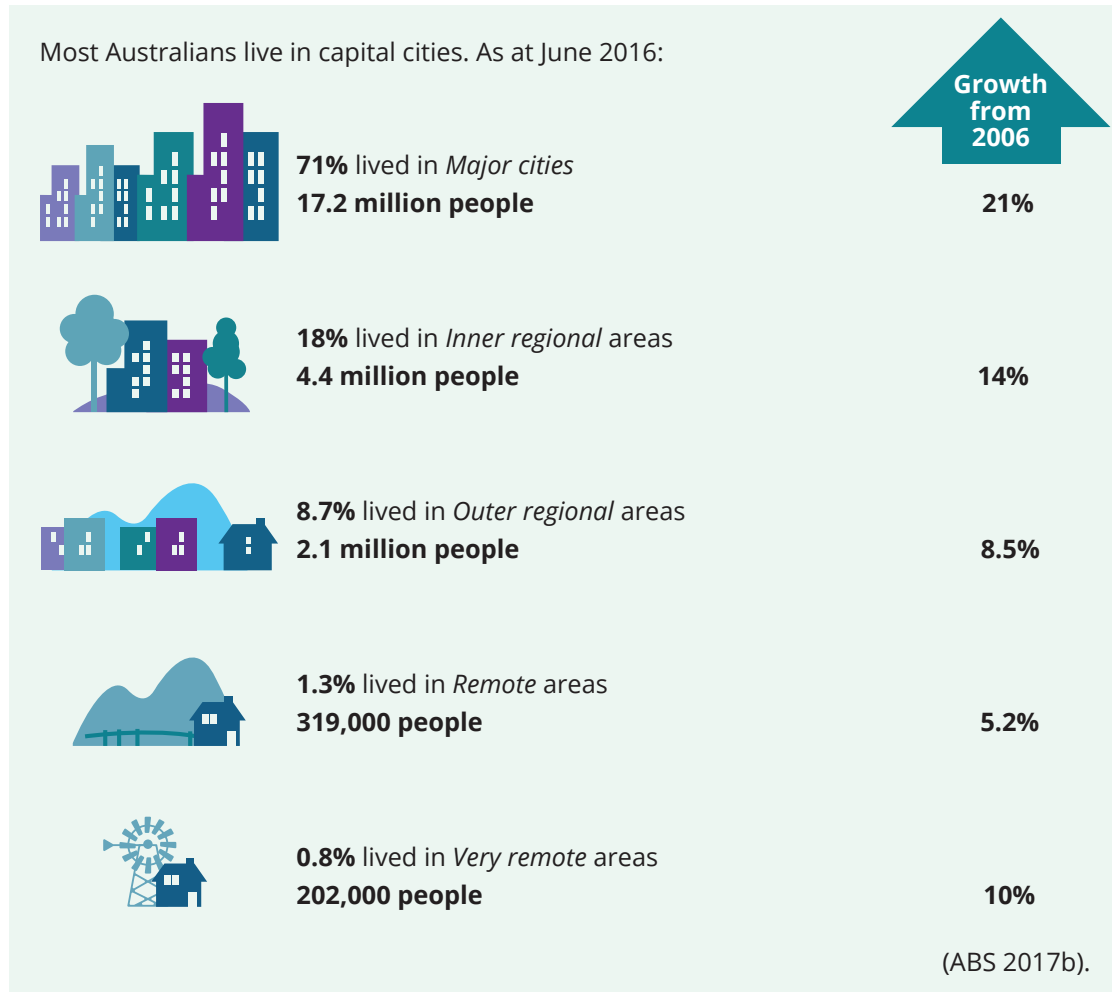




1.2 Where we live

Where we live affects our wellbeing. Many of the factors that shape our lives and wellbeing—such as job opportunities, community networks, air pollution and access to clean water and personal safety—are influenced by where we live (OECD 2015).



Similarly, the majority of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people live in *Major cities* (35%). However, a high proportion of the Indigenous population live in *Inner regional areas* (22%), *Outer regional areas* (22%), *Remote areas* (7.7%) and *Very remote areas* (14%). By comparison, less than 2% of the non-Indigenous population live in *Remote* or *Very remote* areas of Australia (ABS 2013).





Our households and families

According to Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) household and family projections, in 2017, the majority (71%, or 6.7 million) of the 9.4 million Australian households are family households, 25% (2.3 million) are single-person households and 4.3% (403,000) are group households (ABS 2015c).

The number of households in Australia is projected to grow by up to 3.3 million over the next 20 years, to between 12.6 million and 12.7 million in 2036. Family households are still expected to be the most common household type over this time—nearly 70% of households in 2036 (up to 8.8 million). But the household type projected to grow most is Australians living alone, increasing by up to 45% over the next 20 years to between 3.3 million and 3.4 million by 2036. This mainly relates to the ageing of the population, as many older Australians live alone (ABS 2015c).

In 2016, the vast majority of families were couple families (84%) and, of these, 44% had dependants living with them (see Box 1.2.1; Figure 1.2.1). Of the nearly 949,000 single-parent families, 65% had dependants living with them (ABS 2017a).

In 2016, there were an estimated 52,400 same-sex couples (0.9% of all couple families), an increase from 39,400 in 2012 (ABS 2017a).

Box 1.2.1: What is a family?

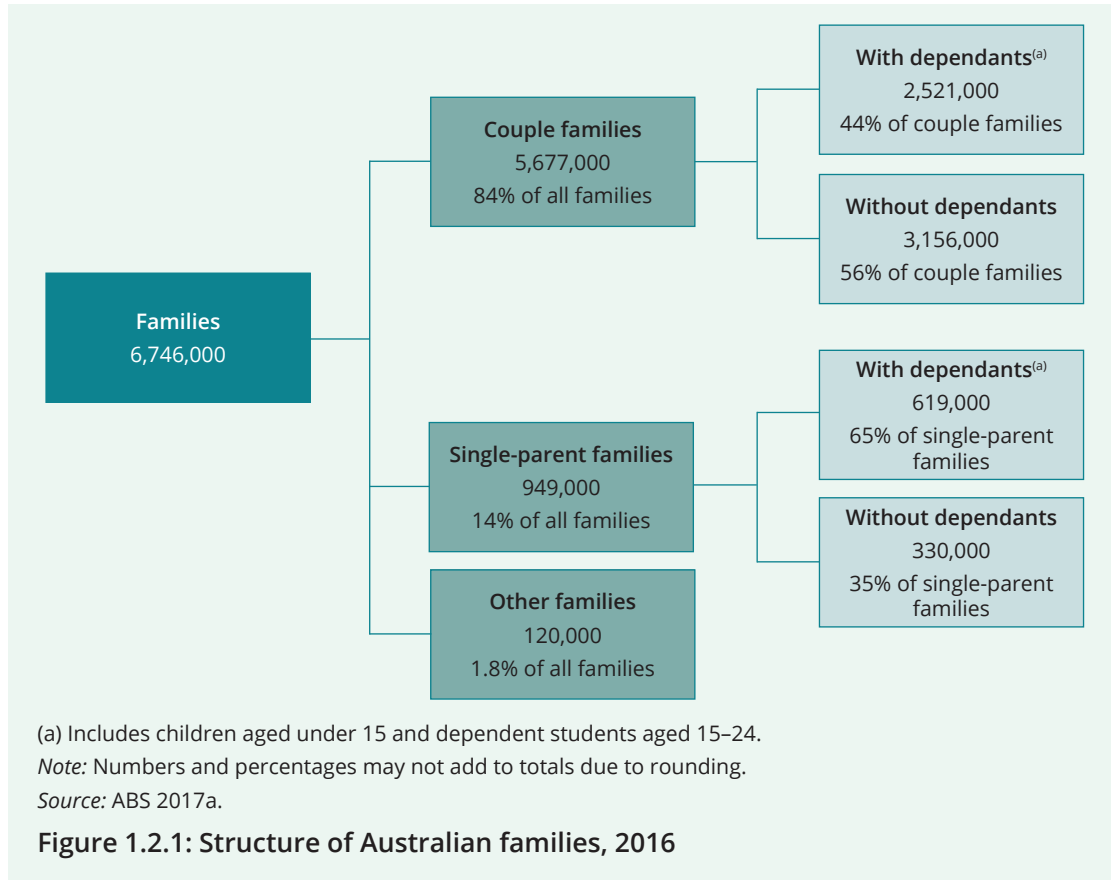
The ABS defines a family as 'a group of two or more persons that are related by blood, marriage (registered or de facto), adoption, step or fostering, and who usually live together in the same household. This includes all families such as newlyweds without children, same-sex partners, couples with dependants, single mothers or fathers with children, and siblings living together. At least one person in the family has to be 15 years or over. A household may contain more than one family' (ABS 2017a).

Families are classed as having, or not having, dependants, and there are two types of dependant: children aged under 15, and students aged 15–24 who are at school or studying full time at a tertiary institution and living with their parents/guardians. Children aged over 15 who are not full-time students are not considered 'dependants' even if they still live at home.

A single-parent family can be classified as 'without dependants'—for example, a 50-year-old woman living with her 30-year-old daughter.

An 'other family' is defined as 'a family of other related individuals residing in the same household. These individuals do not form a couple or parent–child relationship with any other person in the household and are not attached to a couple or one-parent family in the household' (ABS 2015a).





Indigenous households

According to the 2011 ABS Census, compared with other households, Indigenous households are:

- less likely to be single-person households (14% compared with 25%)
- more likely to consist of 2 or more families (6% compared with 2%)
- more likely to contain 5 or more people (23% compared with 10%).

Families in Indigenous households were more likely than families in other households to include children aged under 15 (59% compared with 38%) and more likely to be single parent families with children aged under 15 (28% compared with 8%) (see Chapter 7.1 'Community factors and Indigenous wellbeing').

Our homes

Fewer Australians own their own home today than 20 years ago. In 2013–14, 67% of Australians owned their home (with or without a mortgage) compared with 71% in 1994–95. Households today are less likely to own their home outright and are more likely to be financing the purchase of their own home with a mortgage (Table 1.2.1) (ABS 2015d).

The proportion of households renting has been increasing over the past 20 years, particularly for those renting from a private landlord (ABS 2015d) (see Chapter 6.3 'The Changing shape of housing in Australia').





Table 1.2.1: Home ownership in Australia

Tenure and landlord type	1994–95 (%)	2013–14 (%)
Own home outright	41.8	31.4
Own home with a mortgage	29.6	35.8
Renting from private landlord	18.4	25.7
Renting from a state or territory housing authority	5.5	3.6

Source: ABS 2015d.

Indigenous home ownership

Data from the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey show that, in 2014–15, almost one-third of Indigenous households owned their own home, either with a mortgage (20%), or without (10%). Nearly 7 in 10 Indigenous households were renters—30% lived in social housing, while the remainder (39%) were private renters or rented from another type of landlord. The rate of home ownership among Indigenous households (30%) was less than half that for other households (68%) and was similar to the proportions in 2012–13 and 2008 (both 32%) (SCRGSP 2016) (see Chapter 7.1 'Community factors and Indigenous wellbeing').

Homelessness

Being homeless can severely affect a person's mental and physical health, education and employment opportunities, as well as their ability to participate fully in social and community life. On Census night 2011, close to 105,000 Australians were classified as homeless. These people lived as follows:

- 41,400—in severely crowded dwellings (those that require 4 or more extra bedrooms to accommodate the residents)
- 21,300—in supported accommodation for the homeless
- 17,700—in boarding houses
- 17,400—temporarily with other households
- 6,800—sleeping rough
- 700—in temporary lodgings (ABS 2012).

About 279,000 Australians were supported by homelessness agencies in 2015–16—that is, 1 in 85 people in the Australian population. This compares with about 236,000 clients in 2011–12, or 1 in 94 people in the Australian population.

Currently, the single biggest client group for these services is people experiencing family and domestic violence (38% of all clients; 106,000 people). The number of family and domestic violence clients has increased by 33% since 2011–12 (see Chapter 2.7 'Family, domestic and sexual violence').

Specialist homelessness service (SHS) clients with a current mental health issue are the fastest growing client group within the SHS population, growing at an average rate of 13% per year since 2011–12. In 2015–16, 26% of all clients (72,400 people) had a current mental health issue (see Chapter 6.2 'Homelessness').





What is missing from the picture?

Overall, the availability of information on the demographic, social, economic and welfare status of Australians is good, but there are some gaps. For example, there is little information on people who experience homelessness who do not seek help from service organisations. According to the ABS 2014 General Social Survey, two-thirds of people who had experienced homelessness in the last 10 years (about 950,000 people) did not seek assistance during their most recent experience of homelessness, compared with the 476,000 people who did (ABS 2015b).

Statistics on the wellbeing of smaller subgroups of the population and changes to their living circumstances over time can be difficult and/or costly to obtain. For example, further information is needed on pathways in and out of homelessness and the longer term outcomes for service users. Further information about population cohorts using multiple, cross-sector services is also needed.

The AIHW is actively contributing to the knowledge and understanding of the clients of multiple services, such as drug and alcohol treatment services and child protection services, by undertaking data linkage projects using de-identified information about the users of these services. For more information about data linkage, see Chapter 1.7 'Understanding health and welfare data'.

Where do I go for more information?

The ABS collects information on Australia's population through its 5-yearly Census of Population and Housing (the last Census was conducted in 2016). It also has extensive data on a range of welfare-related topics, including housing and income. More information is available on the [ABS Census](#) website and the [ABS](#) website.

The AIHW's biennial [Australia's health](#) and [Australia's welfare](#) reports include detailed analyses of Australia's population in the context of these two sectors. The reports are available for free download at the AIHW website.

Extensive information on the welfare of Indigenous Australians is also available on the [AIHW](#) website.

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