

Data summary

Report on Government Services 2021

The Productivity Commission has released its annual *Report on Government Services* (ROGS).ⁱ ROGS provides comparative data across jurisdictions for the purposes of service improvement. Below are relevant findings for the child and family services sector. Unless otherwise stated, data is for 2019-20.

Child protection services

- ◆ Nationally, 275,015 children (0-17 years) were the subject of *notifications* at 30 June 2020.
- ◆ 48,886 children were the subject of a *substantiation* in 2019-20.
- ◆ 60,903 children were on care and protection orders. Of these, 23,344 were Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.
- ◆ 45,996 children were in out-of-home care. Of these, 18,862 were Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander children. Of the additional 9,677 children who were in other supported placements, 2,719 were Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander children.
- ◆ The proportion of children in out-of-home care who were placed with relatives or kin was 53.6 per cent, with the proportion similar for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and non-Indigenous children.
- ◆ 86.2 per cent of children who left out-of-home care to a permanency arrangement in 2018-19 did not return to out-of-home care in the following 12 months.
- ◆ Australia's total recurrent expenditure on family support services, intensive family support services, protective intervention services and care services was \$6.9 billion in 2019-20. Of this expenditure, care services accounted for \$4.1 billion or 59 per cent.
- ◆ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children continue to be over-represented in the child protection system.

Victorian data

- ◆ 81,555 children were subject to *notifications*, of which 6,672 were Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.
- ◆ 29,999 children were subject to *finalised investigations*, of which 3,725 were Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.
- ◆ 16,714 children were subject to *substantiations*, of which 2,341 were Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.
- ◆ 14,947 children were on care and protection orders at 30 June 2020, of which 3,451 were Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.
- ◆ 9,095 children were in out-of-home care at 30 June 2020, of which 2,450 were Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and of the 3,326 children who were in other supported placements at, 416 were Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.
- ◆ 4,376 children were admitted to care, of which 971 were Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and 3,881 children were discharged from care, of which 783 were Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

- ◆ 3,184 children were admitted to orders for the first time, of which 781 were Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. 1,138 children had prior admissions to orders, of which 381 were Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.
- ◆ Victoria spent \$340,597,000 on protective intervention services, \$805,339,000 on care services, \$161,523,000 on intensive family support services and \$238,607,000 on family support services.
- ◆ The proportion of *finalised investigations substantiated* was 52.4 per cent.
- ◆ 184 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, 1,513 had one placement, 573 had two placements, 261 had three placements, 242 had four to five placements, 131 had six to ten placements and 35 had 11 or more placements (43 had an unknown number).
- ◆ At 30 June 2020, 284 children were in continuous out-of-home care for less than one month and 1,549 were in continuous out-of-home care for five years or more.
- ◆ 5,986 children aged under 12 years in out-of-home care were in a home-based placement, of which 1,695 were Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.
- ◆ 2,634 children aged 12-17 years in out-of-home care were in a home-based placement, of which 655 were Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.
- ◆ At 30 June 2020:
 - 429 children were in residential care, of which 90 were Aboriginal
 - 1,620 children were in foster care, of which 434 were Aboriginal
 - 6,817 children were in relative/kinship care, of which 1,882 were Aboriginal
 - 183 were in other home-based care, of which 34 were Aboriginal
 - 41 were in independent living, of which eight were Aboriginal
 - Five were in other or unknown placements, of which two were Aboriginal.
- ◆ At 30 June 2020, 5,821 children had a current documented case plan, of which 1,728 were Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.
- ◆ 12,990 children commenced intensive family support services, of which 1,714 were Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.
- ◆ In 2018-19, 894 children were the subject of a decision to substantiate within three months of a decision not to substantiate.
- ◆ In 2018-18, 2,703 children were the subject of a decision to substantiate within 12 months of a decision not to substantiate and 3,257 children exited care to a permanency arrangement, of which 642 were Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

Youth justice services

- ◆ Nationally, the average daily number of young people (aged 10-17 years) under youth justice supervision in 2019-20 was 4,266.
- ◆ On an average day during this period, 85.3 per cent of these young people were supervised in the community. The remainder were in detention.
- ◆ Nationally, the average daily rate of detention and of community-based supervision was the lowest for the six years of reported data.

- ◆ The average daily detention rate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people was 18 times the rate of their non-Aboriginal peers in detention during this period.
- ◆ Consistent with previous years, in 2019-20, 93.2 per cent of all concluded group conferences resulted in an agreement. This percentage is broadly similar for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people and for their non-Aboriginal peers.
- ◆ Nationally (excluding the NT) in 2019-20, 99.8 per cent of young people in detention and of compulsory school age were attending an education course and 99.9 per cent of young people in detention *not* of compulsory school age were attending an accredited education or training course.
- ◆ There were no deaths of young people while in the legal or physical custody of an Australian youth justice agency during 2019-20.
- ◆ Nationally, 58.7 per cent of young people aged 10-16 years at the time of their release from sentenced supervision in 2017-18 returned within 12 months of release, a slight increase on the previous three years.
- ◆ Nationally, the total recurrent expenditure on detention-based supervision, community-based supervision and group conferencing was \$1.0 billion in 2019-20. Detention-based supervision accounted for 58.1 per cent, or \$584.5 million, of this expenditure.

The full report can be found here:

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

ⁱ 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 2021*, Productivity Commission, Melbourne.