



# At a Glance

## Report on Government Services 2020

The Productivity Commission has released their annual *Report on Government Services*, providing information on the equity, effectiveness and efficiency of government services in Australia.<sup>i</sup> Below are relevant findings for the child and family services sector. Unless otherwise stated, data is for 2018-19.

### Child Protection Services

- ◆ Nationally, among children aged 0-17 years in 2018-19:
  - 269,193 were the subject of notifications
  - 98,835 were the subject of a finalised investigation
  - 47,516 were the subject of a substantiation
  - 59,073 were on care and protection orders at 30 June 2019
  - 44,906 were in out-of-home care at 30 June 2019.<sup>ii</sup>
- ◆ Total recurrent expenditure on family support services, intensive family support services, protective intervention services, and care services (out-of-home care and other supported placements) was \$6.5 billion nationally in 2018-19 (a real increase of 9.5 per cent from 2017-18) of which care services accounted for more than half (59.3 per cent, or \$3.8 billion)
- ◆ Real recurrent expenditure on all child protection services per child aged 0–17 years in the population was \$1,160 nationally
- ◆ 59.5 per cent of investigations were commenced within seven days of notification and 18.1 per cent of investigations were completed in 28 days or fewer – more than one in three investigations (38.3 per cent) took longer than 90 days to complete
- ◆ The proportion of children in care who were the subject of a substantiation of abuse or neglect was less than seven per cent across all jurisdictions for whom data were available. The proportion where the person responsible was living in the household was less than four per cent across all jurisdictions for whom data were available
- ◆ 87.9 per cent of children on a care and protection order who exited out-of-home care within 12 months experienced one or two placements, while for children who had been in out-of-home care 12 months or more this proportion was 51.8 per cent
- ◆ At 30 June 2019, 92.3 per cent of children in out-of-home care were in home-based care – 97.3 per cent for children aged less than 12 years, and 82.7 per cent for children aged 12-17 years. Proportions were similar for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous children, and have been consistent across available time series data
- ◆ At 30 June 2019, the proportion of children in out-of-home care who were placed with relatives or kin was 52.3 per cent, with the proportion similar for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children (52.0 per cent) and non-Indigenous children (52.6 per cent)
- ◆ At 30 June 2019, 52.6 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care were placed with relatives/kin (this proportion differs to the first measure as it excludes those in independent living, which largely affects the NSW and Victorian figures). A further 11.0 per cent were placed with other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander carers and 0.7 per cent placed in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residential care

- ◆ 87.3 per cent of children required to have a current documented and approved case plan, had such a plan at 30 June 2019
- ◆ Nationally (excluding Queensland), the cost per child receiving intensive family support services was \$9,499
- ◆ The annual cost per child in care at 30 June 2019 varied across jurisdictions ranging between \$57,066 and \$126,701. In jurisdictions where data were available, annual costs were considerably higher for residential care (ranging between \$470,023 and \$772,051) compared to non-residential care (ranging between \$35,629 and \$51,275)
- ◆ In 2017-18, the proportion of substantiations that occurred within three and 12 months of a *decision not to substantiate* for the jurisdictions where data were available were under 19 per cent in all jurisdictions
- ◆ In 2017-18, the proportion of substantiations that occurred within three and 12 months of a *prior substantiation* for the jurisdictions where data were available were under 27 per cent in all jurisdictions
- ◆ From 2013-2017, the proportions of children in care at or above the national minimum standards for Year Five reading and numeracy varied across jurisdictions. The proportions were below the proportions for all students by at least ten percentage points for the majority of jurisdictions for which data were available
- ◆ Nationally (excluding NSW and Queensland), 84.1 per cent of children who left out-of-home care to a permanency arrangement in 2017-18 did not return to out-of-home care in the following 12 months

## Victorian data

- ◆ 83,069 children were subject to notifications, of which 6,429 were Aboriginal
- ◆ 32,741 children were subject to finalised investigations, of which 3,696 were Aboriginal
- ◆ 18,883 children were subject to substantiations, of which 2,289 were Aboriginal
- ◆ 14,316 children were on care and protection orders at 30 June 2019, of which 3,042 were Aboriginal
- ◆ 8,490 children were in out-of-home care at 30 June 2019, of which 2,181 were Aboriginal
- ◆ 12,093 children were in at least one out-of-home care placement during the year, of which 2,847 were Aboriginal
- ◆ 3,168 children were in other supported placements at 30 June 2019, of which 383 were Aboriginal
- ◆ 4,543 children were admitted to care, of which 924 were Aboriginal
- ◆ 3,849 children were discharged from care, of which 736 were Aboriginal
- ◆ 3,993 children were admitted to orders for the first time, of which 702 were Aboriginal
- ◆ 1,513 children had prior admissions to orders, of which 327 were Aboriginal
- ◆ Victoria spent \$341,526,000 on protective intervention services, \$785,808,000 on care services, \$148,469,000 on intensive family support services and \$231,467,000 on family support services
- ◆ The proportion of finalised investigations substantiated was 54.7 per cent
- ◆ 105 children in care were the subject of a substantiation and the person responsible was living in the household providing out-of-home care
- ◆ Among all children in care, 1,539 had one placement, 603 had two placements, 275 had three placements, 216 had four to five placements, 148 had six to ten placements and 35 had 11 or more placements (42 had an unknown number)
- ◆ At 30 June 2019, 349 children were in continuous out-of-home care for less than one month and 1,320 were in continuous out-of-home care for five years or more

- ◆ At 30 June 2019, 5,648 children aged under 12 years in out-of-home care were in a home-based placement, of which 1,515 were Aboriginal
- ◆ At 30 June 2019, 2,340 children aged 12-17 years in out-of-home care were in a home-based placement, of which 552 were Aboriginal
- ◆ At 30 June 2019:
  - 455 children were in residential care, of which 105 were Aboriginal
  - 1,591 children were in foster care, of which 384 were Aboriginal
  - 6,224 children were in relative/kinship care, of which 1,654 were Aboriginal
  - 173 were in other home-based care, of which 29 were Aboriginal
  - 40 were in independent living, of which seven were Aboriginal
  - Seven were in other or unknown placements, of which two were Aboriginal
- ◆ At 30 June 2019, 5,775 children had a current documented case plan, of which 1,660 were Aboriginal
- ◆ 13,542 children commenced intensive family support services, of which 1,450 were Aboriginal
- ◆ In 2017-18, 736 children were the subject of a decision to substantiate within three months of a decision not to substantiate
- ◆ In 2017-18, 2,289 children were the subject of a decision to substantiate within 12 months of a decision not to substantiate
- ◆ In 2017-18, 3,198 children exited care to a permanency arrangement, of which 605 were Aboriginal

The full report can be downloaded here:

<https://www.pc.gov.au/research/ongoing/report-on-government-services>

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<sup>i</sup> Data in this summary sheet is largely included verbatim from the report. Please refer to the report when interpreting data.  
Source: Productivity Commission 2020, *Report on Government Services 2020*, Productivity Commission, Melbourne.

<sup>ii</sup> Excludes children on third-party parental responsibility orders.