



MEDIA RELEASE

CHILDREN GROWING UP IN FAMILIES UNDER HOUSING AFFORDABILITY STRESS

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Many Australian children come from families that have experienced housing affordability stress for a period of time while they were growing up, according to research by the Australian Institute of Family Studies.

The Institute's Director, Anne Hollonds said that data from the *Growing Up In Australia* Longitudinal Study of Australian Children showed that about 30 per cent of children in the study experienced housing affordability stress at some stage between 2006 and 2014.

"The increasing cost of purchasing a home and a shift from mortgages to rental accommodation, means that many children are being raised in families facing housing affordability stress, despite lower interest rates," she said.

Households identified as being in housing affordability stress are those with an income level in the bottom 40 per cent and are paying more than 30 per cent of their income on housing costs.

Lead researcher, Dr Diana Warren said the study found that housing affordability stress affected families who were renting more than those with mortgages.

"Our analysis showed that in 2014, when the study children were aged 10-11 and 14-15, less than 10 per cent of children living in households where their parents were paying off a mortgage were in households experiencing housing affordability stress, compared to one-third of children whose families were in private rental accommodation," she said.

"Families paying rent in metropolitan areas were paying more per week, on average, than those who were paying off a mortgage in a non-metropolitan area.

"For example, private renters spent 20 per cent of their household income on housing in 2013-14, while households paying off mortgages spent 16 per cent of their income."

Dr Warren said that rates of housing affordability stress were even higher for families where parents had recently separated.

"Forty one per cent of children who had moved house as a result of parental separation moved from a two-parent family that was not in housing affordability stress to a single parent household where affordability stress was now an issue," she said.

"For those who had stayed in the family home when their parents separated, 30 per cent were in households that had gone from having no housing affordability stress to experiencing this problem.

"For children living in a household under housing affordability stress, most were not in that situation two years later.

"However, around one in seven children in the study had lived in households with housing affordability stress at multiple time points.

"For single parent households, housing affordability stress was more likely to be an ongoing issue. One in four children who were in a single parent household that was experiencing housing affordability stress were still in the same situation two years later."



Dr Warren said that cramped conditions was another issue facing families, with 1 in 5 study children having lived in overcrowded conditions at some stage between 2006 and 2014.

Some parents also reported that they lived in areas of poor neighbourhood 'liveability' without access to good parks and playgrounds.

"However, the percentage of children whose parents reported low levels of neighbourhood liveability decreased as children got older – from 7 per cent of parents of 2-3 year olds in 2006, to 4 per cent of parents of 14-15 year olds in 2014."

To download a copy of the AIFS' *Growing Up In Australia* Longitudinal Study of Australian Children 2017 Annual Statistical Report *Children's housing experiences* go to <http://www3.aifs.gov.au/institute/media/docs/tGxliJ48sMY/LSAC-ASR-2017-Chap3.pdf>

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