

ABS Family Characteristics 2009-10, compared to 2006-07

Summary of Findings

There were a total 5.0 million children in Australia in 2009-10.

(4.8 million in 2006-07)

1. The number of children aged 0 to 17, with a secondary 'other' biological parent living elsewhere.

Just over 1 million or 21% = 1,050 000 in (2009-10)

(Just over 1 million or 22% = 1,056 000 in 2006-07)

2. The number of children aged 0 to 17, who spent half or more nights with each of their biological parents = **only 3%. (4% in 2006-07)**

3. There were **441,000** secondary 'other' biological parents, the vast majority **81%** of who were **Fathers. (82% in 2006-07)**

ABS - In 2009-10, of children with a natural parent living elsewhere, 3% spent half their nights or more per year staying with that other parent, while 19% of children spent less than 10% of their nights per year (for example, less than 3 nights per month) staying overnight with the parent living elsewhere. Fifteen percent of children spent between 10% and 20% of their nights (for example, between 3 and 6 nights per month) with the natural parent living elsewhere. Almost half (45%) of children with a natural parent living elsewhere, never stayed overnight with that parent (table 14).

Using the benchmark definition of 'Protective Contact' as representing a child spending a minimum of 20% (e.g. 73 or more nights per year) with each biological parent and extended family, and by converting percentages into numbers, the following disturbing results are revealed:

Of the children who had no such 'protective contact' with their secondary "other" parent and family:

*** 45% of children** never stayed overnight with their secondary "other" parent.

(47% in 2006-07). This includes **24%** who rarely or never even saw that parent. **= 472.500 Children**

*** 19% of children** spent less than 10% of nights with that parent.

(19% in 2006-07). **= 199.500**

*** 15% of children** spent more than 10% but less than 20% with that parent.

(14% in 2006-07). **= 157.500**

*** Total number of children** who had no 'protective contact'

with their biological, secondary "other" parent. **(844.800 in 2006-07).** **= 829.500**

This is a maximum possible 18 year snapshot, with a variation of less than 1.5% over the previous period (2006-07), calling into serious question the effectiveness of Australia's 40 year old Family and Child Protection Laws and Australia's ability or willingness to protect the rights and safety of the nation's children.

It indicates just **2 out of 10**, or **20%** of children from separated parents, continue to enjoy ongoing 'protective contact' with their secondary other parent, as per above definition of 'Protective Contact'.

It also means **8 out of 10**, or **80%** of Australian children from separated parents, are being denied any 'protective contact' with their biological, secondary other parent.

As a consequence, there were **352,000** secondary "**other**" **parents**, who were denied the opportunity to provide protection to their biological children living elsewhere. This in turn denied an estimated **1.52 million other extended family members** the opportunity to provide 'protective contact' for their biological families.

What the above statistics indicate is that an estimated **46,000** children, and **104,000** potentially protective, biological parents and family members, are removed from each other each year, by these Family and Child Protection Laws and Practices. **(e.g. An estimated 150,000 Australian men, women and children have been both, added and removed from above statistics each year, for the past 40 years).**

Completely overlooked is the fact that due to the children and families dropping off the radar once the children reach adulthood, the compounding impact of these policies and practices is not taken into account. The dire consequence of this minor statistical oversight is that the 40 year old accumulated outcome, now affecting almost **6 Million citizens or 26% of the total Australian population**, continues to remain hidden.

The "Sleepover" statistics for the **UK as per the ONS** reveal an even worse trend of **only 18%** of children spending **14%** or more overnight stays per year with their secondary "other" parent, while no data on **20%** 'Protective Contact' appears available. Other English speaking countries we approached such as **Canada** and the **USA** do not even collect this all important, potentially game changing data, at a national level.

However using the Australian and UK statistics module as a guide, and considering there is nothing to indicate the Canadian and American outcomes would be any better, an estimated **112 Million of the civilian population** of those four (4) English speaking countries alone, have been removed from the protection and care of their loved ones, as a result of the current Family and Child Protection Laws and Practices of the past 40 years. What is even more disturbing is that the English speaking world is not alone when it comes to removing children from their families, and even a cursory search as to how other countries resolve this issue, reveals a global similarity so extensive, as to send shivers up your spine.

All of the above results, reveal crippling social fallout from deep-rooted policy failures, which raise some serious questions. If we genuinely consider the above outcomes as actually being in 'The Best Interest of Children', then perhaps we need to urgently take a very close look at that definition. Forcibly replacing millions of dedicated, protective biological family members with thousands of taxpayer funded civil servants and trusting them to effectively protect a nation's children, may not be such a good idea after all.