

# Adoptions Australia 2021-22

Web report | Last updated: 28 Apr 2023 | Topic: [Adoptions](#)

## About

Adoptions Australia 2021-22 covers the latest data on adoptions of Australian children and children from overseas. Data cover characteristics of adopted children, their parents, and adoptive families, as well as processes surrounding consent, contact and information exchange, and intercountry adoption processing times.

Cat. no: CWS 89

- [Appendixes A - E](#)
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### Findings from this report:

- [There were 208 adoptions finalised in Australia in 2021-22, a 34% decrease from the 315 adoptions finalised in 2016-17](#)
- [Following the peak of known child adoptions in 2019-20, numbers decreased 35% from 249 to 161 in 2021-22](#)
- [Overseas adoptions declined from 37 in 2019-20 to 16 in 2021-22, a decrease of 57%](#)
- [Compared to 1971-72, the number of adoptions in 2021-22 has declined by 98% from 9,798 to 208](#)

## Summary

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Adoption aims to provide a nurturing, safe and permanent family for children and young people who are not able to live with their families. It is a process where full parental rights and responsibilities for a child are legally transferred from a child's parents to their adoptive parents.

This report covers the latest data on adoptions of Australian children (domestic adoptions) and children from overseas (intercountry adoptions). Data covers characteristics of adopted children, their parents, and their adoptive families, as well as adoption processes and consent arrangements in place.

### Types of adoption

The type of adoption practiced in Australia is known as a 'plenary open adoption', characterised by an open exchange of information between parties. The [National Adoptions Australia data collection](#) includes the following categories of adoption:

- Domestic adoptions of Australian children, which include:
  - local adoptions, where the child and adoptive parent(s) did not know each other before the adoption
  - known child adoptions, where the child and adoptive parent(s) knew each other before the adoption. Known child adoptions can be further categorised into adoptions by step-parent(s), relative(s), carers, or other.
- Adoptions of children from overseas (or intercountry adoptions), where the child and adoptive parent(s) did not know each other before the adoption.
  - These can be further categorised as either 'Hague' or 'bilateral' adoptions, depending on the arrangement in place between Australia and the partner country. 'Hague' countries are those who are party to the Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Co-operation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption (the Hague Convention). Australia has 'bilateral' arrangements with countries who are not party to the Hague Convention, but who can satisfy the principles of the Convention, regardless of whether the country is a signatory. More information on these differences is in [Appendix A](#).
  - Australia has intercountry adoption programs with the following partner countries who are party to the Hague Convention - Bulgaria, Chile, China, Colombia, Hong Kong, India, Latvia, Poland, South Africa, Philippines, Sri Lanka, and Thailand ([Intercountry Adoption Australia 2022](#)). Australia also has intercountry adoption programs through bilateral arrangements with South Korea and Taiwan.

In 2021-22, 208 adoptions were finalised in Australia. Of these:

- 192 (92%) children were adopted within Australia (31 local adoptions, 161 known child adoptions).
- Most known child adoptions were by a carer (94, or 49% of domestic adoptions) or step-parents (60, or 31% of domestic adoptions).
- 16 children (7.7% of all adoptions) were adopted from overseas - 7 of these children came from countries party to the Hague convention, while 9 were adopted from countries which had a bilateral agreement with Australia.
- All intercountry adoptions were from Asian countries - 7 from South Korea, 6 from Thailand, 2 from Taiwan and one from the Philippines (Figure 1).

Adoptions by relatives or other known carers of children from other countries, or known child intercountry adoptions, are not included in national counts but are collected by all jurisdictions.

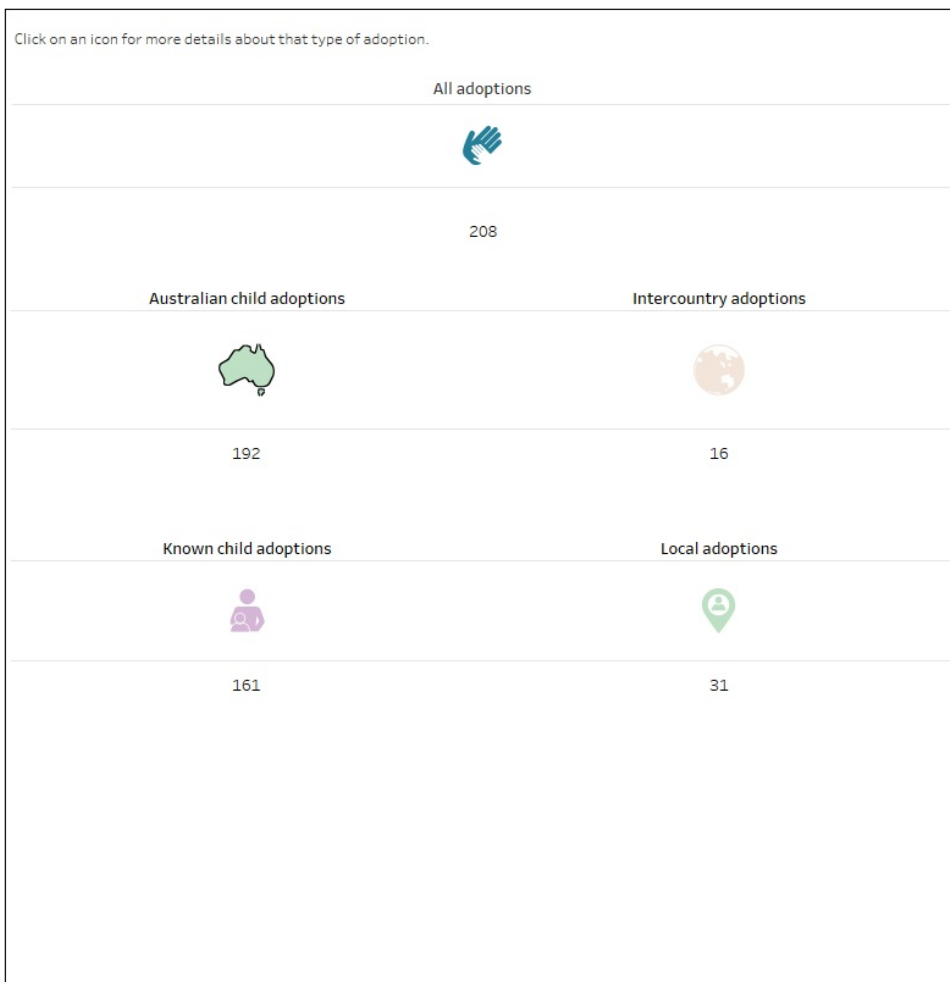
- These can be further categorised as either intercountry relative adoptions or intercountry known non-relative adoptions ([Intercountry Adoption Australia 2022](#)).
- In 2021-22, there were 6 known child intercountry adoptions.

For definitions of each of these adoption types, see the [glossary](#).

More information on intercountry known child adoptions can be found at [Intercountry Adoption Australia](#).

### Figure 1: Number of finalised adoptions in Australia, by type of adoption, 2021-22

The diagram shows an overview of the number and proportion of adoptions finalised in 2021-22, by the category of adoption. Overall, there were 208 adoptions finalised in 2021-22, consisting of 92% domestic adoptions and 7.7% intercountry adoptions. Known child adoptions (77%) made up most of all adoptions, with local adoptions only making up 15%. Four per cent of all adoptions were from countries which Australia had a bilateral arrangement, while 3.4% were from countries where the Hague Convention was in force.



Source: AIHW Adoptions Australia data collection.  
<https://www.aihw.gov.au>

## Notes

1. Excludes intercountry known child adoptions.
2. See [glossary](#) for definitions.

## Trends in adoptions

National adoption trends go back to 1968-69, when adoptions began being recorded across Australia. Between 1968-69 to 1971-72, there was an increase in adoption numbers, from 6,773 to 9,798. Compared to 1971-72, the number of adoptions in 2021-22 has declined by 98% from 9,798 to 208 (Figure 2).

Information on whether children were adopted from Australia or overseas was not recorded until 1979-80. The number of children adopted from overseas has declined by 76% from 66 in 1979-80 to 16 in 2021-22. Over the same period, children adopted within Australia has declined by 93% from 2,731 to 192.

For more information on key social and policy developments impacting adoption trends see [Adoptions in Australia over time](#).

## Figure 2: Number of adoptions and key moments in Australia, 1968-69 to 2021-22

The line chart shows the number of finalised adoptions in Australia from 1968-69 to 2021-22, alongside historical key moments. After a large increase in finalised adoptions between 1968-69 to 1971-72 which occurred during the era of forced adoptions, the number of adoptions have declined substantially. In 1979-80, adoption data could be disaggregated by whether children were adopted from Australia or overseas. Overseas adoptions increased from 1979-80 to 2006-07, before gradually declining, with only 16 intercountry adoptions in 2021-22. Although, the number of children adopted domestically declined overall, there was a gradual upwards trend between 2015-16 and 2019-20. Since 2020-21, the number of domestic adoptions decreases substantially.



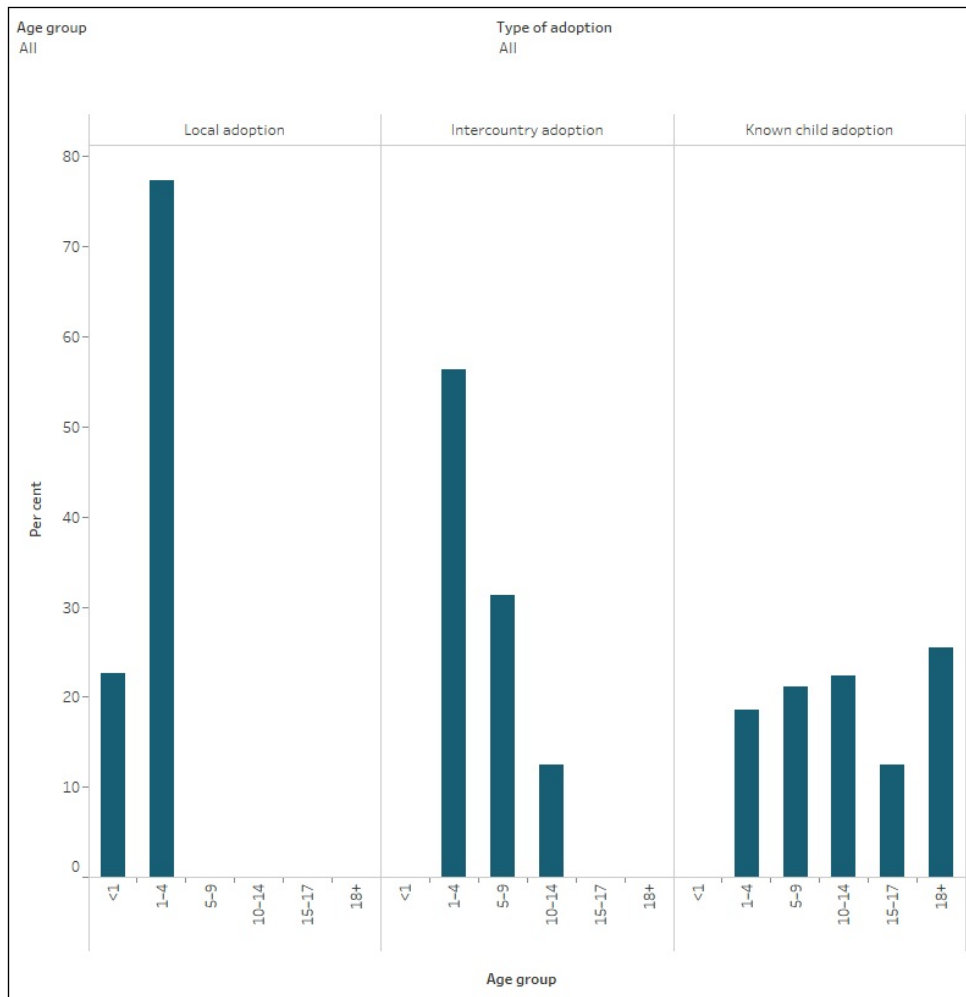
- 14 (45%) local adoptees were adopted into families where there were no other children.

For more information on adoptions of specific sub-populations go to:

- [adoptions of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander children](#)
- [adoptions of children with additional care needs.](#)

**Figure 3: Age group of adoptees, by type of adoption, 2021-22**

The vertical bar chart shows that known child adoptees tended to be older than local and intercountry adoptees. The age groups of known child adoptees ranged from 1 to 4 up to 18 and over. Local adoptees were younger - 23% were infants (less than one year old) and 77% were aged between 1 to 4 years. Most intercountry adoptees were aged below 10 years, with 56% between 1 to 4 years.



Source: AIHW Adoptions Australia data collection.  
<https://www.aihw.gov.au>

Note: For local and intercountry adoptions, 'age of child' refers to the age of the adopted child at the date of placement with the adoptive parent(s). For known child adoptions, 'age of child' refers to the age of the adopted child at the date the adoption order was granted.

### Adoptive parent(s) and birth mothers

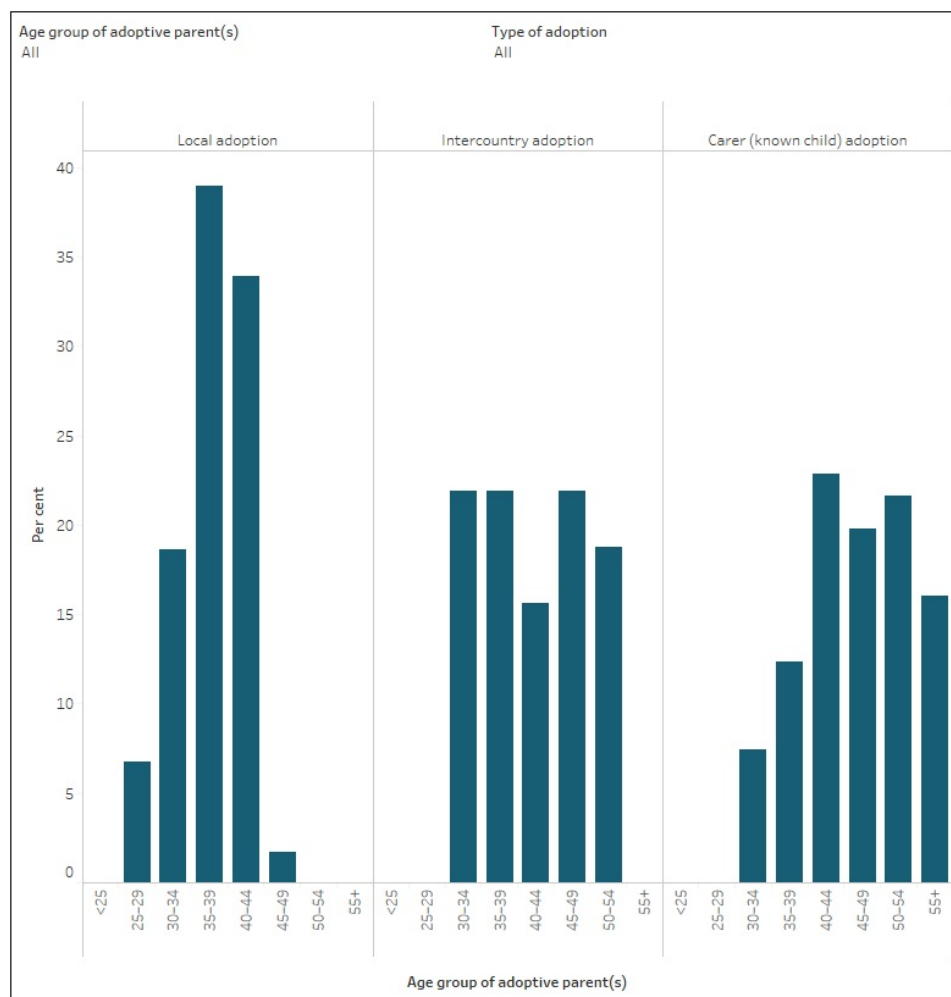
Data on adoptive parent(s) are captured for local and intercountry adoptions. For known child adoptions, these data are only available for carer (known child) adoptions. Data on adoptive parent(s) are counted per adoption and are not unique counts.

In 2021-22:

- All adoptive parent(s) in finalised intercountry adoptions, and most (28) adoptive parent(s) in finalised local adoptions, were in a registered marriage. Although most (57) adoptive parent(s) in carer (known child) adoptions were married, 22 were single (Supplementary table S7).
- 130 adoptive parent(s) in carer (known child) adoptions were aged 40 and over, compared with 18 adoptive parent(s) in intercountry adoptions and 21 adoptive parent(s) in local adoptions (Figure 4).

**Figure 4: Age of adoptive parent(s), by type of adoption, 2021-22**

The vertical bar chart shows that adoptive parents involved in carer (known child) adoptions tended to be slightly older than adoptive parents involved in local and intercountry adoptions. Most adoptive parents of local adoptees were between 35 to 44 years, whereas for carer (known child) adoptions most adoptive parents were between 40 to 54 years. Adoptive parents in intercountry adoptions tended to be between 30 to 39 years, and 45 to 49 years.



Source: AIHW Adoptions Australia data collection.  
<https://www.aihw.gov.au>

Note: Unknowns have been excluded from percentage calculations.

Data on the characteristics of birth mothers are available for finalised local adoptions. In 2021-22:

- the median age of birth mothers was 28 years (Supplementary table S35), slightly younger than the median age of 31.7 years for all mothers giving birth in Australia (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2022)
- the age of birth mothers ranged from 20 to 46 years (unpublished data from AIHW Adoptions Australia data collection)
- 83% of birth mothers were not married to the child's birth father at the time of birth (Supplementary table S36).

## Adoption processes

In Australia, there are specific processes for adopting a child, depending on the jurisdiction and the type of adoption. For more information see [Technical notes](#) and [Appendixes A to D](#).

### Consent arrangements

In 2021-22:

- consent was provided by both parents for about half of all local adoptions
- consent from both parents was dispensed or not required for 3 out of every 4 carer (known child) adoptions. This includes adoptions of children aged 12 and over where the child can consent to their own adoption.

### Information applications and vetoes

Parties to a domestic adoption can access or restrict ('veto') information. Types of information applications and vetoes are detailed in the [Technical notes](#).

At 30 June 2022, 8,348 contact vetoes were in place (Supplementary table S13).

In 2021-22:

- 1,496 applications were lodged to access either identifying or non-identifying information. Most (82% or 1,232) were for identifying information applications, and of these, 915 (75%) were lodged by adoptees (unpublished data from AIHW Adoptions Australia data collection).
- 6 contact vetoes were lodged, while no identifying information vetoes were lodged.

## Intercountry adoption processing time

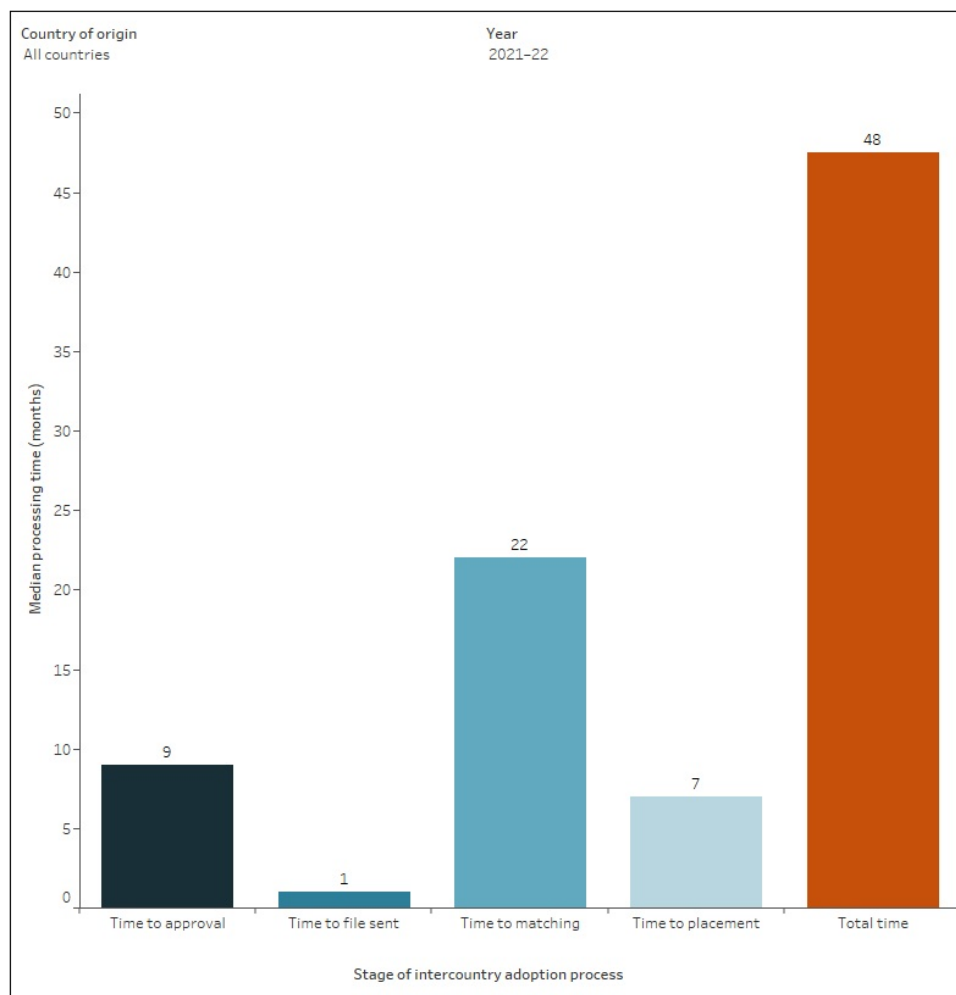
For intercountry adoptions, the length of time is measured from when a prospective adoptive parent is approved to when a child is placed (Figure 5). For further information on the intercountry adoption process see [Technical notes](#).

In 2021-22:

- the total median length of time from approval of an application to placement of a child was 4 years
- South Korea had the shortest median adoption process at 2 years, while the Philippines had the longest median waiting time of 7 years.

### Figure 5: Median processing time (in months) for children placed in intercountry adoptions, by country of origin and stage of intercountry adoption process, 2012-13 to 2021-22

The vertical bar chart shows the median processing time (in months) across each stage of the intercountry adoption process for adoptees placed in 2021-22. The median total processing time was 48 months (2 years), with the longest stage being 22 months (one year, 10 months) for time to matching. The shortest stage was time to file sent at one month.



Source: AIHW Adoptions Australia data collection.  
<https://www.aihw.gov.au>

## Notes

1. 'Time to approval' is the median length of time (in months) from when the applicant(s) become official clients of the department to when an approval decision is made. 'Time to file sent' is the median length of time (in months) from when an approval decision was made to when the file was sent overseas. 'Time to matching' is the median length of time (in months) from when the file was sent overseas to when the child was matched. 'Time to placement' is the median length of time (in months) from when the child was matched to when the child was placed.
2. 'Total time' is the median length of time (in months) from when the applicant(s) become official clients of the department to when the child was placed. This may not equal to the sum of medians for each constituent step of the process.
3. Excludes one adoption from Rwanda which was a known child intercountry adoption.

## Impact of COVID-19

Measures in place as part of government responses to COVID-19 during 2020 and 2021 (including closure of international borders, travel bans/restrictions, lockdowns, quarantine requirements, limitations on non-urgent face-to-face work, and resource allocations) may have affected domestic and intercountry adoption processes from 2019-20 to 2021-22.

Although the long-term impact of COVID-19 on adoption processes is still unknown, there was a 62% drop in intercountry adoptions from 42 in 2020-21 to 16 in 2021-22, indicating that border closures may have had some effect on intercountry adoption numbers. The impact of COVID-19 on adoptions data may become more apparent in future years.

### **Where do I go for more information?**

See also [Adoptions](#) for more information on this topic.

Information on adopting a child can be found at [state and territory departments responsible for adoption](#), [Intercountry Adoption Australia](#) and the [Department of Social Services](#).

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## Adoptions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle (ATSICPP) outlines a preference for placing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care with Indigenous or non-Indigenous relatives or kin, or in close geographical proximity to their existing family if this cannot be achieved (SNAICC 2017). All states and territories have committed to implement legislation, policy, and practise to ensure compliance with the ATSICPP. Data measuring its application across states and territories are currently reporting through 5 nationally agreed indicators, with more indicators in development (AIHW 2022).

The number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children adopted each year is typically small. In 2021-22:

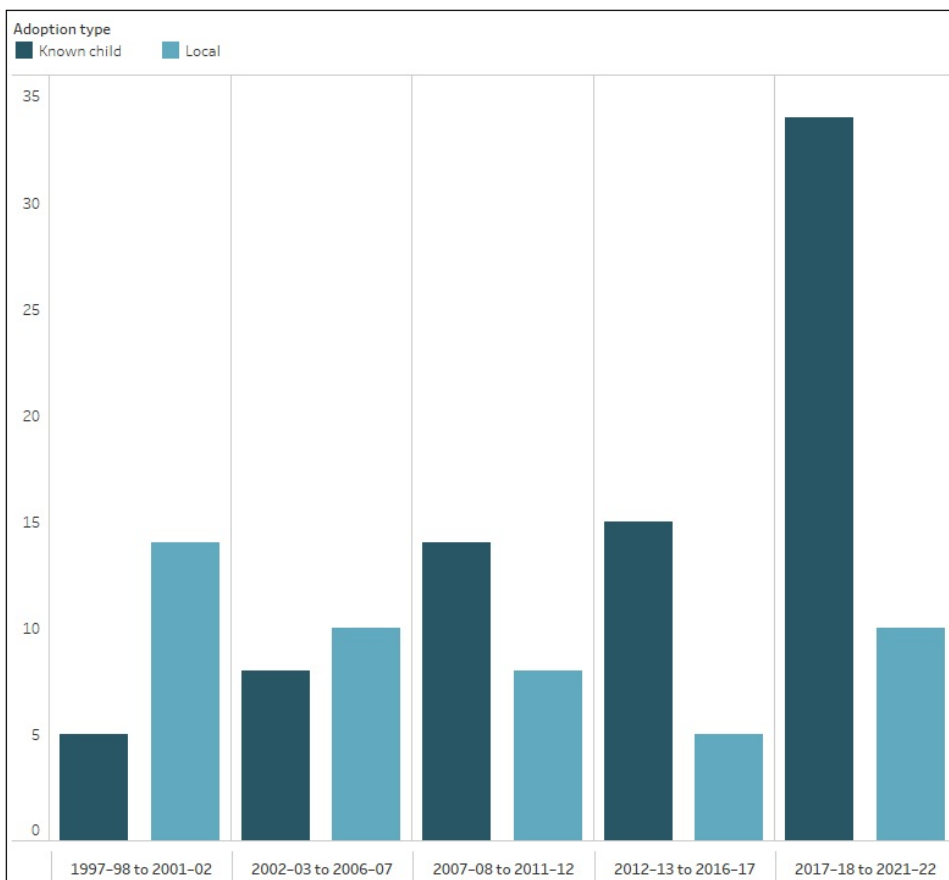
- 6 Indigenous Australian children had adoption orders finalised as part of a known child adoption, and no Indigenous Australian children were adopted through a local adoption (unpublished data from AIHW Adoptions Australia data collection).

The small number of adoptions of Indigenous children each year make it difficult to identify trends. Since 1997-98:

- 123 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children have been adopted, with 36% adopted by Indigenous Australians, and 64% adopted by other Australians.
- 62% of all adopted Indigenous children were adopted through known child adoptions while 38% were adopted through local adoptions
- 55% of local adoptions and 24% of known child adoptions of Indigenous children over this period involved at least one adoptive parent who identified as Indigenous
- the number of Indigenous children adopted through known child adoptions is increasing, with 34 children adopted between 2017-18 and 2021-22. This is the highest count compared to the previous years, and it has doubled compared to the number of adoptions between 2012-13 and 2016-17 (Figure 6).

**Figure 6: Number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander children adopted, by type of adoption, 1997-98 to 2021-22**

The vertical bar chart shows a steady increase of known child adoptions for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. From 1997-98 to 2001-02, there were 5 known child adoptions of Indigenous children, increasing to 34 known child adoptions from 2017-18 to 2021-22. Since 2007-08, the number of local adoptions has been smaller than known child adoptions for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.



Source: AIHW Adoptions Australia data collection.  
<https://www.aihw.gov.au>

**Note:** The Indigenous status of children is not always available for adult adoptees.



## Adoptions of children with additional care needs

In the Australian adoption context, additional care needs are defined as the level of resources or support services required by the adoptee and/or their adoptive family to:

- foster healthy development and wellbeing
- support positive family functioning
- prevent adoption disruption.

Additional care needs are examined through a continuum of level of need that is broken down into the following categories:

- no additional care needs
- minor additional care needs
- moderate to substantial additional care needs.

Definitions for these categories can be found in the [glossary](#).

The level of need of intercountry adoptees is assessed when a child has been matched with and accepted by prospective adoptive parent(s) as part of the intercountry adoptions process, and again 12 months after entering Australia. This includes children who were placed with their adoptive families regardless of whether their adoption order had been finalised.

Of the 44 children who entered Australia in 2020-21:

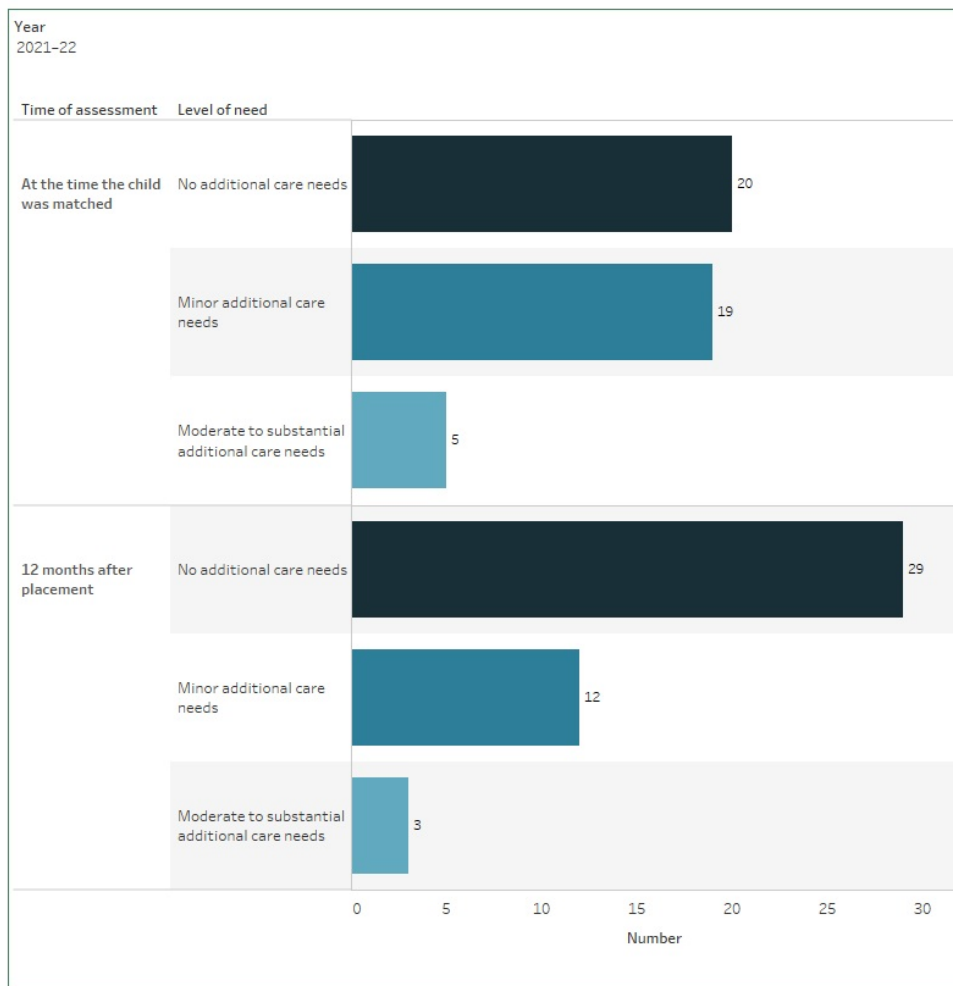
- 20 were identified as having no additional care needs when they were matched with their prospective adoptive parent(s)
- 24 had some level of additional care needs:
  - 19 were assessed as having minor additional care needs
  - 5 with moderate to substantial additional care needs.

These counts varied substantially when the level of need was assessed again 12 months after the children entered Australia:

- Most (29) children were classified as having no additional care needs
- 12 were reported as having minor additional care needs
- 3 were reported as having moderate to substantial needs (Figure 7).

### **Figure 7: Intercountry adoptees who entered Australia in the previous year, by assessed level of need at the time the child was matched, and 12 months after placement, 2017-18 to 2021-22**

The horizontal bar chart shows that 12 months after placement of an intercountry adoptee, the number of those with no additional care needs increased compared to the time the child was matched. The number of children with minor additional care needs and moderate to substantial additional care needs at the time the child was matched decreased 12 months after placement.



Source: AIHW Adoptions Australia data collection.  
<https://www.aihw.gov.au>

## Notes

1. Includes all Hague and bilateral intercountry adoptees from partner countries who entered Australia for each financial year. For example, for 2021-22, counts include all Hague and bilateral intercountry adoptees who entered Australia between 1 July 2020 and 30 June 2021.
2. 'Level of need' is based on the assessment information available 12 months after the child entered Australia. Where available assessment information indicates different levels of need, preference is given to the most recent assessment information.
3. Excludes adoptions from Western Australia, who were unable to report on the level of need.

From 2017-18 to 2021-22, for children who entered Australia in the previous year:

- the number of children assessed as having moderate to substantial additional care needs has declined from 25 to 5
- the number of children assessed as having minor additional care needs has remained generally stable, ranging between 17 to 19, except for those who entered Australian in 2018-19, where only 11 children were assessed as having minor additional care needs (unpublished data from AIHW Adoptions Australia data collection).

## Alternatives to local, known child and intercountry adoptions

### Third-party parental care arrangements

For children and young people in out-of-home care, the importance of achieving permanency and stability is widely recognised and has been reflected in jurisdictional changes in policy and legislation across Australia (AIHW 2016).

These have focused on early planning for permanent placement of children in need, including alternative long-term care arrangements such as:

- carer (known child) adoption
- care and protection orders that transfer guardianship and custody to carers, known as [third-party parental care arrangements](#).

In 2020-21:

- 1,288 third-party parental responsibility orders were issued across Australia
- 70% were from New South Wales (451) and Victoria (445) (Supplementary table S15).

More information on third-party parental care arrangements can be found in the [Permanency outcomes for children in out-of-home care: indicators](#) report.

### Permanent care orders and other legislative changes

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Legislative changes introduced by state and territory departments over the past 25 years have supported greater use of alternative legal orders. This has not only contributed to the decline in adoption numbers but has also given children alternative pathways to permanency.

In Victoria, permanent care orders were introduced in 1992 which transfer sole responsibility for a child to a person other than the parent, in most cases, to relatives or carers with whom the child is currently living. This often replaces the need for adoption (see [Appendix B](#)).

In Western Australia, protection orders (special guardianship) provide for parental responsibility to an individual, or 2 individuals jointly, for a child until they turn 18.

### Visa applications and expatriate adoptions

The Department of Home Affairs provides visa and citizenship application data to the AIHW to inform expatriate and other intercountry adoption practices, such as known child intercountry. [Expatriate adoptions](#) occur outside of the Australian intercountry adoption program, and are not included in national counts.

In 2021-22, 90 Adoption visas were issued to adopted children of Australians seeking to return to Australia with the child (Supplementary table S18). These include visas:

- for children adopted by expatriate Australians through an overseas adoption authority
- for adoptions arranged and supported by Australian adoption authorities.

## Technical notes

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### Abbreviations

ACT	Australian Capital Territory
AIHW	Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
COVID-19	Coronavirus 2019
DSS	Department of Social Services
Hague Convention	Hague Convention of Protection of Children and Co-operation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption
NSW	New South Wales
NT	Northern Territory
Qld	Queensland
SA	South Australia
Tas	Tasmania
Vic	Victoria
WA	Western Australia

### Symbols

—	zero
. .	not applicable
n.a.	not available
n.p.	not publishable because of small numbers, confidentiality or other concerns about the quality of the data
<	less than

### Data sources and processes

- The AIHW Adoptions Australia data collection is the authoritative source of national adoptions data for Australia. This report presents data extracted from the administrative systems of each state and territory department responsible for adoption, according to definitions and technical specifications agreed by the jurisdictions and the AIHW.
- In this report, the terms ‘mother’, ‘father’ or ‘parent’ are used to describe a child’s biological parents. ‘Birth mother’, ‘birth father’ and ‘birth parent’ are considered less appropriate terminology, but, where required for clarity, these terms are also used in this report to refer to the biological parents (Higgins et al. 2016). The terms ‘adoptive mother’, ‘adoptive father’ or ‘adoptive parent’ are used to describe parents who have adopted a child. The children who have been the subject of an adoption order are referred to as ‘adopted children’ or ‘adoptees’.
- Data for the years prior to 1985-86 were collected from the Australian Bureau of Statistics’ Adoptions, Australia (Cat. no. 4406.0). Data between 1987-88 to 1989-90 are from the Standardisation of Social Welfare Statistics project (WELSTAT), Adoptions: National Data Collection. No national data were collected in 1985-86 to 1986-87.

- Data on Adoption visas issued in 2021-22, including those for children adopted by expatriate Australians, are provided by the Department of Home Affairs.
- Due to the size of the target population of this collection, some analyses contain small counts. Where published in this report, these data have been cleared for release by the state and territory departments responsible for adoption and, in some instances, reflect data that are publicly available elsewhere at the same level of disaggregation.
- From 2019-20, the Department of Communities Tasmania requested that counts lower than 5 not be separately identifiable for Tasmania in national reporting on adoptions. This request was consistent with the position of the department to suppress similarly low counts in other national reports based on community services data. To accommodate this request, data from Tasmania, the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory have been combined in tables that present data disaggregated by state and territory. In some instances, the reported combined count will include 'null' or 'zero' counts from one or more of these jurisdictions.
- Definitions can be found in the [glossary](#). Further information on the data contained in this collection can be found in the data quality statement.

### Adoptions not included in the data counts

- Adoptions by relatives or other known carers of children from countries other than Australia, known as 'known child intercountry adoptions', are excluded from total counts of intercountry adoptions.
- Adoptions by Australian citizens or permanent residents living abroad that occur through an overseas agency or government authority are excluded from counts of intercountry adoption. These adoptions are referred to in this report as 'expatriate adoptions'. Australian adoption authorities are not responsible for facilitating expatriate adoptions, and do not assess or approve applicants for such adoptions.

### Intercountry adoption in Australia

- After a child is placed with their adoptive family, if a recognised full adoption order is not in place, there will be a period until the adoption order is finalised by Australian authorities. As a result, some children placed for adoption during the year might not have had their adoption finalised within that financial year.
- Since 1998, adoptions where the Hague Convention had not entered into force in the adoptive child's country of origin before the file of the prospective parent(s) was sent were referred to as 'non-Hague' adoptions for national reporting purposes. Commencing 2017-18, the term 'bilateral' is used to refer to such adoptions.
- Only countries of origin with which Australia had an official intercountry adoption program since 2011-12 are presented.

### Adoptions of children with additional care needs

Adoptions of children who require additional care are examined through a continuum of level of need from those adoptees and their families who do not require any additional resources to those who require regular and more intensive resources and supports.

Although definitions of children with additional care needs vary between countries of origin, in general, the following represent a growing proportion of children for whom intercountry adoptions is used as an option to create permanent care arrangements (Mignot 2015):

- older children
- sibling groups, or
- those with complex social histories and medical backgrounds.

Western Australia do not provide data on additional care needs of intercountry adoptees.

### Age

Age is calculated from date of birth, in completed years. For intercountry adoptions, it is the age at which the child was placed with the adoptive family.

### Median length of time

The intercountry adoption process has 4 stages where median processing times are calculated:

- **Approval:** Time between when the applicant becomes an official client of the state or territory adoption authority to when an approval decision is made
- **File sent:** Time between when an approval decision is made, and the file is sent overseas
- **Matching:** Time between the file being sent overseas to a child being matched
- **Placement:** Time between a child being matched to a child being placed

The median length of time calculated for intercountry adoption processing times is reported in whole months. Medians are not presented where there were fewer than 3 placements in an age group or from a country of origin.

### Local adoption in Australia

- Age is calculated from date of birth, in completed years. For local adoptions, it is the age at which the child was placed with the adoptive family.
- The mother's age is her age in completed years at the date of birth of the child.

### Known child adoption in Australia

- Age is calculated from date of birth, in completed years. For known child adoptions, this is the age when the adoption order for the child was granted.
- ‘Other known’ was introduced as a reporting category in 2000-01, but not consistently used as a reporting category until 2007-08. In addition to adoptions from commissioning parents, adoptions recorded as ‘other known’ prior to 2007-08 may include adoptions where the relationship with the adoptive parent was unknown.
- Data on the composition of adoptive families for known child adoptions is limited, as New South Wales are unable to report on these data.

## Expatriate adoptions

Expatriate adoptions occur when an Australian citizen or permanent resident living abroad adopts a child through an overseas agency or government authority. Australian adoption authorities do not facilitate these adoptions, nor assess or approve applicants. An adoption-specific visa must be applied for, and granted, through the Department of Home Affairs for children adopted this way.

## Consent arrangements

- Dispensation of consent is a legal process by which a court may declare that consent of a parent is not required for an adoption order to be granted. This can occur in both local and carer (known child) adoption types, usually provided by the relevant court in each state or territory. For local adoptions, dispensation can only occur when the parent(s) are unable to give consent themselves. In carer (known child) adoptions, dispensation is provided where:
  - the parent(s) cannot be found
  - the parent(s) are unable to give consent, or
  - in some instances, there is a history of abuse leading to the child being removed from their care for an extended period.
- Where the data indicate ‘Mother only’ or ‘Father only’, the other parent’s consent was either dispensed with or not required.
- In carer (known child) adoptions, where a child is aged 12 and over, all jurisdictions are required to obtain consent from the child before an adoption order is made. A court may dispense with the child’s consent if the adoption is believed to be in their best interests (Monahan & Hyatt 2018). This data is not currently reported in the *Adoptions Australia* data collection.

## Information applications and vetoes

- Two types of information applications are possible in Australia:
  - Identifying information applications, which include details about the person whom the information is being sought, or
  - Non-identifying information applications, which include details such as age of the birth parent(s) and place of birth.
- Two types of vetoes are possible in Australia:
  - Identifying information veto, used when a party to an adoption request that identifying information not be released to any other party to an adoption
  - Contact veto, which creates legal requirements for those receiving identifying information not to contact the other party. This can be lodged even if the information about an adoption is never requested.

## References

### Adoptions summary

ABS (Australian Bureau of Statistics) (2022) *Births, Australia, 2021*, ABS Website, accessed 8 December 2022.

Intercountry Adoption Australia (2022) *Partner countries*, IAA website, accessed 12 November, 2022.

### Adoptions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children

AIHW (2022) *The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle Indicators*, catalogue number CWS 84, AIHW, Australian Government, accessed 9 November 2022.

SNAICC (Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care) (2017) *Understanding and applying the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle*, SNAICC, accessed 10 November 2022.

### Alternatives to local, known child and intercountry adoptions

AIHW (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare) (2016) *Adoptions Australia 2015-16*, *Child Welfare Series 65*, catalogue number CWS 59, AIHW, Australian Government, accessed 8 November 2022.

### Technical notes

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# Data

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## Notes

### Data quality statement

[Adoptions Australia 2021-22 data quality statement](#)

### Amendments

**03 August 2023** - Revisions have been made in the web report and for Tables S12, S14 and S17 in the Adoptions supplementary data tables to reflect jurisdictional data updates.

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### Newer releases

- [Adoptions Australia | Web report](#) | 03 Apr 2024

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### Previous releases

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