



CHILDREN AND YOUTH NEWS

WELCOME

Welcome to the second edition of Children & Youth News, the newsletter of the ABS National Children and Youth Statistics Unit (NCYSU). Children and Youth News is designed to highlight developments in children and youth related statistics and features articles analysing data on topical children and youth issues. In addition, other information of likely interest to researchers and policy makers is presented. Interested readers are also invited to visit the [Children and Youth Statistics Theme page](#) on the ABS website for links to relevant ABS datasets and other web sites.

INFORMATION DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

The NCYSU is currently undertaking work to produce an Information Development Plan for children and youth statistics. The overall purpose of the plan will be to improve the quality and range of information available on the populations of children and youth.

The ABS will be working closely with a range of key stakeholders in formulating the plan. It will be a tool for stakeholders to use in developing a more comprehensive and consistent information set. The plan will act to increase cooperation, coordination and communication between

relevant agencies. It will also be important in terms of developing and promulgating standards relating to children and youth and will help to promote a wider shared understanding and commitment to statistical priorities for this population group.

Importantly, the plan will outline the information gaps, overlaps and deficiencies in existing information sets relating to children and youth and, accordingly, enable the development of an agreed set of priorities for ABS and stakeholders to improve relevant children and youth statistics. In addition, it is hoped that there will be an improvement in the use and capacity of existing information through mechanisms such as data linkage and better sharing and access to information.

The Information Development Plan is expected to be available by the end of 2004. For more information contact David Povah on 08 9360 5383 (david.povah@abs.gov.au).

LATEST FINDINGS NEW PROFILE OF YOUTH

A new ABS publication, Census of Population and Housing: Australia's Youth, 2001 provides an updated snapshot of youth (15–24 year olds) across a range of areas of social concern, such as Indigenous and cultural background, family relationships, participation in education and the labour force, income levels, use of computers and migration.

Australia's 2.6 million young people accounted for 14% of the total population in 2001. Around 15% of young people were born overseas, with most of these born in non-main English speaking countries (71%). Australia's youth collectively spoke over 200 languages, with 21% speaking a language other than English at home. The most commonly spoken languages, other than English,

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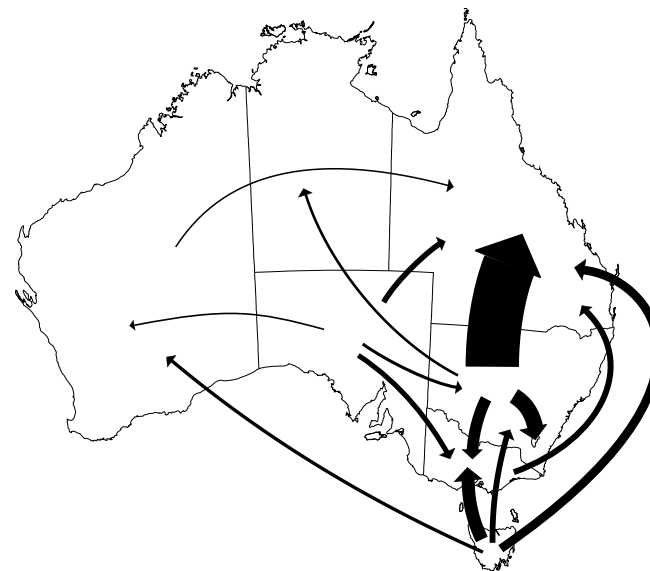
were Cantonese and Arabic, including Lebanese (both 10%), Mandarin, Vietnamese, Italian and Greek (all 7%).

Young people were more likely to be living in the parental home (59%) than in the past, reflecting, among other things, the increase in education participation and the delay of marriage. In 2001, 10% of young people were married, with de facto marriages comprising 63% of these marriages.

The participation of youth in education increased between 1996 and 2001, with over half of all young people (53%) attending an educational institution in 2001. Of these young people attending an educational institution, 49% were also participating in the labour force, compared with 84% of those not attending an educational institution. The median weekly income of youth not attending an educational institution (\$377) was similar to that of part-time students (\$332), while the figure for full-time students was considerably lower (\$53).

Young people were one of the most mobile population groups within Australia, with over half moving residence between 1996 and 2001. The movement of youth was similar to that of the total population, with people moving northward, away from south-eastern Australia.

Main Net Interstate Migration Flows(a) Persons aged 15–24 years, 1996–2001



a) The line thickness equates to population movements. The thicker the line, the greater the number of people moving interstate. Excludes net flows of less than 250 people.

Further information is available in [Census of Population and Housing: Australia's Youth, 2001](#) (cat. no. 2059.0). Other recently produced profiles of young people have been produced by the [Foundation for Young Australians](#) and the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare ([Australia's Young People: Their Health and Wellbeing](#)).

CHILDREN'S CULTURE AND LEISURE ACTIVITIES

The 2003 Survey of Children's Participation in Culture and Leisure Activities collected information on participation by Australian children aged 5–14 years in selected organised cultural activities and organised sports outside of school hours.

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Of the 2.6 million children, the survey estimates that in the 12 months prior to April 2003:

- Almost all (99.8%) participated in at least one of the selected leisure activities surveyed; the most frequent activities reported were watching television or videos, reading for pleasure and playing electronic or computer games
- 62% participated in organised sport
- 29% were involved in selected organised cultural activities
- 29% did not participate in either organised sport or selected organised cultural activities.

Further information is available in [Children's Participation in Cultural and Leisure Activities, Australia, April 2003](#) (cat. no. 4901.0).

SPECIAL FEATURE

COORDINATION OF REPORTING ON CHILDREN

In recent years there has been an expanding array of strategies and plans relating to children, many of which have an associated reporting mechanism or system. At the national level, initiatives such as the Federal Government's Stronger Families and Communities Strategy, National Agenda for Early Childhood and the National Obesity Taskforce, as well as the establishment of the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY) reflect a convergence of attention on improving the wellbeing and life chances of children. Initiatives such as these require statistical support in order to determine how children are faring and to track how this may be changing over time. A number of government and other organisations have developed statistical reports, frameworks and/or indicator

sets for measuring these issues (for example, the Families First initiative in NSW, Best Start in Victoria, Our Kids in Tasmania, and the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare's report, Australia's Children: Their Health and Wellbeing) while others have projects in development.

Given the intensive effort that is being applied to reporting on children and the potential duplication of effort in this field, there exists opportunities to bring together work and knowledge in order to provide a more comprehensive and coordinated approach to reporting. The recent workshop, A Picture of Australia's Children (auspiced by the Australian Council for Children and Parenting) brought together a wide range of research bodies, policy organisations and data professionals to discuss and further these issues.

The workshop provided an impetus for developing an information framework for measuring the health, wellbeing and development of children, establishing key indicators within this framework, and strategies for progressing reporting on this important population group. As well as enabling the creation of an overall picture of how children are doing, these initiatives will promote consistency and comparability across data collections and between jurisdictions, drive a single whole of nation approach to reporting, improve identification of emerging issues, and prevent duplication. As an initial output from this work, the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (in consultation with an advisory committee, including ABS and other key stakeholders) will release the framework and indicator set in 2005 as the "A Picture of Australia's Children" report.

For more information contact Carrington Shepherd on 08 9360 5255 (carrington.shepherd@abs.gov.au).

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RECENT RELEASES

Schools, Australia, 2003

(cat. no. 4221.0) Release date: February 2004

Deaths from External Causes, Australia, 1998-2002

(cat. no. 3320.0) Release date: February 2004

Census of Population and Housing: Australia's Youth, 2001

(cat. no. 2059.0) Release date: February 2004

Children's Participation in Culture and Leisure Activities, Australia, 2003

(cat. no. 4901.0) Release date: January 2004

To find out more about these and other ABS publications, see [ABS Catalogue](#).

UPCOMING RELEASES

Household and Family Projections, Australia, 2001 to 2006

(cat. no. 3236.0) - to be released in May 2004

Indigenous Social Survey, 2002

(cat. no. 4714.0) - to be released in June 2004

NON-ABS RESEARCH

WHAT IS THE HILDA SURVEY?

The Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (or HILDA) Survey is a household-based longitudinal survey,

which aims to track all members of an initial sample of households over an indefinite life (in successive 'waves' of the survey). The survey is designed to collect data in three main areas: economic and subjective wellbeing, labour market dynamics and family dynamics. Wave 1 data was released in 2002 and enabled a detailed analysis of issues such as education, current employment and employment history, job search experience, income, health and wellbeing, child care, housing, family background, marital history and family formation, for those aged 15 years and over. The release of Wave 2 data (in 2003) allows for longitudinal analysis of these issues, along with a snapshot of the asset and debt holdings of Australian households.

Data from the HILDA survey is available by age, allowing for analysis of issues affecting youth and children within families.

Further information on the HILDA study can be found at <http://www.melbourneinstitute.com/hilda/>

CLICK
HERE

CHILDREN AND YOUTH THEME PAGE

A Children and Youth Statistics Theme Page on the ABS website contains relevant information from the ABS and other organisations. This page highlights the type and range of data available for analysis of children and youth issues and is updated to highlight new data releases as they become available.

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CONTACT US

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