



Census

Media release

## 2021 Census shows changing face of Australia's 6 million families

The 2021 Census counted more than 5.5 million (5,552,973) couple families, of which 53 per cent have children living with them (53.0 per cent) and 47 per cent do not have children living with them (47.0 per cent), according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) today.

The proportion of couple families without children living with them has been growing steadily, with only 41 per cent of couple families not having children living with them in 1996 (40.8 per cent).

For the first time, the Census recorded more than a million one parent families (1,068,268), of which four out of every five of those parents were female. As a proportion of families this is increasing slowly, from under 15 per cent (14.5 per cent) in 1996 to nearly 16 per cent (15.9 per cent) in 2021.

In 2021, the Census counted over 2.5 million (2,550,284) families with children under the age of 15 years.

Dr David Gruen AO, Australian Statistician, said "The 2021 Census data provides a fascinating glimpse into the structure and changing profile of Australian families.

We think there may be some COVID-19 impacts on child care arrangements, with the Census seeing a reduction in people aged over 55 years looking after other people's children, for example their grandchildren.

In 2016, the Census saw an increase of nearly 140,000 people (137,227) over 55 who look after other people's children to more than 825,000. However in 2021, we have seen that figure drop by 50,000 to under 775,000."

The variety in make-up of Australian families is reflected in the richness of the 2021 Census data presented by the ABS today.

In the 2021 Census, 46.5 per cent of Australians over the age of 15 were in a registered marriage (9,665,708). Following the 2017 amendments to the *Marriage Act 1961*, which enabled marriage equality, nearly 25,000 same sex marriages (23,914) were counted in the 2021 Census.

More than 1.8 million people are divorced (1,831,952) and over 600,000 are separated (674,590). Over one million Australians are widowed (1,029,142) and, of these, eight out of ten are female.

The information collected by the Census is used to inform decisions about local services to support families in all walks of life, including local playgroups, health care, schools and transport.

For further information about 2021 Census data, tune into the 2021 Census data release launch on 28 June at 10am AEST at <http://www.abs.gov.au/census/events> or explore the data at [www.abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data](http://www.abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data).

## Media notes

- For media requests and interviews, contact the ABS Media Team on [media@abs.gov.au](mailto:media@abs.gov.au) or **1300 175 070**.
- Further information on 2021 Census is available in the [Census media backgrounders](#).