

Fact sheet number 7: Australia

Social Health Atlas series

PHIDU

Families

Single parent families

Volume 1: Australia, page 30-33

- 9.7% of all families in Australia are single parent families.
- Darwin had the highest proportion (13.8%) and Melbourne had the lowest (9.1%).
- The Northern Territory had the highest proportion in non-metropolitan areas (14.6%) while South Australia had the lowest (8.4%).
- The proportions of single parent families have increased since 1986.
- Very Remote areas under the Accessibility/Remoteness Index of Australia had a substantially higher proportion of single parent families (12.8%) than less remote areas (under 10%).
- Areas in cities with high proportions of single parent families also had high proportions of:
 - Public rental housing ($r=0.76$)
 - unemployed people ($r=0.55$)
 - people on disability support payments ($r=0.53$). (*page 353-354*)
- Areas in cities with high proportions of single parent families are also significantly correlated with poor health. These areas have a high rates of:
 - people reporting their health as fair/poor ($r=0.64$)
 - deaths from lung cancer ($r=0.58$)
 - deaths from respiratory system diseases ($r=0.58$)
 - deaths from circulatory system diseases ($r=0.56$)
 - people with low Physical Component Summary scores ($r=-0.51$) (*page 353-354*)
- Non-metropolitan areas with high proportions of single parent families are socioeconomically disadvantaged, as measured by the IRSD ($r=-0.65$). They also had a high proportion of:
 - Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders ($r=0.68$)
 - unemployed people ($r=0.67$)

These areas also had a low proportion of people in high status occupations (professionals, etc.) ($r=-0.57$). (*page 355-356*)
- Non-metropolitan areas with high proportions of single parent families are also significantly correlated with poor health. These areas have a high rates of:
 - years of potential life lost from premature deaths at ages 15 to 64 years ($r=0.52$)
 - people reporting their health as fair/poor ($r=0.66$) (*page 355-356*)

Low income families

Volume 1: Australia, page 34-37

- 17.5% of families in the capital cities were low income families. Adelaide had the highest percent (21.8%) while Darwin (11.1%) and Canberra (11.7%) had the lowest.
- There has been an increase in low income families in capital cities from 15.8% in 1986 to 17.5% in 1996).
- 24.6% of families in non-metropolitan areas were low income families. South Australia (26.2%) and New South Wales (23.6%) had the highest percent while Western Australia (20.6%) and the Northern Territory (21.6%) had the lowest.

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- Areas in the capital cities with high proportions of low income families are socioeconomically disadvantaged, as measured by the IRSD ($r=-0.80$). They also had a high proportion of:
 - people on disability support payments ($r=0.86$)
 - unemployed people ($r=0.79$)
 - people on unemployment benefits ($r=0.78$)
 - unskilled and semi-skilled workers ($r=0.60$)
 - women on sole parent pensions ($r=0.70$).

They also had low female workforce participation rates ($r=-0.57$) and a low proportion of high income families ($r=-0.85$) (*page 353-354*)

- Areas in cities with high proportions of low income families were also significantly correlated with poor health. These areas have high rates of:
 - people with low Physical Component Summary scores ($r=-0.82$)
 - people reporting their health as fair/poor ($r=0.68$)
 - deaths from circulatory system diseases ($r=0.59$)
 - deaths from respiratory system diseases ($r=0.50$)
 - public acute hospital admissions ($r=0.50$) (*page 353-354*)
- Non-metropolitan areas with high proportions of low income families are socioeconomically disadvantaged, as measured by the IRSD ($r=-0.65$). They also had high proportions of:
 - people on disability support payments ($r=0.56$)
 - unemployed people ($r=0.53$)
 - people on unemployment benefits ($r=0.53$).

They also had a low proportion of high income families ($r=-0.78$) (*page 353-354*)

- Non-metropolitan areas with high proportions of low income families were also significantly correlated with poor health. These areas have a high rates of:
 - people with a handicap ($r=0.73$)
 - people with low Physical Component Summary scores ($r=-0.65$)
 - people reporting their health as fair/poor ($r=0.60$) (*page 353-354*)

Also see Fact sheet 1: Children **Parents receiving income support**
 Fact sheet 3: Women **Sole parent pensioners**