

# A snapshot of children and young people in the ACT

ACT is home to more than 72,000 children and young people aged 0-14. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people make up 1.5 per cent of the population, including 2453 children and youth. More than 93,000 families live in the ACT with an average of 1.8 children per family. Around 46 per cent are couple families with children, 38 per cent are couple families without children and 15 per cent are one-parent families. Almost two-thirds of refugee children live in the ACT.



**In 2014-15, there were 614 substantiated reports of child abuse and neglect in ACT.**  
AIHW 15/16

**The number of children in foster care in ACT has more than doubled since 2003.**  
AIHW 15/16



**In 2011, Canberra had the second highest rate of homelessness of all Australian states and territories.**  
NATSEM 13

**80 in every 1000 Indigenous children are in out-of-home care in the ACT, 13 times the rate for non-Indigenous Canberra children.**  
AIHW 15/16



**In 2016, there were 748 children living in out-of-home care in ACT (8 per 1000).**  
AIHW 15/16

**One in 13 Canberrans struggle to pay for every day essentials such as housing and food.**  
NATSEM 13



## Key issues facing ACT children and young people

**Accommodation:** The most common reason for homelessness in the ACT (37% of cases) is housing crisis and inadequate or inappropriate dwellings. (Homelessness Australia 16)

**Homelessness:** Homelessness in the ACT jumped 70 per cent in just five years from 949 to 1785 (50 per 10,000). Almost 30 per cent are aged 0-18 years; 501 per 10,000 are Aboriginal. (ABS 12)

**Neglect:** Neglect is the second most common type of maltreatment suffered by children in the ACT (49%), after emotional abuse (34%), and followed by physical (12%) and sexual (5%). (AIHW 15/16)

**Aboriginal children in care:** The rate of Aboriginal children who were the subject of a substantiated report of abuse or neglect in the ACT (40 per 1,000) is 12 times the national rate for non-Aboriginal children. (AIHW 14/15)

**Hidden & multiple disadvantage:** ACT disadvantage is masked by many living in areas that are not disadvantaged but have some of Australia's highest costs of living, particularly rent. Those living in poverty often also face homelessness, financial stress and housing stress. (NATSEM 13)

**Youth unemployment:** The rate has risen to 11.3 per cent and is double the adult rate. (ABS 13)

**Foster care shortage:** Many children and young people need immediate care from ACT families.

**Indigenous children in the ACT are 13 times more likely to be living in out-of-home care.**

(AIHW 2015/16)

**1800 061 000**  
**barnardos.org.au**

### Find out more

- Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) Child Protection 2015-16,
- AIHW, A picture of Australia's Children 2012
- ACT Government, Keeping Children and Young People Safe 2012
- ACT Government & NATSEM, Disadvantage in ACT: Report for Anti-Poverty Week 2013



**Barnardos**  
**Australia**

# How Barnardos Australia helps children and young people in the ACT

Barnardos Australia in the ACT offers family support, out-of-home care (foster and kin) and supported accommodation services. Our programs and services aim to help the most financially and socially disadvantaged in Canberra, including young families and adolescents. Our Canberra Centre has been operating for more than 40 years.

## About our children and young people

The children referred to Barnardos have been exposed to exceptionally difficult circumstances in their young lives. Many have been hurt or neglected by the very people meant to care for and protect them.

Barnardos Australia provides an extensive range of services to help children, young people and families across the ACT including:

- Temporary accommodation for people facing homelessness
- Couch Surfing (financial support for people accommodating homeless 15-20 year olds)
- In-home tutoring for children struggling with school work
- Friendly Landlord service (accommodation for 16-25 year olds)
- Intensive Parenting Sessions
- Drug, alcohol and mental health support
- Family violence support and parenting programs
- Kids Friends Program (youth mentoring)
- Specialist care for high needs children
- Temporary foster care (short term, crisis and respite care)
- Kin Care - family care and family preservation
- Concurrency care (stable care for children under 2 years old)
- Indigenous youth group
- Foster care

Across NSW and ACT in 2015/16 we directly helped:

1,262 children find safe homes through out-of-home care

18 children find permanent homes through our Find-a-Family adoption program

17,039 children through all our programs

**We believe all children have the right to a childhood**

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