



Australian Government

**Australian Institute of
Health and Welfare**

Australia's children and young people: who is at risk?

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AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF HEALTH AND WELFARE

Australia's children and youth

Most are faring well with regards to health, development and wellbeing...



But some are still at increased risk of social exclusion

Social exclusion

- Australian Government's Social Inclusion Agenda...

When people are lacking in certain resources, opportunities and/or capabilities so that they are unable to participate in learning, working or engaging activities and are unable to influence the decisions affecting them, they can experience social exclusion.

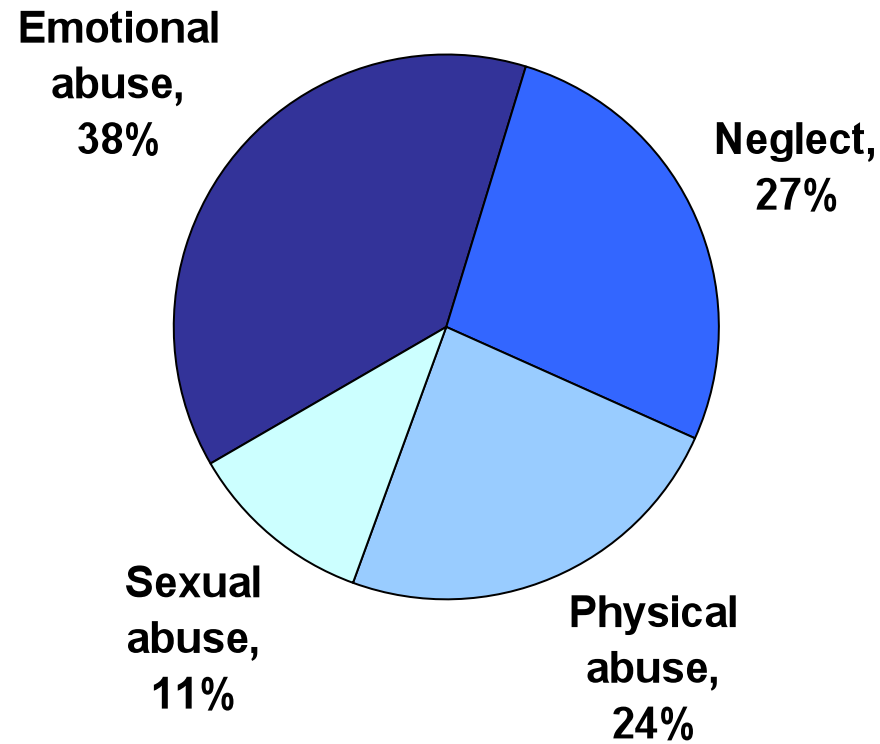
Who are our children and young people at risk?

Child protection

Child abuse and neglect 2008-09

- Over 207,000 children (0-17) with notifications
- Almost 33,000 children in substantiated cases (6.9 per 1,000 children)
 - 1 in 143 children
 - 1 in 72 infants (<1 year old)
 - 1 in 27 Indigenous children

Most common types of abuse & neglect



Out-of-home care

- 34,000 children in OOHC (6.7 per 1,000)
- Most were in foster care (47%) or relative/kinship care (45%)
- Length of continuous time in OOHC
 - 23% less than 1 year
 - 44% 1 to <5 years
 - 33% 5 years or more

Child protection and social exclusion

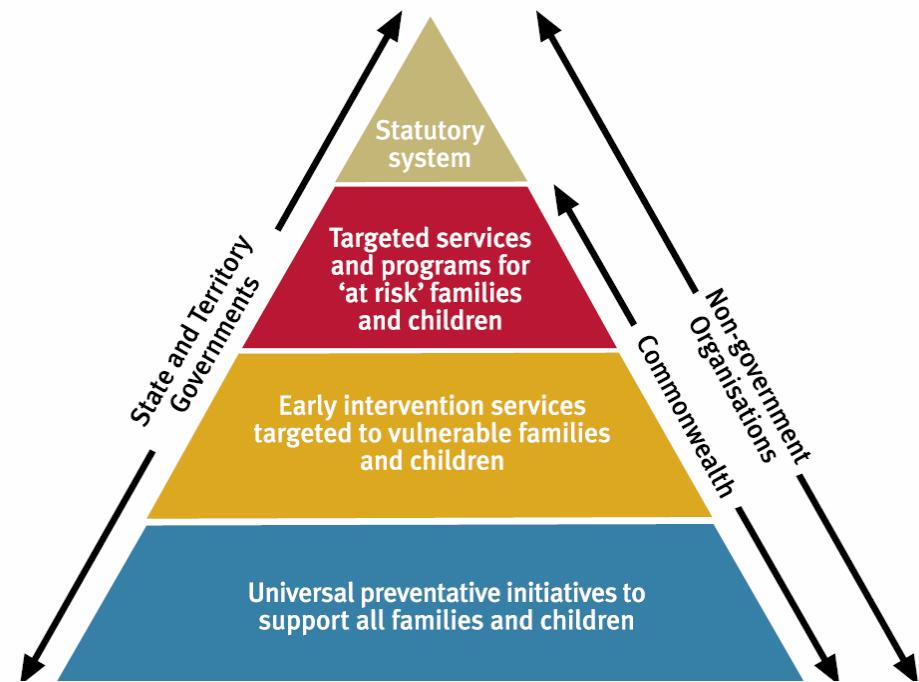
- Among children and young people who have been abused or neglected...
 - mental health problems, behavioural disorders, substance abuse, lower social competence
 - poor school performance, impaired language ability
 - greater risk of criminal offending and homelessness
 - intergenerational cycle

(Chartier et al. 2007; Gupta 2008; Lamont 2010; Zolotor et al. 1999)

Child protection and social exclusion

- National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009-2020
 - Long-term vision
 - Much broader than statutory 'child protection'
- A priority of Australia's Social Inclusion Agenda

Figure 1 – A system for protecting children



Juvenile justice

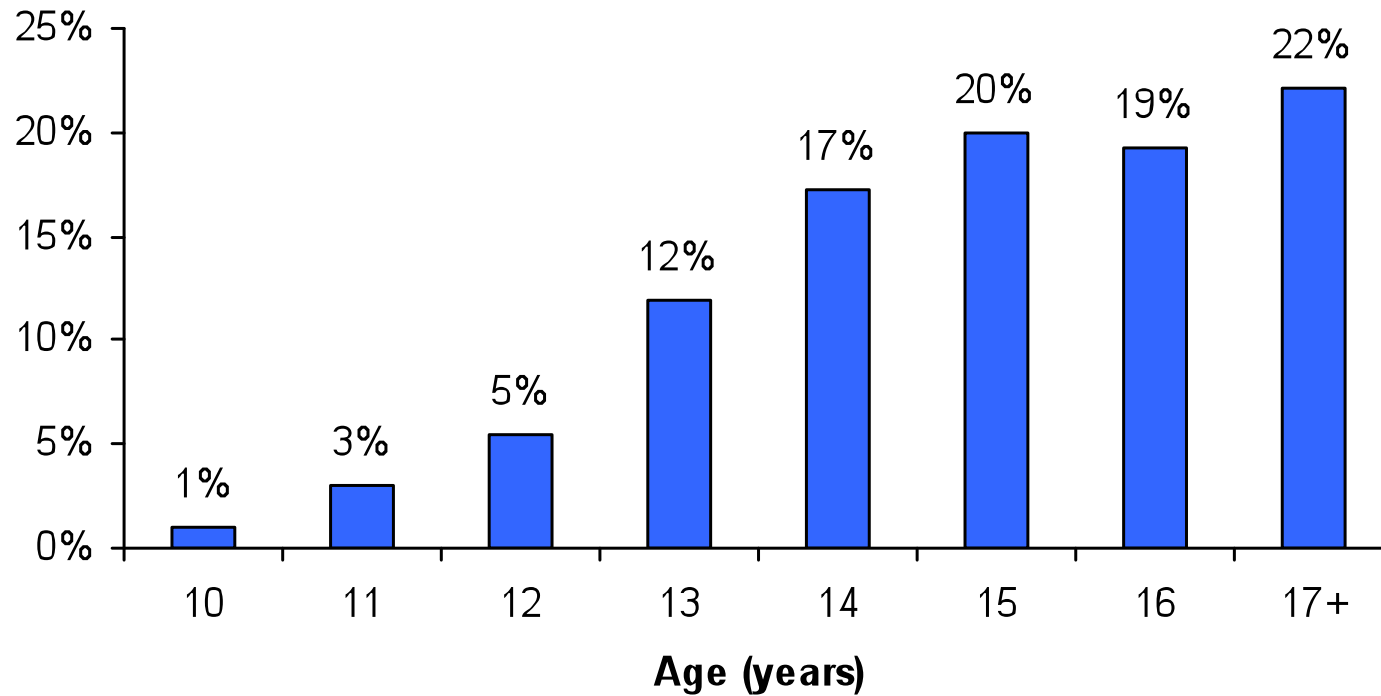
JJ supervision 2007-08

- 4,700 young people (10-17) under supervision on an average day (2.5 per 1,000)
 - 85% under community-based supervision
 - 15% in detention

JJ supervision

- 84% were males
- 50% were 14-16 years old
- 40% were Indigenous
 - 16 times as likely to be in JJ supervision

Age at first JJ supervision



Length of JJ supervision periods

- 6 months on average for each period (183 days)
- Multiple supervision periods
 - Half had one supervision period in 2007-08 (52%)
 - 16% had 4 or more periods

Juvenile justice and social exclusion

- Among young offenders...
 - mental health problems, behavioural disorders, substance abuse
 - poor physical health, higher mortality
 - low educational attainment, high financial stress
 - history of childhood abuse and neglect
 - vulnerable to continued and more serious offending later in life

(Kenny et al. 2006; Prichard & Payne 2005; Stewart et al. 2002)

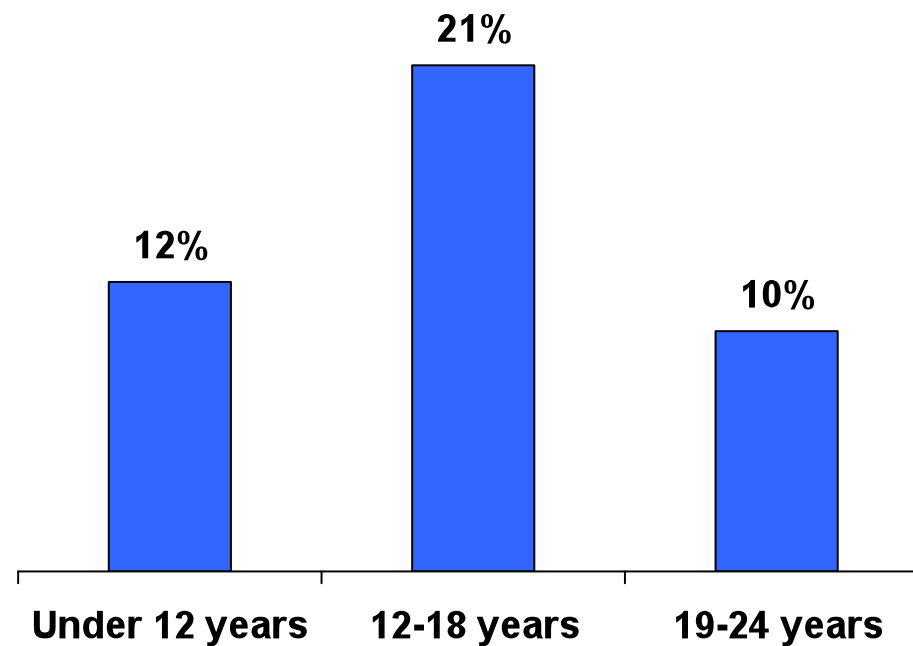
- Priorities of Australia's Social Inclusion Agenda

Homelessness

Homelessness in 2006

- 45,000 homeless aged under 25
- 43% of homeless population

Proportion of total homeless population



Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) 2008-09

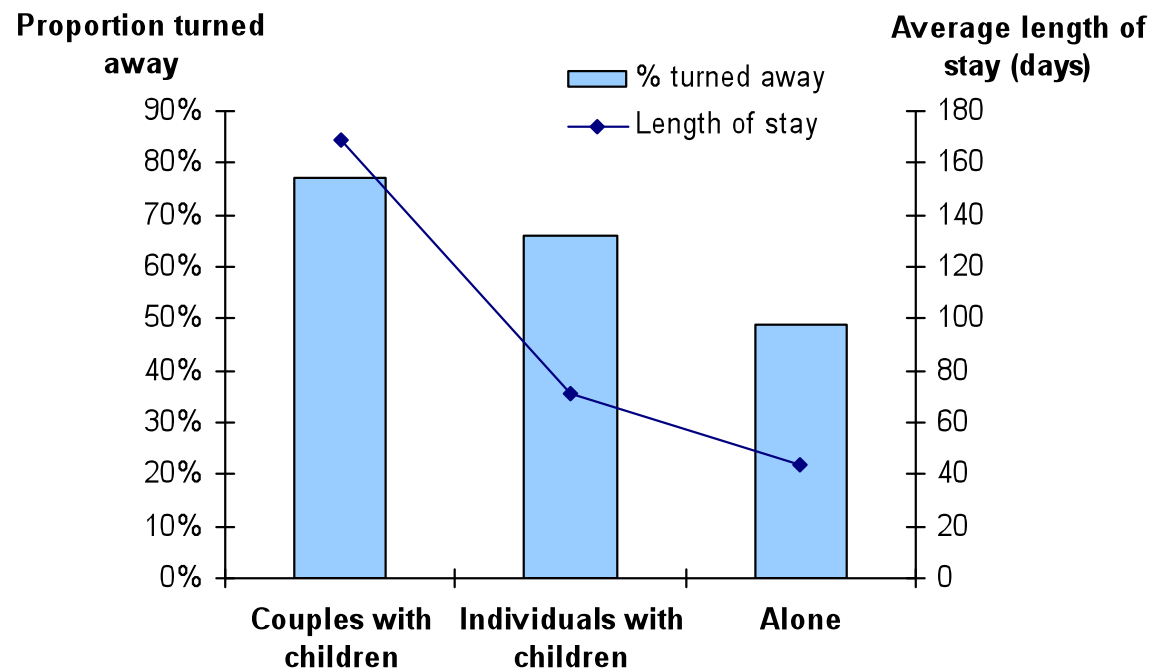
- 46,000 SAAP clients aged under 25
 - 36% of all SAAP clients
 - Mostly females in this age group (64%)
- A further 79,000 accompanying children (under 18)

Main reasons for seeking SAAP assistance

- Family breakdown and interpersonal conflict
 - 66% of females with children (largely domestic violence)
 - 61% of lone females under 25
 - 42% of lone males under 25
- Accommodation issues
 - 44% of couples with children
 - 35% of males with children

SAAP accommodation turn-away 2007-08

- 241 people were turned away each day (average)
 - Families had higher turn-away and longer stays



Homelessness and social exclusion

- Among homeless children and young people...
 - mental health problems, behavioural disorders, social isolation
 - poor health, risky behaviours
 - poor/disrupted access to education, employment, health care and social services
 - intergenerational cycle(Karim et al. 2006; Moore et al. 2007; Yu et al. 2008)
- A priority of Australia's Social Inclusion Agenda

**What else would we like to
know about children and
youth at risk?**

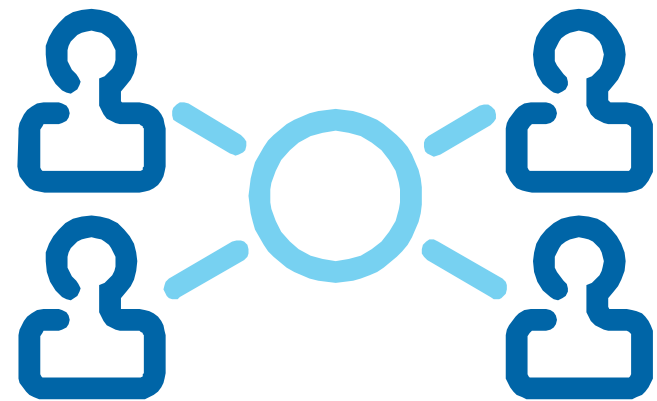
‘At risk’ children and youth

- Complex populations
- Pathways/connections across sectors
- National data needed to inform social inclusion policy and targeted interventions



Major work in progress

- Unit record data collection: child protection
- Indicators under CP national framework
- National data linkage between Child protection, Juvenile justice and SAAP



Future directions

- Better data for better outcomes
 - Comparability
 - Completeness
 - Longitudinal aspect

For further information...

www.aihw.gov.au