other <sup>(a)</sup>	—	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Other children</b>								
Physical abuse	32	26	24	29	32	41	31	50
Sexual abuse	18	8	6	34	10	31	6	5
Emotional abuse	32	44	32	10	23	7	39	26
Neglect	17	22	37	28	34	21	25	19
Other <sup>(a)</sup>	—	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

(a) The category 'other' used for New South Wales comprises children identified as being at high risk but with no identifiable injury.

### Notes

1. For details on the coding of Indigenous status see Appendix 2.
2. Refer to Table A1.3 for numbers for this table.

## Additional data on notifications and substantiations

### Source of notifications

Child protection notifications made to community services departments come from a range of different sources. Data on the sources of notifications for finalised investigations show that the most common sources of those notifications in 2002-03 were school personnel, police and parents or guardians (Table 2.11). In South Australia, for instance, school personnel were the source of the notifications for 18% of finalised investigations, police were the source of 18% and parents/guardians were the source of 10%.

**Table 2.11: Finalised investigations, by source of notification and state and territory, 2002-03 (per cent)**

Source of notification	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT
Subject child	1	—	3	3	2	1	—	—
Parent/guardian	8	8	17	11	10	9	13	5
Sibling	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	1
Other relative	6	7	12	8	9	6	6	13
Friend/neighbour	5	6	13	5	10	7	7	9
Medical practitioner	2	3	2	2	3	1	2	6
Other health personnel	7	5	—	1	2	5	3	1
Hospital/health centre	10	5	5	16	6	5	9	12
Social worker	—	3	5	—	5	3	2	5
School personnel	17	17	13	14	18	20	11	10
Childcare personnel	—	1	1	1	—	—	—	2
Police	27	21	14	17	18	19	16	18
Departmental officer	2	6	3	12	5	9	6	5
Non-government organisation	7	13	4	3	—	6	14	7
Anonymous	—	—	2	1	3	—	3	2
Other	7	2	6	6	8	7	8	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

*Notes*

1. 'Other' category may include the person responsible.
2. Refer to Table A1.4 for numbers for this table.

## Family type

Data on the type of family in which children in substantiations were living were available from most jurisdictions. However, it is important to note that a family member with whom the child was living may not have been the person responsible for the abuse, neglect or harm to the child.

Compared with the distribution of family types in the Australian population, a relatively high proportion of substantiations involved children living in female-headed one-parent families and in two-parent step or blended families, whereas a relatively low proportion of substantiations involved children living in two-parent intact families. For example, in Victoria, 44% of substantiations involved children from female one-parent families, 6% involved children living in male one-parent families, 7% involved children from two-parent step or blended families, and 32% involved children from two-parent intact families (Table 2.12). In comparison, in 1997, 16% of all Australian children lived in female one-parent families, 2% lived in male-headed one-parent families, 8% lived in two-parent step or blended families and 74% lived in two-parent intact families (ABS 1997).

Children of female sole parents accounted for a relatively high proportion of children in substantiations. However, the children of male sole parents are also over-represented in relation to their frequency in the general population. This becomes evident when these data are translated into rates of substantiations in relation to the size of the population group. For example, in Victoria the rate of substantiations for children in female sole-parent families was 19.2 per 1,000, and the rate for children in male-headed one-parent families was 17.2 per 1,000 (Table 2.12; ABS 1997).

There are likely to be a number of reasons for the over-representation of one-parent families in substantiations. For instance, sole parents are more likely to:

- have low incomes and be financially stressed
- suffer from social isolation
- have less support from their immediate family.

These are all factors that have been associated with child abuse and neglect.

**Table 2.12: Substantiations, by type of family in which the child was residing, 2002-03**

Family type	NSW <sup>(a)</sup>	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT
				<b>Number</b>				
Two parent—intact	n.a.	2,080	3,085	282	597	69	64	124
Two parent—step or blended	n.a.	480	2,504	172	497	29	36	42
Single parent—female	n.a.	2,840	5,137	299	1,061	83	108	129
Single parent—male	n.a.	367	683	32	129	18	15	7
Other relatives/kin	n.a.	377	181	64	78	4	6	13
Foster	n.a.	66	—	20	6	4	2	1
Other	n.a.	257	591	16	28	6	2	4
Not stated	n.a.	820	22	3	27	—	77	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>16,765</b>	<b>7,287</b>	<b>12,203</b>	<b>888</b>	<b>2,423</b>	<b>213</b>	<b>310</b>	<b>327</b>
				<b>Per cent</b>				
Two parent—intact	n.a.	32	25	32	25	32	27	39
Two parent—step or blended	n.a.	7	21	19	21	14	15	13
Single parent—female	n.a.	44	42	34	44	39	46	40
Single parent—male	n.a.	6	6	4	5	8	6	2
Other relatives/kin	n.a.	6	1	7	3	2	3	4
Foster	n.a.	1	—	2	—	2	1	—
Other	n.a.	4	5	2	1	3	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>n.a.</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

(a) New South Wales could not provide these data.

*Notes*

1. For Victoria and Queensland, family of residence was categorised as where the child was living at the time of investigation. For other jurisdictions it was where the child was living when the abuse, neglect or harm occurred.
2. Queensland does not have a category for 'foster parent'—these have been included in 'Other'.