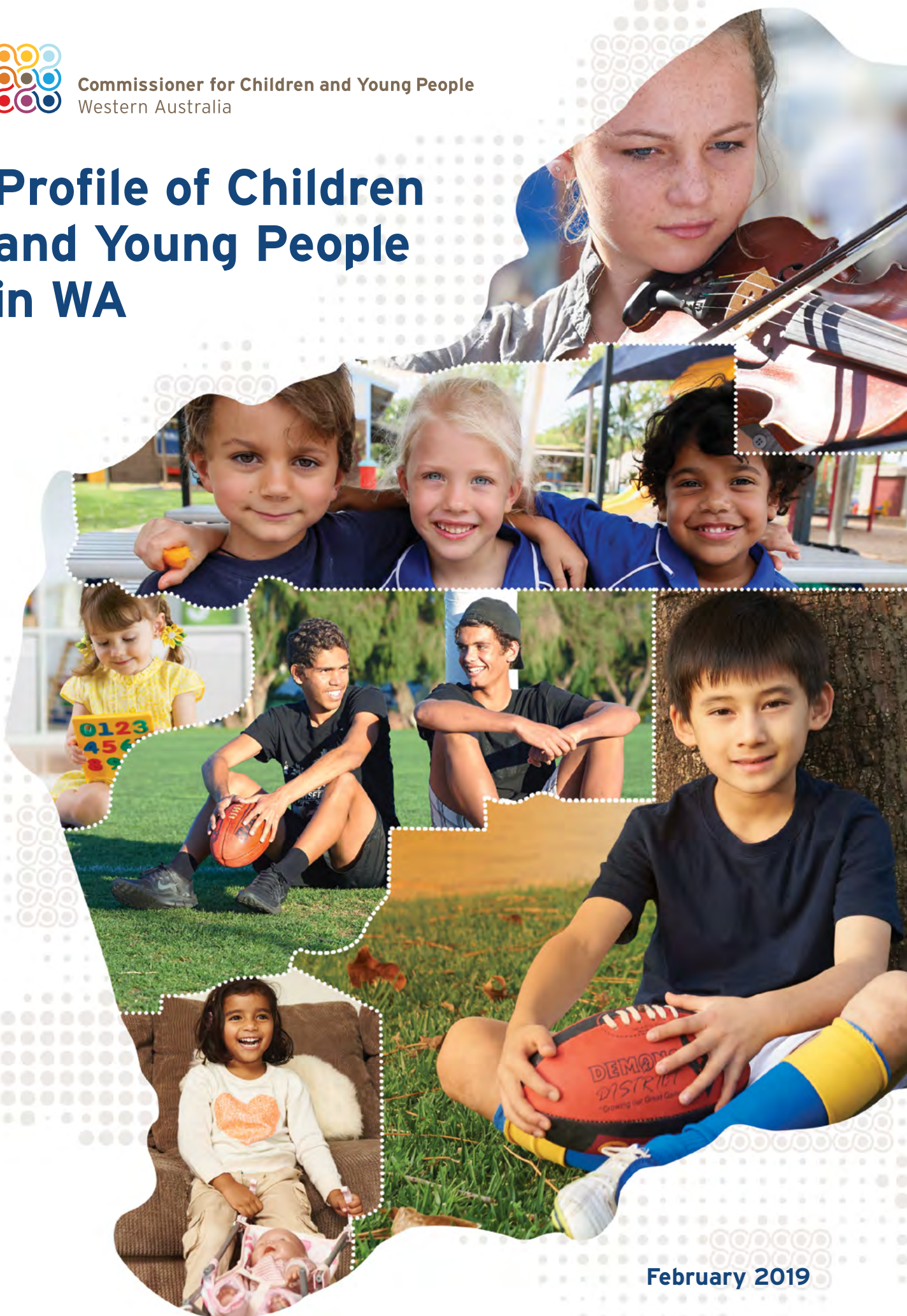




Commissioner for Children and Young People
Western Australia

Profile of Children and Young People in WA



February 2019



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Recognising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People

The Commissioner for Children and Young People WA acknowledges the unique culture and heritage of our Aboriginal peoples and the contributions Aboriginal peoples have made and continue to make to Western Australian society. For the purposes of this publication, the term 'Aboriginal' is intended to encompass the diverse cultures and identities of the First Peoples of Western Australia and also recognises those of Torres Strait Islander descent who call Western Australia home.

Suggested citation

Commissioner for Children and Young People 2019, *Profile of Children and Young People in WA - January 2019*, Commissioner for Children and Young People WA, Perth.

Alternative formats

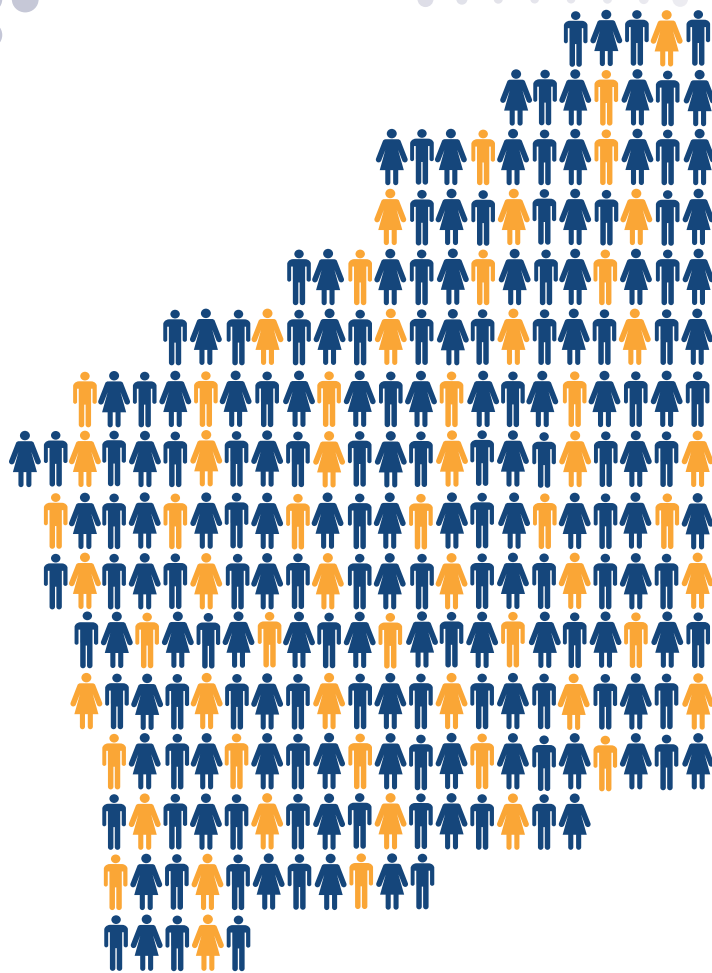
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Subiaco WA 6008
Telephone: (08) 6213 2297
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Email: info@ccyp.wa.gov.au
Web: ccyp.wa.gov.au

ISBN: 978-0-6482876-9-8



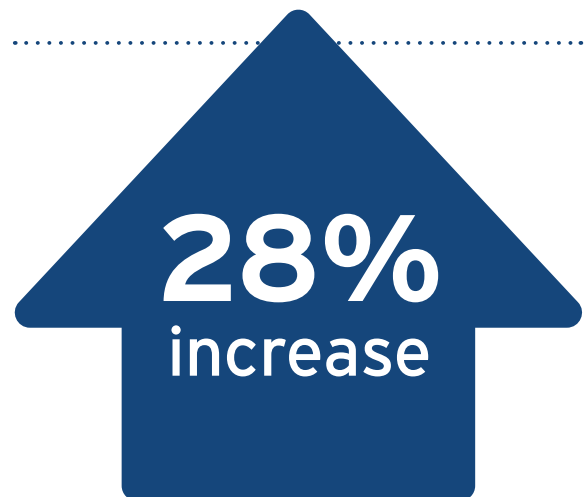
Western Australia's children and young people



Approximately

593,000

children and young people live in Western Australia and make up **23 per cent** of the state's population.

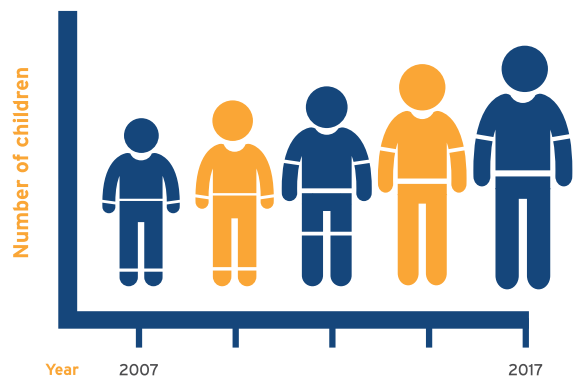


Poverty line

Around

44,000

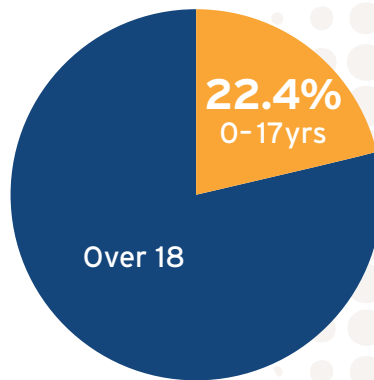
children and young people are living below the poverty line in WA.



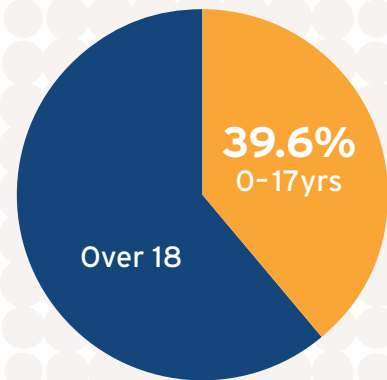
In the last 10 years, there has been a 28 per cent increase in the number of children aged 0 to 5 years living in WA.

Aboriginal children and young people

There are about **40,000** Aboriginal children and young people aged under 18 years living in WA. Children and young people aged under 18 years make up **39.6 per cent** of the total WA Aboriginal population.



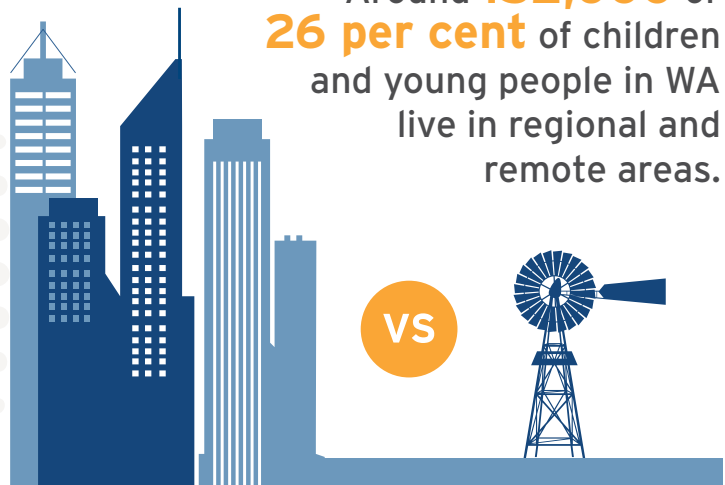
WA non-Aboriginal population



WA Aboriginal population



There were **34,768 births** registered in WA during 2017.



Around **152,000** or **26 per cent** of children and young people in WA live in regional and remote areas.

The number of WA children and young people is projected to increase by **91 per cent** to over **1.2 million** by 2058.

91%
increase
by 2058





Population

Western Australia is home to more than 593,000 children and young people, which is 23.1 per cent of WA's total population.

Between June 2016 and June 2017, the number of children and young people in WA increased by 0.8 per cent (Table 1).

Table 1: Children and young people aged 0 to 17 years: number and in per cent, WA and Australia, 2016 and 2017

	2017	Proportion of state/ national population	Proportion of Australia's children and young people	2016	Increase from 2016 to 2017
	Number	Per cent	Per cent	Number	Per cent
WA	593,643	23.1	10.8	588,868	0.8
Australia*	5,503,275	22.4	100.0	5,438,943	1.2

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics 2018, 3101.0 – Australian Demographic Statistics, December 2017

* Figure includes other territories comprising Jervis Bay Territory, Christmas Island and the Cocos (Keeling) Islands.

From 2007 to 2017, the number of 0 to 17 year-olds in WA increased by more than 88,000 or 17.5 per cent. The strongest increase (27.9%) occurred in the early childhood age group of 0 to five years – the result of a high birth rate in recent years (Table 2).

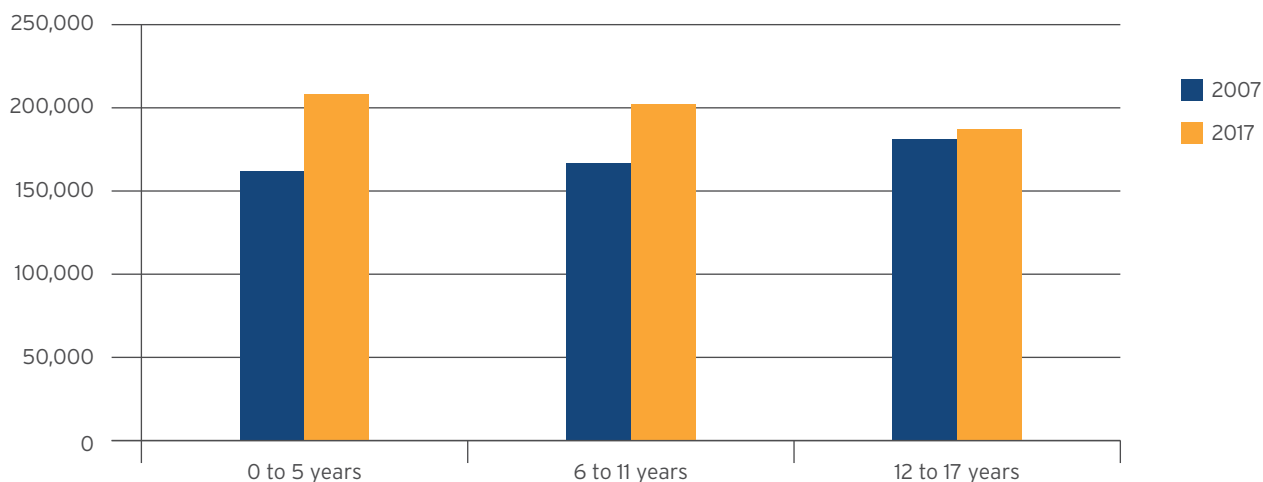
Table 2: Children and young people aged 0 to 17 years by age group: number and in per cent, WA, 2007 and 2017

	2017	2017 proportion of total	2007	2007 proportion of total	Increase from 2007 to 2017
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Per cent
0 to 5 years	207,752	35.0	162,469	32.2	27.9
6 to 11 years	203,087	34.2	166,662	33.0	21.8
12 to 17 years	182,804	30.8	176,085	34.9	3.8
Total 0 to 17 years	593,643	100.0	505,216	100.0	17.5

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics 2018, 3101.0 Australian Demographic Statistics, June 2017

Population

Figure 1: Population of children and young people aged 0 to 17 years by age group: number, WA, 2007 and 2017



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics 2018, *Australian Demographic Statistics*, June 2017, cat. no. 3101.0

The WA population of children and young people started to increase significantly a decade ago and the trajectory has continued. The first of this cohort of children are now in primary school and will be entering high school over the next five years.

Aboriginal children and young people

There are approximately 40,000 Aboriginal children and young people under 18 in WA. The proportion of children and young people in the Aboriginal population is almost double that of the proportion of children and young people in the non-Aboriginal population (39.6% compared to 22.4%).¹

Around 58 per cent of Aboriginal children and young people aged 0 to 19 years live outside the Perth metropolitan area, compared to 20 per cent of non-Aboriginal children and young people.²

Gender

The gender distribution of children and young people in WA is 51.2 per cent male and 48.8 per cent female, which is consistent with most Australian states and territories and the national distribution.³

Geographical distribution

The geographical distribution of children and young people across WA remains largely unchanged. In 2017, around 74 per cent of the population of 0 to 17 year olds resided in metropolitan Perth, just under 17 per cent resided in regional areas and just under 10 per cent in remote areas of WA (Table 3).

There has been a small increase in the number of children and young people in WA between June 2016 and June 2017. The number of children and young people increased in the metropolitan area by 1.1 per cent, remained relatively stable in regional areas and there was a slight decrease in remote areas. Perth - South East and Perth - South West had the most significant increases in the number of children and young people (1.5% and 1.4% respectively), while the Gascoyne and Esperance had the largest decreases (3.2% and 2.5% respectively).

¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics 2018, *Estimates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians*, June 2016 cat. no. 3238.0, Estimated resident Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Non-Indigenous populations, States and Territories, Single year of age, Table 5 - Western Australia, viewed 3 September 2018.

² Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2016 Census TableBuilder, Cultural diversity and remoteness area.

³ Australian Bureau of Statistics 2018, *Australian Demographic Statistics*, Dec 2017, cat. no. 3101.0 [website], viewed 30 July 2017, <www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/3101.0Dec%202017?OpenDocument>.

Profile of Children and Young People in WA

Table 3: Geographical distribution of children aged 0 to 17 years: number, by age group, regions of WA, 2017

	0 to 5 years	6 to 11 years	12 to 17 years	Total 0 to 17 years	Increase or decrease - 2016 to 2017	Proportion of WA children
	<i>Number</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Per cent</i>	<i>Per cent</i>
Perth	137,692	167,802	135,773	441,267	1.1%	74.3%
Perth - South East	42,713	38,715	34,846	116,274	1.5%	19.6%
Perth - South West	29,341	40,014	30,487	99,842	1.4%	16.8%
Perth - North East	18,244	23,767	18,681	60,692	1.2%	10.2%
Perth - North West	38,491	52,066	40,757	131,314	0.5%	22.1%
Perth - Inner	8,903	13,240	11,002	33,145	1.0%	5.6%
WA regional	25,931	40,043	31,573	97,547	0.2%	16.4%
Mandurah	5,964	9,116	7,073	22,153	1.1%	3.7%
Bunbury ^(c)	11,700	17,897	14,731	44,328	-0.4%	7.5%
Wheatbelt ^(d)	8,267	13,030	9,769	31,066	0.4%	5.2%
WA remote	16,948	22,423	15,458	54,829	-0.6%	9.2%
Esperance	1,077	1,571	1,329	3,977	-2.5%	0.7%
Goldfields	3,434	4,187	2,921	10,542	-1.0%	1.8%
Mid West	3,587	5,302	4,321	13,210	-1.4%	2.2%
Gascoyne	654	964	621	2,239	-3.2%	0.4%
Pilbara	4,952	6,118	3,403	14,473	1.2%	2.4%
Kimberley	3,244	4,281	2,863	10,388	-0.4%	1.7%
Total WA	180,571	230,268	182,804	593,643	0.8%	100.0%

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics 2018, *Estimated Resident Population (ERP), Customised Report June 2017 and June 2016* (unpublished)

Notes:

- (a) Totals may not add up to 100 per cent due to rounding.
- (b) In order to provide a detailed picture of the geographical distribution of children and young people across WA, Statistical Area Level 4 (SA4) was chosen to represent areas within Perth and regional WA and Statistical Area Level 3 (SA3) for remote areas. For more information on these areas see Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS)* at [www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/D3310114.nsf/home/Australian+Statistical+Geography+Standard+\(ASGS\)](http://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/D3310114.nsf/home/Australian+Statistical+Geography+Standard+(ASGS))
- (c) Includes Busselton, Margaret River, Augusta and Manjimup.
- (d) Includes Albany, Wheatbelt North and Wheatbelt South.

Births

After experiencing a falling total fertility rate from the 1960s, the WA fertility rate increased in the 2000s to reach 2.095 babies per woman in 2008. Since 2008, the WA total fertility rate has again declined and is at 1.874 babies per woman in 2016.⁴

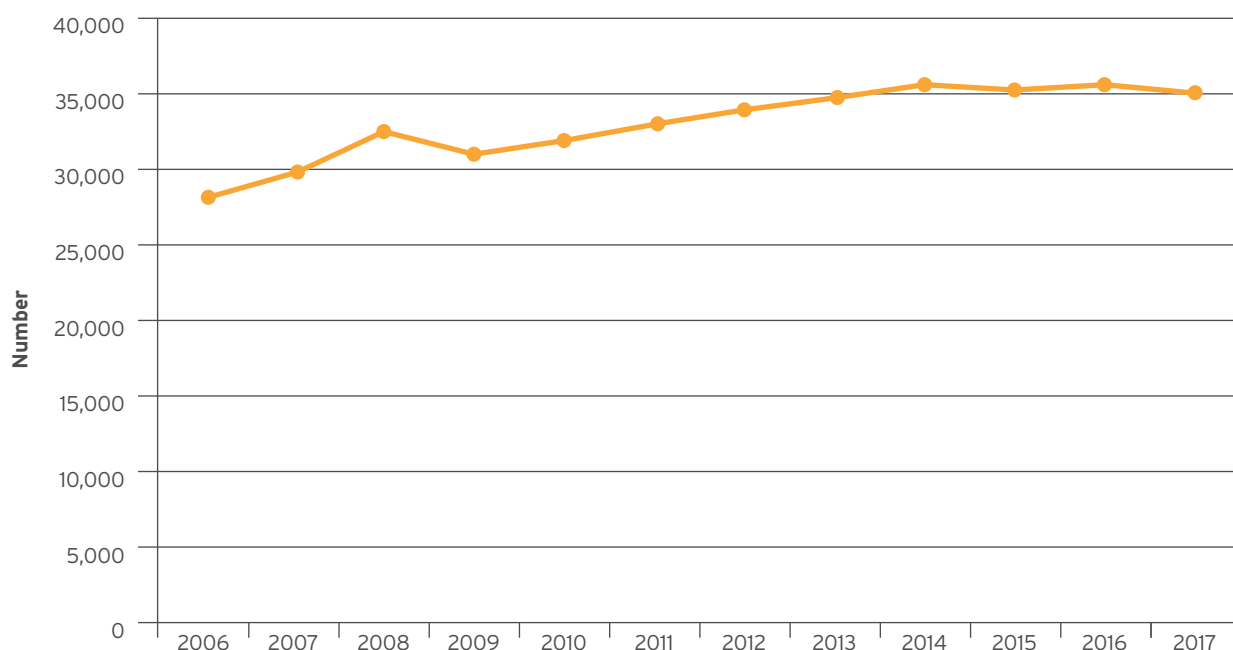
The number of births registered in 2017 (34,768) has decreased slightly by 2.5 per cent compared to 2016 (35,652) (Figure 2).⁵

⁴ Australian Bureau of Statistics 2018, 3301.0 *Births, Australia, 2016*, ABS.Stat, Fertility by age, by state [website], viewed 3 October 2018, <http://stat.data.abs.gov.au/Index.aspx?DatasetCode=FERTILITY_AGE_STATE>.

⁵ WA Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages 2018, Statistics [website], viewed 30 July 2018, <<https://bdm.justice.wa.gov.au/S/statistics.aspx?uid=4567-3246-1975-5827>>.

Population

Figure 2: Number of births: WA, 2006 to 2017



Source: WA Registry of Births Deaths and Marriages, statistics

The median age of all mothers for births registered in 2016 was 30.9 years (an increase on the median age of 30.4 recorded in 2006), while the median age of fathers was 33 years (also a slight increase on the median age of 32.9 recorded in 2006).⁶

There were 2,768 births (7.8% of all births) registered in WA during 2016 where at least one parent recorded themselves as Aboriginal on their child's birth registration form. The median age of Aboriginal women who registered a birth was 24.9 years, six years less than the median age of all mothers (30.9 years).⁷



The majority of Aboriginal mothers giving birth (31.4%) are aged 20 to 24 years. In comparison, the majority of non-Aboriginal mothers giving birth (36.9%) are aged 30 to 34 years of age (Figure 3).

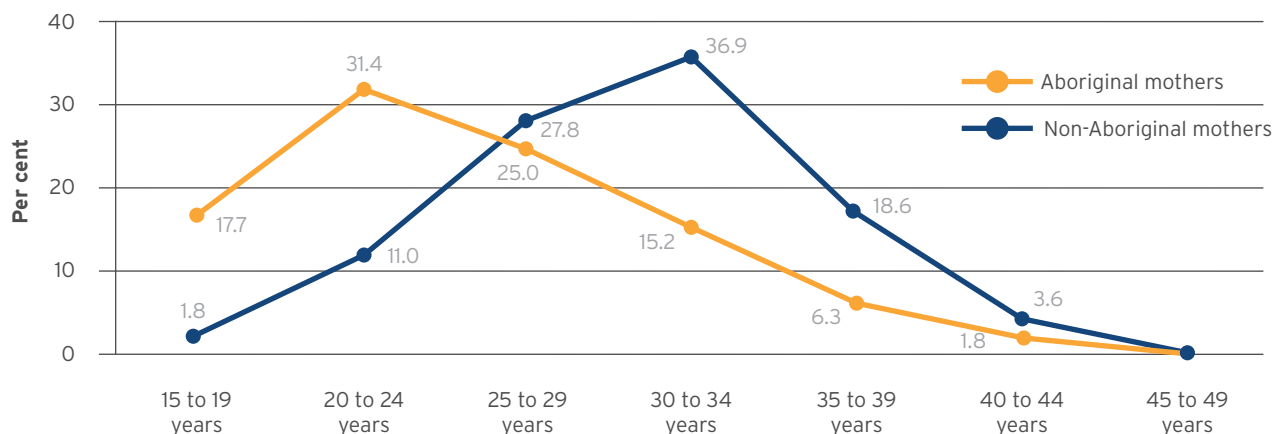
Over the past decade, the total number of births in the 15 to 19 year-old cohort has declined by 33 per cent, from 1,485 in 2007 to 999 in 2016. However, the number of births to Aboriginal mothers in the same age cohort has increased from 377 in 2007 to 391 in 2016. This is nevertheless a decrease from the previous year (415 births).⁸

⁶ Australian Bureau of Statistics 2017, 3301.0 Births, Australia, 2016, cat. no. 3301.0, ABS.Stat Dataset, 'Confinements, by nuptiality, by state' [website], viewed 25 July 2018, <http://stat.data.abs.gov.au/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=CONFINEMENTS_NUPTIALITY>.

⁷ Australian Bureau of Statistics 2017, *Births, Australia*, 2016, cat. no. 3301.0, ABS.Stat Dataset, 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander fertility, by age, by state' [website], viewed 5 October 2018, <http://stat.data.abs.gov.au/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=ATSI_FERTILITY>.

⁸ Ibid.

Figure 3: Proportion of overall births: in per cent, by Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal mothers and age group, WA, 2016



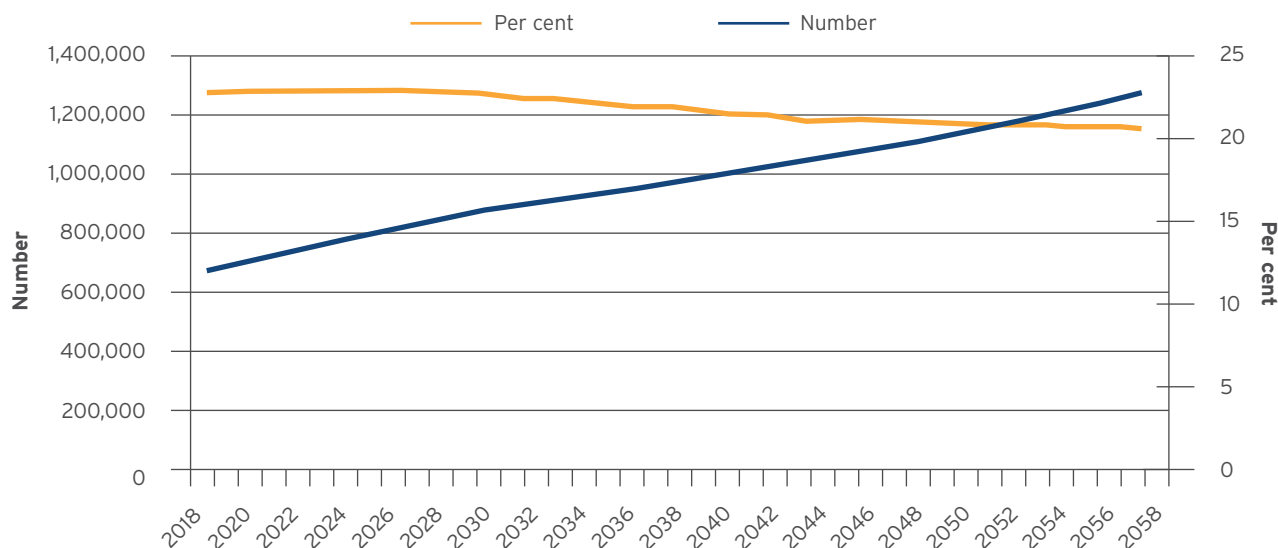
Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics 2017, *Births, Australia, 2016*, cat. no. 3301.0

Projected growth

The ABS projects that from 2018 to 2058, WA's population will more than double to reach over 6.1 million people.⁹ This is expected to be the largest percentage increase across Australia.¹⁰

The number of children and young people is projected to increase by 91 per cent, to just over 1.2 million by 2058.¹¹ Most of this growth is expected to occur in Perth, with smaller population increases in regional areas. However, the proportion of children and young people in the overall population is projected to decrease due to Australia's ageing population (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Projected number and percentage of children and young people aged 0 to 17 years: WA, 2018 to 2058



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics 2013, 3222.0 - *Population Projections, Australia: Time Series*, TABLE B5. Population projections, by age and sex, Western Australia - Series B

⁹ Australian Bureau of Statistics 2013, 3222.0 - *Population Projections, Australia: Time Series*, TABLE B5. Population projections, By age and sex, Western Australia - Series B [website], viewed 13 September 2018 <[www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/3222.02012%20\(base\)%20to%2020101?OpenDocument](http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/3222.02012%20(base)%20to%2020101?OpenDocument)>.

¹⁰ Australian Bureau of Statistics 2013, 3222.0 - *Population Projections, Australia* [website], viewed 25 July 2018, <[www.ausstats.abs.gov.au/ausstats/subscriber.nsf/0/13D196FB0DBECC3BCA257C2E00173FAD/\\$File/3222.0_2012%20\(base\)%20to%2020101.pdf](http://www.ausstats.abs.gov.au/ausstats/subscriber.nsf/0/13D196FB0DBECC3BCA257C2E00173FAD/$File/3222.0_2012%20(base)%20to%2020101.pdf)>.

¹¹ Ibid.



**Education,
care and home**

Childhood and care

Almost 50 per cent (47.6%) of WA children aged less than two years and 61.9 per cent of children aged two to three years attend some form of non-parental care.¹² Child care arrangements become less common once children commence formal schooling (Table 4).

Table 4: Type of care attended by children aged 0 to 12 years: number and in per cent, by age group and type of care arrangement, WA, 2017

	Under 2 years		2 to 3 years		4 to 5 years		6 to 12 years	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
Usually attended care	31,300	47.6	45,600	61.9	38,000	55.5	97,000	41.3
Formal care only*	9,400 ^(a)	14.3 ^(a)	18,100	24.6	9,000	13.1	14,700	6.3
Informal care only**	14,300	21.7	11,400	15.5	21,800	31.8	77,600	33.0
Both formal and informal care	7,500 ^(a)	11.4 ^(a)	15,400	20.9	5,500 ^(a)	8.0 ^(a)	3,700 ^(a)	1.6 ^(a)
No usual care arrangement	36,200	55.0	24,300	33.0	34,300	50.1	139,500	59.4
Total	65,800		73,700		68,500		234,800	

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics 2018, *Childhood Education and Care, Australia, June 2017*, cat. no. 4402.0

* Includes formal care such as long day care, family day care, before and/or after school care and other.

** Includes informal care provided by a relative such as grandparent, non-resident parent, brother/sister or other relative.

Notes:

(a) Estimate has a relative standard error of 25% to 50% and should be used with caution.

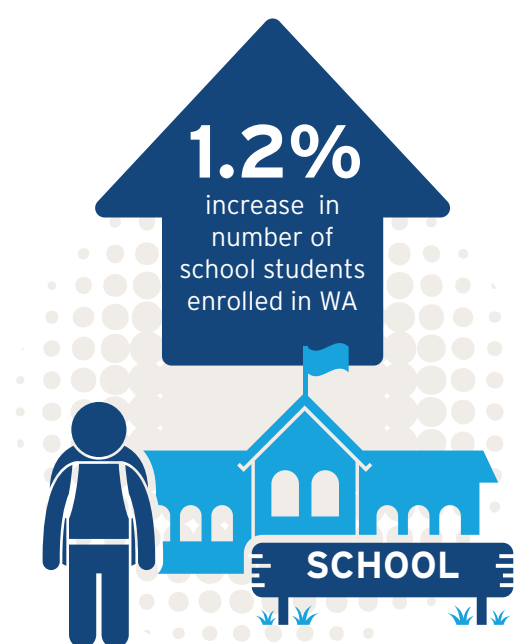
(b) The totals in the above table do not sum. The ABS states: Cells in this table have been randomly adjusted to avoid the release of confidential data. Discrepancies may occur between sums of the component items and totals.

School education

More than two-thirds of WA students are educated in government schools.

Between Semester 1 2017 and Semester 1 2018, the number of school students enrolled in WA rose slightly from 449,742 to 455,333, an increase of 1.2 per cent. Government schools remained the largest provider of school education in WA. In government schools, student numbers increased by 1.7 per cent, while in non-government schools numbers increased by 0.2 per cent (Table 5).

There were 30,247 Aboriginal students enrolled in Semester 1 2018, representing 6.6 per cent of all students.¹³



¹² Includes formal care (e.g. long day care, family day care) and informal care (e.g. care provided by a relative).

¹³ WA Department of Education 2018, Summary Statistics of Schools and Full-Time Students, 'Aboriginal student numbers by Education Sector and Education Region' [website], viewed 30 July 2018, <www.det.wa.edu.au/schoolinformation/detcms/navigation/statistical-reports/?page=2>.

Education, care and home

Table 5: Students in government and non-government schools: number, by year level, WA, Semester 1 2018

	Kindergarten	Pre-primary	Years 1 to 6	Years 7 to 12	Total	Difference 2017 to 2018
	<i>Number</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Per cent</i>
Government	24,644	25,953	149,548	107,375	307,520	1.7
Non-government	10,293	8,674	56,239	72,607	147,813	0.2
Total	34,937	34,627	205,787	179,982	455,333	1.2

Source: WA Department of Education 2018, *Summary Statistics of Schools and Full-Time Students*, <<http://det.wa.edu.au/schoolinformation/detcms/navigation/statistical-reports/?page=1#toc1>>

The Perth metropolitan area comprising the North and South Metropolitan education regions totals 359,655 students, which is 79 per cent of all students in WA. Around 10 per cent of students attended schools in the South West education region.

Across the education regions, student numbers slightly fluctuated from 2017 to 2018, with the Wheatbelt and the Mid West recording decreases of 2.6 and 3.3 per cent respectively, while the Pilbara and both metropolitan regions recorded increases (Table 6).

Table 6: Students in government and non-government schools: number, by year level, education regions of WA, Semester 1, 2018

	Kindergarten and Pre-primary	Years 1 to 6	Years 7 to 12	Total students	Proportion of all students	Difference 2017 to 2018
	<i>Number</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Per cent</i>	<i>Per cent</i>
Goldfields	1,697	5,045	3,924	10,666	2.3	-1.9
Kimberley	1,252	3,879	2,572	7,703	1.7	2.5
Mid West	1,735	5,775	4,616	12,126	2.7	-3.3
North Metropolitan	26,497	78,173	74,040	178,710	39.2	1.3
Pilbara	1,917	5,193	3,175	10,285	2.3	2.0
South Metropolitan	28,416	82,399	70,130	180,945	39.7	2.0
South West	6,226	19,965	17,909	44,100	9.7	0.3
Wheatbelt	1,824	5,358	3,616	10,798	2.4	-2.6
Total	69,564	205,787	179,982	455,333	100.0	1.2

Source: WA Department of Education 2018, *Summary Statistics of Schools and Full-Time Students*, <<http://det.wa.edu.au/schoolinformation/detcms/navigation/statistical-reports/?page=1#toc2>>

Family composition

There are almost 380,000 households with children in WA, and more than one-half have children under the age of 15.

The most recent ABS Census data shows there are almost 380,000 households with one or more children¹⁴ in WA.¹⁵

About 164,000 or 43 per cent of these households are couple families with children under the age of 15, and about 35,000 or nine per cent are single-parent families with children under the age of 15.

In addition, more than 51,000 households are either couple or single-parent families with children under 15 years as well as 15 years and over (Table 7).

The vast majority of single parents in WA are female (81.7%).¹⁶

Table 7: Households with children: number, by family composition, WA, 2016

Family type	Number	Per cent
Couple families with children	289,583	76.3
Couples with children aged under 15 years	164,130	43.3
Couples with children aged both under 15 years and 15 years and over	40,177	10.6
Couples with children aged 15 years and over	85,276	22.5
Single-parent families with children	89,718	23.7
Single parents with children under 15 years	35,108	9.3
Single parents with children aged both under 15 years and 15 years and over	10,906	2.9
Single parents with children aged 15 years and over	43,704	11.5
Total households with children	379,301	100.0

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Census of Population and Housing 2016*, figures compiled by .id, the population experts, <<https://profile.id.com.au/australia/households-with-children?WebID=140&submissionGuid=213c4d35-1d44-4dc8-b22b-bda2b3f1c99f>>

¹⁴ Children include either children under 15 (dependent by definition), dependent students aged 15-24, or independent children who are either non-students aged 15-24, or anyone over the age of 25 (a parent-child relationship must exist in the household).

¹⁵ Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Census of Population and Housing 2011 and 2016*, figures compiled by .id, the population experts [website], viewed 13 September 2018, <<https://profile.id.com.au/australia/households?submissionGuid=9dbbb924-361d-46d3-9573-e4bc54a1fce6&WebID=140>>.

¹⁶ ABS Census 2016, Quick Data, WA [website], viewed 15 October 2018, <http://quickstats.censusdata.abs.gov.au/census_services/getproduct/census/2016/quickstat/5?opendocument>.

Education, care and home



Housing

There are around 6,892 children and young people on the public housing wait list.

About two-thirds (68.7%) of dwellings in WA are owner-occupied and one-third (28.6%) are rented. Among those households that are rented, around 3 per cent are State Government rental dwellings (Table 8).

From 2005-06 to 2015-16, the proportion of WA dwellings owned without a mortgage reduced by 1.2 per cent and the proportion of dwellings rented from a private landlord increased by 3.8 per cent.

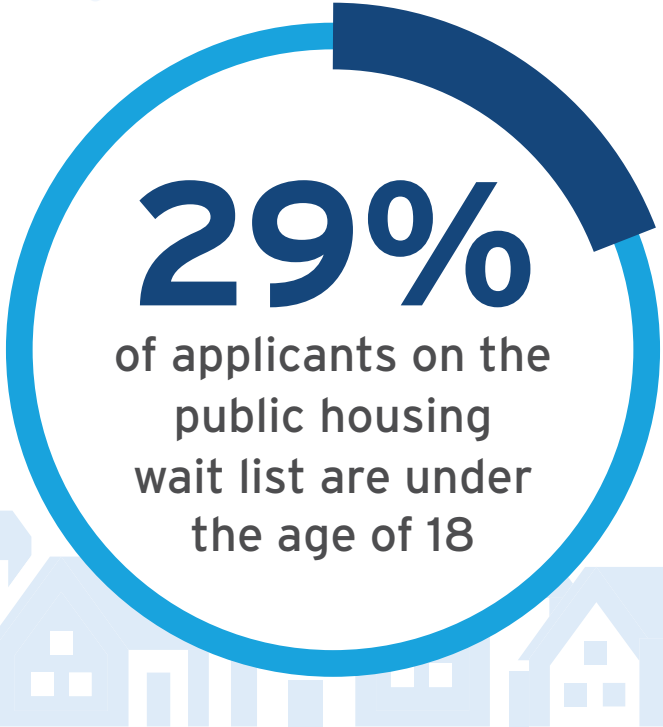
Table 8: Occupied dwellings: in per cent, by tenure and landlord type, Western Australia, 2005-06, 2013-14 and 2015-16

	2005-06	2013-14	2015-16	Change 2005-06 to 2015-16
Total owners	69.6	68.1	68.7	-0.9
Owners without a mortgage	29.8	28.3	28.6	-1.2
Owners with a mortgage	39.8	39.8	40.0	0.2
Total renters	26.9	29.4	28.6	1.7
State Government landlord	4.0	3.1	3.1	-0.9
Private landlord	20.2	24.5	24.0	3.8
Other tenure types	3.5	2.5	2.7	N/A
All households	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics 2017, *Housing Occupancy and Costs*, 2015-16, cat. no. 4130.0

Data provided by the Department of Communities (Housing) shows as at 30 June 2018, there were 13,912 applications or 23,637 applicants on the public housing wait list. Of the 23,637 applicants, almost 30 per cent (6,892) are under the age of 18 (Table 9).

Education, care and home



29%
of applicants on the
public housing
wait list are under
the age of 18

Table 9: Applicants on public housing wait list: number, overall and under the age of 18, WA, 30 June 2016, 2017 and 2018

	Applications	Applicants	Applicants under 18	Proportion of all applicants
	<i>Number</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Per cent</i>
30 June 2016	18,530	36,167	11,963	33.1
30 June 2017	16,516	29,544	9,070	30.7
30 June 2018	13,912	23,637	6,892	29.1

Source: Department of Communities (Housing) 2018, data as at 30 June 2016, 2017 and 2018, custom report (unpublished)

Children and young people under 18 are considered applicants when their parent(s) or guardians are applying for housing to accommodate them. In a small number of cases the young person (aged 16 to 17 years) can be applying in their own right.

Profile of Children and Young People in WA

Table 10: Children and young people under 18 years on public housing wait list: number of applications and applicants, WA, 30 June 2016, 2017 and 2018

	Applications	Applicants
	<i>Number</i>	<i>Number</i>
30 June 2016	6,058	11,963
30 June 2017	4,532	9,070
30 June 2018	3,311	6,892

Source: Department of Communities (Housing) 2018, data as at 30 June 2016, 2017 and 2018, custom report (unpublished)

During 2017-18, 3,511 households were accommodated in public housing. On average, households waited 113 weeks to be housed.¹⁷ There has been a decrease in the number of children and young people on the public housing wait list over the last three years (Table 10).

Table 11: Children and young people under the age of 18 on public housing wait list: number, by dwelling requirement* WA, 30 June 2018

Dwelling requirement	Applications	Applicants
Singles - 1 BR (bedroom)	78	80
Singles - 2 BR	4	4
Seniors - 2 BR	1	1
Family - 2 BR	1,591	1,905
Family - 3 BR	873	2,086
Family - 4 BR	526	1,846
Family - 5+ BR	212	922
To be determined	26	48
Total	3,311	6,892

Source: Department of Communities (Housing) 2018, custom report (unpublished)

* 'Dwelling Requirement' does not always correspond with the family structure of the application. Caution is recommended when using this field. The WA Housing Authority is investigating a more accurate solution to identify family structure.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics 2016 Census reported that at least 1,949 WA children and young people are homeless.¹⁸ This figure is known to be underestimated due to the often hidden nature of youth homelessness.¹⁹

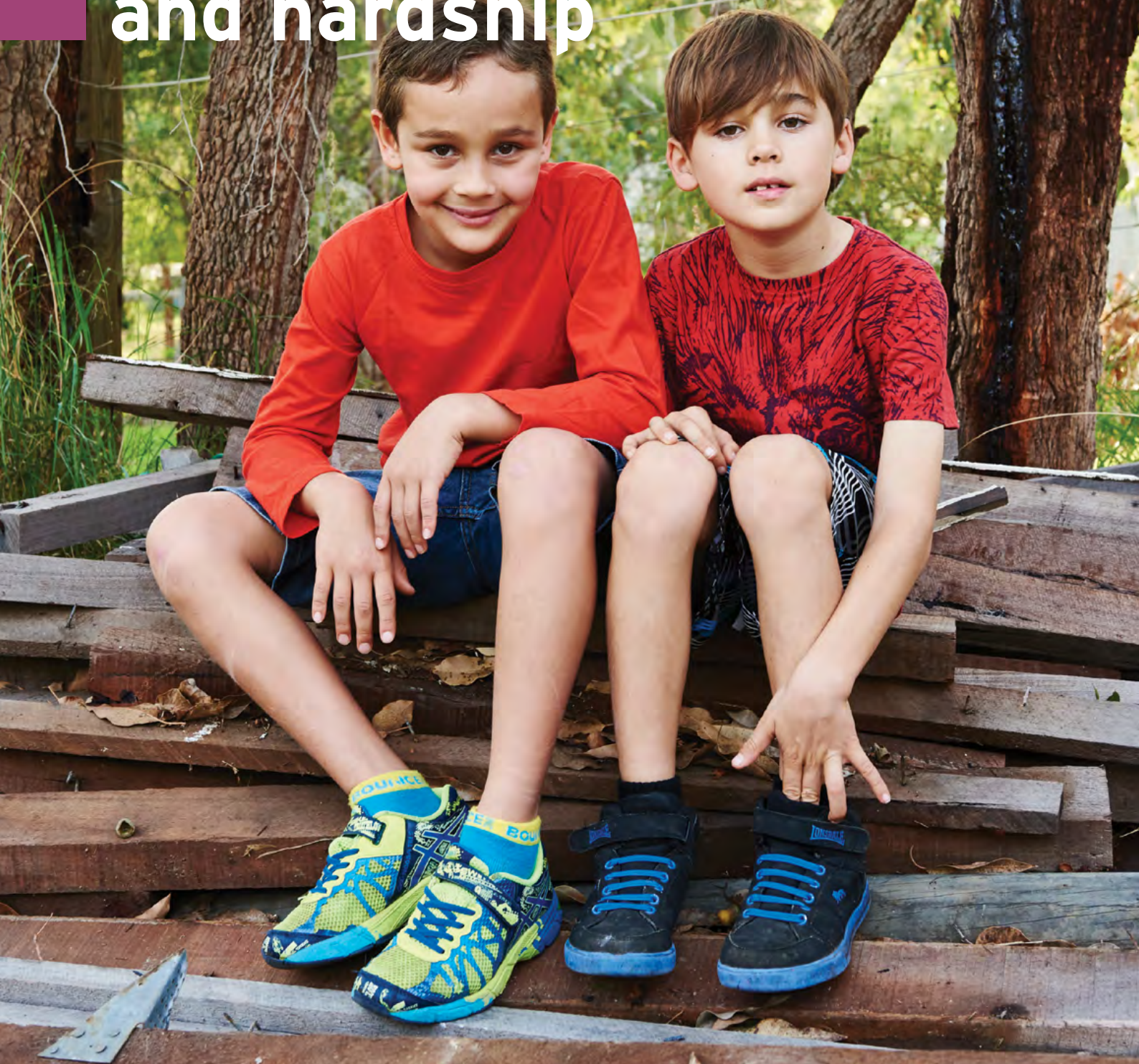
¹⁷ Department of Communities 2018, *2017-18 Annual Report* [website], viewed 22 October 2018, <<https://www.communities.wa.gov.au/media/1350/departments-of-communities-annual-report-2017-18.pdf>>.

¹⁸ Australian Bureau of Statistics 2018, 2049.0 - Census of Population and Housing: Estimating homelessness, 2016, Homeless Operational Groups and Other Marginal Housing, Western Australia-Sex by age of person-2016 [website], viewed 13 September 2018, <<http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/2049.02016?OpenDocument>>.

¹⁹ Australian Bureau of Statistics 2018, 2049.0 - Census of Population and Housing: Estimating homelessness, 2016, Explanatory Notes [website], viewed 13 September 2018, <<http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/exnote/2049.0>>.



Vulnerability and hardship



Children and young people in the youth justice system

Aboriginal children and young people continue to be over-represented in both the out-of-home care and youth justice systems.

In 2017 there were 732 children and young people under youth justice supervision, 66 per cent of whom were Aboriginal. From 2015-16 to 2016-17, the number of children and young people in the youth justice system increased by 6.1 per cent (Table 12).

Between 2012-13 and 2016-17, the rate of young people aged 10 to 17 years under youth justice supervision on an average night in WA has fallen.²⁰ The rate of young people aged 10 to 17 years in detention on an average night in WA has remained relatively stable from June 2014 to June 2018.²¹

Table 12: Children and young people aged 10 to 17 under youth justice supervision - community and detention on an average day: number, WA and Australia, 2015-16 and 2016-17

	2015-16		2016-17	
	WA	Australia	WA	Australia
Community	561	4,036	596	3,932
Detention	131	789	137	786
Total	690	4,821	732	4,717

Source: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW), *Youth justice in Australia 2015-16*; *Youth justice in Australia 2016-17*

Note: The number of young people on an average day may not sum due to rounding, and because some young people may have been moved between community-based supervision and detention on the same day.

Female children and young people are significantly less likely to be under youth justice supervision. On an average day in 2017, 16.8 per cent of children and young people under community supervision were female and 5.8 per cent of children and young people in detention were female.²²

In 2017, AIHW released an analysis of young people aged 10 to 16 years in child protection²³ and under youth justice supervision. They found that compared with 3.3 per cent of the general Australian population in the child protection system, 30.2 per cent of those under youth justice supervision in WA were also in the child protection system.²⁴

²⁰ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2018, *Youth Justice in Australia 2016-17*, Cat. no. JUV 116, AIHW, p. 29.

²¹ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2018, *Youth Detention population in Australia - 2018*, Bulletin 145, December 2018, Cat. No. JUV 128, AIHW.

²² Australian Institute of Health and Welfare *Youth justice in Australia 2016-17*, Supplementary Tables: Western Australia.

²³ Child protection data includes investigated notifications, children under care and protection orders and children in out-of-home care (AIHW, *Youth justice in Australia 2016-17*, p. 2-3).

²⁴ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2017, *Young people in child protection and under youth justice supervision 2015-16*, Data linkage series no. 23, Cat. No. CSI 25, Data Tables: Table S3, Canberra, AIHW.

Vulnerability and hardship

Children and young people in out-of-home care

On 30 June 2017, there were 4,795 children and young people in out-of-home care in WA, more than half of whom (54%) were Aboriginal. From 2016 to 2017, the total number of children and young people in care increased by 137, or 2.9 per cent.

Of the 137 additional children and young people in care, 123 (or 89.8%) were Aboriginal.

Table 13: Children and young people aged 0 to 17 years in out-of-home care: number, by age group and Aboriginal status, WA, 30 June 2016 and 2017

	2016			2017		
	Aboriginal	Non-Aboriginal	Total	Aboriginal	Non-Aboriginal	Total
Less than 1 year	105	73	178	93	60	153
1 to 4 years	576	455	1,031	584	454	1038
5 to 9 years	838	677	1,515	875	677	1552
10 to 14 years	700	627	1,327	776	656	1432
15 to 17 years	261	346	607	275	345	620
Total	2,480	2,178	4,658	2,603	2,192	4,795

Source: Department for Child Protection and Family Support 2017, *Annual Report 2016-17*, p. 43; Department for Child Protection and Family Support 2016, *Annual Report 2015-16*, p. 124

It is noteworthy that the 15 to 17 years of age cohort is the only group in which the number of non-Aboriginal children and young people in care exceeds the number of Aboriginal children and young people in care.

The lower number of young people aged 15 to 17 years is principally due to this category spanning three years. Furthermore, over the last 10 years there has been an increase in entry to out-of-home care for younger children and a higher number of 15 to 17 year olds are discharged than other age groups.²⁵

²⁵ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2018, *Child Protection Australia 2016-17, Child welfare series no. 68*, cat. no. CWS 63, AIHW, Canberra.

Children and young people with disability

The ABS estimates that in 2015 54,400 WA children and young people aged 0 to 24 years have a reported disability.²⁶ This represents 6.6 per cent of the total population of 0 to 24 year-olds in WA (Table 14).

Table 14: Children and young people aged 0 to 24 years with disability: number, by age group and type of disability, WA and Australia, 2015

	WA		Australia	
	Reported disability	Profound or severe core activity limitation*	Reported disability	Profound or severe core activity limitation*
0 to 4 years	5,100**	2,600**	52,800	19,400
5 to 14 years	23,700	13,200	274,600	78,300
15 to 24 years	25,600	8,900	249,600	35,700
Total	54,400	24,700	577,000	133,400

Source: ABS 2017, *Disability, Ageing and Carers, Western Australia*, cat. no. 4430.0

* 'Profound or severe core activity limitation' indicates the person is unable to do, or always needs help with, a core activity task such as communication, mobility or self-care.

** Estimate has a relative standard error of 25 to 50 per cent and should be used with caution.

Children and young people living in poverty

Around 44,000 children and young people are living below the poverty line.

Research suggests that approximately 43,985 (7.2%) of all children and young people in WA under the age of 15 years are living below the 50 per cent poverty line (standard poverty measure), while approximately 18,574 (3%) are living below 30 per cent of median income (severe or 'deep' poverty measure) (Table 15).^{27, 28}

Over the past decade, the rates of standard and severe poverty for WA children have reduced by 2.8 per cent and 0.7 per cent respectively.²⁹

²⁶ The ABS notes that for the Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers a person has a disability if they report they have a limitation, restriction or impairment, which has lasted, or is likely to last, for at least six months and restricts everyday activities.

²⁷ Duncan A 2017, *Child Poverty in Australia and WA*, Presentation to the Commissioner for Children and Young People, Bankwest Curtin Economics Centre, data is based on calculations from the Household, Income and Labour Dynamics (HILDA) Survey, 2015.

²⁸ Poverty is a complex concept with multiple definitions. In wealthy countries such as Australia and New Zealand, internationally accepted practice is to measure poverty by setting a poverty line; as a fraction of the median after-tax household income. Commonly-used poverty line thresholds are either 50 or 60 per cent of median income. A more severe measure is 30 per cent of median income.

²⁹ Duncan A 2017, *Child Poverty in Australia and WA*, Presentation to the Commissioner for Children and Young People, Bankwest Curtin Economics Centre, data is based on calculations from the Household, Income and Labour Dynamics (HILDA) Survey, 2015.

Vulnerability and hardship

Table 15: Children and young people under the age of 15 years living in poverty: number and in per cent, by poverty measure, WA and Australia, 2015

	Below 50 per cent median income		Below 30 per cent median income	
	Number	Proportion of all children under 15 (per cent)	Number	Proportion of all children under 15 (per cent)
WA	43,985	7.2	18,574	3.0
Australia	727,822	12.1	180,952	3.0

Source: Duncan A 2017, *Child Poverty in Australia and WA*, Presentation to the Commissioner for Children and Young People, Bankwest Curtin Economics Centre

Note: Figures contained in BCEC reports are based on calculations from the Household, Income and Labour Dynamics (HILDA) Survey, 2015.

Children in single parent families face a far higher risk of poverty. Nearly one in three children in single parent households are in poverty and one in seven in severe poverty.³⁰

Children experiencing developmental vulnerability

According to the 2015 Australian Early Development Census (AEDC),³¹ 3,403 WA children were assessed as vulnerable on two or more developmental domains upon entering primary school.³² The percentage of children developmentally vulnerable on two or more domains is lower in WA (10.5%) than the Australian average (11.1%) (Table 16).

In 2015, approximately one in four Aboriginal children (28.8%) were developmentally vulnerable on two or more domains. This figure has decreased since 2009 (32.2%) but is three times the incidence for non-Aboriginal children (9.2%).³³

Table 16: Children developmentally vulnerable on two or more domains: number and in per cent, WA and Australia, 2012 and 2015

	WA		Australia	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
2012	3,449	11.2	29,543	10.8
2015	3,403	10.5	31,754	11.1

Source: Australian Early Development Census Data Explorer, <<https://www.aedc.gov.au/data/data-explorer>>

In WA, 23.6 per cent of children living in very remote areas are developmentally vulnerable on two or more domains compared to 9.6 per cent of children who live in the metropolitan area.³⁴

30 Duncan A 2017, *Child Poverty in Australia and WA*, Presentation to the Commissioner for Children and Young People, Bankwest Curtin Economics Centre, data is based on calculations from the Household, Income and Labour Dynamics (HILDA) Survey, 2015.

31 The Australian Early Development Census measures the development of children in Australia in their first year of full-time school. Data is collected using an adapted version of the Early Development Instrument which consists of approximately 100 questions across five key domains which are closely linked to child health, education and social outcomes. Children receive a score between zero and ten for each domain and children falling below the 10th percentile are categorised as 'developmentally vulnerable'.

32 Department of Education and Training 2016, *Australian Early Development Census National Report 2015* [website], viewed 6 August 2018, <www.aedc.gov.au/resources/detail/2015-aedc-national-report>.

33 WA Department of Education 2016, *Early childhood development in Western Australia, Australian Early Development Census, State Report: Western Australia 2015*, Table 9.

34 Ibid.



Vulnerability and hardship

Developmentally vulnerable children on two or more domains - Western Australia

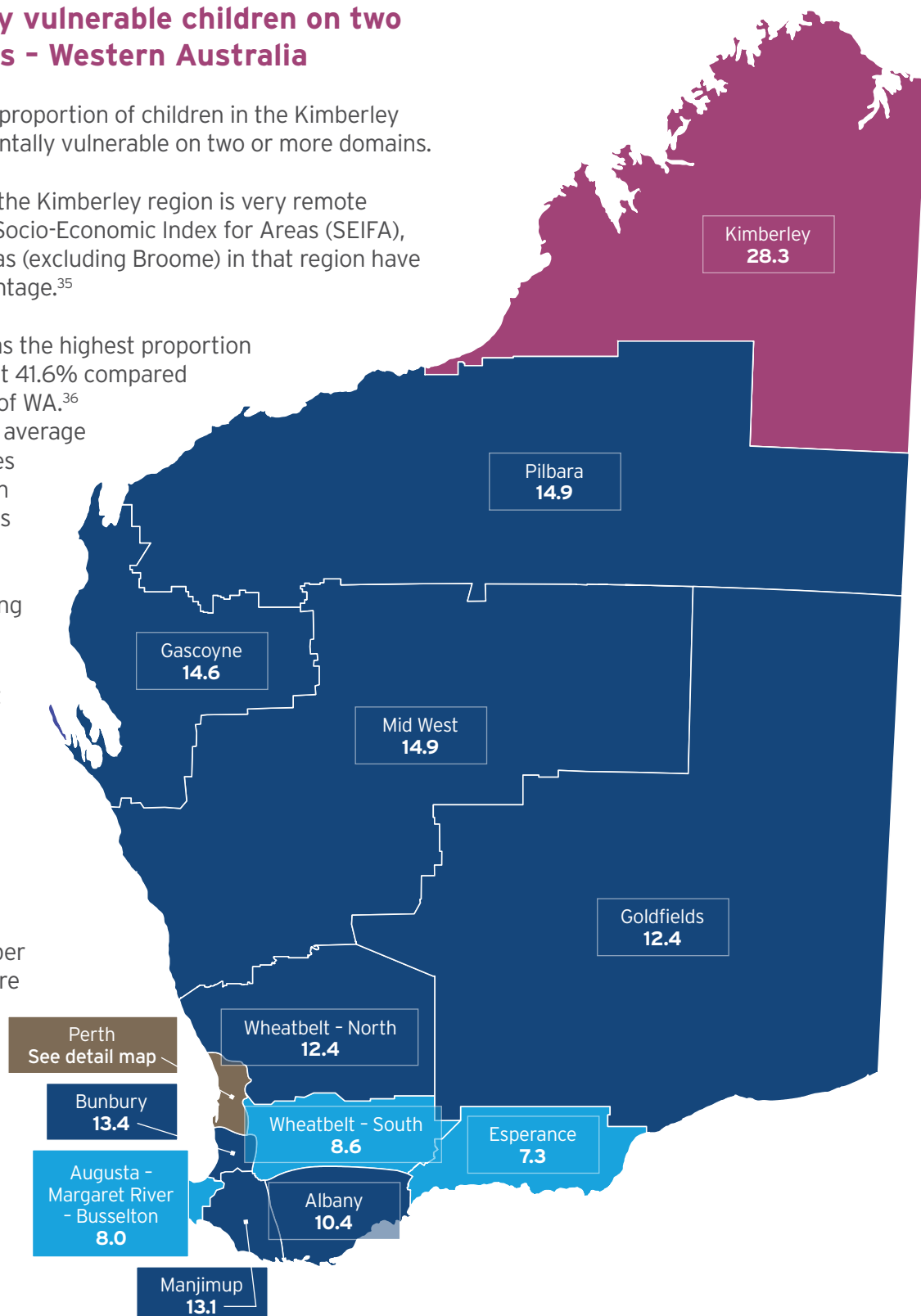
A significantly higher proportion of children in the Kimberley region are developmentally vulnerable on two or more domains.

A large proportion of the Kimberley region is very remote and according to the Socio-Economic Index for Areas (SEIFA), local government areas (excluding Broome) in that region have high levels of disadvantage.³⁵

The Kimberley also has the highest proportion of Aboriginal people at 41.6% compared to 3.1% for the whole of WA.³⁶

Aboriginal families on average face greater challenges and disadvantage than non-Aboriginal families and this is reflected in almost all health and wellbeing data including the AEDC data.

- Below 10 per cent of children are developmentally vulnerable
- 10 to 20 per cent of children are developmentally vulnerable
- Greater than 20 per cent of children are developmentally vulnerable



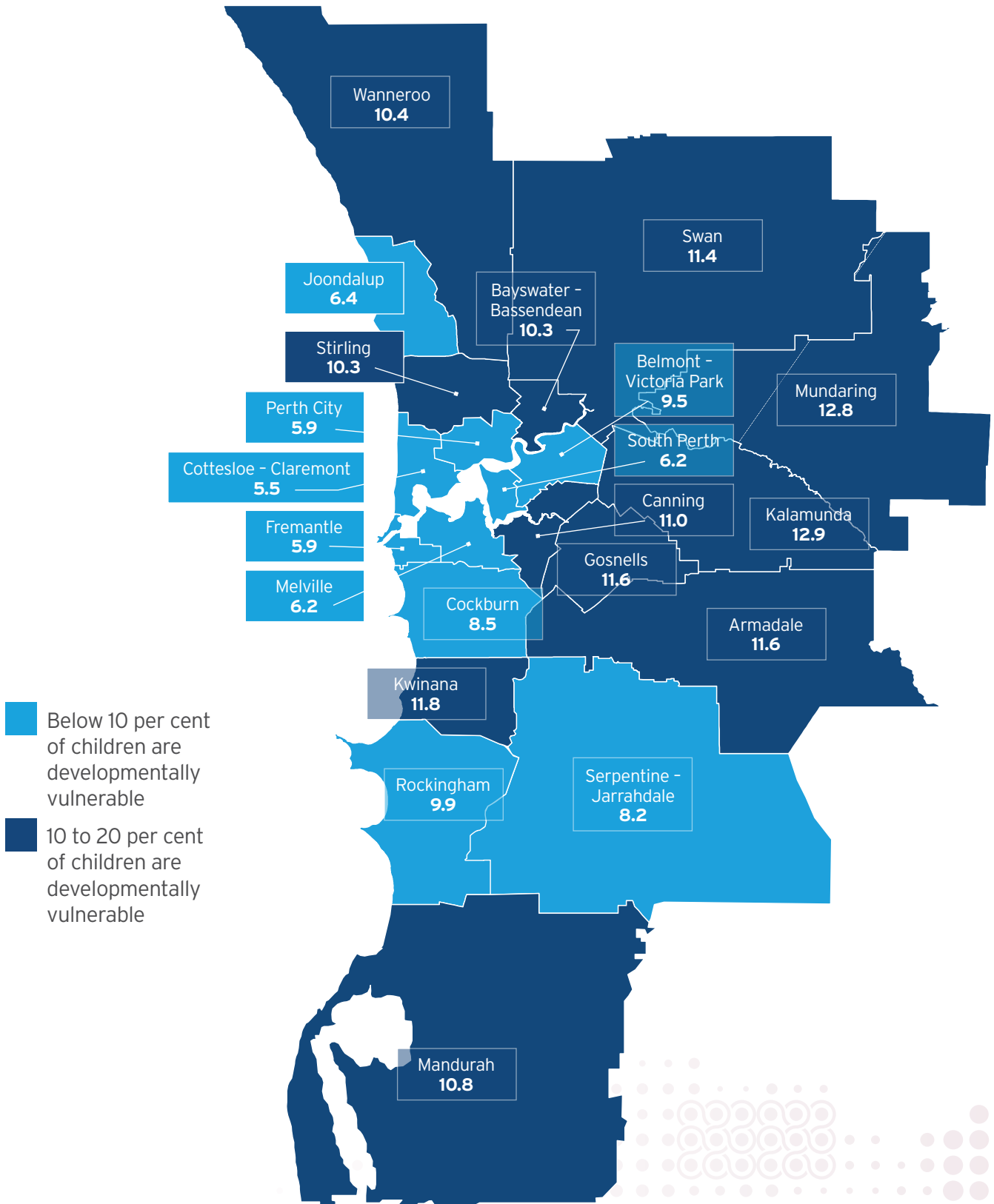
Source: AEDC Additional data tables - Public table by Statistical Area Level (SA3) 2009-2015.

* Data for Christmas Island and Cocos (Keeling) Islands is not included due to the relatively small number of children with valid scores.

³⁵ Australian Bureau of Statistics 2018, 2033.0.55.001 Socio-Economic Indexes for Australia (SEIFA), 2016, Table 1 Local Government Area (LGA) SEIFA Summary, 2016.

³⁶ Australian Bureau of Statistics 2018, 2016 Census QuickStats: Kimberley [website], viewed 3 October 2018 at <http://quickstats.censusdata.abs.gov.au/census_services/getproduct/census/2016/quickstat/51001?opendocument>.

Developmentally vulnerable children on two or more domains - Perth metropolitan area



Source: AEDC Additional data tables - Public table by Statistical Area Level (SA3) 2009-2015.



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