22/05/2026

Legislative Scrutiny Committee
Northern Territory Legislative Assembly Legislative Scrutiny Committee

Re: Submission on the Care and Protection of Children Legislation Amendment (Every Child Matters) Bill 2026

Dear Committee Members,

Thriving Families and the South Australian Commissioner for Aboriginal Children and Young People have taken the opportunity to provide a submission regarding the proposed amendments contained in the *Care and Protection of Children Legislation Amendment (Every Child Matters)* Bill 2026.

We acknowledge the Northern Territory Government's stated intention to strengthen child safety, improve permanency outcomes, and reform aspects of the child protection system. We also recognise the importance of ensuring that children are protected from harm and are supported to thrive within safe, stable and nurturing environments.

We hold significant concerns regarding several aspects of the proposed amendments, particularly those relating to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle, participation in family-led decision-making, and the potential reduction of statutory protections supporting Aboriginal children's connection to family, culture, community and Country.

Aboriginal children remain significantly overrepresented in child protection and out-of-home care systems across Australia. Legislative reforms in this area must therefore be approached with care, recognising both the historical context of child removal policies and the ongoing impacts of intergenerational trauma, systemic disadvantage, and cultural disconnection.

We are concerned that aspects of the proposed reforms may weaken safeguards designed to preserve Aboriginal children's cultural identity and kinship connections. In particular, the reframing of placement and participation provisions reduces the practical operation of the Aboriginal Child Placement Principle and diminishes the role of Aboriginal families and communities in decisions affecting children.

We also note stakeholder concerns that the proposed reforms place increased emphasis on compliance, permanency and safety via statutory intervention without corresponding investment in culturally safe early intervention, family preservation and community-led support services. Without such supports, there is a significant risk that reforms may contribute to increased rates of removal of Aboriginal children and greater placement instability, particularly in already overstretched child protection systems.

Please find enclosed a summary of our submission and a report including research undertaken by the BetterStart Group in South Australia for the Commissioner for Aboriginal Children and Young People's Inquiry into the Application of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle in the removal of Aboriginal children that culminated in the *Holding on to Our Future* Report. While developed within the South Australian context, many of the issues identified are directly relevant to the current Northern Territory reforms.

Our report draws on evidence and analysis from the BEBOLD linked data platform in South Australia, which has provided significant insight into the long-term impacts of child protection and removal policies on Aboriginal children and families. The BEBOLD data demonstrates the cumulative effects of increasing statutory intervention and child removal, including intergenerational system contact, poorer long-term social outcomes, and the disproportionate impact on Aboriginal communities. Importantly, the evidence reinforces that policy settings focused primarily on removal without corresponding investment in prevention, early intervention and culturally informed family supports can entrench disadvantage rather than improve outcomes for children over the long term.

We strongly urge the Northern Territory Government to consider and learn from the South Australian experience and evidence base when progressing reforms of this significance. We have responded directly to the terms below and enclose a summary of our response herein.

Whether the Assembly should pass the Bill; *No, we do not support the Bill being passed*

(i) whether the Assembly should amend the Bill; *No, it should be withdrawn*

(ii) whether the Bill has sufficient regard to the rights and liberties of individuals; *No, it does not abide by the fundamental human right that the best interest of the child be the paramount principle; and*

(iii) whether the Bill has sufficient regard to the institution of Parliament. *No comment*

Thriving Families and the South Australian Commissioner for Aboriginal Children and Young People appreciate the opportunity to contribute to this inquiry and would welcome any further engagement with the Committee regarding these matters.

Yours sincerely,

[redacted]

Ashum Owen

Director for Aboriginal Leadership
Thriving Families SA

[redacted]

Dale Agius

South Australian Commissioner for
Aboriginal Children and Young People

Submission to

The Northern Territory inquiry into proposed changes to the Care and Protection Act.

Ashum Owen, Director of Aboriginal Leadership, Thriving Families South Australia, Adelaide University
Dale Agius, Commissioner for Aboriginal children and Young People, South Australia
Dr Alisa Willis, Director of Thriving Families South Australia, Adelaide University
Associate Professor Rhiannon Pilkington, Co-Director BetterStart, Adelaide University
Professor John Lynch Co-Director BetterStart, Adelaide University

BetterStart | School of Public Health | College of Health | Adelaide University

May 22 2026

Acknowledgement of Country
We acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the First Peoples and Nations of the lands and waters we live and work upon.

We acknowledge and pay our respects to the Kaurna and all First Nations people, the traditional custodians of the lands we live and work on. We acknowledge the deep feelings of attachment and relationship of the Kaurna and all First Nations people to country and we respect and value their past, present and ongoing connection to the land and cultural beliefs.

We extend our respects to all First Nations people, and acknowledge that sovereignty of the land was never ceded, it always was, and always will be, Aboriginal land.

The University acknowledges the historical impact of colonisation and its continuing effects, and is committed to the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation vision: 'A united Australia which respects this land of ours; values the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage; and provides justice and equity for all'.

1. Why we are submitting to the Northern Territory inquiry into proposed changes to the Care and Protection Act.

We are South Australians working for system change to improve outcomes for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal children across the country. We are submitting to this Inquiry to reflect on the experiences that have occurred in South Australia and other jurisdictions following similar proposals for changes to child protection legislation.

Our experience and knowledge comes from our collective experiences spanning more than three decades of research, Aboriginal and systems-change leadership currently focussed on enabling new ways of working that do not rely on child protection system intervention to achieve better outcomes for children, young people and families. We believe the challenge is the system does not have enough effective and early, prevention focussed supports that are able to effectively support children and families to stay safe and well, together. Changing the paramount principle to safety will entrench current patterns of funnelling children and families into statutory systems, rather than investing in keeping children safe and well at home in community and culture.

2. Child protection is the most acute symptom of families not thriving

Thriving Families views the disturbing statistics on child protection as the most acute symptom of families not thriving. Child protection is one part of the system of government and non-government agencies that underpin outcomes for children, young people and families.

We have done considerable work in understanding and documenting child protection from a public health viewpoint.

In a single year in South Australia, 1 in 12 non-Aboriginal children and 1 in 2 Aboriginal children are reported to the Department for Child Protection (DCP). Outcomes for Aboriginal children are disproportionately worse with Aboriginal children 10 times more likely to be removed from their families than non-Aboriginal children (1).

South Australia – like other jurisdictions - has evolved to a state where crisis oriented systems are often seen as the only "front door" to receiving supportive services. Too many families are experiencing cycles of trauma, disadvantage, and adversity without supportive service responses that result in better outcomes. This is seen in the child protection system, where families are often struggling with multiple, complex social challenges, limiting their ability to make positive changes and access holistic support.

We don't respond early enough with over 70% of children notified each year already known to child protection, suggesting there are high rates of churn for families through child protection reporting cycles with limited system capacity to respond in a way that ameliorates child maltreatment risk (2). The rate of children being removed from family and community in South Australia has continued to grow at a level well above the national average. South Australia now sits almost 50% higher than the national rate of children in care (3). **What we know from South Australia is relevant to the inquiry as South Australia has had safety as the paramount principle for child protection legislation since the early 1990s, and more recent changes in 2017 prioritised child permanency in placements, resulting in a significant reduction in the use of 12-month orders, and ongoing increases in children being placed on 18-year orders at very young ages.**

3. There is an opportunity for the NT to learn from other jurisdictional inquiries and experiences that illustrate the impacts of some of the proposed legislative changes

In South Australia The Commissioner for Aboriginal Children and Young People's "Holding Onto Our Future" report clearly makes the case for the need for additional investment in early support and prevention, and the need for transparency and accountability mechanisms to ensure adherence to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Placement Principle to the standard of active efforts. This is counter to the current proposal to "override" the Aboriginal Child Placement Principle in the NT.

The principles of transparency, responsivity and accountability are core to a well-functioning democratic society. There is an opportunity to **embed these principles in legislation** through clear reporting mechanisms that support a system-wide understanding of the action and investment required to shift to early support and prevention.

4. Take a wholistic view of improving life chances for children

The standard of best interests

The NT should adopt the nationally recognised standard of Best Interests. The focus on child safety as a one-dimensional paramount principle represents a siloing of the reality of the multi-dimensional safety considerations that are required to effectively respond to the drivers of child maltreatment, that result in statutory child protection involvement and child removals.

Across thousands of conversations with over 82 non-government organisations, children's commissioners, and families with lived experience, a consistent theme has been that shifting the balance to a one-dimensional view of child safety has resulted in the increases in child removals seen over the last decades.

Some of the strongest evidence that system changes have negatively impacted child removal rates can be seen in the research conducted by BetterStart for Commissioner Lawrie's Inquiry into the Aboriginal Child Placement Principle in South Australia. Analysis examined the first-time children were removed for those born from 1990 onwards. If we rewind to three decades ago, for children born during the 1990s to the early 2000s there was a clear pattern of declining child removals. Over the subsequent decade of births (children born 2001 to 2010), the proportion of child removals over the lifecourse was steady. However, for children born from 2011 to 2020 there is a year-on-year increase in the proportion of children removed from their families into out-of-home care. These patterns exist for both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal children, but are most starkly apparent for Aboriginal children (1). Can we do better? Removal rates in New Zealand are one third of those in SA.

We invest heavily in crisis responses, with little capacity for prevention or early intervention. Unless we believe that children born in more recent years are fundamentally different from their peers born the year before them, or the year before that – than we are left with the interpretation that changes in the way our system responds, and what we invest in are driving these shifts.

Learning from the recommendations from Commissioner Lawrie's recent inquiry

Thriving Families recognises that the legacy of colonisation, oppression, and institutional racism perpetuates poorer outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and results in over-representation in statutory responses such as child protection. We are committed to embedding and

elevating Aboriginal leadership in Thriving Families to create a system and governance model where power is truly shared between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal leaders.

The proposal to enable exceptions **to the Aboriginal Child Placement Principles do not appropriately or adequately support the empowerment and self-determination of the Aboriginal Community**.

The Commissioner for Aboriginal Children and Young People and Wakwakurna Kanyini in South Australia have been clear that child protection systems need to be decolonised, which includes the sharing of power and decision making to Aboriginal Communities and those who have deep Cultural knowledge. We urge the NT Government to consider the recommendations in from the South Australian Commissioners Inquiry as pivotal building blocks to dismantling institutional racism and breaking the cycles of system responses that contribute to disproportionately poorer outcomes for Aboriginal children, families and communities. **This will mean changing the proposal to creating exceptions to the Aboriginal child placement principle and taking a much more wholistic view of the priority of any legislation concerning children.**

5. Supporting better outcomes requires a new front door to family support services that addresses drivers of child maltreatment

Thriving Families vision for system change, includes a 'flip' of the current system so that as a society our investment is dominated by prevention and early supports, and our crisis and statutory responses become the leanest part the system. We will always need part of the system that can respond to crisis, and remove children from unsafe environments, but we need to increase and re-balance investment to enable far greater efforts in preventing families falling into crisis in the first place.

This means scaffolding supports throughout life stages to enable children and families to access assistance and services which can support their wellbeing before they experience crisis, diverting them from current statutory responses wherever possible. To do this, governments must build systems that support all individuals during all life stages (from children, young people and adults) regardless of gender, cultural and linguistic background and sexuality.

Notifications to child protection often indicate need that requires a non-statutory supportive response from other parts of the system. Children and families should not be having repeat contact with statutory systems because they lack access to fundamental resources and supports such as food, health, education, financial support, housing and other basics to support their families, until such a time that they reach crisis and a statutory response is triggered. Instead, we have engineered a system that depends on exceeding a threshold that is intended to identify a child protection risk, and the triaging of a family through a statutory process once they are already in crisis, before they can be considered eligible for support. **The fundamental challenge is the system does not have enough effective and early, prevention focussed supports that are able to effectively support children and families to stay safe and well, together. Changing the paramount principle to safety does not address the core problems of the current system orientation.**

Thriving Families urges the NT Government to consider how the draft bill can support the best interests of children and young people with regard to early intervention and support, rather than continuing down the path of heavy investment in statutory response to the detriment .

6. Break cycles of disadvantage and intergenerational child protection contact – opportunities to embed a focus on prevention and early support

A high-level principle that should underpin the child and family support system in SA is that every service interaction can be seen as an opportunity for prevention and support. We must recognise that investment in all parts of the system – from early support all the way through to non-family residential care - has long-term impacts on the life chances of our State's children and young people.

A key motivation for seriously considering how the system embeds early support that helps keep children safe and well with their families, communities, and in culture, is the intergenerational patterns of child protection system contact. In South Australia more than half of Aboriginal children (56.9%) and non-Aboriginal children (51.1%) in out of home care in 2016/17 had a parent with their own child protection contact history (1). This is demonstrative of intergenerational cycles of child protection contact, and reinforces the need to consider how we can better invest in responses that break intergenerational cycles of disadvantage.

Family group conferencing (FGC) is an opportunity to support children to remain safe and well with families. In the Australian Centre for Child Protection (ACCP) evaluation of family group conferencing, a survey of n=753 Aboriginal family members who participated in FGCs showed that over 90% of respondents agreed that the FGC process gave them a fair opportunity to help lead decision making, their child's voice was encouraged, their culture and values were recognised and respected, and putting the child at the centre of the FGC and the decisions that were made kept the child safer (4).

Thriving Families supports the assertion by the Commissioners and Guardians for children and young people, and the peak bodies in South Australia such as CAFSSA and Wakwakurna Kanyini that **family group conferencing *must* be offered not only early but at multiple points for both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal families in the system**. This means embedding the broader provision of Family Group Conferencing and other opportunities for early support in legislation, whilst also underpinning these supports with robust evaluation and monitoring to ensure we understand what works, when, and for whom.

7. Create an intelligent information system that drives improvement

Much of the data we need already exists but it does not sit in infrastructure designed to be shared and to drive improved support services.

The data we currently rely on (both government and non-government) often falls short in effectively measuring outcomes for a number of reasons including: limited capacity to regularly analyse and connect data sources, publicly available data being updated irregularly or being outdated, lack of integration between different data systems to understand service-system contact with a wholistic lens. There is a clear need to invest in a transparent learning system to ensure the impact of any legislative and accompanying practice changes can be monitored to enable an assessment of the positive and negative impacts of these changes.

To truly understand the system's success and challenge points, and to engage in continuous improvement processes for the betterment of outcomes for children and young people who have contact with the system, we need to set clear directions for progress and to be able to measure progress. This includes having shared goals, shared outcomes, being clear on what is trying to be

achieved and having stringent processes and mechanisms to collect the evidence that will tell us if we are meeting the mark.

8. Attached is our report for the SA Commissioner for Aboriginal Children and Young People's Inquiry into the application of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle

This report includes analysis BetterStart was contracted to undertake by April Lawrie, Commissioner for Aboriginal Children and Young People. We were asked to conduct data analysis of child protection contact patterns in South Australia to inform the Inquiry into the application of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle.

Data used in this analysis is from the Better Evidence Better Outcomes Linked Data (BEBOLD) platform, a comprehensive whole-of-population de-identified linked data platform. BEBOLD contains de-identified data on ~500,000 young people in South Australia born from 1991 onwards and their parents, and spans more than 30 different government administrative data sources.

This report clearly shows that whichever part of the child protection system we look at, from the first notification of a child all the way through to when children are removed - the comparison of the experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children compared to non-Aboriginal children is confronting and alarming. We respectfully submit the evidence submitted in this report is deeply relevant to the proposed reforms in Northern Territory.

9. References

1. Montgomerie A DJ, Pilkington R, Lynch J. Analysis of child protection contact to support the South Australian Commissioner for Aboriginal Children and Young People's Inquiry into the application of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle. BetterStart Health and Development Research Group, The University of Adelaide; 2023.
2. Pilkington R, Lynch, J. BetterStart Witness Statement, Royal Commission Early Childhood Education and Care. Adelaide: BetterStart Health and Development Research Group, The University of Adelaide; 2023.
3. Report on Government Services 2022: 16 Child Protection Services. 2022.
4. Krakouer J, Thain, E, Maclean, M, Octoman, O, Kaltner, M. Evaluation of SA Family Group Conferencing, Final Report. University of South Australia; 2024.

COMMISSIONER FOR ABORIGINAL CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE

THE UNIVERSITY of ADELAIDE

Analysis of child protection contact patterns

This work is to support the South Australian Commissioner for Aboriginal Children and Young People's Inquiry into the application of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle

Alicia Montgomerie

Jessica Dobrovic

Rhiannon Pilkington

John Lynch

for the BetterStart Health and Development Research Group

The University of Adelaide

June 2023

BETTERSTART
Health and Development Research

Better Evidence

Better Outcomes Linked Data platform

make history.

This report was commissioned by the Commissioner for Aboriginal Children and Young People for the purpose of the Inquiry in to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Child Placement Principle.

Acknowledgement of country

BetterStart acknowledge Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people as the First Peoples and Nations of the lands and waters we live and work upon. Sovereignty of these lands has never been ceded. It always was and always will be, Aboriginal land.

We acknowledge the Kaurna people who are traditional owners and custodians of the lands this work was undertaken on, and we pay our respects to Kaurna Elders, past, present and emerging. We recognise and respect their cultural authority, cultural heritage, beliefs and relationship with the land.

This report may be distressing

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are over-represented in the child protection system due to the enduring impact of colonisation, legacies of systemic racism, oppression, and systems set up to remove and assimilate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. This contributes to intergenerational trauma, and multiple economic and social disadvantages experienced by current generations.

The aim of the reports we deliver is to provide evidence from which decisions can be made that will lead to improved outcomes for families and children experiencing different forms of disadvantage. However, as these reports primarily focus on data analysis, this can appear to depersonalise the real-life experiences that underlie these data. We acknowledge the data shown here represents distressing experiences that can have a lifelong impact on children, young people, families, and communities.

Using data in this way is only one way to tell important stories, however, we hope that this work contributes to ensuring South Australia is able to better support children, young people, families and community.

Acknowledgements

We are grateful for funding that supports the Better Evidence, Better Outcomes, Linked Data platform from:

- National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) Australia Fellowship (570120);
- NHMRC Partnership Project Grant (APP1056888);
- NHMRC Centre for Research Excellence (APP1099422);

as well as contributions from:

- SA Department of the Premier and Cabinet;
- SA Department of Health and Wellbeing;
- SA Department for Education;
- SA Department for Child Protection;
- SA Department of Human Services

We would like to thank SA-NT DataLink and all of the data custodians and data managers from all government departments at State and Federal levels who have contributed to the development of the BEBOLD platform.

Disclaimer

The views expressed here do not necessarily reflect those of our government partners.

Suggested citation

Montgomerie A, Dobrovic J, Pilkington R, Lynch J (2023). Analysis of child protection contact to support the South Australian Commissioner for Aboriginal Children and Young People's Inquiry into the application of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle. Adelaide: *BetterStart* Health and Development Research Group, The University of Adelaide.

Who we are

The *BetterStart* Health and Development Research Group comprises inter-disciplinary researchers from epidemiology, public health, criminology, paediatrics, biostatistics, and psychology who are trying to better understand how to ensure infants and children have the best start in life that will enhance their health, development and human capability formation over the life course.

Contact us

For further information, please visit our website:

health.adelaide.edu.au/betterstart/research/

or contact us via our Research Coordinator:

jacqueline.aldis@adelaide.edu.au

Background

This report includes analysis BetterStart was contracted to undertake by April Lawrie, Commissioner for Aboriginal Children and Young People. We were asked to conduct data analysis of child protection contact patterns in South Australia to inform the Inquiry into the application of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle.

We acknowledge the data shown here represents distressing experiences that can have a lifelong impact on children, young people, families and communities. However, we hope that this work contributes to ensuring South Australia is able to better support children, young people, families and community.

Data used in this analysis is from the Better Evidence Better Outcomes Linked Data (BEBOLD) platform, a comprehensive whole-of-population de-identified linked data platform. BEBOLD contains de-identified data on ~500,000 young people in South Australia born from 1991 onwards and their parents, and spans more than 30 different government administrative data sources.

Data collected in these government systems is often for the day-to-day running of services and programs. Therefore, much of the available data is deficit-based and gives little insight into strength, resilience, and success stories. There is more work to be done to support data collection that recognises the strength and unique cultural perspectives, knowledge, and practices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Narrative summary

This report clearly shows that whichever part of the child protection system we look at, from the first notification of a child all the way through to when children are removed - the comparison of the experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children compared to non-Aboriginal children is confronting and alarming.

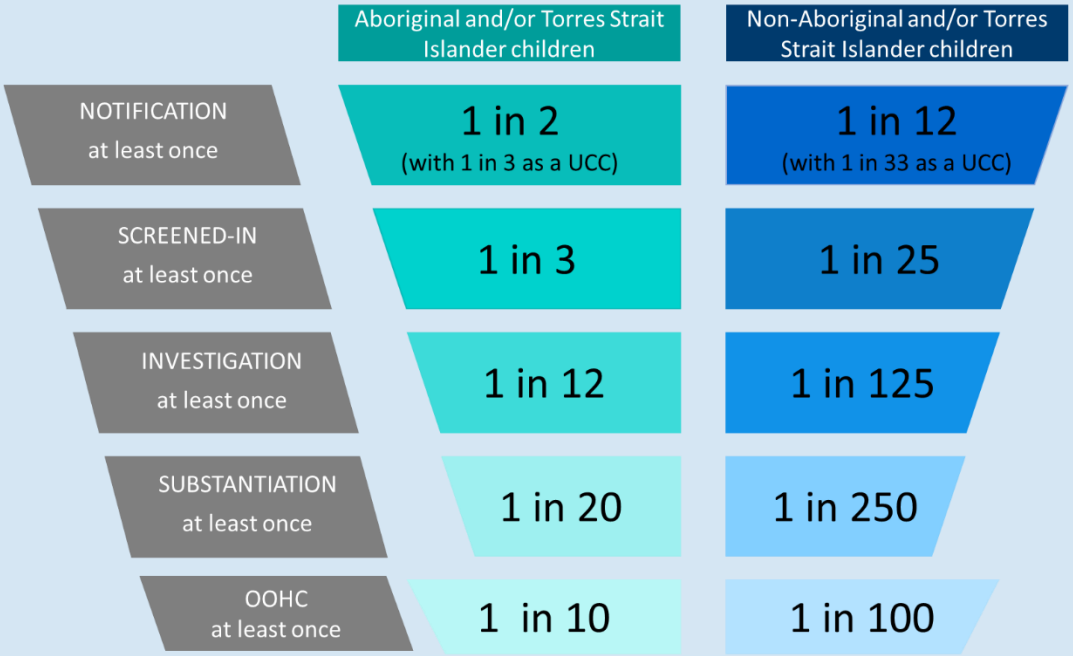
The greatest absolute disparity exists at the front door of the child protection system – where concerns relating to children are first reported by mandated and non-mandated reporters.

Contact with child protection for all children is far too common. For non-Aboriginal children 1 in 12 in any one year were notified, but this jumps to a staggering 1 in 2 for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

In the most recent data available (2020) 1 in 3 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander pregnancies were reported as unborn child concerns, compared to 1 in 30 non-Aboriginal pregnancies. In other words, pregnancies to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women are 10 times more likely to be reported to the Department for Child Protection.

These absolute disparities are seen through every stage of the child protection system. See Figure 1 below which shows that in 2020/2021 for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children compared to Non-Aboriginal children:

- 1 in 2 compared to 1 in 12 children were notified at least once
- 1 in 3 compared to 1 in 25 children were the subject of at least one screened-in notification
- 1 in 12 compared to 1 in 125 children were investigated at least once
- 1 in 20 compared to 1 in 250 children were the subject of at least one substantiation
- 1 in 10 compared to 1 in 100 children were in out-of-home care



NOTE: denominator for these calculations is the ABS estimated populations

Figure 1*:* Proportion of South Australian children & young people aged <18 years in contact with child protection system in 2020/21

One of the most confronting findings is the increasing proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children being placed onto Guardianship orders until age 18. If we follow children from birth over time, we can see that

- Every year since 1991 the risk of an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander child being placed on a GOM-18 order has increased.
- 1 in 10 Aboriginal children born in 2000-2003 were removed on a GOM 18 order *by age 17*, if we fast forward 15 years later we see that this has increased to 1 in 10 children *before age 5* for those born in 2015-2016.

The greatest increases have occurred at young ages. For infants born in 2020, 1 in 24 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children were placed on GOM-18 orders before their 1st birthday. This has increased dramatically from a decade ago, when it was 1 in 70 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children placed on a GOM-18 order before 1st birthday.

These striking disparities mean that the experiences of contact with child protection are much, much more common for the entire Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

Findings

Some of the main points from the analysis undertaken for this project are presented below according to sub-headings that reflect the report sections.

Child protection contact in South Australia

In 2020/2021

Almost 1 in 2 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children were notified to child protection in 2020/2021 compared to 1 in 12 non-Aboriginal children.

About 1 in 20 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children were substantiated at least once compared to 1 in 250 of the non-Aboriginal population.

About 1 in 10 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children experienced at least one out-of-home care placement compared to 1 in 100 of the non-Aboriginal population. (Figure 6 on page 29)

Child protection contact in Australia from 2017/18 to 2021/22

South Australia has had the largest relative increase in the number of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children (28% increase) and the number of non-Aboriginal children (29.8% increase) subject to a screened-in notification from 2017/18 to 2021/2022, compared to all other jurisdictions. (Table 4 on page 32)

Transitions through the child protection system

Notifications transitions through the child protection system in one year (Figure 8 on page 35)

47.8% of notifications for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children and young people in 2020/21 did not meet the threshold and were screened out, compared to 57.3% of notifications for the non-Aboriginal population.

23.2% of screened-in-notifications for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children and young people were investigated, compared to 18.8% for the non-Aboriginal population.

44.3% of investigated notifications for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children and young people were substantiated, compared to 40.6% for the non-Aboriginal population.

25% of notifications concerning both the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal population were made by police, and 24% were made by Education professionals.

Transitions through the child protection system in one year – 2020/21 (Figure 9 on page 36)

Of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children notified to child protection at least once; 62.1% experienced a screened-in notification vs 47.8% for the non-Aboriginal population.

Of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children investigated at least once; 59.1% were substantiated vs 51.8% for the non-Aboriginal population.

Younger age at notification is associated with a higher likelihood of transitioning through every stage of the child protection system in 2020/21 (e.g. of those notified, how many are screened-in, of those screened-in how many are investigated etc.). For example, of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children notified before they turned 1, 81.3% were screened-in vs 54.1% for those notified at age 14 years and over. (Table 6)

Transitions through the child protection system by age 10 (Figure 10 on page 38)
Of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children notified to child protection at least once; 80.4% experienced a screened-in notification vs 59.5% for the non-Aboriginal population.

Of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children investigated at least once; 68.2% were substantiated vs 57.8% for the non-Aboriginal population.

Of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children substantiated at least once; 45.1% were substantiated vs 38.5% for the non-Aboriginal population.

Referral patterns

Over five years, the proportion of screened-in notifications referred to another agency has increased from 5.9% in 2016/17 to 41.2% in 2020/21 for notifications relating to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children. (Figure 11 on page 39)

Children in out-of-home care

Cumulative incidence of out-of-home care
By age 18, 1 in 4 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children born in 1991 to 1992 were removed and this decreased to 1 in 5 children removed for those born in 2003-04. (Figure 12 on page 40)

For Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children born from 2001-01 to 2009-10 the proportion removed into out-of-home care varied by year of birth without a consistent upward or downward pattern. (Figure 13 on page 41)

For the more recent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander birth cohorts from 2011-12 onwards, the proportion of children removed into out-of-home care has increased year-on-year. For example, by age 5 the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children being placed in out-of-home care increased from 12.4% of those born in 2011-12, to 13.9% of those born in 2013-14, and to 15.2% of those born in 2015-16. The proportion of children removed under age 1 has almost doubled from 5.3% born in 2011-12 to 9.0% for those born in 2019-20. (Figure 14 on page 42)

Cumulative incidence of Guardianship to 18 years orders (Figure 15 on page 43)
The proportion of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children placed on a Guardianship to the Minister until 18 years of age order has increased year-on-year.

By age 17, 1 in 10 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander young people born in 2000-2003 were placed on a Guardianship to 18 years order (they turned 17 from 2017-2020), and this has increased to 1 in 10 by age 5, for children born in 2015-2016.

By age 1, 1 in 14 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander infants born in 2019 were placed on a Guardianship to 18 years order.

The proportion of the out-of-home care population identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (Figure 16 on page 45 and Table 7 on page 44)

In 2020/21 39.1% of children and young people who experienced their first OOHC placement were Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.

There has been a 55.5% relative increase in the number of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children experiencing OOHC for the first time from 173 children in 2011/12 to 269 in 2020/21 vs a 32% relative increase for the non-Aboriginal population.

Age at first out-of-home care placement (Figure 17 on page 46)

It is difficult to discern a consistent pattern of first-time removal into out-of-home care by age, although for both the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal populations 1 in 3 children being removed for the first time were aged under 1.

Time spent in care (Figure 18 on page 47)

Since 2011/12 there has been a decrease in the proportion and number of children exiting care within 6 months of their first placement. For Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children, 24.9% of children removed for the first time in 2011/12 spent less than 6 months in care, compared to 13.7% of children removed in 2018/19 (20.9% reduction in the proportion exiting care at 6 months for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children and a 25.3% reduction for the non-Aboriginal population).

Type of care (Figure 19 on page 50)

In the most recent data, of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children removed for the first time in 2017/19 and followed for two-years:

- **51.8% did not spend any time in kinship care;**
- **33.7% spent over three-quarters of their time in kinship care;**
- **27.5% spent over three-quarters of their time in foster care; and**
- **13.3% spent over three-quarters of their time in residential care.**

Indicators of disadvantage for children in out-of-home care

Figure 20 on page 51 shows that for the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care in 2016:

- **96% had at least one indicator of poverty**
- **54% had at least one indicator of poor mental health**
- **43% had at least one indicator of substance misuse**
- **35% had at least one indicator of domestic and family violence**
- **69% had experienced intergenerational child protection contact**

For the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children, the most common pattern showed 19% of the children experiencing poverty and intergenerational child protection contact, and the second most common pattern of overlapping complexities was experiencing all five types of disadvantage.

Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children who had experienced out-of-home care were about 2.5 times more likely to experience all 5 forms of disadvantage compared to the non-Aboriginal population (i.e. 14% of the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander population compared to 6% of the non-Aboriginal population).

Reunification

The proportion of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal children to be reunified at 6 months, 12 months or 24 months following their first ever out-of-home care placement has decreased. (Figure 21, Figure 22, Figure 23 on pages 52-54)

For example:

- **For Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children removed for the first time in 2011/12, 27.2% of those children were reunified by 6 months compared to 12.6% of children removed for the first time in 2020/21; and**
- **For Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children removed for the first time in 2011/12, 51.4% of those children were reunified by 24 months compared to 28.9% of children removed for the first time in 2018/19.**

Intergenerational child protection contact

Parental child protection contact history (Figure 24 on page 55)

- **43% of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children who were notified to child protection in 2016/17 had at least one parent who had their own child protection history compared to 29.8% of non-Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children.**

- **56.9% of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children who were in out-of-home care in 2016/17 had at least one parent who had their own child protection history compared to 51.1% of non-Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children.**

Parental out-of-home care history (Figure 25 on page 56)

- **13.5% of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children who had been notified in 2016/17 had at least one parent who had been in out-of-home care during their own childhood compared 6.0% of non- Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children.**

- **22.3% of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children who were in out-of-home care in 2016/17 had at least one parent who had been in care during their own childhood compared 15.9% of non-Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children.**

Children subject to pre-birth (unborn) notification

In the last five years, the proportion of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander births subject to at least one unborn (pre-birth) child concern has increased from a quarter to a third.

In the most recent data available, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander births were ten times more likely to be subject to an unborn child concern compared to the non-Aboriginal population (Figure 26 on page 57)

Indicators of disadvantage for children subject to an unborn child concern (Figure 27 on page 58)
For the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children subject to an unborn child concern:

- **93% had at least one indicator of poverty;**
- **55% had at least one indicator of poor mental health;**
- **40% had at least one indicator of domestic and family violence; and**
- **82% had experienced intergenerational child protection contact.**

For the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children, the most common pattern involves indicators of poverty and intergenerational child protection contact, while the second most common pattern of overlapping complexities was experiencing all five types of disadvantage.

Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children subject to an unborn child concern were about 2.5 times more likely to experience all five forms of disadvantage compared to the non-Aboriginal population (i.e. 17% of the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander population compared to 7% of the non-Aboriginal population).

Transition from an unborn child concern to child removal (Figure 28, Figure 29, Figure 30, Figure 31 on pages 59 to 62)
Pre-birth notification to out-of-home care by 1 month of age: **1 in 7 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children subject to a pre-birth (unborn) notification were subsequently removed into OOHC prior to 1 month of age.**

Pre-birth notification to out-of-home care by 6 months of age: **Nearly 1 in 5 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children subject to a pre-birth (unborn) notification were subsequently removed into OOHC prior to 6 months of age.**

Time spent in out-of-home care following first placement (Figure 32 on page 63)
Of those subject to a pre-birth notification and removed prior to their first birthday, nearly three-quarters of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children (72.3%) and non-Aboriginal children (72.7%) spent the full two years in out-of-home care following their first out-of-home care placement.

Type of care in two years following first placement (Figure 33 on page 64)
Of those subject to a pre-birth notification and removed prior to their first birthday:

- **37.2% of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children spent more than 76% of their total time in care in a *kinship* carer placement compared to 34.9% of non-Aboriginal children.**
- **47% of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children spent more than 76% of their total time in care in a *foster* carer placement compared to 51.8% of non-Aboriginal children.**

Table of contents

Background 14
About this report 22
Data sources 23
Identification of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children and young people 24
Child protection contact in South Australia 25
Child protection contact in Australia 32
Transitions through the child protection system 35
Referral patterns and responses 39
Cumulative incidence of out-of-home care ..... **Error! Bookmark not defined.**
Removal into out-of-home care 44
Reunification 52
Intergenerational child protection contact 55
Pre-birth (unborn) notifications 57
Appendix 1 – Indicator Definitions 65
Appendix 2 – Data Summary Tables 66
Appendix 3 – Addendum – additional material submitted 1st of March 2024 ..... **Error! Bookmark not defined.**
References 83

About this report

April Lawrie, Commissioner for Aboriginal Children and Young People contracted BetterStart to conduct analysis of Aboriginal children's contact with the South Australian child protection system to inform the Inquiry into the application of the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle. Ethics approval for this project was provided by the Aboriginal Human Research Ethics Committee.

This report explores child protection system contact for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children and young people compared to non-Aboriginal children.

The analysis includes answering the following contracted research questions:

1. What proportion of all children are notified, investigated, substantiated, removed into out-of-home care by age? What does this look like in recent years?
2. What are the transitions through the child protection system for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal children?
3. What are the referral patterns and responses (as recorded in DCP data) for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal children?
4. What are the patterns of removal by age and care type for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal children? What is the transition from UCC to child removal?
5. What are the recent patterns of reunification by age, care type, time in care for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal children?
6. What can we know about the socioeconomic circumstances and the intergenerational child protection experiences of families who have children removed?

Data sources

This project utilised data from the Better Evidence Better Outcomes Linked Data (BEBOLD) platform, a comprehensive whole-of-population de-identified linked data platform. BEBOLD contains de-identified data on ~500,000 young people in South Australia born from 1991 onwards and their parents, and spans more than 30 different government administrative data sources. Figure 2 details the data sources in the BEBOLD platform.

Figure 2: Description of the BEBOLD platform and data sources

Data used for this analysis came from:

- Child Protection, Department for Child Protection
- Birth registrations, Attorney General's Department
- Perinatal Statistics Data Collection, Wellbeing SA
- Adult Imprisonments, Department of Corrections
- Youth Justice, Department of Human Services
- Integrated South Australian Activity Collection (ISAAC) Data, SA Health;
- Emergency Department Data Collection (EDDC), SA Health;
- SA Public Housing; and
- SA Specialist Homelessness Services (Homelessness to Home, H2H).

Identification of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children and young people

An ever-identified algorithm was used to determine individuals identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander as per previous research conducted by the BetterStart group in collaboration Professor Alex Brown and A/Professor Odette Pearson. The "ever identified" algorithm results in identifying a person as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, if they are identified as such in any of the following BEBOLD datasets:

- Birth registrations
- Perinatal Statistics Data Collection
- Emergency Department Data Collection (EDDC)
- Admitted Patient Data Collection (APC)
- Australian Early Development Census (AEDC)
- Public Housing, SA Housing Authority
- Specialist Homelessness Service Homeless to Home, SA Housing Authority
- Child Protection
- South Australian School Enrolment Census, Education
- Youth Justice; and
- Adult Corrections

Reference: Gialamas, A., Pilkington, R., Berry, J., Scalzi, D., Gibson, O., Brown, A., & Lynch, J. (2016). Identification of Aboriginal children using linked administrative data: consequences for measuring inequalities. *Journal of Paediatrics and Child Health*, *52*(5), 534-540.

Child protection contact in South Australia

Proportion of children in South Australia notified to child protection in one year

Figure 3 shows the number and proportion of South Australian children aged unborn to 17 years who had contact with child protection in each Financial Year from 2016/17 to 2020/21. The numbers underlying this figure can be viewed in Table 1 on page 28.

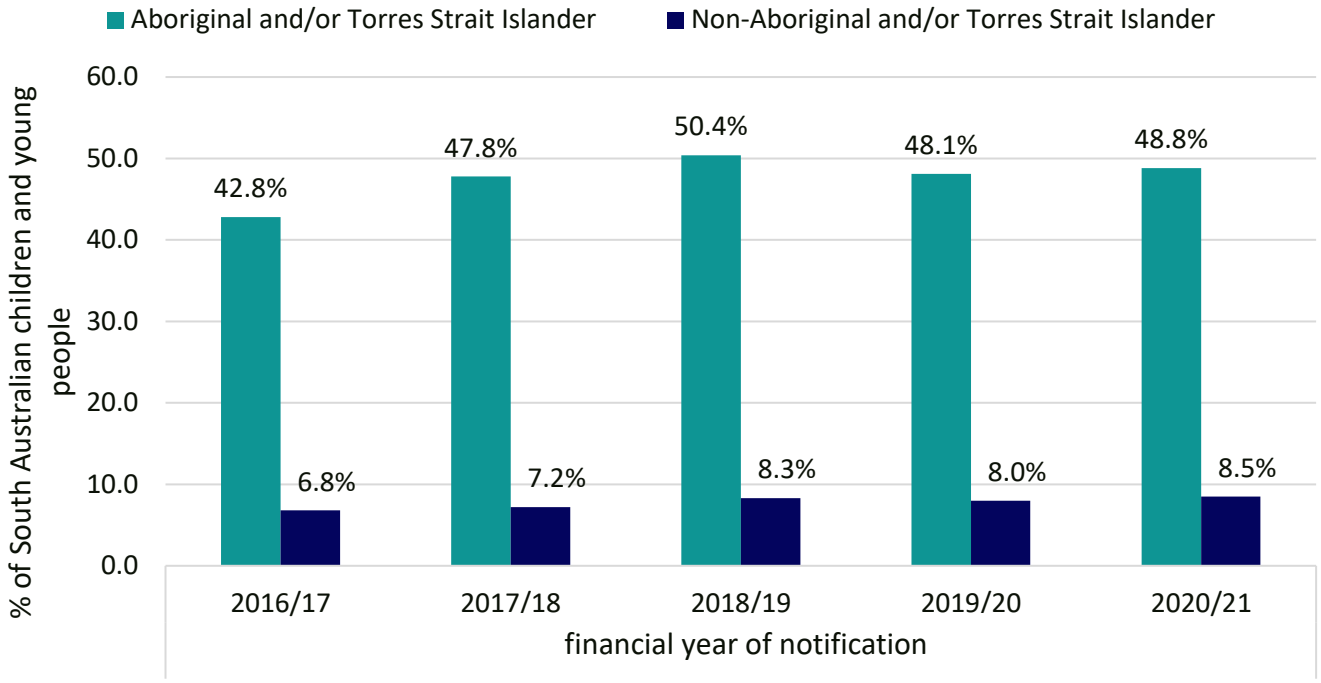


Figure 3: Proportion of children in South Australia notified to child protection in one year

Key Message

In 2020/21;

- Almost 1 in 2 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children were notified to child protection in 2020/2021 compared to 8.5% of non-Aboriginal children.

Proportion of children in South Australia substantiated in one year

Figure 4 shows the number and proportion of South Australian children aged less than 17 years who had at least one substantiation in each Financial Year from 2016/17 to 2020/21. The numbers underlying this figure can be viewed in Table 1 on page 28. The numbers underlying this figure can be viewed in Table 1 on page 28.

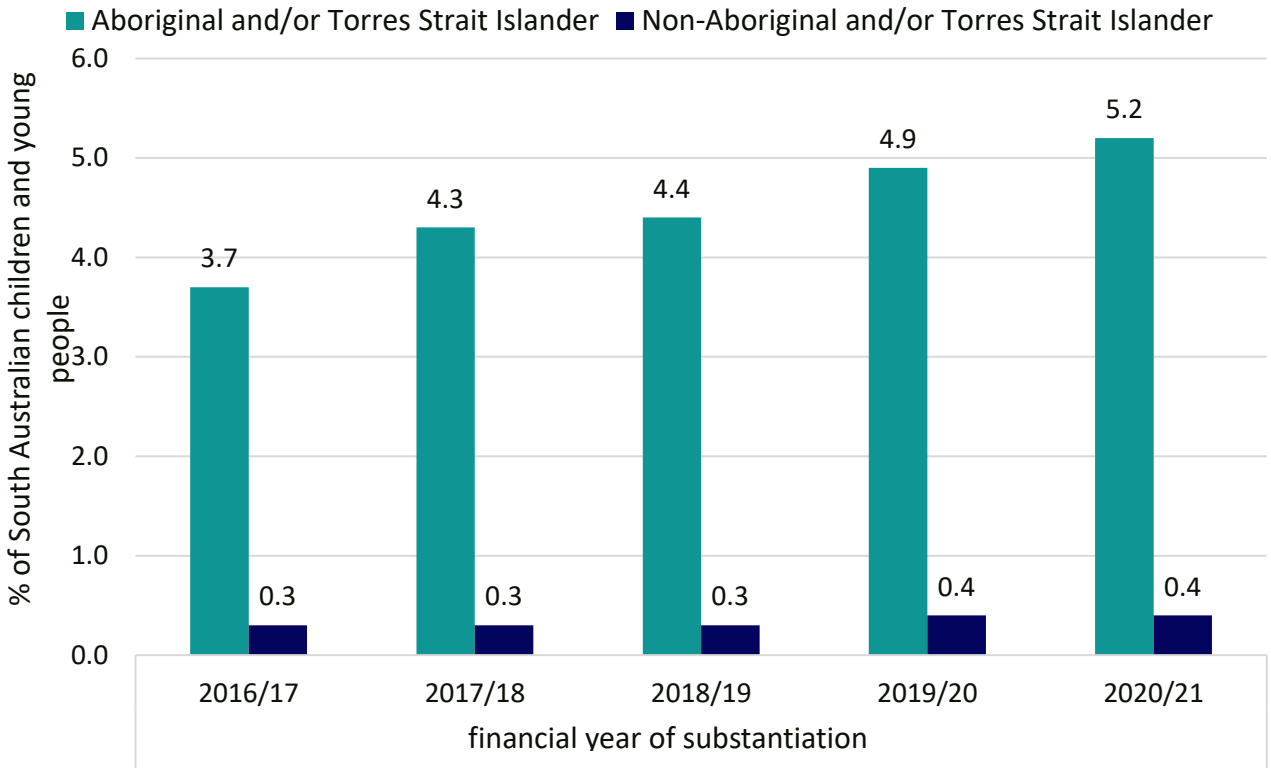


Figure 4: Proportion of children in South Australia substantiated in one year

Key Message:

In 2020/21;

- About 1 in 20 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children were substantiated at least once compared to 1 in 250 of the non-Aboriginal population.

Proportion of children in South Australia in OOHC in one year

Figure 5 shows the number and proportion of South Australian children aged less 17 years who experienced an out-of-home-care placement during each Financial Year from 2016/17 to 2020/21. The numbers underlying this figure can be viewed in Table 1 on page 28.

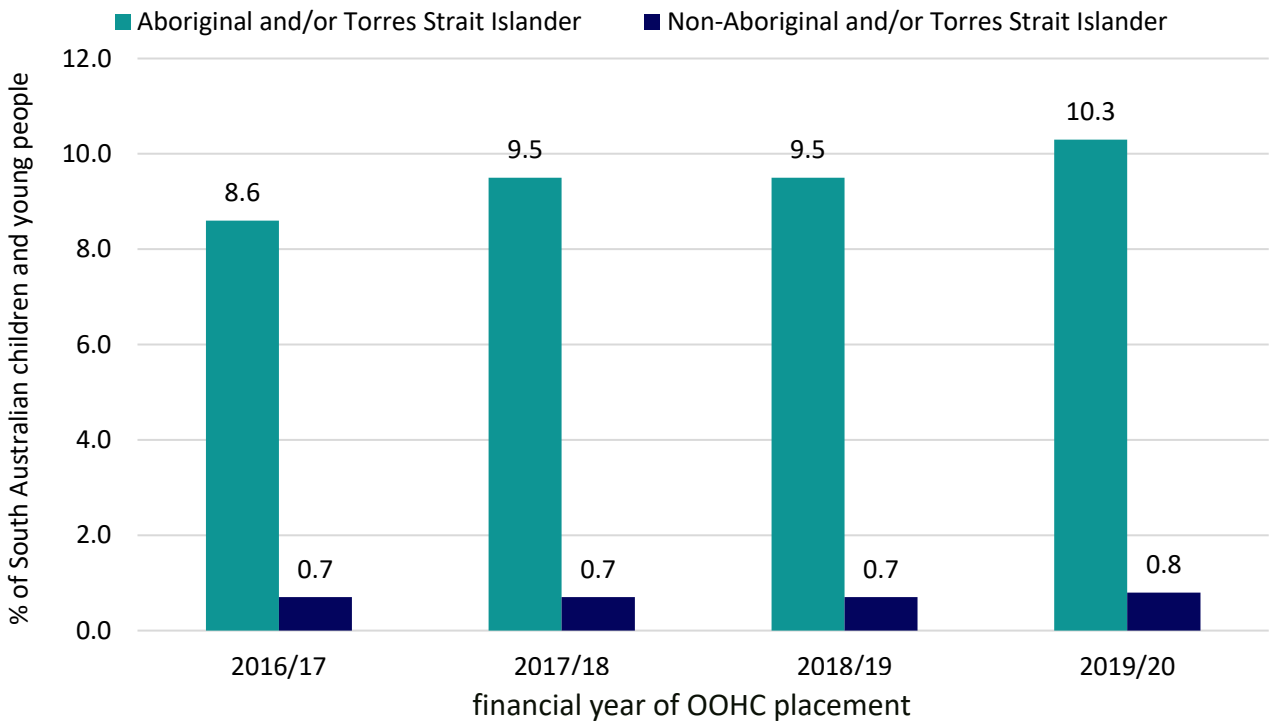


Figure 5: Proportion of children in South Australia in OOHC in one year

Key Message:

In 2020/21;

- About 1 in 10 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children experienced at least one out-of-home care placement

compared to

- About 1 in 100 of the non-Aboriginal population

Proportion of children in South Australia who had contact with child protection

Table 1 shows the number and proportion of South Australian children aged unborn to 17 years who had contact with child protection in each Financial Year from 2016/17 to 2020/21 and type of child protection contact.

Table 1: Number and proportion of South Australian children from pregnancy to 17 years of age who had contact with child protection by type of contact in each financial year from 2016/17 to 2020/21

Financial Year		Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander		Non-Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	
		n	% of ERP	n	% of ERP
2016/17	ABS Estimated Residential population [a]	17,535	100.0	350,070	100.0
	# of children notified [b]	7,350	41.9	23,394	6.7
	# of children subject to screened-in notification	4,000	22.8	9,569	2.7
	# of children investigated	1,092	6.2	1,735	0.5
	# of children substantiated	640	3.7	1,094	0.3
	# of children in OOHC	1,513	8.6	2,380	0.7
	Total	**8,267**	**47.1**	**24,957**	**7.1**
2017/18	ABS Estimated Residential population[a]	16,680	100.0	368,573	100.0
	# of children notified[b]	7,811	46.8	26,160	7.1
	# of children subject to screened-in notification	4,113	24.7	10,230	2.8
	# of children investigated	1,174	7.0	1,763	0.5
	# of children substantiated	715	4.3	1,139	0.3
	# of children in OOHC	1,592	9.5	2,494	0.7
	Total	**8,770**	**52.6**	**27,770**	**7.5**
2018/19	ABS Estimated Residential population[a]	17,987	100.0	370,445	100.0
	# of children notified[b]	8,883	49.4	30,467	8.2
	# of children subject to screened-in notification	4,714	26.2	11,961	3.2
	# of children investigated	1,308	7.3	1,939	0.5
	# of children substantiated	791	4.4	1,209	0.3
	# of children in OOHC	1,713	9.5	2,689	0.7
	Total	**9,783**	**54.4**	**32,058**	**8.7**
2019/20	ABS Estimated Residential population[a]	18,305	100.0	371,986	100.0
	# of children notified[b]	8,598	47.0	29,542	7.9
	# of children subject to screened-in notification	5,638	30.8	15,299	4.1
	# of children investigated	1,532	8.4	2,661	0.7
	# of children substantiated	903	4.9	1,543	0.4
	# of children in OOHC	1,879	10.3	2,962	0.8
	Total	**9,704**	**53.0**	**31,370**	**8.4**
2020/21	ABS Estimated Residential population[a]	18,639	100.0	373,217	100.0
	# of children notified[b]	8,913	47.8	31,488	8.4
	# of children subject to screened-in notification	5,655	30.3	15,211	4.1
	# of children investigated	1,624	8.7	3,058	0.8
	# of children substantiated	960	5.2	1,585	0.4
	# of children in OOHC	2,027	10.9	3,134	0.8
	Total	**10,103**	**54.2**	**33,494**	**9.0**

(a) Australian Bureaus of Statistics (ABS) estimated resident population in South Australia aged 0 to 17 years by Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander for each year

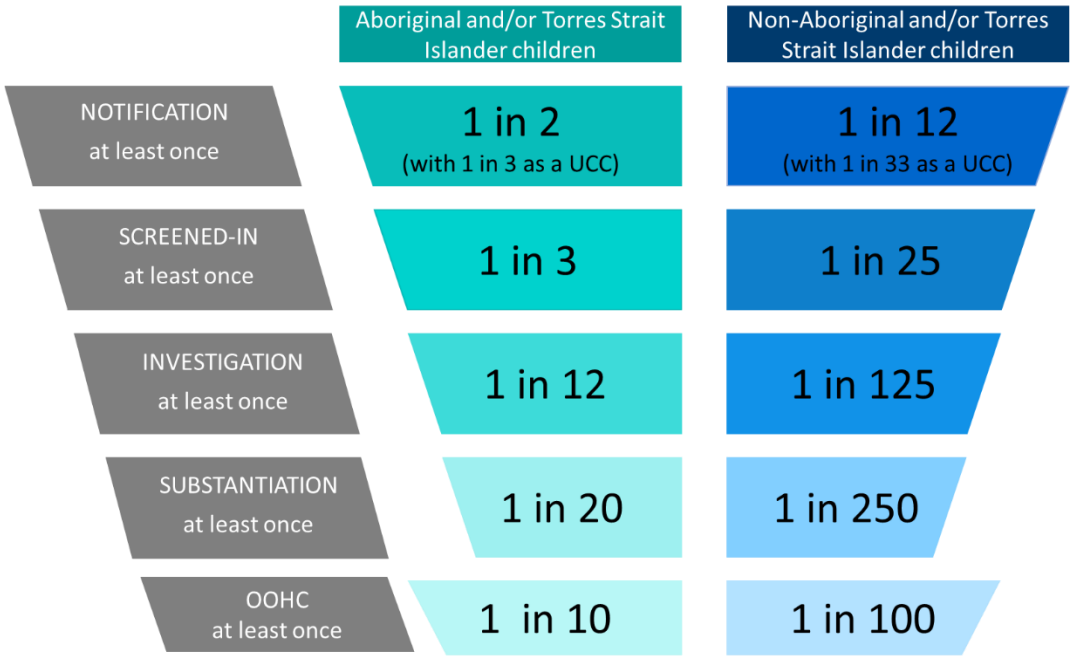
(b) Includes pre-birth (unborn) notification, and adolescent at risk notifications.

Proportion of children in South Australia who had contact with child protection in one year

Figure 6 summaries the Table 1 on page 28 prior, it shows the proportion of South Australian children aged unborn to 17 years who had contact with child protection in 2020/21 and type of child protection contact.

For example, In South Australia in 2020/21,

- 1 in 2 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children and young people had at least one notification to child protection compared to 1 in 12 non-Aboriginal children
- 1 in 3 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children and young people had at least one screened-in notification to child protection compared to 1 in 25 non-Aboriginal children
- 1 in 12 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children and young people had at least one investigation compared to 1 in 125 non-Aboriginal children
- 1 in 20 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children and young people had at least one substantiation compared to 1 in 250 non-Aboriginal children
- 1 in 10 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children and young people had at least one OOHC placement compared to 1 in 100 non-Aboriginal children



NOTE: denominator for these calculations is the ABS estimated populations

Figure 6*:* Proportion of South Australian children & young people aged <18 years in contact with child protection system in 2020/21

Age of child protection contact in 2020/21

Table 2 shows the age profile of children notified to child protection in 2020/21.

Table 2: Age of children notified to child protection in 2020/21 by Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander

	Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander		Non-Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	
	n	col %	n	col %
Less than 1 year	667	7.3	1,512	4.8
1 to 2 years	810	8.9	2,362	7.4
3 to 4 years	936	10.3	2,906	9.1
5 to 9 years	2,492	27.4	8,703	27.4
10 to 13 years	2,026	22.3	8,138	25.6
14 years and over	1,804	19.8	7,609	23.9
Total	**9,100**	**100.0**	**31,797**	**100.0**

Event level: Number of notifications over time

Table 3 shows at the event level, the number of notifications, screened-in notifications, investigations and substantiations in each financial year from 2011/2012 to 2020/2021, and what proportion of those were subsequently screened-in, investigated and substantiated.

Table 3: Number of notifications, screened-in notifications, investigations and substantiations in each Financial Year from 2011/2012 to 2020/2021 by Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander

	Financial Year	# of Notifications (a)	# of Screened-in Notifications	% of notifications screened-in	Number of investigations	% of screened-in investigated	Number of substantiations	% of investigations substantiated
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	2011/2012	10,108	5,827	57.6%	1,901	32.6%	930	48.9%
	2012/2013	10,563	5,780	54.7%	2,069	35.8%	944	45.6%
	2013/2014	11,748	5,600	47.7%	2,441	43.6%	1,060	43.4%
	2014/2015	14,490	6,608	45.6%	2,220	33.6%	1,043	47.0%
	2015/2016	14,754	6,500	44.1%	1,920	29.5%	862	44.9%
	2016/2017	14,033	6,201	44.2%	1,523	24.6%	716	47.0%
	2017/2018	17,166	6,937	40.4%	1,834	26.4%	832	45.4%
	2018/2019	21,026	8,290	39.4%	2,220	26.8%	941	42.4%
	2019/2020	19,589	11,185	57.1%	2,607	23.3%	1,103	42.3%
	2020/2021	20,484	10,701	52.2%	2,479	23.2%	1,099	44.3%
Non-Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	2011/2012	25,334	11,387	44.9%	3,025	26.6%	1,525	50.4%
	2012/2013	26,765	11,123	41.6%	3,194	28.7%	1,491	46.7%
	2013/2014	29,522	11,254	38.1%	3,946	35.1%	1,718	43.5%
	2014/2015	35,225	12,457	35.4%	3,218	25.8%	1,528	47.5%
	2015/2016	37,064	12,233	33.0%	2,832	23.2%	1,255	44.3%
	2016/2017	35,923	12,591	35.0%	2,454	19.5%	1,207	49.2%
	2017/2018	43,279	13,696	31.6%	2,575	18.8%	1,291	50.1%
	2018/2019	52,821	16,765	31.7%	2,955	17.6%	1,397	47.3%
	2019/2020	51,244	24,239	47.3%	4,119	17.0%	1,712	41.6%
	2020/2021	54,089	23,104	42.7%	4,350	18.8%	1,767	40.6%

(a) Includes Familial notifications only, excludes pre-birth (unborn) notifications, adolescent at risk notifications and extra-familial notifications.

Key Message:
in 2020/21

- 47.8% of notifications for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children and young people did not meet the threshold and were screened out.
- 57.3% of notifications for non-Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children and young people did not meet the threshold and were screened out.
- 25% of notifications concerning both the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal populations were made by police, and 24% were made by Education professionals.

Child protection contact in Australia

National view: number of children subject to a screened-in notification each year

Report on Government Services (ROGS)[1] data was used to provide jurisdictional comparisons of children subject to a screened-in notification from 2017/18 through to 2021/22.

Table 4: Number of children subject to a screened-in notification each financial year by state or territory in Australia, 2017/18 to 2020/21

FY		Number of children subject to a screened-in notification						
		SA	NSW	VIC	QLD	WA	ACT	NT
2017/18	Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	3,412	18,454	5,791	6,886	5,166	878	9,197
	Non-Aboriginal	10,158	52,937	66,143	12,018	7,075	4,159	2,610
	Unknown	996	20,616	5,592	1,984	2,888	2,220	130
	Total	**14,566**	**92,007**	**77,526**	**20,888**	**15,129**	**7,257**	**11,937**
2018/19	Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	4,084	21,268	6,429	7,794	5,622	944	8,810
	Non-Aboriginal	12,108	53,963	70,830	12,691	8,495	4,502	2,533
	Unknown	774	30,541	5,810	2,261	3,291	2,296	104
	Total	16,966	105,772	83,069	22,746	17,408	7,742	11,447
2019/20	Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	5,055	23,937	6,672	7,825	5,259	942	8,887
	Non-Aboriginal	15,607	62,116	69,999	13,017	7,838	3,974	2,742
	Unknown	623	26,464	4,884	2,424	2,225	2,821	67
	Total	21,285	112,517	81,555	23,266	15,322	7,737	11,696
2020/21	Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	5,202	26,657	6,908	8,197	5,058	1,120	9,991
	Non-Aboriginal	15,234	68,079	70,203	14,118	7,185	4,435	2,952
	Unknown	915	32,082	5,567	2,906	1,793	3,195	14
	Total	21,351	126,818	82,678	25,221	14,036	8,750	12,957
2021/22	Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	4,737	24,483	7,068	9,132	4,903	1,052	10,248
	Non-Aboriginal	14,475	56,645	68,847	15,752	6,426	4,853	3,133
	Unknown	803	27,569	5,477	3,692	1,420	2,525	66
	Total	**20,015**	**108,697**	**81,392**	**28,576**	**12,749**	**8,430**	**13,447**
% relative change from 2017/18 to 2021/22	Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	28.0%	24.6%	18.1%	24.6%	-5.4%	16.5%	10.3%
	Non-Aboriginal	29.8%	6.5%	3.9%	23.7%	-10.1%	14.3%	16.7%
	Unknown	-24.0%	25.2%	-2.1%	46.3%	-103.4%	12.1%	-97.0%
	Total	27.2%	15.4%	4.7%	26.9%	-18.7%	13.9%	11.2%

Key Message:
In South Australia:

- There has been a 28% relative increase in the number of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children subject to a screened-in notification from 3,412 children in 17/18 to 4,737 in 21/22, and a
- 29.8% relative increase in the number of non-Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children subject to a screened-in notification from 10,158 children in 17/18 to 14,475 in 21/22.

Compared to Victoria;

- There has been a 18.1% relative increase in the number of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children subject to a screened-in notification from 5,791 children in 17/18 to 7,068 in 21/22, and a
- 6.5% relative increase in the number of non-Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children subject to a screened-in notification from 66,143 children in 17/18 to 68,847 in 2021/22.

National view: Screened-in notifications, Investigations and Substantiations in 2021/22

Table 5 shows the number screened-in notifications, finalised investigations, and substantiations and the proportion of screened-in notifications that resulted in an investigation, and the proportion of investigations that resulted in a substantiation for the 2021/22 financial year.

Table 5: Number of events and children with at least one screened-in notification, finalised investigation, and substantiation in 2021/22 by State or Territory

		Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander				Non-Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander			
		Events		Individuals		Events		Individuals	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
SA	Screened-in notifications	9,561		4,737		24,200		14,475	
	Finalised investigations	2,288	23.9	1,459	30.8	4,179	17.3	3,020	20.9
	Substantiations	926	40.5	822	56.3	1,493	35.7	1,371	45.4
NSW	Screened-in notifications	64,526		24,483		115,665		56,645	
	Finalised investigations	19,650	30.5	9,611	39.3	31,818	27.5	17,978	31.7
	Substantiations	11,063	56.3	5,209	54.2	17,429	54.8	9,290	51.7
VIC	Screened-in notifications	11,198		7,068		100,265		68,847	
	Finalised investigations	4,191	37.4	3,693	52.2	29,850	29.8	26,863	39.0
	Substantiations	2,127	50.8	2,032	55.0	13,954	46.7	13,275	49.4
QLD	Screened-in notifications	10,428		9,132		17,656		15,752	
	Finalised investigations	7,840	75.2	7,029	77.0	13,393	75.9	12,122	77.0
	Substantiations	2,404	30.7	2,274	32.4	3,916	29.2	3,708	30.6
WA	Screened-in notifications	5,775		4,903		7,247		6,426	
	Finalised investigations	3,350	58.0	3,052	62.2	5,506	76.0	5,119	79.7
	Substantiations	1,888	56.4	1,759	57.6	2,365	43.0	2,231	43.6
TAS	Screened-in notifications	430		385		628		585	
	Finalised investigations	162	37.7	156	40.5	191	30.4	187	32.0
	Substantiations	139	85.8	133	85.3	159	83.2	155	82.9
ACT	Screened-in notifications	3,399		1,052		12,382		4,853	
	Finalised investigations	447	13.2	338	32.1	1,497	12.1	1,102	22.7
	Substantiations	127	28.4	100	29.6	301	20.1	253	23.0
NT	Screened-in notifications	24,894		10,248		5,545		3,133	
	Finalised investigations	3,997	16.1	3,501	34.2	779	14.0	731	23.3
	Substantiations	1,287	32.2	1,224	35.0	235	30.2	223	30.5

Key Message:

In 2021-22, in South Australia,

- 40.5% of all finalised investigations for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children were substantiated for abuse or neglect; compared to 35.7% for non-Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children.
- 56.3% of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander with at least one investigation, had at least one substantiation, compared to 45.4% for non-Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children.

National view: Change in the relative proportion of screened-in notifications over time

Figure 7 shows the number of children subject to a screened-in notification each financial year by state or territory in Australia, 2017/18 to 2020/21 and the proportion relative change from 2017/18 to 2021/22.

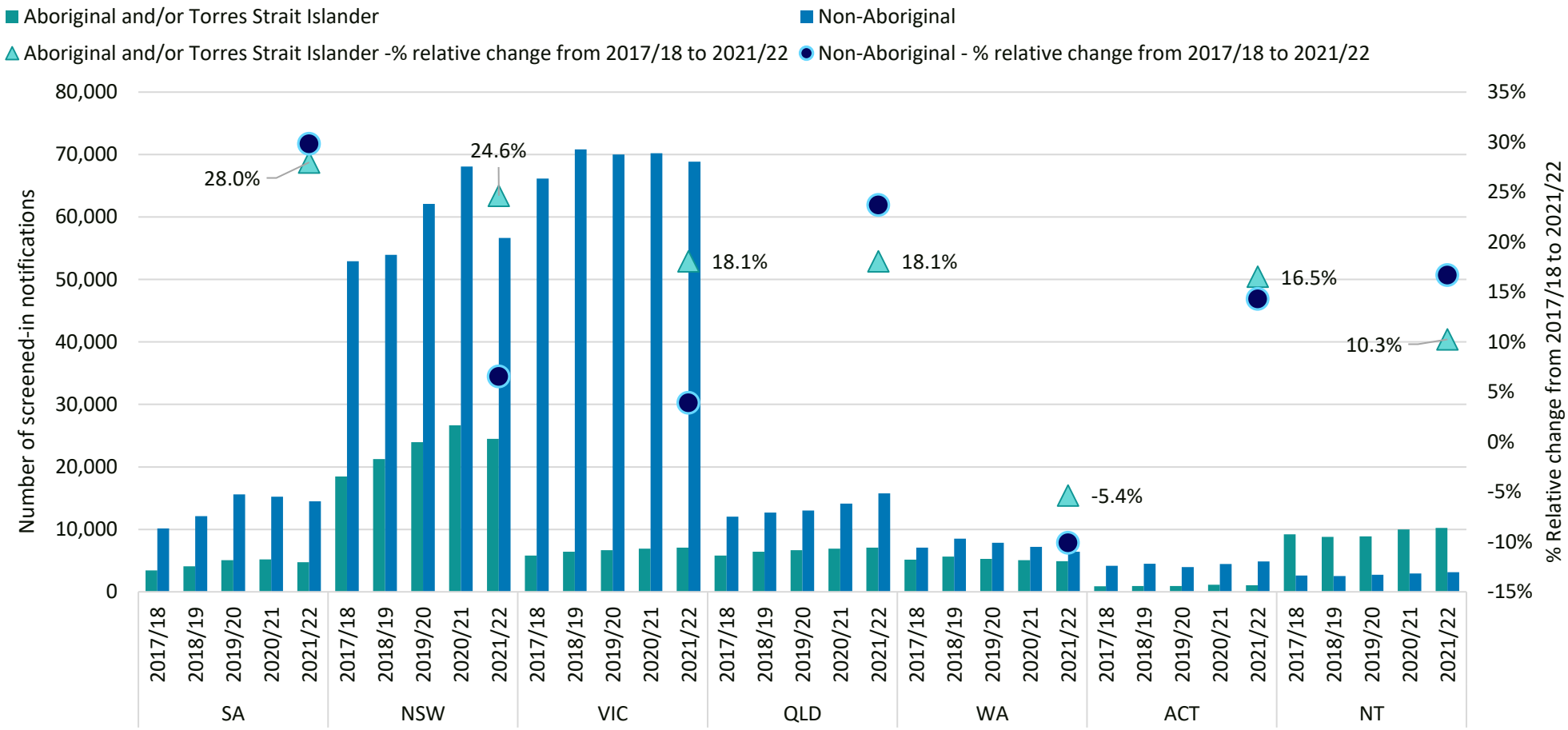


Figure 7: Number of children subject to a screened-in notification each financial year by state or territory in Australia and % relative change in screened-in notifications from 2016/17 to 2020/21

Key Message:

In 2020/21, of all screened-in notifications for Aboriginal and/Torres Strait Islander children and young people:

- SA had the largest relative increase in the number of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children (28% increase) and the number of non-Aboriginal children (29.8% increase) subject to a screened-in notification from 2017/18 to 2021/2022, compared to all other jurisdictions.

Transitions through the child protection system

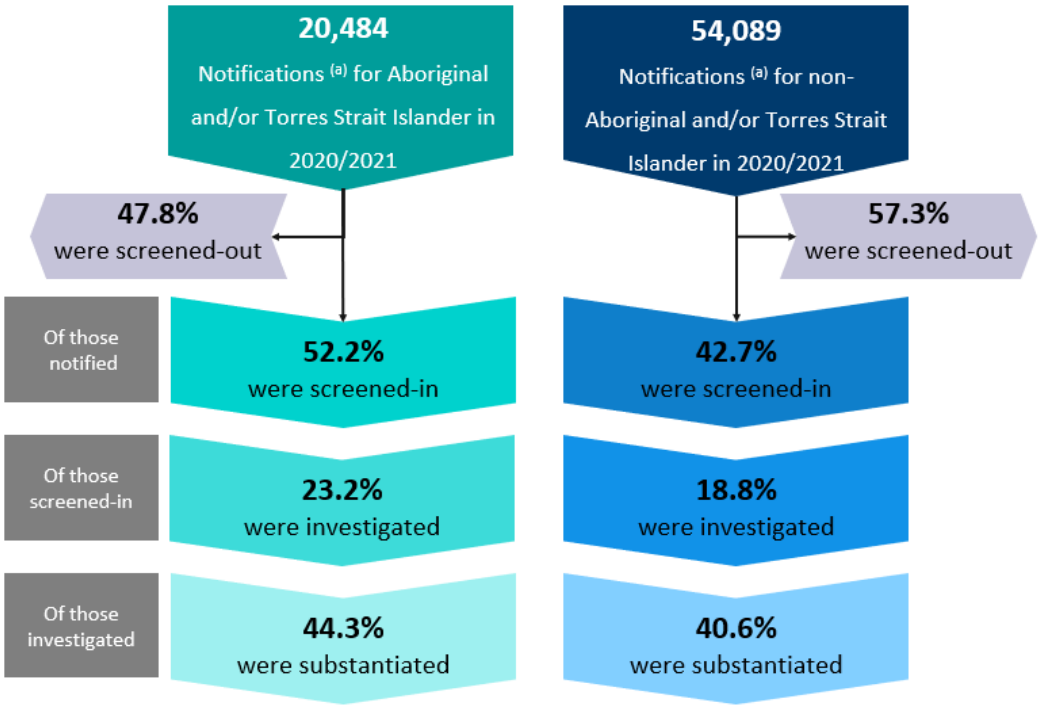
Notifications level: Child Protection transitions in 2020/2021

Figure 8 investigates the number of notifications and their subsequent transitions through the child protection system at the child level in financial year 2020/21 by Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. At this point, we were unable to add out-of-home care to this analysis as we cannot join this up to a specific substantiation.

Example of how to read Figure 8:

There were 20,484 notifications for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children and young people in 2020/21, of those notifications

- 47.8% were screened-out; and
- 52.2% of all notifications were screened-in; of those
  - 23.2% were investigated by child protection; of those
    - 44.3% were substantiated for child maltreatment.



(a) Includes Familial notifications only, excludes pre-birth (unborn) notifications, adolescent at risk notifications and extra-familial notifications.

Figure 8: Transition of notifications through the child protection system in 2020/21

Key Messages:

- 47.8% of notifications for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children and young people in 2020/21 did not meet the threshold and were screened out, compared to 57.3% of notifications for the non-Aboriginal population.
- 23.2% of screened-in-notifications for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children and young people were investigated, compared to 18.8% for the non-Aboriginal population.
- 44.3% of investigated notifications for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children and young people were substantiated, compared to 40.6% for the non-Aboriginal population.
- 25% of notifications concerning both the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal population were made by police, and 24% were made by Education professionals

Child level: Child Protection transitions in 2020/2021

Figure 9 investigates transitions through the child protection system at the child level in financial year 2020/21 by Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. At this point, we were unable to add out-of-home care to this analysis as we cannot join this up to a specific substantiation.

Example of how to read Figure 9:

There were 9,100 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children and young people with at least one notification in 2020/21; of those

- 62.1% were subject to at least screened-in notification in 2020/21; of those
  - 28.7% were investigated by child protection at least once by in 2020/21; of those
    - 59.1% were substantiated for child maltreatment at least once in 2020/21.

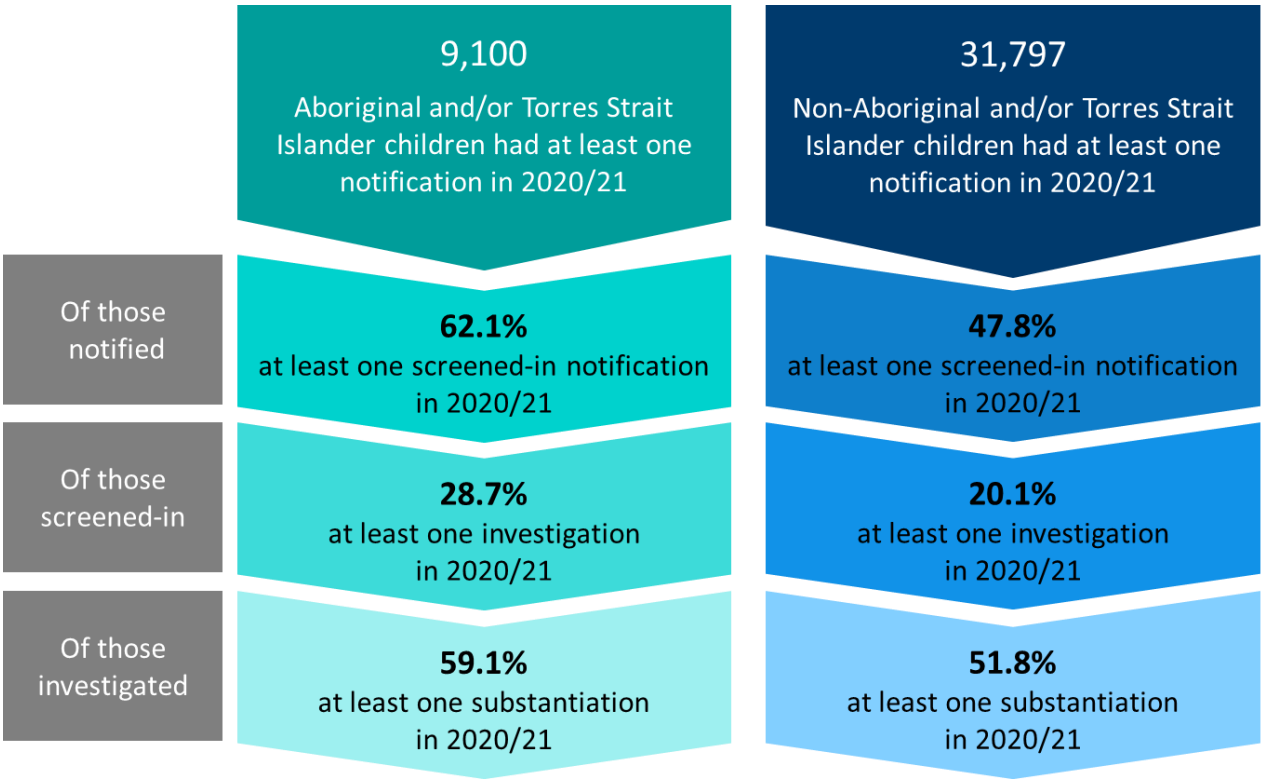


Figure 9: Child Protection transitions in financial year 2020-21 by Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander

Key Message:

- *The Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander population were more likely to transition through every stage of the child protection system in 2020/21 (e.g. of those notified, how many are screened-in, of those screened-in how many are investigated etc.)*

Child level: Child Protection transitions by age in 2020/21

Table 6 shows the transitions through the child protection system at the child level in the financial year 2020/21 by age at notification, and Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.

Example of how to read Table 6:

There were 667 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander infants age less than 1 year who had at least one notification in 2020/21; of those

- 81.3% were subject to at least one screened-in notification in 2020/21; of those
  - 46.9% were investigated by child protection at least once by in 2020/21; of those
    - 73.6% were substantiated for child maltreatment at least once in 2020/21.

Table 6: Child Protection transitions in financial year 2020-21 by age of child at notification and Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander

		Child age in 2020/21						
		Less than 1 year	1 to 2 years	3 to 4 years	5 to 9 years	10 to 13 years	14 years and over	Total
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	Number of children notified	667	810	936	2,492	2,026	1,804	9,100
	% of those screened-in	81.3%	70.7%	66.9%	65.5%	63.7%	54.1%	62.1%
	% of those investigated	46.9%	38.6%	31.2%	29.4%	24.0%	15.7%	28.7%
	% of those substantiated	73.6%	70.7%	57.6%	57.9%	49.5%	52.8%	59.1%
Non-Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	Number of children notified	1,512	2,362	2,906	8,703	8,138	7,609	31,797
	% of those screened-in	63.8%	57.8%	51.7%	48.5%	46.8%	43.9%	47.8
	% of those investigated	39.9%	28.2%	23.7%	21.8	16.9%	10.7%	20.1%
	% of those substantiated	66.8%	54.9%	53.5%	47.5%	48.7%	46.9%	51.8%

Key Message:

- *For both Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children, the younger the age at notification the more likely they were to transition through every stage of the child protection system in 2020/21 (e.g. of those notified, how many are screened-in, of those screened-in how many are investigated etc.)*

Child level: Child Protection transitions by age 10

Figure 10 shows at the child level the transitions through the child protection system by age 10, by Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.

Example of how to read Figure 10:

There were 5,397 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children born from 2006 to 2010 with at least one notification by age 10; of those

> 80.4% were subject to at least screened-in notification by age 10 years; of those

> 58.9% were investigated by child protection at least once by age 10 years; of those

> 68.2% were substantiated for child maltreatment at least once by age 10; and of those

> 45.1% of those experienced at least one out-of-home care placement by age 10 years.

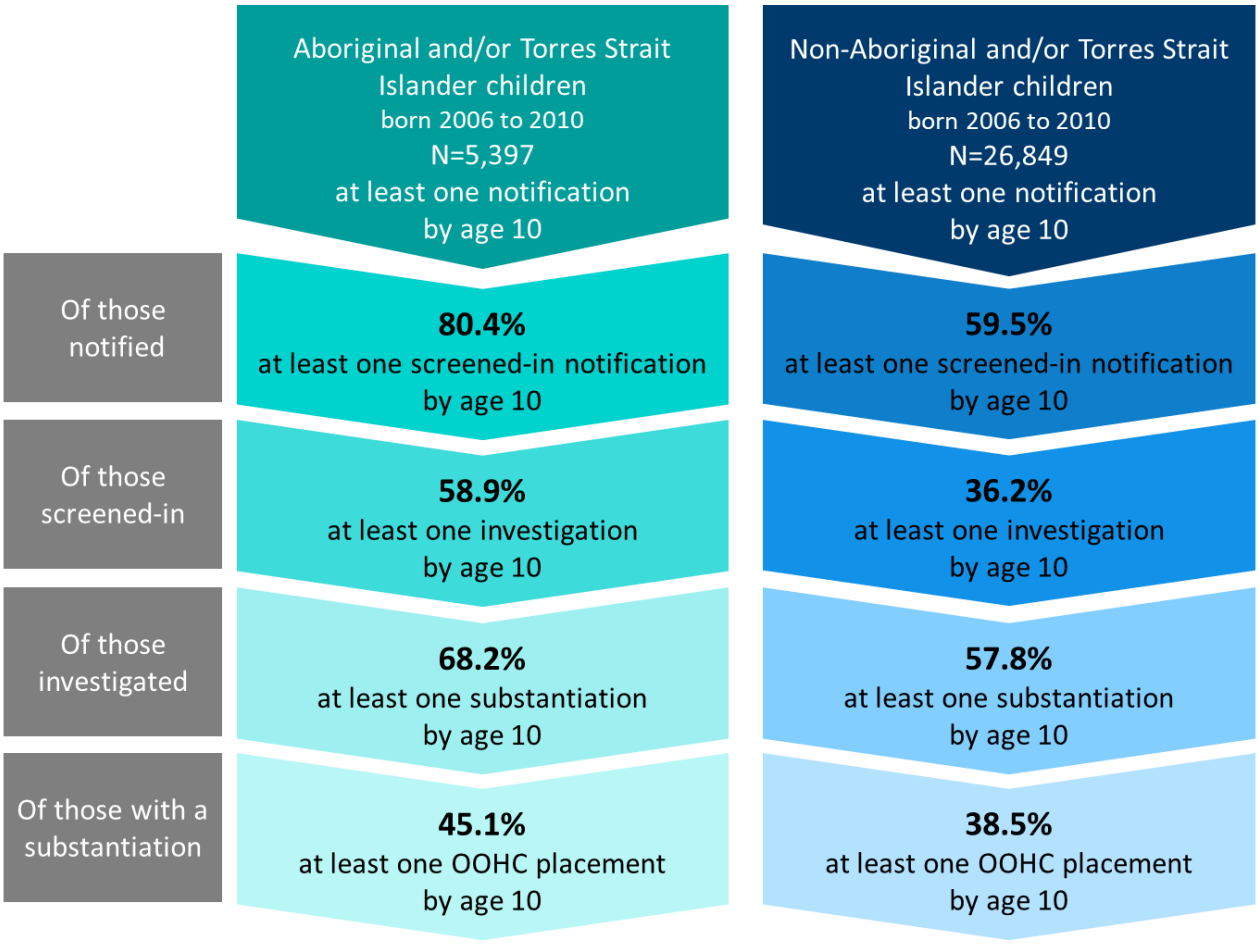


Figure 10: Child Protection transitions by age 10 among those born 2006 to 2010 by Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander

Key Message:

- *The Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander population is more likely to transition through every stage of the child protection system by age 10 years (e.g. of those notified, how many are screened-in, of those screened-in how many are investigated etc.)*

Referral patterns and responses

Figure 11 shows the outcome of all screened-in notifications from financial year 2016/17 to 2020/21 by Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.

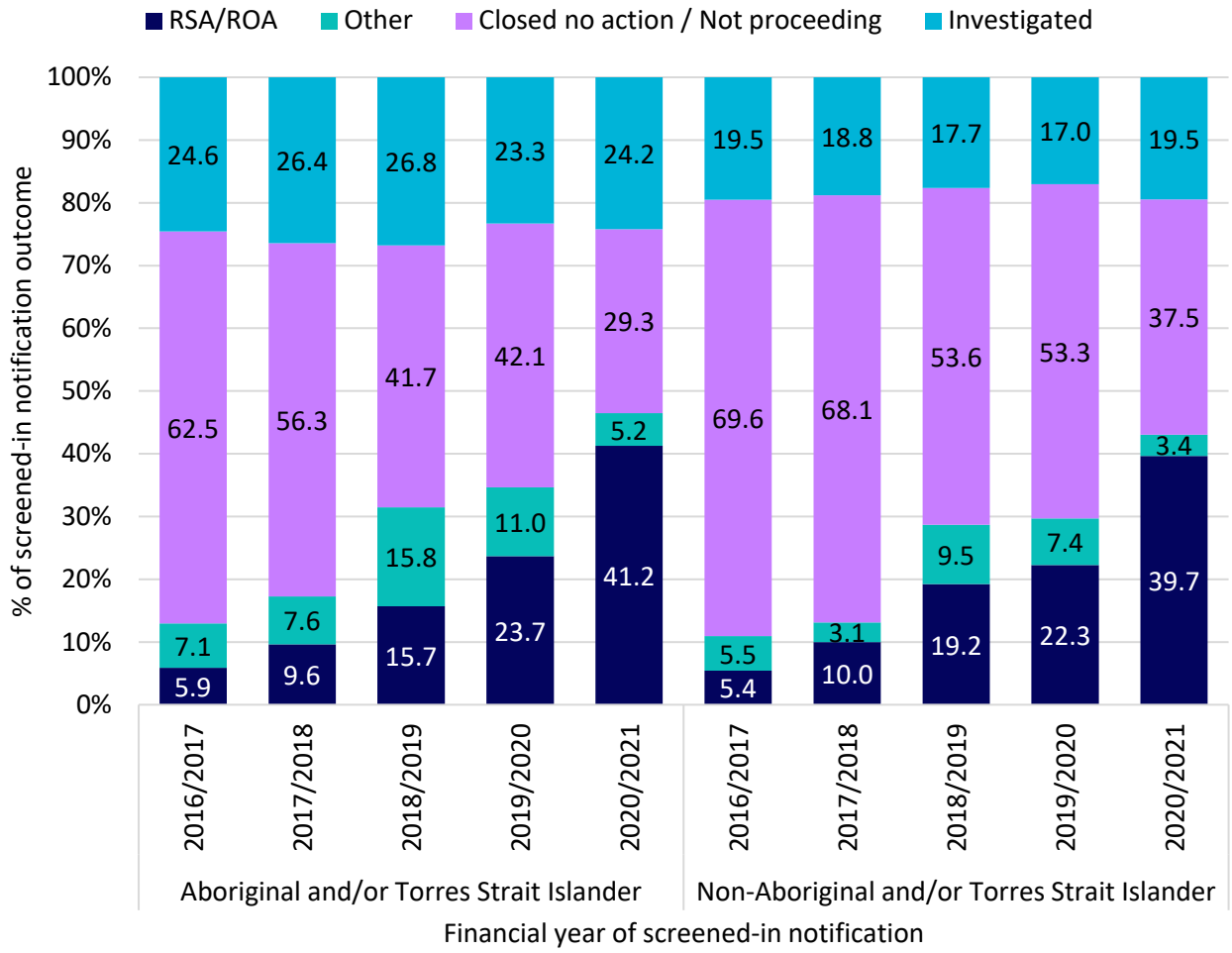


Figure 11: Outcome of screened-in notifications by financial year from 2016/17 to 2020/21
RSA = Referred to State Authority, ROA = Referred to other Agency

Key Message:
In 2020/21, of all screened-in notifications for Aboriginal and/Torres Strait Islander children and young people:

- 41.2% were RSA/ROA, compared to 39.7% for the non-Aboriginal population
- 29.3% were closed no action/ not proceeding compared to 37.5% for the non-Aboriginal population
- 24.2% were investigated, compared to 19.5% for the non-Aboriginal population.

The proportion of screened-in notifications for Aboriginal and/Torres Strait Islander children and young people that were RSA/ROA increased by 35.3% from 5.9% in 2016/17 to 41.2% in 2020/21.

The proportion of screened-in notifications for the non-Aboriginal population that were RSA/ROA increased by 34.3% from 5.4% in 2016/17 to 39.7% in 2020/21.

Cumulative incidence of out-of-home care

Figure 12 to Figure 14 show the cumulative incidence of out-of-home care (OOHC) from birth to age 17 years by age at first placement and year of birth, for children born from 1991 to 2020. Each line represents those children born in a particular year, ranging from the oldest children born in 1991-1992 to the youngest children born in 2019-2020. For Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander born in 1991-1992, by age 17 years 24.5% had at least one OOHC placement, compared to 2.9% of non-Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander born in 1991-92.

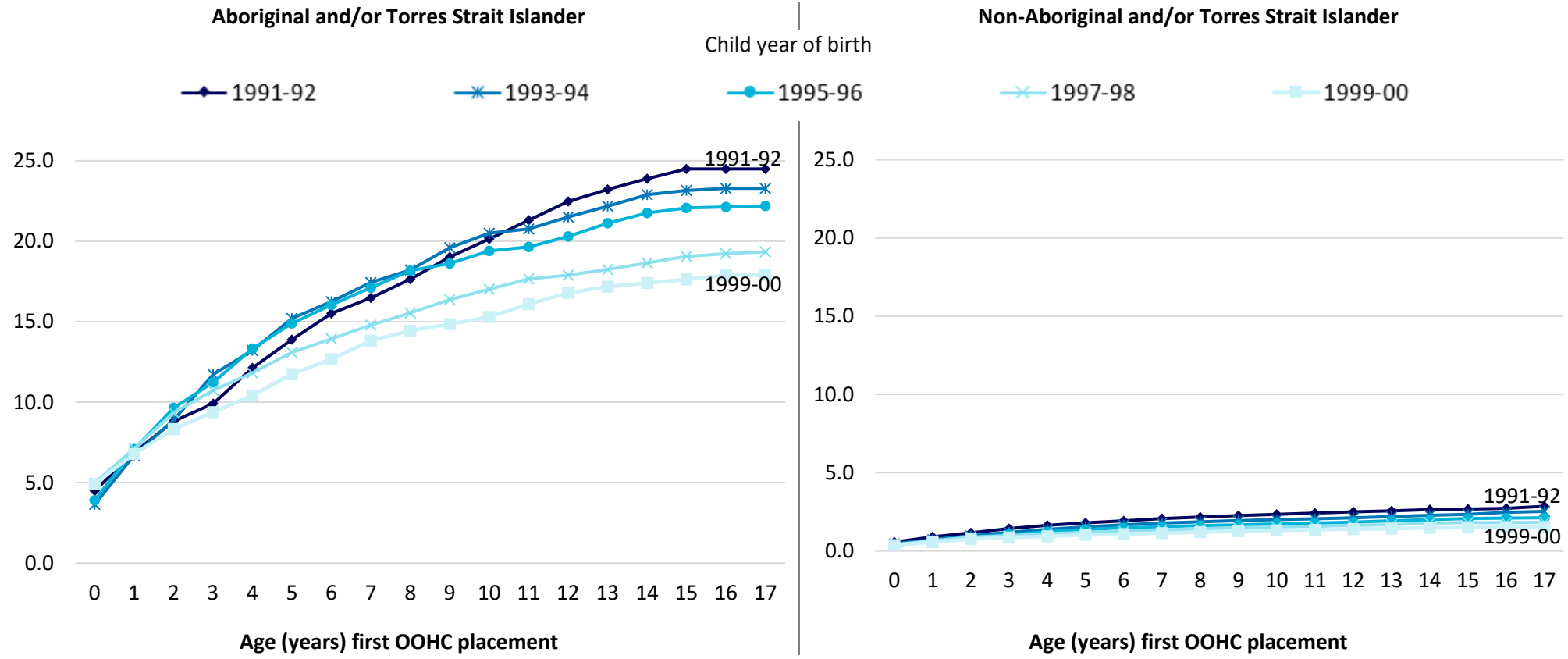


Figure 12: Cumulative incidence of out-of-home care from birth to age 17 years by age at first placement and year of birth, for births from 1991 to 2020 by Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander

Cumulative incidence of out-of-home care, born 2001-2009

Figure 13 shows the cumulative incidence of out-of-home care (OOHC) from birth to age 17 years by age at first placement and year of birth, for children born from 2001 to 2010.

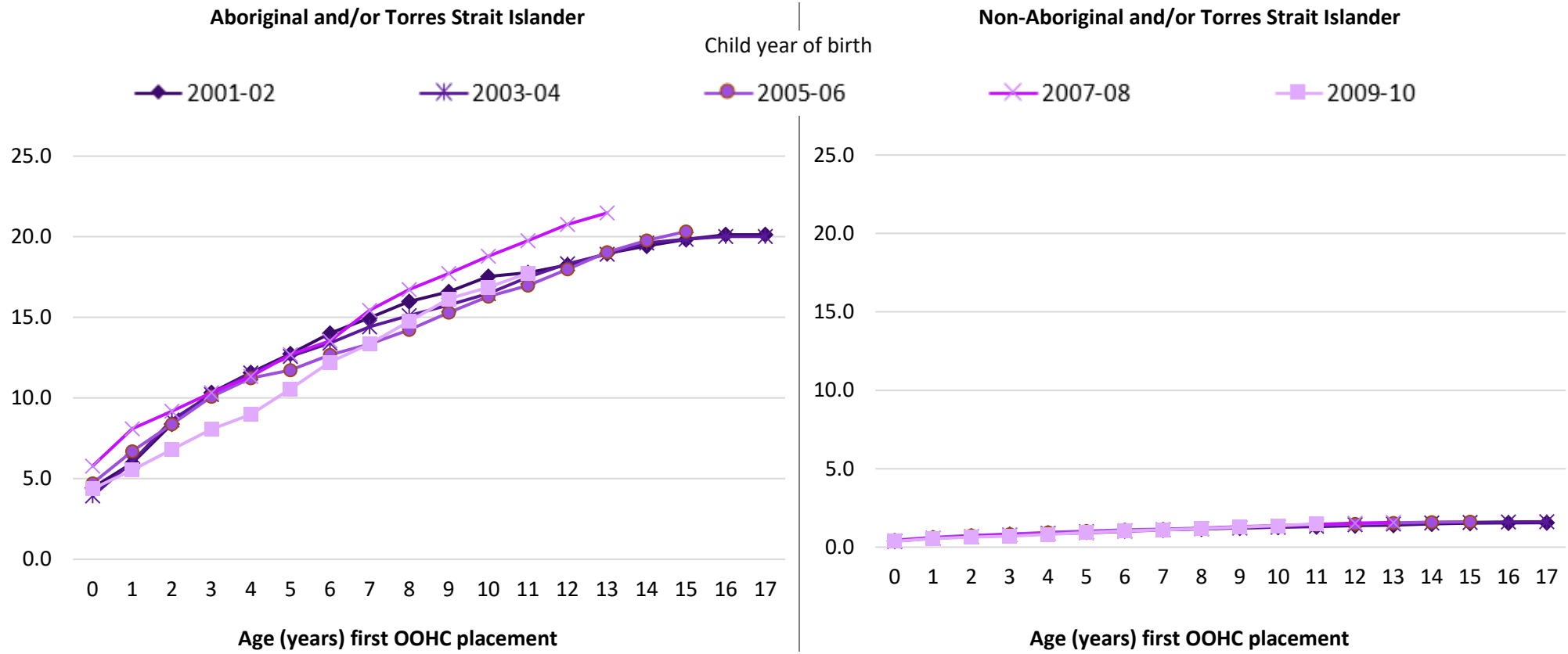


Figure 13: Cumulative incidence of out-of-home Care from birth to age 17 years by age at first placement and year of birth, for births from 2001 to 2010 by Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander

Cumulative incidence of out-of-home care, born 2011-2020

Figure 14 shows the cumulative incidence of out-of-home care (OOHC) from birth to age 17 years by age at first placement and year of birth, for children born from 2011 to 2020.

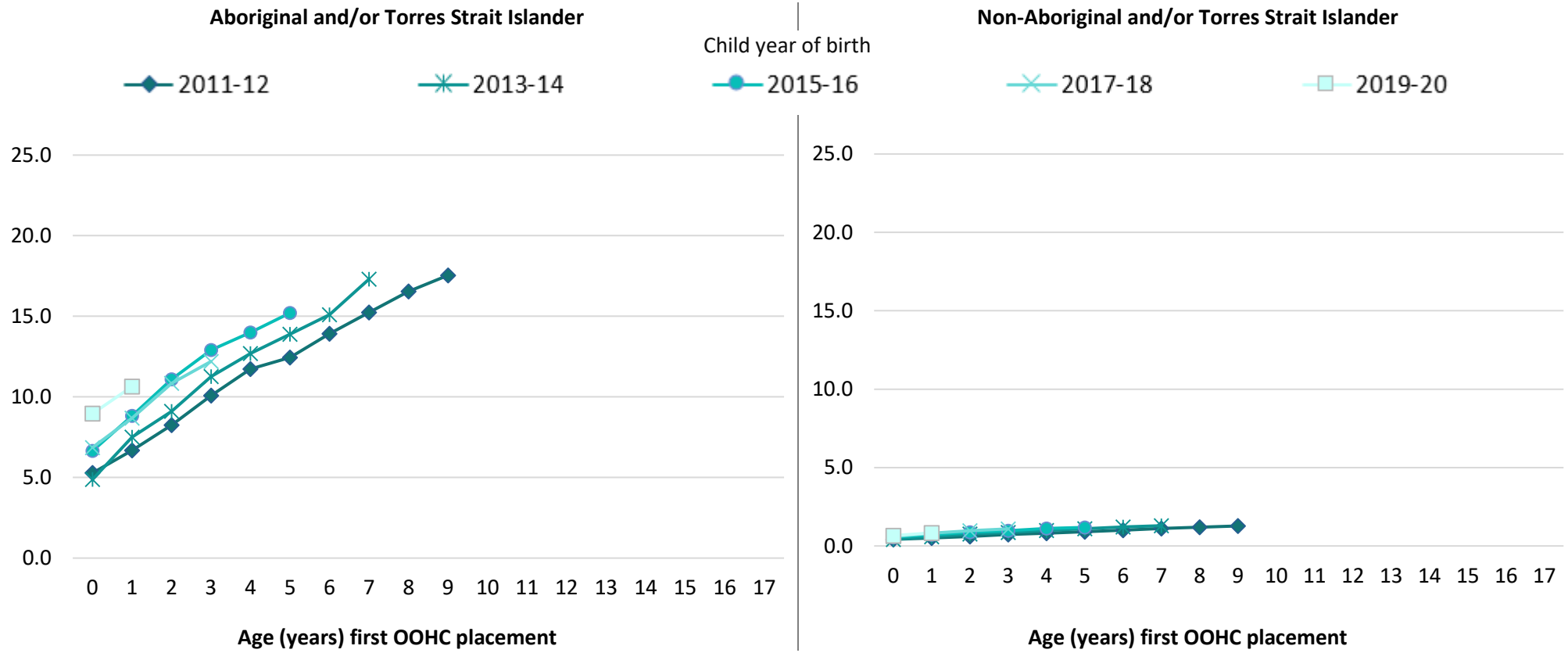


Figure 14: Cumulative incidence of out-of-home care from birth to age 17 years by age at first placement and year of birth, for births from 2011 to 2020 by Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander

Cumulative incidence of Guardianship to Minister until 18 years old orders

Figure 15 shows the cumulative incidence of the Guardianship to the Minister until 18 years old order from birth to age 17 years by age, and year of birth, for children born from 1991 to 2020. Each line represents children born in a particular year, ranging from the oldest children born in 1991-1992 to the youngest children born in 2019-2020. For Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander born in 1991-1999, by age 17 years 5.6% had at least one Guardianship to Minister until 18 years old order, compared to 0.5% of the non-Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander population.

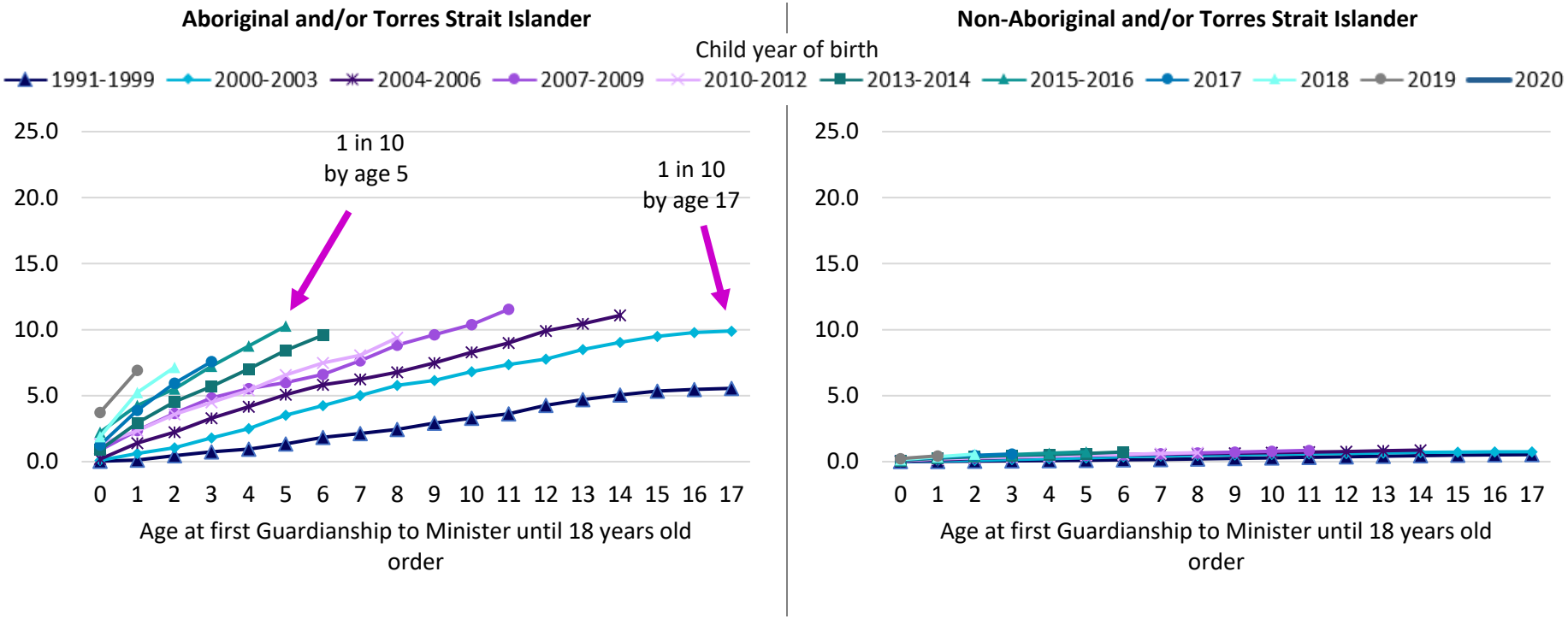


Figure 15: Cumulative incidence of Guardianship to Minister until 18 years of age order by age and year of birth, for those born from 1991 to 2020 by Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander

Key Message:

- By age 17, 1 in 10 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander young people born in 2000-2003 were placed on a Guardianship to 18 years order (they turned 17 from 2017-2020), and this has increased to 1 in 10 by age 5, for children born in 2015-2016.
- By age 1, 1 in 14 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander infants born in 2019 were placed on a Guardianship to 18 years order

10. Removal into out-of-home care

First ever placement

Table 7 shows the number of children aged 0 to 17 years that had their first ever OOHC placement in each financial year from 2011/12 to 2020/21 and the proportion relative change from 2011/12 to 2020/21.

Table 7: Number of children that had their first ever OOHC placement by financial year and Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander

Financial year of first ever OOHC placement	Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Number of children that had their first ever OOHC placement		Non-Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Number of children that had their first ever OOHC placement	
	n	Row %	n	Row %
2011/2012	173	35.3	317	64.7
2012/2013	156	35.9	278	64.1
2013/2014	122	34.6	231	65.4
2014/2015	181	34.6	342	65.4
2015/2016	311	43.6	403	56.4
2016/2017	215	35.4	393	64.6
2017/2018	234	41.3	332	58.7
2018/2019	249	37.6	414	62.4
2019/2020	312	40.0	468	60.0
2020/2021	269	39.1	419	60.9
% relative change from 2011/2012 to 2020/2021 in number of children	**55.5%**		**32.2%**	

Key Message:

- In 2020/21 39.1% of children and young people who experienced their first OOHC placement were Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.
- There has been a 55.5% relative increase in the number of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children experiencing OOHC for the first time from 173 children in 2011/12 to 269 in 2020/21, and a
- 32.2% relative increase in the number of non-Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children experiencing OOHC for the first time from 317 children in 2011/12 to 419 in 2020/21.

Figure 16 shows the proportion of children entering OOHC for the first time each financial year who were Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.

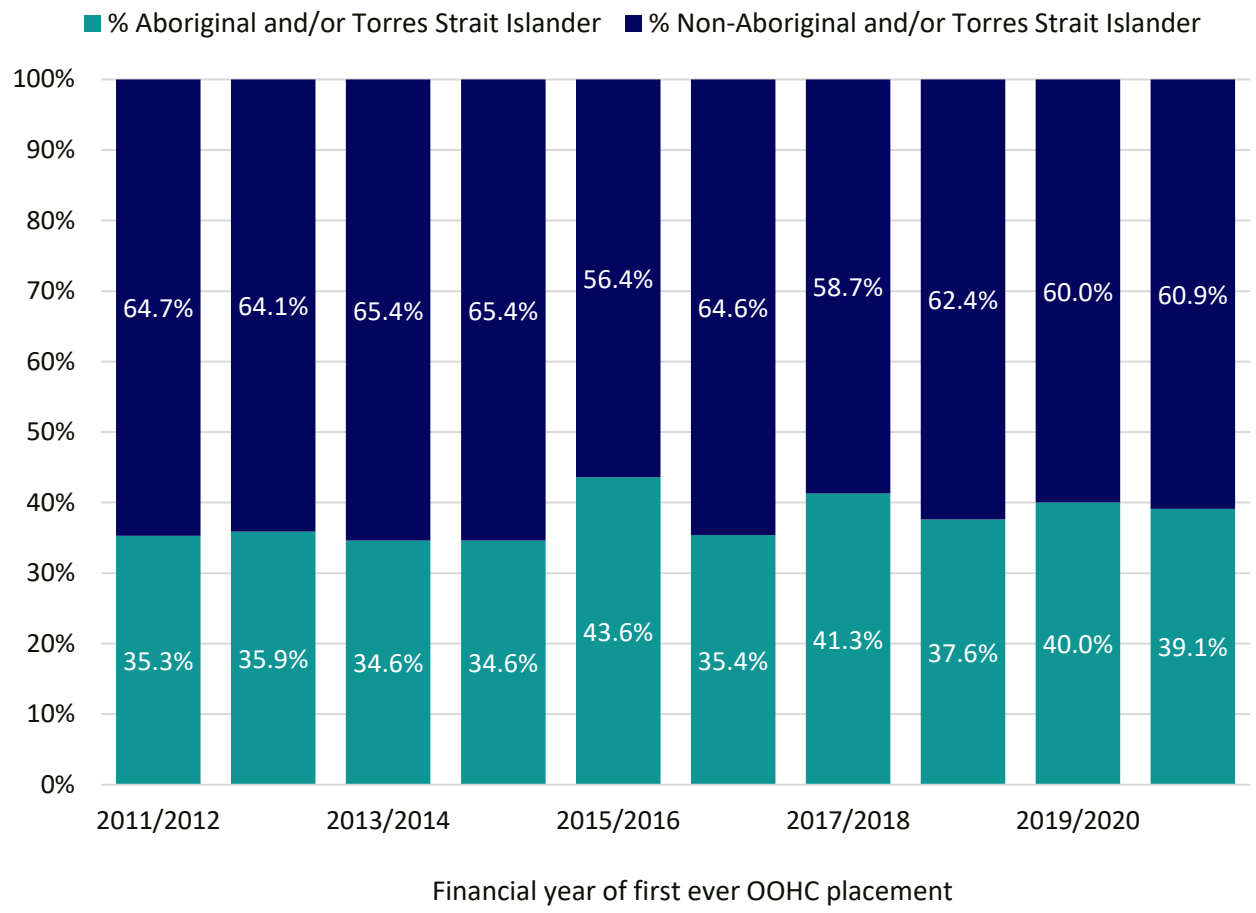


Figure 16: Proportion of children entering OOHC for the first time each financial year who were Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, from 2011/12 to 2020/21.

Key Message:

- In 2020/21 39.1% of children and young people who experienced their first OOHC placement were Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.

Age at first OOHC placement

Figure 17 shows the number of children aged 0 to 17 years that had their first ever OOHC placement from 2011/12 to 2020/21 by age at first placement. It is difficult to discern a consistent pattern of first-time removal into out-of-home care by age, although for both the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal populations 1 in 3 children being removed for the first time were aged under 1. The numbers underlying this table can be viewed in Appendix 2 – Data Summary Tables in Table 11 on page 67.

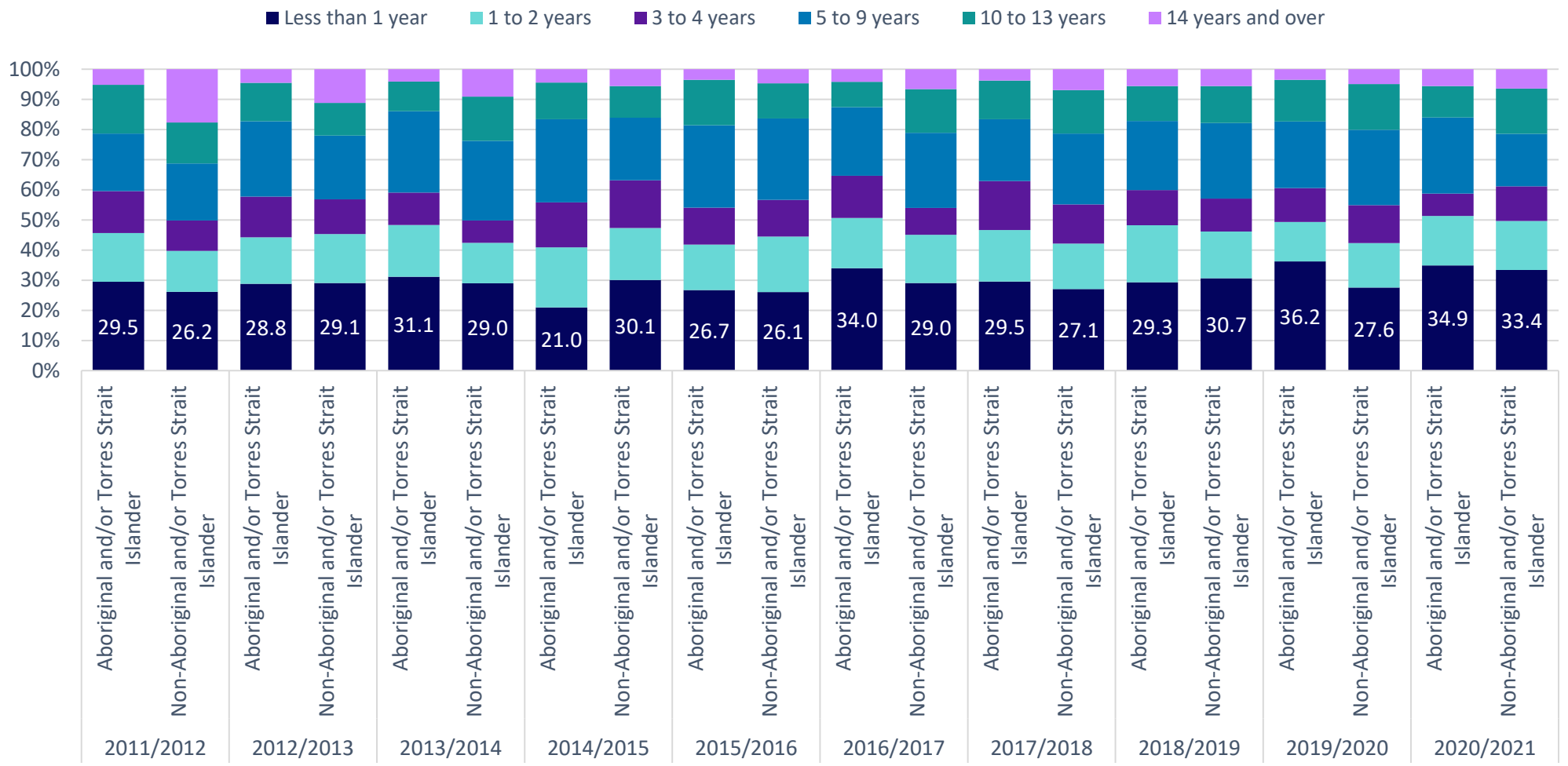


Figure 17: Age at first entry into OOHC each financial year, from 2011/12 to 2020/21.

Time in out-of-home care following first placement

We followed children and young people for two years following their first OOHC placement and Figure 18 shows the total time they spent in care in the following 2 years after first ever OOHC from 2011/12 to 2018/19. The numbers underlying this figure can be viewed in Appendix 2 – Data Summary Tables in Table 12 on page 68.

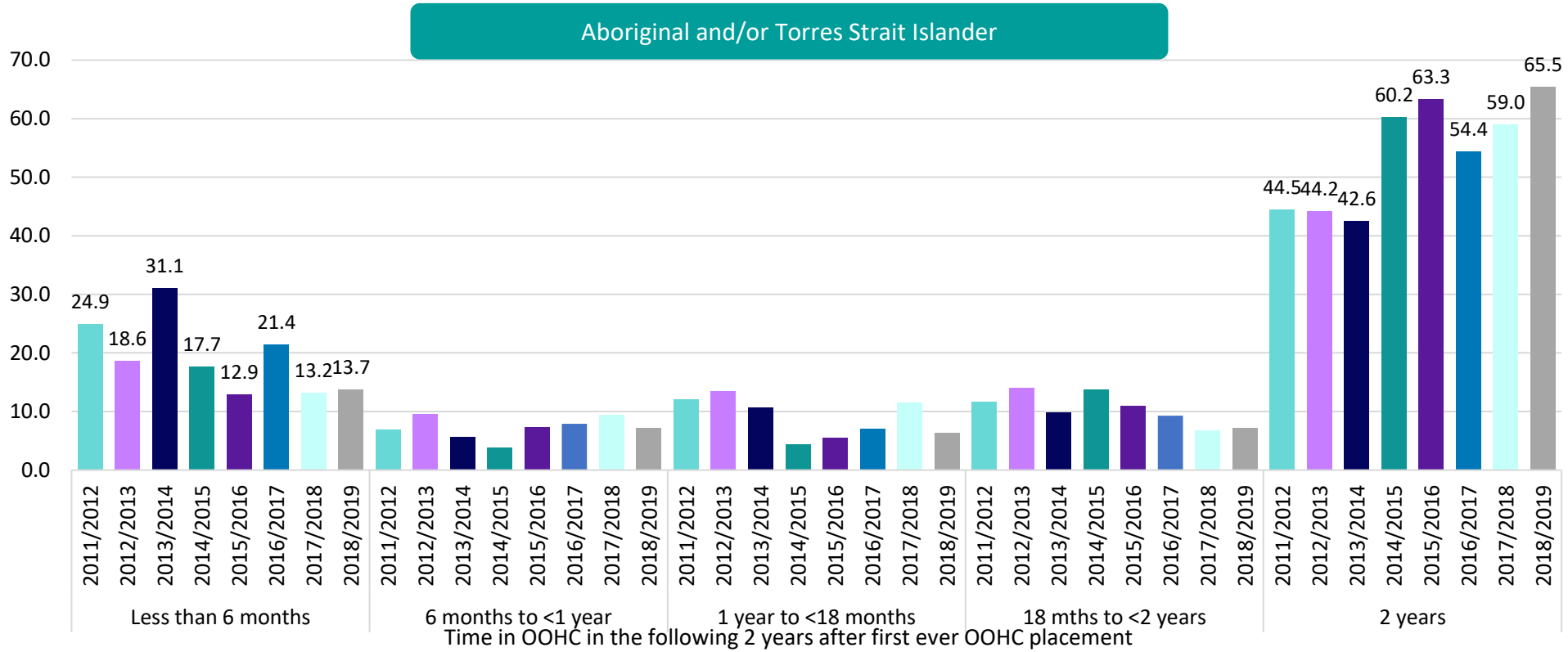


Figure 18: Time spent in OOHC following first entry into OOHC each financial year, from 2011/12 to 2020/21.

Key Message:

- Since 2011/12 there has been a decrease in the proportion and number of children exiting care within 6 months of their first placement. For Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children, 24.9% of children removed for the first time in 2011/12 spent less than 6 months in care, compared to 13.7% of children removed in 2018/19 (20.9% reduction in the proportion exiting care at 6 months for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children and a 25.3% reduction for the non-Aboriginal population).

Time in out-of-home care following first placement by age for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander

We followed children and young people for two years following their first OOHC placement and Table 8 shows for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children and young people the total time they spent in care in the following 2 years after first ever OOHC from 2011/12 to 2018/19. Table 9 on the next page (page 49) shows for non-Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children and young people the total time they spent in care in the following 2 years after first ever OOHC from 2011/12 to 2018/19.

Table 8: Time in OOHC in the following 2 years after first ever OOHC placement by financial year, age at first placement for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children and young people

	Age at 1st Placement	FY of first OOHC placement	Time in OOHC in the following 2 years						Total	
			< 6 months		6 mths to <2 yrs		2 years			
			n	Row %	n	Row %	n	Row %	n	Row %
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait	Less than 1 year	2011/12-2012/13	15	15.6	19	19.8	62	64.6	96	100.0
		2013/14- 2014/15	14	18.4	11	14.5	51	67.1	76	100.0
		2015/16- 2016/17	11	7.1	32	20.5	113	72.4	156	100.0
		2017/18- 2018/19	13	9.2	29	20.4	100	70.4	142	100.0
	1 – 2 years	2011/12-2012/13	7	13.5	15	28.8	30	57.7	52	100.0
		2013/14- 2014/15	15	26.3	13	22.8	29	50.9	57	100.0
		2015/16- 2016/17	15	18.1	22	26.5	46	55.4	83	100.0
		2017/18- 2018/19	10	11.5	24	27.6	53	60.9	87	100.0
	3 – 4 years	2011/12-2012/13	9	20.0	23	51.1	13	28.9	45	100.0
		2013/14- 2014/15	10	25.0	9	22.5	21	52.5	40	100.0
		2015/16- 2016/17	10	14.7	16	23.5	42	61.8	68	100.0
		2017/18- 2018/19	7	10.4	18	26.9	42	62.7	67	100.0
	5 – 9 years	2011/12-2012/13	14	19.4	33	45.8	25	34.7	72	100.0
		2013/14- 2014/15	19	22.9	19	22.9	38	45.8	83	100.0
		2015/16- 2016/17	31	23.1	20	14.9	81	60.4	134	100.0
		2017/18- 2018/19	16	15.2	25	23.8	63	60.0	105	100.0
	10 – 13 years	2011/12-2012/13	18	37.5	18	37.5	12	25.0	48	100.0
		2013/14- 2014/15	6	17.6	9	26.5	19	55.9	34	100.0
		2015/16- 2016/17	16	24.6	22	33.8	27	41.5	65	100.0
		2017/18- 2018/19	14	23.7	13	22.0	32	54.2	59	100.0
	14 years & over	2011/12-2012/13	9	56.3	#	#	#	#	16	100.0
		2013/14- 2014/15	#	#	#	#	#	#	13	100.0
		2015/16- 2016/17	#	#	12	60.0	#	#	20	100.0
		2017/18- 2018/19	5	21.7	7	30.4	11	47.8	23	100.0

Time in out-of-home care following first placement by age for non-Aboriginal

We followed children and young people for two years following their first OOHC placement and Table 9 shows for non-Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children and young people the total time they spent in care in the following 2 years after first ever OOHC from 2011/12 to 2018/19.

Table 9: Time in OOHC in the following 2 years after first ever OOHC placement by financial year, age at first placement for non-Aboriginal children and young people

	Age at 1st Placement	FY of first OOHC placement	Time in OOHC in the following 2 years						Total	
			< 6 months		6 mths to <2 yrs		2 years			
			n	Row %	n	Row %	n	Row %	n	Row %
Non-Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait	Less than 1 year	2011/12-2012/13	20	12.2	40	24.4	104	63.4	164	100.0
		2013/14- 2014/15	21	12.4	36	21.2	113	66.5	170	100.0
		2015/16- 2016/17	23	10.5	55	25.1	141	64.4	219	100.0
		2017/18- 2018/19	22	10.1	47	21.7	148	68.2	217	100.0
	1 – 2 years	2011/12-2012/13	19	21.6	29	33.0	40	45.5	88	100.0
		2013/14- 2014/15	12	13.3	21	23.3	57	63.3	90	100.0
		2015/16- 2016/17	22	16.1	37	27.0	78	56.9	137	100.0
		2017/18- 2018/19	13	11.4	28	24.6	73	64.0	114	100.0
	3 – 4 years	2011/12-2012/13	9	14.1	28	43.8	27	42.2	64	100.0
		2013/14- 2014/15	13	18.3	19	26.8	39	54.9	71	100.0
		2015/16- 2016/17	18	21.4	22	26.2	44	52.4	84	100.0
		2017/18- 2018/19	12	13.6	24	27.3	52	59.1	88	100.0
	5 – 9 years	2011/12-2012/13	29	24.4	37	31.1	53	44.5	119	100.0
		2013/14- 2014/15	29	22.0	38	28.8	65	49.2	132	100.0
		2015/16- 2016/17	54	26.1	51	24.6	102	49.3	207	100.0
		2017/18- 2018/19	30	16.5	41	22.5	111	61.0	182	100.0
	10 – 13 years	2011/12-2012/13	24	32.9	17	23.3	32	43.8	73	100.0
		2013/14- 2014/15	22	31.4	26	37.1	22	31.4	70	100.0
		2015/16- 2016/17	19	18.3	25	24.0	60	57.7	104	100.0
		2017/18- 2018/19	22	22.2	30	30.3	47	47.5	99	100.0
	14 years & over	2011/12-2012/13	50	57.5	25	28.7	12	13.8	87	100.0
		2013/14- 2014/15	21	52.5	13	32.5	6	15.0	40	100.0
		2015/16- 2016/17	23	51.1	9	20.0	13	28.9	45	100.0
		2017/18- 2018/19	10	21.7	17	37.0	19	41.3	46	100.0

Time spent in types of care following first entry into out-of-home-care

We followed children and young people for two years following their first OOHC placement and Figure 19 shows of the total time spent in OOHC, and what proportion of that time was spent in kinship care, foster care or residential or commercial care in the following 2 years, for children who had their first OOHC placement in 2017/2019. The numbers underlying this figure can be viewed in Appendix 2 – Data Summary Tables in Table 13, Table 14, and Table 15, on pages 69 to 71.

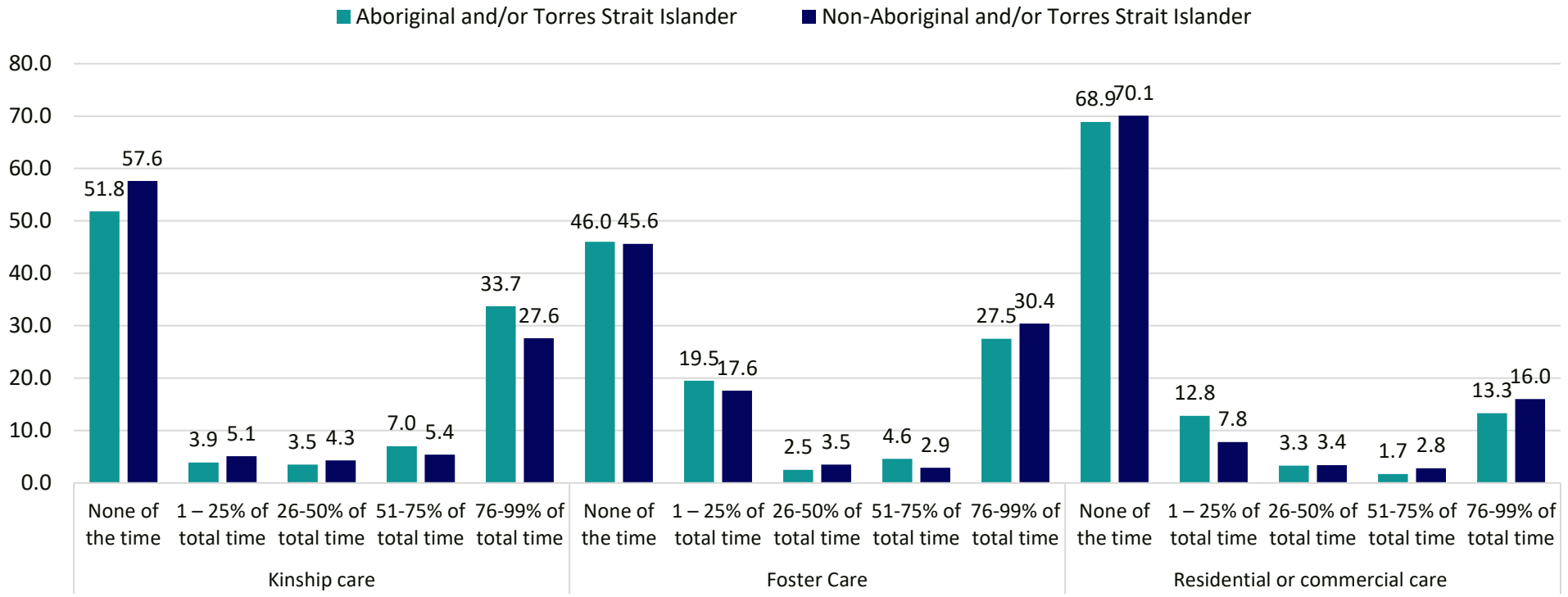


Figure 19: Proportion of time spent in type of care in the following 2 years after first ever OOHC placement, children who had their first OOHC placement in 2017/2019

Key Message: In the most recent data, of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children removed for the first time in 2017/19 and followed for two-years:

- 51.8% did not spend any time in kinship care;
- 33.7% spent over three-quarters of their time in kinship care;
- 27.5% spent over three-quarters of their time in foster care; and
- 13.3% spent over three-quarters of their time in residential care.

Characteristics of children in out-of-home care during 2016

Figure 20 includes indicators sourced from the BEBOLD platform used to describe different forms of disadvantage. Each bar in the figure represents the proportion of the population of children with a parent (as identified through birth registrations) recorded as having one or more indicators of poverty, poor mental health, substance misuse, domestic and family violence or intergenerational child protection, and their co-occurrence. Data from 2016 was used to enable connecting children to parental indicators of disadvantage through Births Registrations data.

How to read Figure 20:

The bar graph on the left side of the figure shows that of the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children and young people who were in OOHC during 2016

> 96% had at least one indicator of poverty, 54% mental health, 43% substance misuse, 35% domestic and family violence, and 69% intergenerational child protection contact.

The column graph illustrates the combinations of indicators that align with the shaded blue circles below . For example

> Start by looking at the first column - this represents the most common pattern and shows that 19% of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children in OOHC during 2016 had both poverty and intergenerational child protection contact indicators as indicated by the blue circles

> Then look at the second largest column - this shows 14% of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children in OOHC during 2016 had a record of every type of indicator

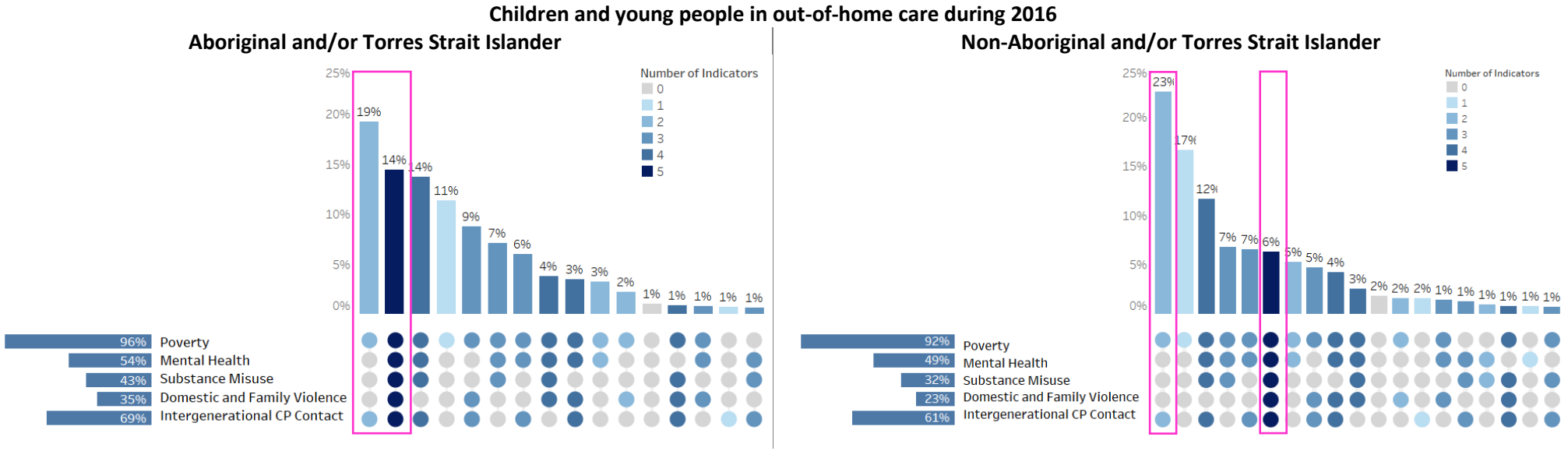


Figure 20: Indicators and combinations of disadvantage for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in OOHC during 2016

Key Message:

14% of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander in OOHC had at least one indicator of all 5 domains of poverty, mental health, substance misuse, domestic and family violence and intergenerational child protection contact; compared to 6% of non-Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children.

Reunification

Reunification at 6 months

Figure 21 shows the proportion of children who were reunified with their families at 6 months post first ever out-of-home-care placement from 2011/12 to 2020/21. The numbers underlying this table can be viewed in in Appendix 2 – Data Summary Tables, in Table 16, on pages 72.

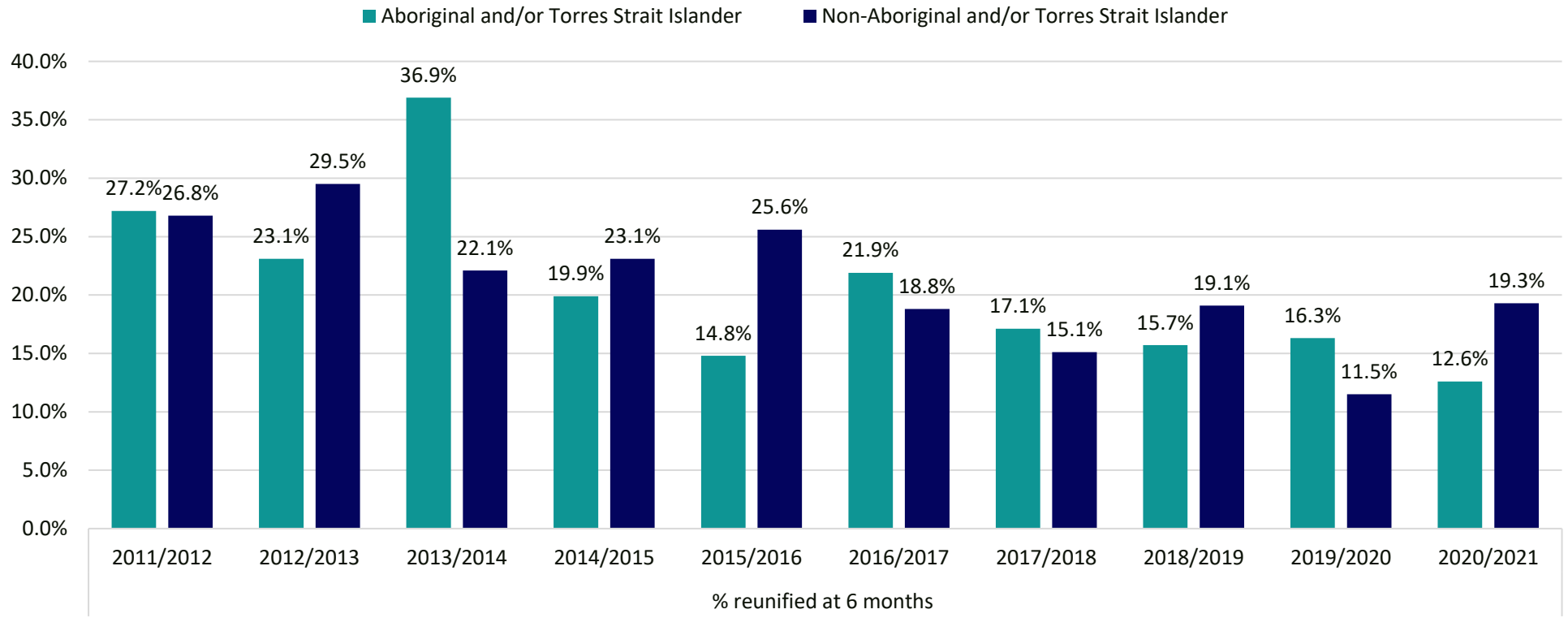


Figure 21: Proportion of children reunified at 6 months post first ever OOHC placement by financial year of first placement and Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander

Key Message:
For Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children removed for the first time in 2011/12, 27.2% of those children were reunified by 6 months compared to 12.6% of non-Aboriginal children removed for the first time in 2020/21.

Reunification at 12 months

Figure 22 shows the proportion of children who were reunified with their families at 12 months post first ever out-of-home-care placement from 2011/12 to 2020/21. The numbers underlying this table can be viewed in in Appendix 2 – Data Summary Tables, in Table 16, on pages 72.

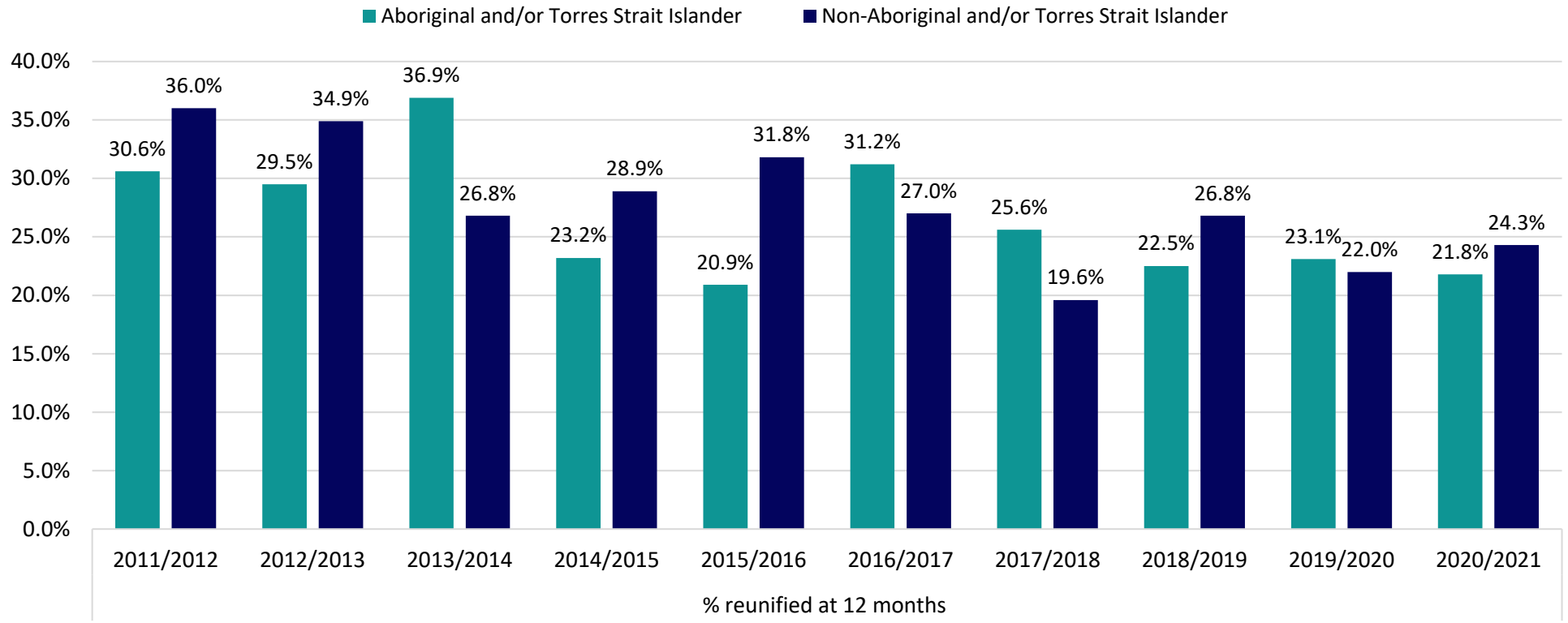


Figure 22: Proportion of children reunified at 12 months post first ever OOHC placement by financial year of first placement and Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander

Key Message:
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children removed for the first time in 2011/12, 30.6% of those children were reunified by 12 months compared to 21.8% of children removed for the first time in 2020/21.

Reunification at 24 months

Figure 23 shows the proportion of children who were reunified with their families at 24 months post first ever out-of-home-care placement from 2011/12 to 2020/21. The numbers underlying this table can be viewed in in Appendix 2 – Data Summary Tables, in Table 14, on page 62.

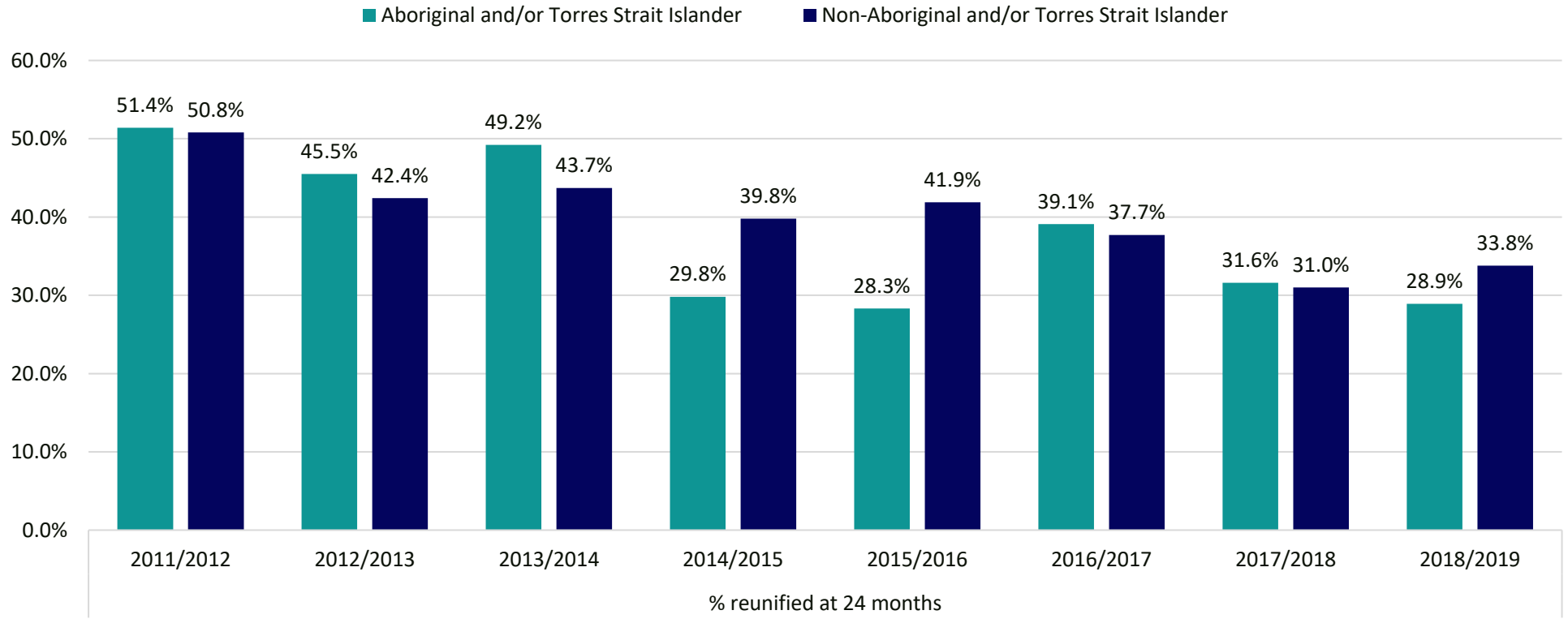


Figure 23: Proportion of children reunified at 24 months post first ever OOHC placement by financial year of first placement and Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander

Key Message:
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children removed for the first time in 2011/12, 51.4% of those children were reunified by 24 months compared to 28.9% of children removed for the first time in 2018/19.

Intergenerational child protection contact

Figure 24 shows children who had contact with child protection in 2016/17 and whether their parent(s) had contact with child protection in their own childhood. The numbers underlying this Figure can be viewed in Appendix 2 – Data Summary Tables, in Table 17, on page 73.

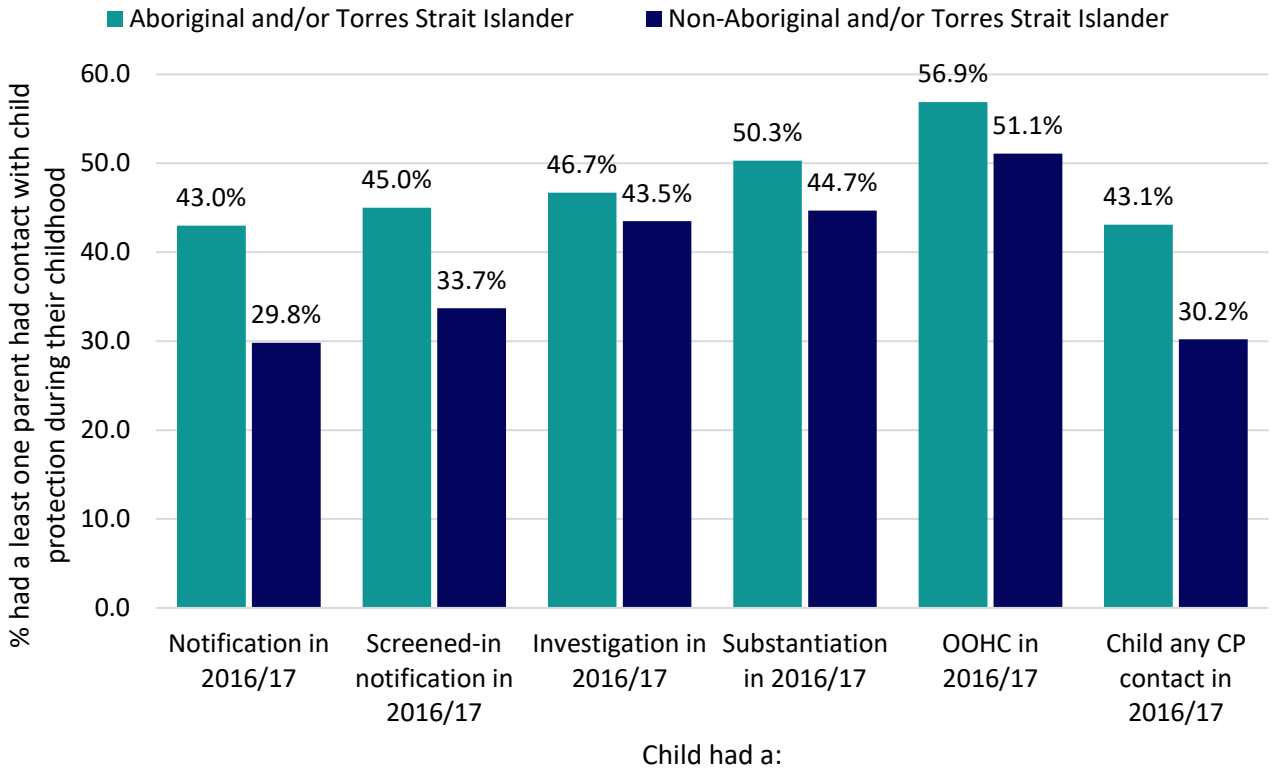


Figure 24: Intergenerational child protection contact for children in contact with child protection 2016/17

Key Message:
For children and young people who had a notification to child protection in 2016/2017;

- 43% of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children had at least one parent who had their own child protection contact history compared to 29.8% of non-Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children.

For children and young people in OOHC during 2016/2017;

- 56.9% of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children had at least one parent with their own child protection contact history compared to 51.1% of non-Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children.

Figure 25 shows children who had contact with child protection in 2016/17 and whether their parent(s) had their own history of out-of-home care. The numbers underlying this table can be viewed in in Appendix 2 – Data Summary Tables, in Table 18, on page 73.

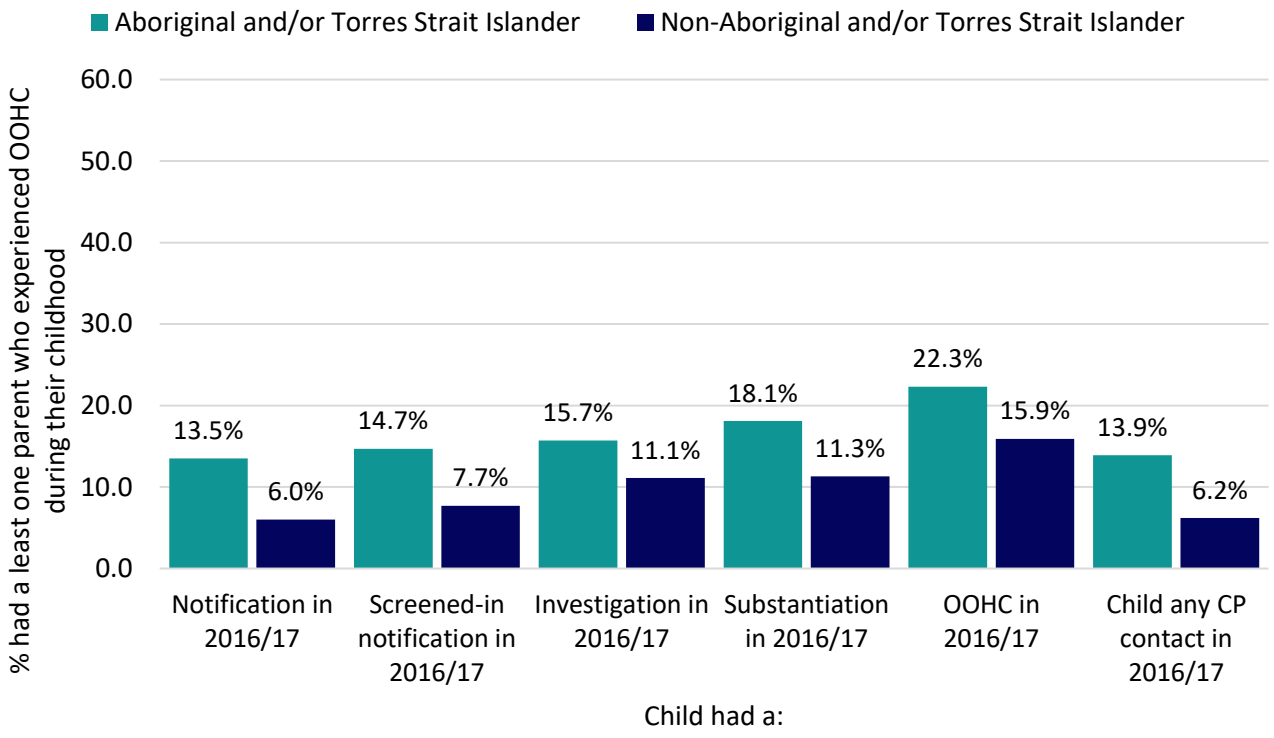


Figure 25: Intergenerational child protection OOHC for children in contact with child protection 2016/17

Key Message:
For children and young people who had a notification to child protection in 2016/2017;

- 13.5% of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children had at least one parent who had been in OOHC during their own childhood compared to 6.0% of non-Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children.

For children and young people in OOHC during in 2016/2017;

- 22.3% of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children had at least one parent who had been in OOHC during their own childhood compared 15.9% of non-Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children.

11. Pre-birth (unborn) notifications

Pre-birth (unborn) notifications over-time

Figure 26 shows the number and proportion of South Australian children subject to pre-birth (unborn) report. The numbers underlying this table can be viewed in Appendix 2 – Data Summary Tables in Table 20 on page 75.

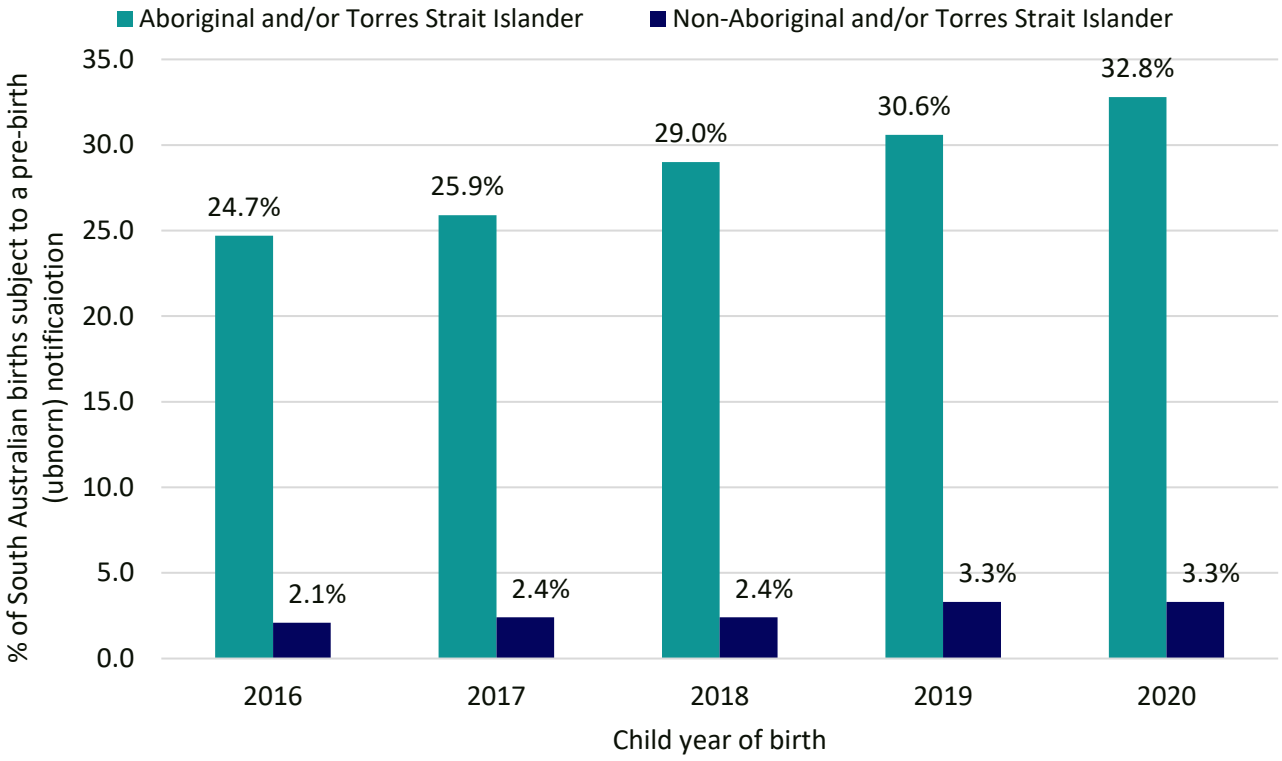


Figure 26: Proportion of South Australian children who were subject to an unborn report by child year of birth and Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander

Key Message:

- In the last five years, the proportion of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander births subject to at least one unborn (pre-birth) child concern has increased from a quarter (24.7% in 2016) to a third (32.8% in 2020).
- In the most recent data available, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander births were ten times more likely to be subject to an unborn child concern compared to the non-Aboriginal population (32.8% vs 3.3%).
- 60% of pre-birth reports were made by health professionals (45%) and police (15%) for the notifications related to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal births (data not shown).

Characteristics of children subject to a pre-birth (unborn) notification

Figure 27 includes indicators sourced from the BEBOLD platform used to describe different forms of disadvantage. Each bar in the figure represents the proportion of the population of children with a parent (as identified through birth registrations) recorded as having one or more indicators of poverty, mental health, substance misuse, domestic and family violence or intergenerational child protection, and their co-occurrence.

How to read Figure 27:

The bar graph on the lower left side of the figure shows that of the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children subject to at least one unborn child concern

- 93% had at least one indicator of poverty, 55% mental health, 40% substance misuse, 48% domestic and family violence and 82% intergenerational child protection contact.

The column graph illustrates the combinations of indicators that align with the filled in circles, each on a row specific to a different indicator (e.g. first row=poverty, second row= mental health etc.) below. For example

- The first column in the left panel shows that 19% of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children had both poverty and intergenerational child protection contact indicators
- The second largest column in the left panel shows that 17% of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children had a record of every type of indicator

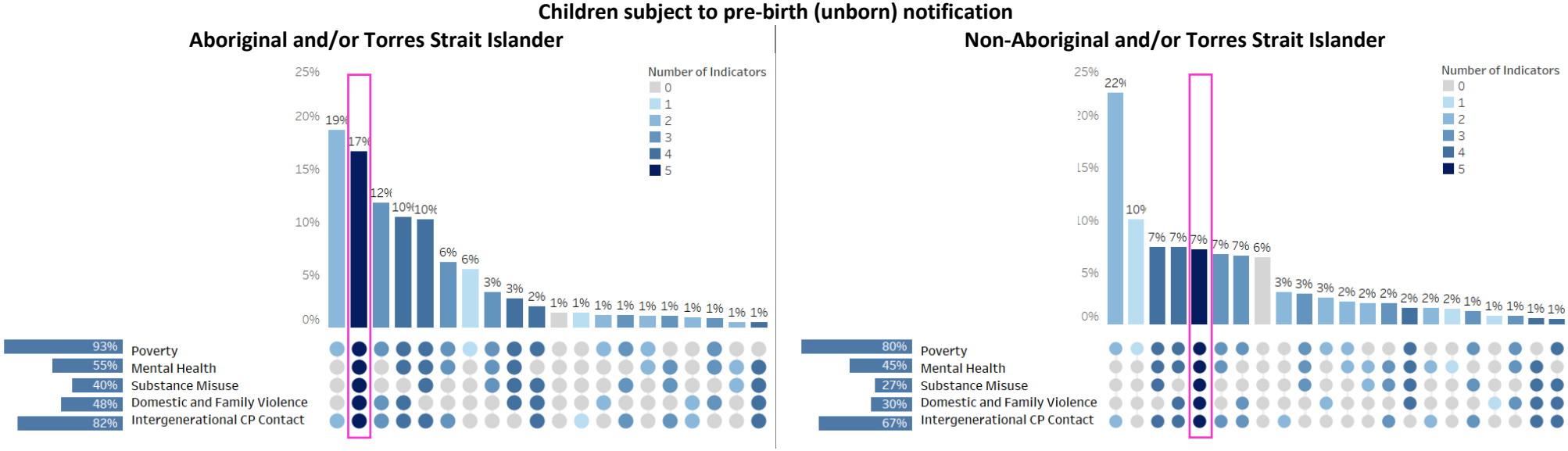


Figure 27: Indicators and combinations of disadvantage for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people subject to pre-birth (unborn) notification

Key Message:

Almost 1 in 5 (17%) Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children subject to pre-birth (unborn) notification had at least one indicator in all 5 domains of poverty, mental health, substance misuse, domestic and family violence and intergenerational child protection contact; compared to 7 in 100 (7%) of non-Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children subject to pre-birth (unborn) notification.

Transition from pre-birth (unborn) notification to child removal

Pre-birth (unborn) notification to removed into out-of-home care prior to 1 month

Figure 28 shows the proportion of children subject to a pre-birth (unborn) notification who were then subsequently removed into out-of-home care prior to 1 month of age. The numbers underlying this figure can be viewed in Appendix 2 – Data Summary Tables in Table 20 on page 75.

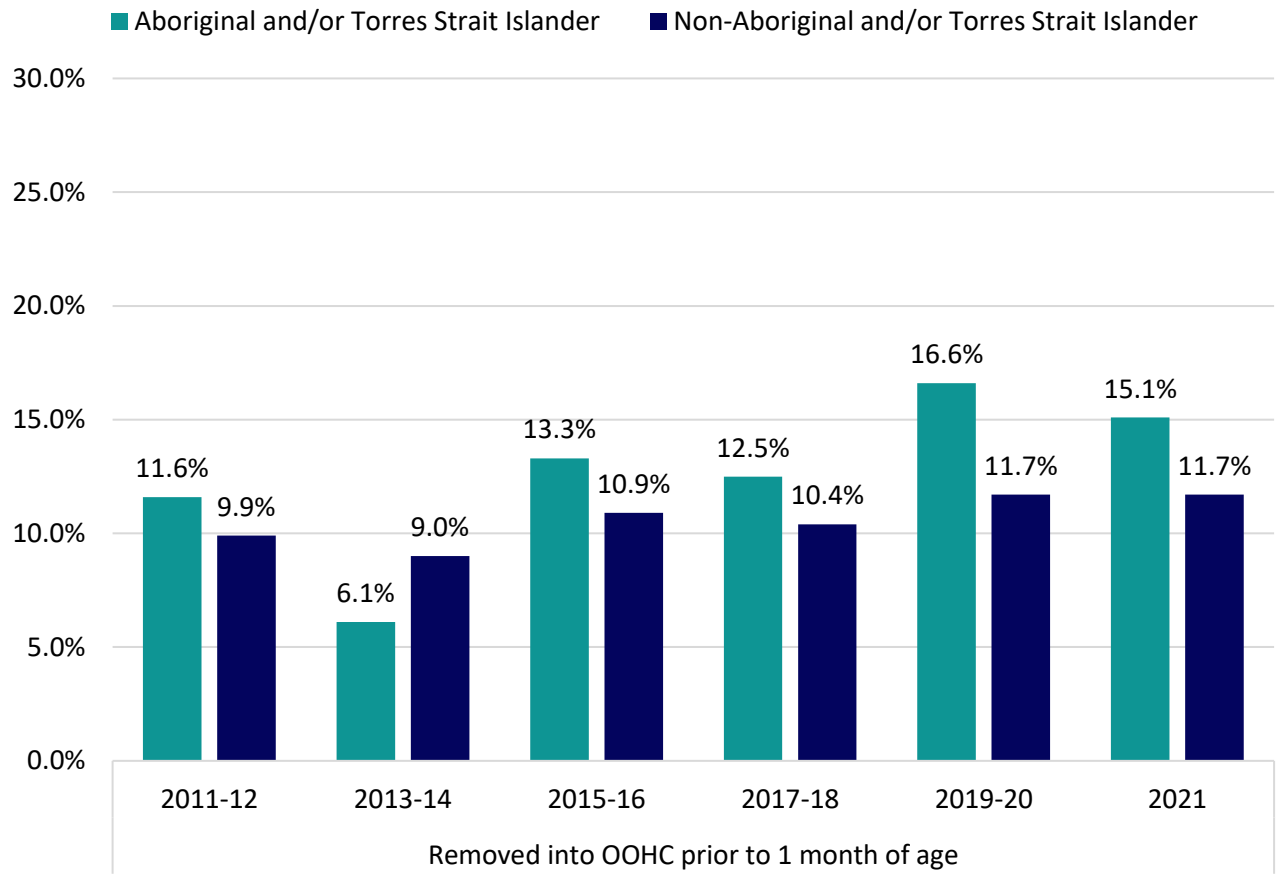


Figure 28: Proportion of children subject to a pre-birth (unborn) notification who were then subsequently removed into out-of-home care prior to 1 month of age by year of birth and Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander

Key Message:
Pre-birth notification to out-of-home care by 1 month of age: 1 in 7 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children subject to a pre-birth (unborn) notification were subsequently removed into OOHC prior to 1 month of age.

Pre-birth (unborn) notification to removed into out-of-home care prior to 3 months

Figure 29 shows the proportion of children subject to a pre-birth (unborn) notification who were then subsequently removed into out-of-home care prior to 3 months. The numbers underlying this table can be viewed in Appendix 2 – Data Summary Tables in Table 20 on page 75.

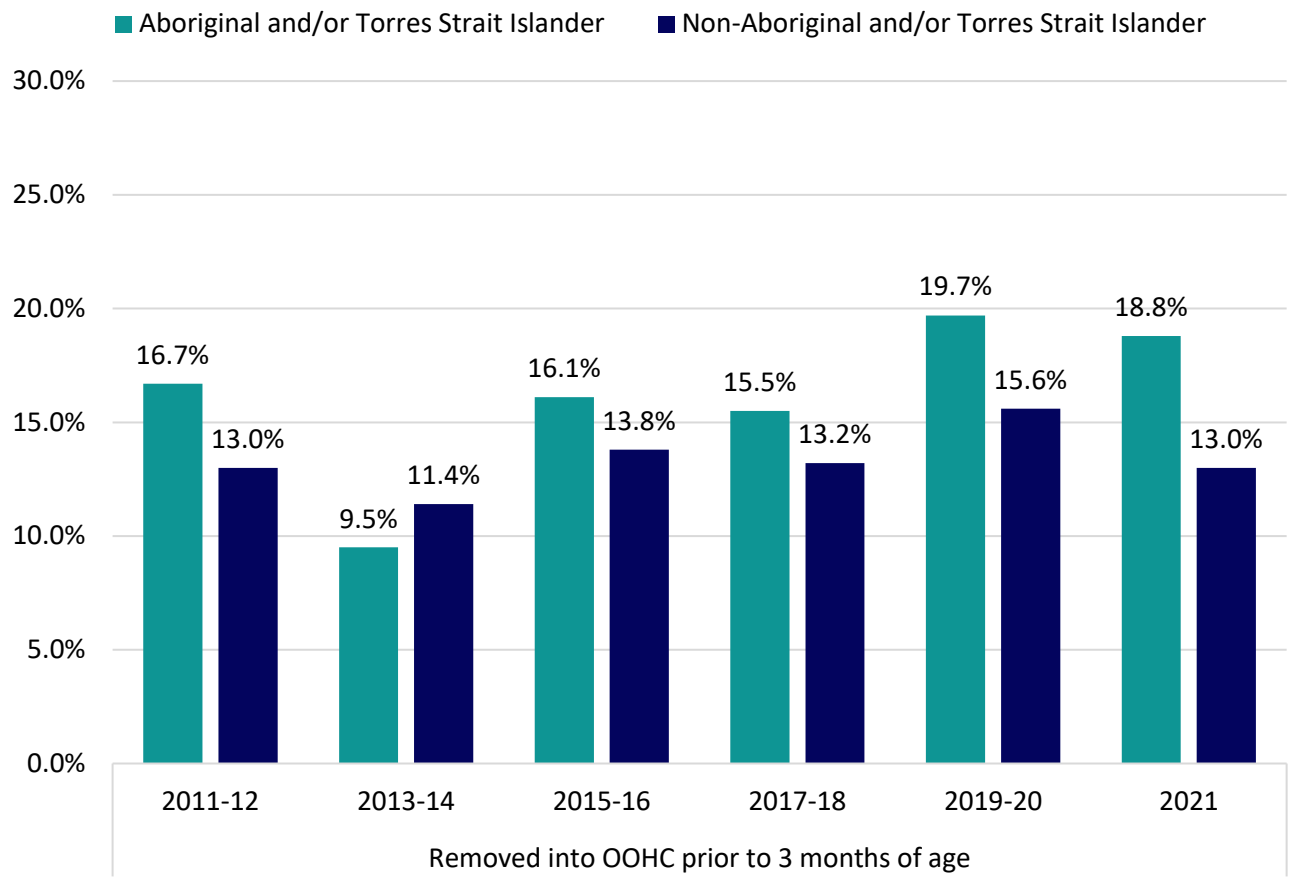


Figure 29: Proportion of children subject to a pre-birth (unborn) notification who were then subsequently removed into out-of-home care prior to 3 months of age by year of birth and Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander

Key Message:

- Pre-birth notification to out-of-home care by 3 months of age: 18.8% Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children subject to a pre-birth (unborn) notification were subsequently removed into OOHC prior to 3 months of age.

Pre-birth (unborn) notification to removed into out-of-home care prior to 6 months

Figure 30 shows the proportion of children subject to a pre-birth (unborn) notification who were then subsequently removed into out-of-home care prior to 6 months of age. The numbers underlying this table can be viewed in Appendix 2 – Data Summary Tables in Table 20 on page 75.

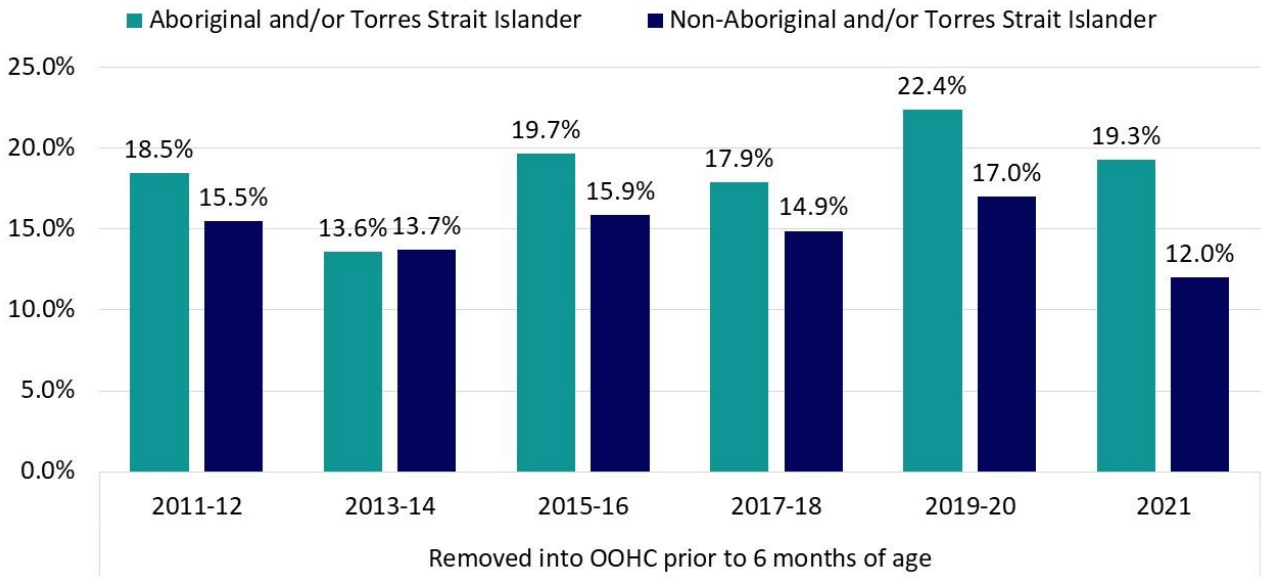


Figure 30: Proportion of children subject to a pre-birth (unborn) notification who were then subsequently removed into out-of-home care prior to 6 months of age by year of birth and Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander

Key Message:

- Pre-birth notification to out-of-home care by 6 months of age: 1 in 5 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children subject to a pre-birth (unborn) notification were subsequently removed into OOHC prior to 12 months of age.

Pre-birth (unborn) notification to removed into out-of-home care prior to 12 months

Figure 31 shows the proportion of children subject to a pre-birth (unborn) notification who were then subsequently removed into out-of-home care prior to 12 months of age. The numbers underlying this table can be viewed in Appendix 2 – Data Summary Tables in Table 20 on page 75.

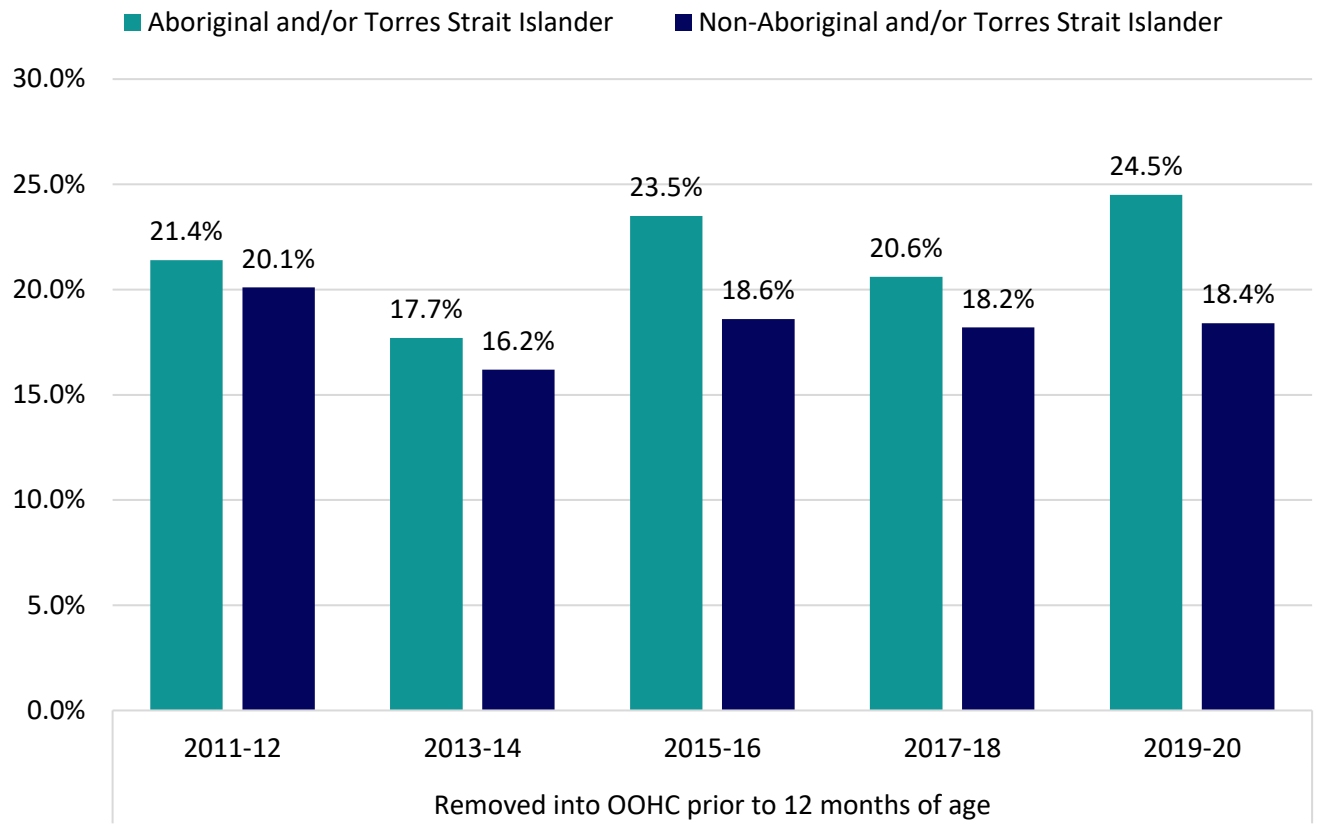


Figure 31: Proportion of children subject to a pre-birth (unborn) notification who were then subsequently removed into out-of-home care prior to 12 months of age by year of birth and Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander

Key Message:

- Pre-birth notification to out-of-home care by 12 months of age: 1 in 4 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children subject to a pre-birth (unborn) notification were subsequently removed into OOHC prior to 12 months of age.

Time in care following first placement

We followed children subject to pre-birth (unborn) notification and removed into OOHC prior to 12 months of age for two years and Figure 32 shows the total time they spent in OOHC in the 2 years following their first placement. The numbers underlying this figure can be viewed in Appendix 2 – Data Summary Tables in Table 21 on page 76.

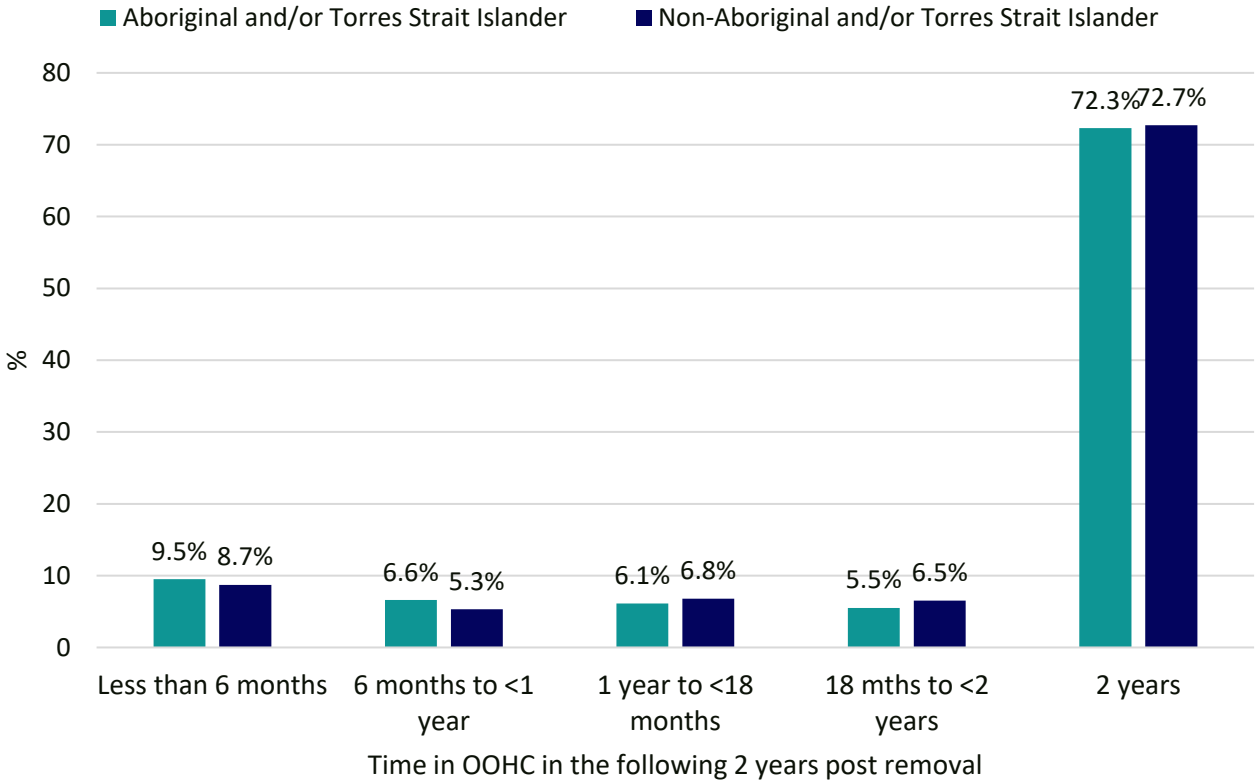


Figure 32: Children subject to pre-birth (unborn) notification and removed into OOHC prior to 12 months of age: time in OOHC in the following 2 years after first ever OOHC placement by year of birth and Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander

Key Message:
Children subject to pre-birth (unborn) notification and removed into OOHC prior to 12 months of age, were followed for two years following their first OOHC placement;

- For Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children, 72.3% spend the entire two years in OOHC, compared to 72.7% for Non-Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children.

Time in kinship, foster, residential care following first placement

We followed children subject to a pre-birth (unborn) notification and removed into OOHC prior to 12 months of age, and Figure 33 shows the total time they spent in kinship care. Foster care and residential or commercial care in the 2 years following their first placement. The numbers underlying this table can be viewed in Further information is available in Appendix 2 – Data Summary Tables in in Table 22 on page 77.

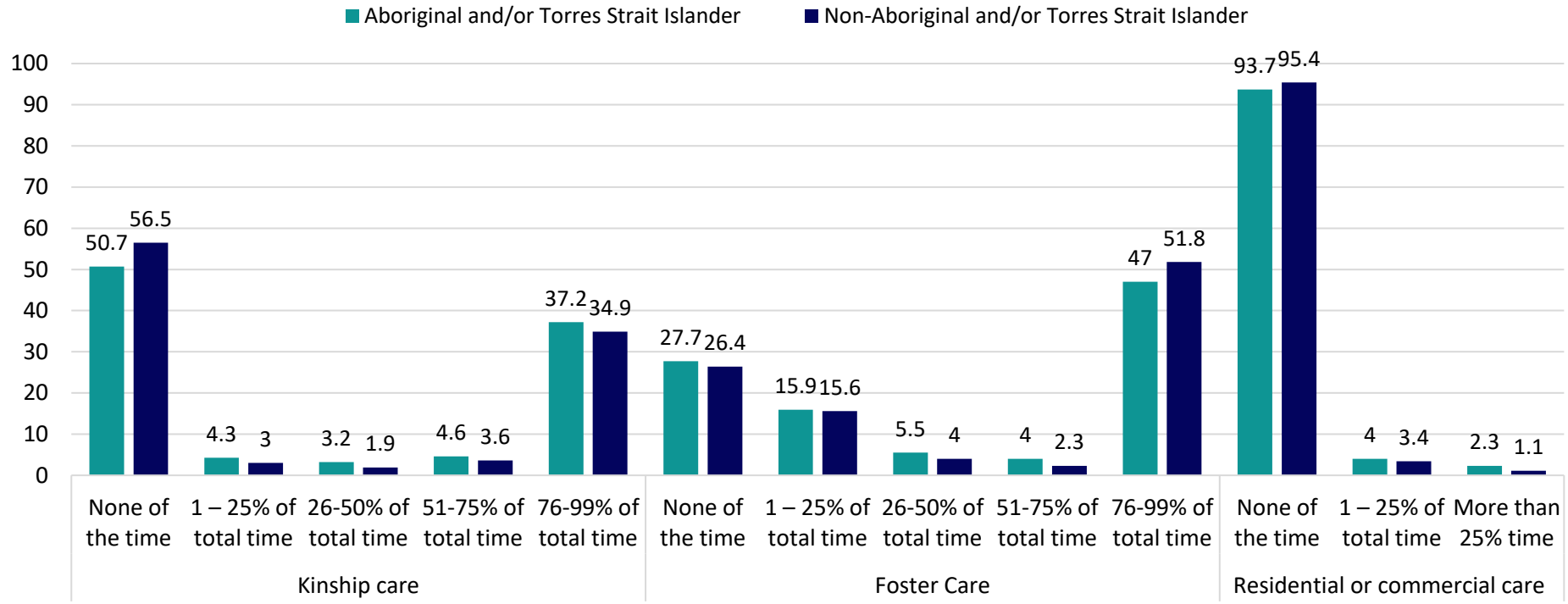


Figure 33: Children subject to pre-birth (unborn) notification and removed into OOHC prior to 12 months of age: time in kinship care, foster care, or residential/commercial care in the 2 years after first ever OOHC placement by Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, children born 2011-2018

Key Message:

Of those subject to a pre-birth notification and removed prior to their first birthday:

- 37.2% of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children spent more than 76% of their total time in care in a kinship carer placement compared to 34.9% of non-Aboriginal children.
- 47% of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children spent more than 76% of their total time in care in a foster carer placement compared to 51.8% of non-Aboriginal children.

Appendix 1 – Indicator Definitions

Table 10 shows the definitions of the indicators included the in the indicators of disadvantage.

Table 10: Definitions of the indicators included in the indicators of disadvantage

Domain	Indicator	Description
Poverty	Jobless family	Jobless family at child's birth: 'No'; At least one parent in labour force, 'Yes'; two parent family both not in labour force or single parent family not in labour force
	Primary child protection allegation and/or substantiation for homelessness	Ever had child protection primary allegation and/or substantiation for homelessness in the 2016 calendar year
	Public housing	Child, mother or co-parent was recorded as primary tenant for public housing ever. N.b. dataset has no dates
	Homelessness	Child, mother or co-parent was recorded as interacting with a state funded homelessness service in the year of, and/or year previous to notification to child protection.
Mental health	Parent Mental Health related hospitalisation	Child, mother or co-parent ED presentation and/or hospitalisation for mental health in the year of, and/or year previous to notification to child protection.
	Primary child protection allegation and/or substantiation for mental health	Ever had child protection primary allegation and/or substantiation for mental health in the 2016 calendar year
Substance misuse	Parent Drug and Alcohol related hospitalisation	Child, mother or co-parent ED presentation and/or hospitalisation for substance misuse in the year of, and/or year previous to notification to child protection.
	Primary child protection allegation and/or substantiation for substance misuse	Ever had child protection primary allegation and/or substantiation for substance misuse in the 2016 calendar year
Domestic and Family Violence	Parent domestic or family violence related hospitalisation	Child, mother or co-parent ED presentation and/or hospitalisation for domestic and family violence in the year of, and/or year previous to notification to child protection.
	Primary child protection allegation and/or substantiation for domestic violence	Ever had child protection primary allegation and/or substantiation for domestic violence in the 2016 calendar year
	Domestic violence related public housing	Child, mother or co-parent ever had a domestic and family violence related complaint, flag or intervention order placed on tenancy; or domestic and family violence listed as the reason for an application for public housing.
Intergenerational child protection contact	Parent(s) Child Protection contact	Parental experience of child protection contact of all types from notification through to out-of-home care.

Appendix 2 – Data Summary Tables

Age at first OOHC for children that had their first ever OOHC placement by financial year

Table 11: Age at first OOHC for children that had their first ever OOHC placement by financial year and Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander

	financial year of first OOHC placement	Age at their first ever OOHC placement												Total
		Less than 1 year		1 to 2 years		3 to 4 years		5 to 9 years		10 to 13 years		14 years and over		
		n	Row %	n	Row %	n	Row %	n	Row %	n	Row %	n	Row %	n
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	2011/2012	51	29.5	28	16.2	24	13.9	33	19.1	28	16.2	9	5.2	173
	2012/2013	45	28.8	24	15.4	21	13.5	39	25.0	20	12.8	7	4.5	156
	2013/2014	38	31.1	21	17.2	13	10.7	33	27.0	12	9.8	5	4.1	122
	2014/2015	38	21.0	36	19.9	27	14.9	50	27.6	22	12.2	8	4.4	181
	2015/2016	83	26.7	47	15.1	38	12.2	85	27.3	47	15.1	11	3.5	311
	2016/2017	73	34.0	36	16.7	30	14.0	49	22.8	18	8.4	9	4.2	215
	2017/2018	69	29.5	40	17.1	38	16.2	48	20.5	30	12.8	9	3.8	234
	2018/2019	73	29.3	47	18.9	29	11.6	57	22.9	29	11.6	14	5.6	249
	2019/2020	113	36.2	41	13.1	35	11.2	69	22.1	43	13.8	11	3.5	312
	2020/2021	94	34.9	44	16.4	20	7.4	68	25.3	28	10.4	15	5.6	269
	% relative change 2011/12 -2020/21	**84.3%**		**57.1%**		**-16.7%**		**106.1%**		**0.0%**		**66.7%**		**55.5%**
Non-Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	2011/2012	83	26.2	43	13.6	32	10.1	60	18.9	43	13.6	56	17.7	317
	2012/2013	81	29.1	45	16.2	32	11.5	59	21.2	30	10.8	31	11.2	278
	2013/2014	67	29.0	31	13.4	17	7.4	61	26.4	34	14.7	21	9.1	231
	2014/2015	103	30.1	59	17.3	54	15.8	71	20.8	36	10.5	19	5.6	342
	2015/2016	105	26.1	74	18.4	49	12.2	109	27.0	47	11.7	19	4.7	403
	2016/2017	114	29.0	63	16.0	35	8.9	98	24.9	57	14.5	26	6.6	393
	2017/2018	90	27.1	50	15.1	43	13.0	78	23.5	48	14.5	23	6.9	332
	2018/2019	127	30.7	64	15.5	45	10.9	104	25.1	51	12.3	23	5.6	414
	2019/2020	129	27.6	69	14.7	59	12.6	117	25.0	71	15.2	23	4.9	468
	2020/2021	140	33.4	68	16.2	48	11.5	73	17.4	63	15.0	27	6.4	419
	% relative change 2011/12 -2020/21	**68.7%**		**58.1%**		**50.0%**		**21.7%**		**46.5%**		**-51.8%**		**32.2%**

Key Message:

Of the 269 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children and young people that experienced their first OOHC placement in 2020/21,

- 34.9% were age less than 1 years, 16.4% were aged 1 to 2, 7.4% aged 3 to 4, 25.3% were aged 5 to 9, 10.4% were aged 10 to 13 and 5.6% were aged 14 and over.

Table 12: Time in OOHC in the following 2 years after first ever OOHC placement by financial year and Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander

	FY of first OOHC placement	Time in OOHC in the following 2 years after first ever OOHC placement										Total
		Less than 6 months		6 months to <1 year		1 year to <18 months		18 mths to <2 years		2 years		
		n	Row %	n	Row %	n	Row %	n	Row %	n	Row %	
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	2011/2012	43	24.9	12	6.9	21	12.1	20	11.6	77	44.5	173
	2012/2013	29	18.6	15	9.6	21	13.5	22	14.1	69	44.2	156
	2013/2014	38	31.1	7	5.7	13	10.7	12	9.8	52	42.6	122
	2014/2015	32	17.7	7	3.9	8	4.4	25	13.8	109	60.2	181
	2015/2016	40	12.9	23	7.4	17	5.5	34	10.9	197	63.3	311
	2016/2017	46	21.4	17	7.9	15	7.0	20	9.3	117	54.4	215
	2017/2018	31	13.2	22	9.4	27	11.5	16	6.8	138	59.0	234
	2018/2019	34	13.7	18	7.2	16	6.4	18	7.2	163	65.5	249
	% relative change 2011/12 -2018/19	-20.9%		50.0%		-23.8%		-10.0%		111.7%		43.9%
Non-Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	2011/2012	83	26.2	30	9.5	27	8.5	40	12.6	137	43.2	317
	2012/2013	68	24.5	26	9.4	30	10.8	23	8.3	131	47.1	278
	2013/2014	47	20.3	15	6.5	25	10.8	27	11.7	117	50.6	231
	2014/2015	71	20.8	23	6.7	38	11.1	25	7.3	185	54.1	342
	2015/2016	95	23.6	30	7.4	36	8.9	29	7.2	213	52.9	403
	2016/2017	64	16.3	35	8.9	45	11.5	24	6.1	225	57.3	393
	2017/2018	47	14.2	13	3.9	27	8.1	38	11.4	207	62.3	332
	2018/2019	62	15.0	45	10.9	43	10.4	21	5.1	243	58.7	414
	% relative change 2011/12 -2018/19	-25.3%		50.0%		59.3%		-47.5%		77.4%		30.6%

Key Message:
If we followed children and young people for two years following their first OOHC placement;

- For Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children who had their first OOHC in 2011/12, 44.5% spent the entire two years in OOHC and this increased to 65.5% by 2018/19, an 111.7% relative increase, compared to;
- Non-Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children who had their first OOHC in 2011/12, 43.2% spent the entire two years in OOHC and this increased to 58.7% by 2018/19, a 77.4% relative increase.

Time in kinship care following first placement

We followed children and young people for two years following their first OOHC placement and Table 13 shows of the total time spent in OOHC, what proportion of that time was spent in kinship care in the following 2 years, from 2011/12 to 2018/19.

Table 13: Time in kinship care in the 2 years after first ever OOHC placement by financial year and Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander

	FY of first OOHC placement	Proportion of time spent in kinship care in the 2 years after first ever OOHC placement										Total
		None of the time		1 – 25% of total time		26-50% of total time		51-75% of total time		76-99% of total time		
		n	Row %	n	Row %	n	Row %	n	Row %	n	Row %	
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	2011/2013	172	52.3	13	4.0	23	7.0	9	2.7	112	34.0	329
	2013/2015	139	45.9	12	4.0	19	6.3	24	7.9	109	36.0	303
	2015/2017	213	40.5	49	9.3	25	4.8	29	5.5	210	39.9	526
	2017/2019	250	51.8	19	3.9	17	3.5	34	7.0	163	33.7	483
Non-Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait	2011/2013	330	55.5	20	3.4	22	3.7	29	4.9	194	32.6	595
	2013/2015	321	56.0	21	3.7	18	3.1	10	1.7	203	35.4	573
	2015/2017	406	51.0	49	6.2	22	2.8	38	4.8	281	35.3	796
	2017/2019	430	57.6	38	5.1	32	4.3	40	5.4	206	27.6	746

Key Message:
If we followed children and young people for two years following their first OOHC placement;

- For Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children and young people who had their first OOHC in 2017/19, 51.8% spent no time in kinship care and 33.7% spent three-quarters or more of their time in kinship care.

Time in foster care following first placement

We followed children and young people for two years after their first OOHC placement and Table 13 shows of the total time spent in OOHC, what proportion of that time was spent in foster care in the 2 years after their first ever OOHC, from 2011/12 to 2018/19.

Table 14: Time in foster care in the 2 years after first ever OOHC placement by financial year and Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander

	FY of first OOHC placement	Proportion of time spent in foster care in the 2 years after first ever OOHC placement										Total
		None of the time		1 – 25% of total time		26-50% of total time		51-75% of total time		76-99% of total time		
		n	Row %	n	Row %	n	Row %	n	Row %	n	Row %	
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	2011/2013	158	48.0	61	18.5	18	5.5	12	3.6	80	24.3	329
	2013/2015	162	53.5	49	16.2	12	4.0	13	4.3	67	22.1	303
	2015/2017	283	53.8	82	15.6	28	5.3	24	4.6	109	20.7	526
	2017/2019	222	46.0	94	19.5	12	2.5	22	4.6	133	27.5	483
Non-Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait	2011/2013	292	49.1	74	12.4	29	4.9	22	3.7	178	29.9	595
	2013/2015	278	48.5	75	13.1	17	3.0	20	3.5	183	31.9	573
	2015/2017	394	49.5	129	16.2	38	4.8	24	3.0	211	26.5	796
	2017/2019	340	45.6	131	17.6	26	3.5	22	2.9	227	30.4	746

Key Message:
If we followed children and young people for two years after their first OOHC placement;

- For Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children and young people who had their first OOHC in 2017/19, 46% spent no time in foster care and 27.5% spent three-quarters or more of their time in foster care.

Time in residential or commercial care following first placement

We followed children and young people for two years following their first placement and Table 13 shows of the total time spent in OOHC, what proportion of that time was spent in residential or commercial care in the 2 years after their first ever OOHC, from 2011/12 to 2018/19.

Table 15: Time in residential or commercial care in the following 2 years after first ever OOHC placement by financial year and Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander

	FY of first OOHC placement	Proportion of time spent in residential or commercial care* in the following 2 years after first ever OOHC placement										Total
		None of the time		1 – 25% of total time		26-50% of total time		51-75% of total time		76-99% of total time		
		n	Row %	n	Row %	n	Row %	n	Row %	n	Row %	
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	2011/2013	203	61.7	26	7.9	15	4.6	22	6.7	63	19.1	329
	2013/2015	164	54.1	39	12.9	20	6.6	13	4.3	67	22.1	303
	2015/2017	316	60.1	53	10.1	21	4.0	22	4.2	114	21.7	526
	2017/2019	333	68.9	62	12.8	16	3.3	8	1.7	64	13.3	483
Non-Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait	2011/2013	421	70.8	37	6.2	28	4.7	26	4.4	83	13.9	595
	2013/2015	392	68.4	48	8.4	11	1.9	9	1.6	113	19.7	573
	2015/2017	497	62.4	76	9.5	31	3.9	28	3.5	164	20.6	796
	2017/2019	523	70.1	58	7.8	25	3.4	21	2.8	119	16.0	746

*commercial care is no longer a care type recorded in the data from 2021

Key Message:
If we followed children and young people for two years after their first OOHC placement;

- For Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children and young people who had their first OOHC in 2017/19, 68.9% spent no time in residential or commercial care and 13.3% spent three-quarters or more of their time in residential or commercial care.

Reunification at 6, 12 and 24 months

Table 16 shows the proportion of children reunified 6 months, 12 months, and 24 months post first entry into OOHC by financial year of first ever placement.

Table 16: Proportion of children reunified 6 months, 12 months, and 24 months post first ever OOHC placement by financial year and Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander

Financial year of first ever OOHC placement	Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander				Non-Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander			
	Number of children had their first ever OOHC placement	% reunified at 6 months (a)	% reunified at 12 months (b)	% reunified at 24 months (c)	Number of children had their first ever OOHC placement	% reunified at 6 months (a)	% reunified at 12 months (b)	% reunified at 24 months (c)
2011/2012	173	27.2%	30.6%	51.4%	317	26.8%	36.0%	50.8%
2012/2013	156	23.1%	29.5%	45.5%	278	29.5%	34.9%	42.4%
2013/2014	122	36.9%	36.9%	49.2%	231	22.1%	26.8%	43.7%
2014/2015	181	19.9%	23.2%	29.8%	342	23.1%	28.9%	39.8%
2015/2016	311	14.8%	20.9%	28.3%	403	25.6%	31.8%	41.9%
2016/2017	215	21.9%	31.2%	39.1%	393	18.8%	27.0%	37.7%
2017/2018	234	17.1%	25.6%	31.6%	332	15.1%	19.6%	31.0%
2018/2019	249	15.7%	22.5%	28.9%	414	19.1%	26.8%	33.8%
2019/2020	312	16.3%	23.1%		468	11.5%	22.0%	
2020/2021	269	12.6%	21.8%		419	19.3%	24.3%	
Jul 2021 to Sep 2021	57				107			

Includes children (a) who could be followed for 6-months, (b) who could be followed for 12-months, (c) who could be followed for 6-months post, first OOHC placement, as we only hold child protection data until September 2021.

Key Message:
For young people who had their first OOHC in 2020/2021;

- 12% of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children were reunified at 6 months post entry into OOHC compared 19.3% of non- Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children.

For young people who had their first OOHC in 2018/2019;

- 28.9% of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children were reunified at 24 months post entry into OOHC compared 33.8% of non- Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children.

Intergenerational child protection contact

Table 17 shows children who had contact with child protection in 2016/17 and whether their parent(s) had contact with child protection in their own childhood.

Table 17: Intergenerational child protection contact for children who had child protection contact in 2016/17

	Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander						Non-Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander					
	Parent(s) had contact with child protection during their childhood				Total		Parent(s) had contact with child protection during their childhood				Total	
	No		Yes				No		Yes			
Child had a:	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Notification in 2016/17	4,100	57.0	3,097	43.0	7,197	100.0	16,287	70.2	6,928	29.8	23,215	100.0
Screened-in notification 2016/17	2,200	55.0	1,802	45.0	4,002	100.0	6,345	66.3	3,226	33.7	9,571	100.0
Investigation in 2016/17	583	53.3	510	46.7	1,093	100.0	980	56.5	755	43.5	1,735	100.0
Substantiation in 2016/17	318	46.7	322	50.3	640	100.0	605	55.3	489	44.7	1,094	100.0
OOHC in 2016/17	370	43.1	488	56.9	858	100.0	550	48.9	575	51.1	1,125	100.0
Child any CP contact in 2016/17	**4,432**	**56.9**	**3,354**	**43.1**	**7,786**	**100.0**	**16,741**	**69.8**	**7,232**	**30.2**	**23,973**	**100.0**

Table 18 shows children who had contact with child protection in 2016/17 and whether their parent(s) had their own history of out-of-home care.

Table 18: Intergenerational child protection contact (parental out-of-home care) for children who had child protection contact in 2016/17

	Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander						Non-Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander					
	Parent(s) were in OOHC during their childhood				Total		Parent(s) were in OOHC during their childhood				Total	
	No		Yes				No		Yes			
Child had a:	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Notification 2016/17	6,225	86.5	972	13.5	7,197	100.0	21,831	94.0	1,384	6.0	23,215	100.0
Screened-in notification 2016/17	3,412	85.3	590	14.7	4,002	100.0	8,837	92.3	734	7.7	9,571	100.0
Investigation in 2016/17	921	84.3	172	15.7	1,093	100.0	1,543	88.9	192	11.1	1,735	100.0
Substantiation 2016/17	524	81.9	116	18.1	640	100.0	970	88.7	124	11.3	1,094	100.0
OOHC 2016/17	667	77.7	191	22.3	858	100.0	946	84.1	179	15.9	1,125	100.0
Child any CP contact 2016/17	**6,708**	**86.2**	**1,078**	**13.9**	**7,786**	**100.0**	**22,488**	**93.8**	**1,485**	**6.2**	**23,973**	**100.0**

Number and proportion of South Australian children who were subject to an unborn report

Table 19: Number and proportion of South Australian children who were subject to an unborn report by child year of birth and Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander

Child year of birth		Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander		Non-Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	
		n	% of ERP	n	% of ERP
2016	ABS Estimated Residential population [(a)]	998		19,673	
	Number of children subject to pre-birth (unborn) notification	247	24.7	418	2.1
2017	ABS Estimated Residential population [(a)]	1,024		18,311	
	Number of children subject to pre-birth (unborn) notification	265	25.9	435	2.4
2018	ABS Estimated Residential population [(a)]	1,046		17,828	
	Number of children subject to pre-birth (unborn) notification	303	29.0	492	2.8
2019	ABS Estimated Residential population [(a)]	1,070		17,817	
	Number of children subject to pre-birth (unborn) notification	327	30.6	593	3.3
2020	ABS Estimated Residential population [(a)]	1,095		17,682	
	Number of children subject to pre-birth (unborn) notification	359	32.8	575	3.3

(a) Australian Bureaus of Statistics (ABS) estimated resident population in South Australia aged 0 years by Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander for each year.

Proportion of children subject to a pre-birth (unborn) notification who were then subsequently removed into out-of-home care

Table 20: Proportion of children subject to a pre-birth (unborn) notification who were then subsequently removed into out-of-home care prior to 1 month, 3 months, 6 months and 12 months of age by year of birth and Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander

	Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander						Non-Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander					
Child year of birth	**2011-12**	**2013-14**	**2015-16**	**2017-18**	**2019-20**	**2021**	**2011-12**	**2013-14**	**2015-16**	**2017-18**	**2019-20**	**2021**
Removed into OOHC prior to 1 month of age	11.6%	6.1%	13.3%	12.5%	16.6%	15.1%	9.9%	9.0%	10.9%	10.4%	11.7%	11.7%
Removed into OOHC prior to 3 months of age	16.7%	9.5%	16.1%	15.5%	19.7%	18.8%	13.0%	11.4%	13.8%	13.2%	15.6%	13.0%
Removed into OOHC prior to 6 months of age	18.5%	13.6%	19.7%	17.9%	22.4%	19.3%	15.5%	13.7%	15.9%	14.9%	17.0%	12.0%
Removed into OOHC prior to 12 months of age	21.4%	17.7%	23.5%	20.6%	24.5%		20.1%	16.2%	18.6%	18.2%	18.4%	
# children subject to pre-birth (a)	285	361	452	568	686	245	467	679	829	927	1,168	369
# children subject to pre-birth (b)	281	358	447	560	680	181	462	674	814	912	1,147	284
# children subject to pre-birth (c)	276	354	441	554	675	88	452	664	813	912	1,143	133
# children subject to pre-birth (d)	285	361	452	568	596		467	679	829	927	1,019	

Includes children subject to a pre-birth (unborn) notification, (a) who could be followed for 1-month post birth, (b) who could be followed for 3 months post birth, (c) who could be followed for 6 months post birth, (d) who could be followed for 12 months post birth, as we only hold child protection data until September 2021.

Children subject to pre-birth (unborn) notification and removed into OOHC prior to 12 months of age: Time in care following first placement

How to read Table 21:

- If you look in the first row, for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children who were removed prior to 12 months of age following a pre-birth notification from 2011 to 2014:
  - 13.6% spent less than 6 months in OOHC during the two years following their first removal
  - 5.6% spent 6 months to less than a year in OOHC during the two years following their first removal
  - 4.0% spent one year to less than 18 months in OOHC during the two years following their first removal
  - 5.6% spent 18 months to less than 2 years in OOHC during the two years following their first removal
  - 71.2% spent the entire 2 years in OOHC during the two years following their first removal

Table 21: Children subject to pre-birth (unborn) notification and removed into OOHC prior to 12 months of age: time in OOHC in the following 2 years after first ever OOHC placement by year of birth and Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander

	Child year of birth	Children subject to pre-birth (unborn) notification and removed into OOHC prior to 12 months of age Time in OOHC in the following 2 years after first ever OOHC placement										Total
		Less than 6 months		6 months to <1 year		1 year to <18 months		18 mths to <2 years		2 years		
		n	Row %	n	Row %	n	Row %	n	Row %	n	Row %	
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	2011 to 2014	17	13.6	7	5.6	5	4.0	7	5.6	89	71.2	125
	2015 to 2018	16	7.2	16	7.2	16	7.2	12	5.4	162	73.0	222
	Total	**33**	9.5	**23**	6.6	**21**	6.1	**19**	5.5	**251**	**72.3**	**347**
Non-Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	2011 to 2014	17	8.3	10	4.9	13	6.4	9	4.4	155	76.0	204
	2015 to 2018	29	9.0	18	5.6	23	7.1	25	7.7	228	70.6	323
	Total	**46**	**8.7**	**28**	**5.3**	**36**	**6.8**	**34**	**6.5**	**383**	**72.7**	**527**

Children subject to pre-birth (unborn) notification and removed into OOHC prior to 12 months of age: Time in kinship, foster, residential care following first placement

Table 22: Children subject to pre-birth (unborn) notification and removed into OOHC prior to 12 months of age: time in kinship care, foster care, or residential/commercial care in the 2 years after first ever OOHC placement by Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, children born 2011-2018

	Children subject to pre-birth (unborn) notification and removed into OOHC prior to 12 months of age			
	Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander		Non-Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	
	n	col %	n	col %
Time in kinship care in the following 2 years				
None	176	50.7	298	56.5
1 – 25% of total time	15	4.3	16	3.0
26 – 50% of total time	11	3.2	10	1.9
51-75% of total time	16	4.6	19	3.6
76-99% of total time	129	37.2	184	34.9
Time in foster care in the following 2 years				
None	96	27.7	139	26.4
1 – 25% of total time	55	15.9	82	15.6
26 – 50% of total time	19	5.5	21	4.0
51-75% of total time	14	4.0	12	2.3
76-99% of total time	163	47.0	273	51.8
Time in residential or commercial care in the following 2 years				
None	325	93.7	503	95.4
1 – 25% of total time	14	4.0	18	3.4
More than 25% time	8	2.3	6	1.1
50% or more of total time in				
Kinship care	147	42.4	205	38.9
Foster care	188	54.2	312	59.2
Residential or commercial care	6	1.7	5	0.9
Other care type	6	1.7	5	0.9
Total	**347**	**100.0**	**527**	**100.0**

Key Message:
Children subject to pre-birth (unborn) notification and removed into OOHC prior to 12 months of age, were followed for two years following their first OOHC placement;

- 42.4% of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children spent more than half of that total time in Kinship care compared to 38.9% of the non-Aboriginal population.

Guardianship to Minister until 18 years old orders

There has been an increase in the number and proportion of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal children placed on Guardianship to the Minister until 18 years old order before 10th birthday;

- From 1 in 48 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children for those born in 1991 and turned 10 years old in 2001 to 1 in 11 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children for those born in 2010 and turned 10 years old in 2010.
- From 1 in 600 non-Aboriginal children for those born in 1991 and turned 10 years old in 2001 to 1 in 149 non-Aboriginal children for those born in 2010 and turned 10 years old in 2010.
- 543% relative increase for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children from 14 children born in 1991 to 90 children born in 2010.
- 313% relative increase for non-Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children from 32 children born in 1991 to 132 children born in 2010.

The age that saw the biggest increase in children being placed on Guardianship to Minister until 18 years old orders was for children under 1;

- 1 in 70 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children born in 2010 and who turned 1 year old in 2011 were placed on a Guardianship to Minister until 18 years old order before their 1st birthday and this increased to 1 in 24 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children born in 2020 and who turned 1 year old in 2021. Compared to
- 1 in 900 non-Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children born in 2010 and who turned 1 year old in 2011 were placed on a Guardianship to Minister until 18 years old order before their 1st birthday and increased to 1 in 310 non-Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children born in 2020 and who turned 1 year old in 2021.

Guardianship to Minister until 18 years old orders before 10th birthday

Table 23 shows the number and proportion on children placed on a Guardianship to the Minister until 18 years old order before their 10th birthday by year of birth, for children born from 1991 to 2010.

Table 23: Number and proportion on children placed on a Guardianship to the Minister until 18 years old order before 10th birthday by year of birth

Year of birth	Year child would turn 10 years	*Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander*			*Non-Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander*		
		Number of children with GOM 18 order* before 10th birthday	Number in South Australia	% GOM 18 before 10th Birthday	Number of children with GOM 18 order* before 10th birthday	Number in South Australia	% GOM 18 before 10th Birthday
1991	2001	14	664	2.1% or 1 in 48	32	19,207	0.17% or 1 in 600
1992	2002	16	678	2.4% or 1 in 41	43	19,114	0.22% or 1 in 450
1993	2003	13	678	1.9% or 1 in 52	32	19,203	0.17% or 1 in 600
1994	2004	22	691	3.2% or 1 in 31	35	18,851	0.19% or 1 in 520
1995	2005	23	708	3.2% or 1 in 31	46	19,026	0.24% or 1 in 450
1996	2006	22	717	3.1% or 1 in 32	42	18,639	0.23% or 1 in 430
1997	2007	27	776	3.5% or 1 in 29	59	18,086	0.33% or 1 in 300
1998	2008	22	800	2.8% or 1 in 36	56	17,866	0.31% or 1 in 320
1999	2009	35	818	4.3% or 1 in 23	68	17,987	0.38% or 1 in 260
2000	2010	42	872	4.8% or 1 in 21	73	17,745	0.41% or 1 in 245
2001	2011	41	821	5.0% or 1 in 20	103	17,382	0.59% or 1 in 170
2002	2012	60	798	7.5% or 1 in 14	91	17,396	0.52% or 1 in 191
2003	2013	62	812	7.6% or 1 in 13	102	17,270	0.59% or 1 in 170
2004	2014	61	845	7.2% or 1 in 14	101	17,524	0.58% or 1 in 172
2005	2015	55	849	6.5% or 1 in 15	122	17,670	0.69% or 1 in 145
2006	2016	79	915	8.6% or 1 in 12	116	18,146	0.64% or 1 in 157
2007	2017	89	834	10.7% or 1 in 10	121	18,848	0.64% or 1 in 157
2008	2018	94	931	10.1% or 1 in 10	155	19,201	0.81% or 1 in 124
2009	2019	73	904	8.1% or 1 in 12	139	19,429	0.72% or 1 in 138
2010	2020	90	932	9.7% or 1 in 11	132	19,580	0.67% or 1 in 149

*GOM18 - Guardianship to the Minister until 18 years old order

Key Message:
There has been an increase in the number and proportion of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal children placed on Guardianship to the Minister until 18 years old order before their 10th birthday;

- From 1 in 48 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children for those born in 1991 who turned 10 years old in 2001 to 1 in 11 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children for those born in 2010 who turned 10 years old in 2020.
- From 1 in 600 non-Aboriginal children for those born in 1991 who turned 10 years old in 2001 to 1 in 149 non-Aboriginal children for those born in 2010 who turned 10 years old in 2020.

Guardianship to Minister until 18 years old orders before 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th birthday

Table 24 shows the cumulative incidence of the Guardianship to the Minister until 18 years old order from birth to age 5 years by age, and year of birth, for children born from 2010 to 2020.

Table 24: Cumulative incidence of Guardianship to Minister until 18 years of age order by age and year of birth, for those born from 2010 to 2020 by Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander

Year of birth	Number of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children on Guardianship to Minister until 18 years old order										
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Before 1st Birthday	1 in 70	1 in 68	1 in 90	1 in 110	1 in 100	1 in 61	1 in 36	1 in 75	1 in 52	1 in 27	1 in 24
Before 2ndBirthday	1 in 45	1 in 44	1 in 38	1 in 38	1 in 30	1 in 28	1 in 20	1 in 26	1 in 19	1 in 15	
Before 3rd Birthday	1 in 27	1 in 26	1 in 31	1 in 26	1 in 19	1 in 21	1 in 16	1 in 17	1 in 14		
Before 4th Birthday	1 in 23	1 in 22	1 in 21	1 in 19	1 in 16	1 in 17	1 in 12	1 in 13			
Before 5th Birthday	1 in 20	1 in 19	1 in 18	1 in 16	1 in 13	1 in 14	1 in 10				
Year of birth	**Number of non-Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children on Guardianship to Minister until 18 years old order**										
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Before 1st Birthday	1 in 900	1 in 1200	1 in 1700	1 in 1000	1 in 900	1 in 900	1 in 650	1 in 700	1 in 610	1 in 420	1 in 310
Before 2ndBirthday	1 in 550	1 in 420	1 in 560	1 in 400	1 in 370	1 in 290	1 in 360	1 in 300	1 in 270	1 in 225	
Before 3rd Birthday	1 in 400	1 in 310	1 in 360	1 in 285	1 in 260	1 in 245	1 in 220	1 in 215	1 in 174		
Before 4th Birthday	1 in 310	1 in 270	1 in 270	1 in 220	1 in 210	1 in 185	1 in 182	1 in 172			
Before 5th Birthday	1 in 270	1 in 220	1 in 225	1 in 200	1 in 170	1 in 156	1 in 156				

Key Message:

There has been an increase in the proportion of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal children placed on Guardianship to the Minister until 18 years old order before 1st birthday;

- From 1 in 70 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children for those born in 2010 who turned 1 year old in 2011 to 1 in 24 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children for those born in 2020 who turned 1 year old in 2021.
- From 1 in 900 non Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children for those born in 2010 who turned 1 year old in 2011 to 1 in 310 non-Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children for those born in 2020 who turned 1 year old in 2021.

Characteristics of children in out-of-home care during 2016

Figure 34 originally appears earlier in this report as Figure 20. We have included additional key messages related to this figure, over the page.

How to read Figure 34:

The bar graph on the left side of the figure shows that of the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children and young people who were in OOHC during 2016

> 96% had at least one indicator of poverty, 54% mental health, 43% substance misuse, 35% domestic and family violence, and 69% intergenerational child protection contact.

The column graph illustrates the combinations of indicators that align with the shaded blue circles below . For example

> Start by looking at the first column - this represents the most common pattern and shows that 19% of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children in OOHC during 2016 had both poverty and intergenerational child protection contact indicators as indicated by the blue circles

> Then look at the second largest column - this shows 14% of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children in OOHC during 2016 had a record of every type of indicator

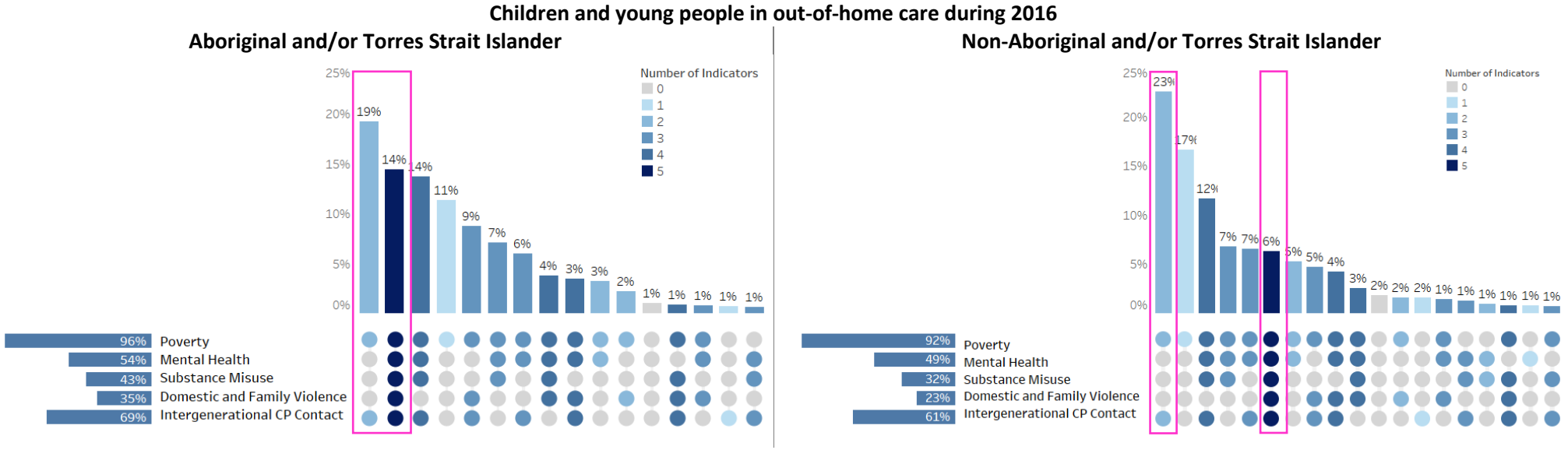


Figure 34: Indicators and combinations of disadvantage for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in OOHC during 2016

Key Message:

14% of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander in OOHC had at least one indicator of all 5 domains of poverty, mental health, substance misuse, domestic and family violence and intergenerational child protection contact; compared to 6% of non-Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children.

Additional key messages for Figure 34;

For children in out-of-home care in 2016 when looking at five characteristics poverty, mental health, substance misuse, domestic and family violence, and intergenerational child protection contact;

- The most common combination of characteristic's experienced by Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander was a combination of Poverty and Intergenerational child protection contact, 19% or almost 1 in 5 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children or young people in care had only these two characteristics, and 23% or almost 1 in 4 non-Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children or young people in care had only these two characteristics. In the data for these children and young people there were no characteristics of mental health, substance misuse or domestic and family violence recorded.

References

[1] Report on Government Services. (2023). Child protection services, *Australian Government Productivity Commission.* Retrieved from: https://www.pc.gov.au/ongoing/report-on-government-services/2023/community-services/child-protection