



Government of South Australia

Office of the Guardian
for Children and Young People

South Australian child protection expenditure from the *Report on Government Services 2017*

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1 INTRODUCTION and KEY POINTS

The Guardian for Children and Young People tracks government child protection spending as part of her monitoring role under the *Children's Protection Act 1993*.¹ While expenditure alone is not a sufficient indicator of how well or how poorly we support children in care, adequate funding is essential to meeting the community's child protection and wellbeing goals.

This paper draws on data consolidated in the Productivity Commission *Report on Government Services 2017*² to examine South Australian spending on four child protection programs in a comparative context: child protection services (CPS), family support services (FSS), intensive family support services (IFSS) and out of home care (OOHC).

Part 2 of this summary explains factors that have influenced information selection. Part 3 then considers child protection expenditure in the most recent reporting year, 2015-16, and part 4 presents information about expenditure over time in South Australia and across all jurisdictions.

Key points - child protection expenditure in 2015-16

- SA expenditure on **child protection services per child** in 2015-16 was the lowest of all states and territories and 30.6 per cent of the average Australian rate
- SA expenditure on **family support services per child** in 2015-16 was 42.9 per cent of the average Australian rate
- SA expenditure on **intensive family support services per child** in 2015-16 was 36.8 per cent of the average Australian rate and lower than all jurisdictions other than Western Australia
- SA expenditure on **out of home care per child** in 2015-16 was above the average Australian rate (which was only 62.5 per cent of the SA rate) and greater than all

¹ The *Children's Protection Act 1993* potentially will be repealed in 2017 should the *Children and Young People (Safety) Bill 2017*, introduced to Parliament on 14 February 2017, be passed. The Guardian's enabling legislation then will become the separate *Children and Young People (Oversight and Advocacy Bodies) Act 2016*.

² Productivity Commission, *Report on Government Services 2017, Volume F: Community services* available at – <http://www.pc.gov.au/research/ongoing/report-on-government-services/2017/community-services/rogs-2017-volumef.pdf>

jurisdictions other than the Northern Territory

- the average Australian rate of **expenditure per child across the four program areas** in 2015-16 (CPS, FSS, IFSS and OOHC) was 94.5 per cent of the SA rate. South Australia's per child figure was exceeded only by New South Wales and the Northern Territory
- 86 per cent of **overall SA child protection expenditure** in 2015-16 was for OOHC (with about 3 per cent each to FSS and IFSS and 8 per cent to CPS)
- SA out of home care expenditure on **residential** compared to **non-residential out of home care** in 2015-16 was 64 to 36 per cent
- **Residential out of home care** has a significantly greater cost per child than non-residential care; the comparative ratio in 2015-16 was about 10:1.
- the **residential care population** has increased 240 per cent in the ten years since 2006/07.

Key points - child protection expenditure over time

- South Australian expenditure *per child* on non-residential out of home care compared to residential care is low and declined from 2013-14 (12.26%) to 2015-16 (9.73 %)
- the very high proportion of total South Australian spend on **out of home care** compared to the other three program areas has grown over time
- from 2013-14 to 2015-16, average Australian expenditure on **out of home care per child** decreased from 82.6 to 62.85 per cent of the average South Australian rate
- from 2013-14 to 2015-16, South Australian expenditure on **child protection services per child** declined by a half in absolute terms, and decreased from 62.7 to 30.8 per cent of the average Australian rate
- from 2013-14 to 2015-16, South Australian expenditure on **family support services per child** increased slightly from 40.1 to 42.9 per cent of the average Australian rate
- from 2013-14 to 2015-16, South Australian expenditure on **intensive family support services per child** decreased significantly from 68.5 to 36.9 per cent of the average Australian rate
- from 2013-14 to 2015-16, average Australian expenditure on **out of home care per child** increased at a relatively consistent rate, whereas the South Australian rate increased markedly.

2 READING THIS REPORT

2.1 SCOPE OF PROGRAMS

The *Report on Government Services 2017* accommodates four activity areas within the broad field of child protection (*Attachment 1* has the full definitions) -

Child protection services (CPS) are government functions that receive and assess allegations of abuse, neglect or harm, provide and refer clients to family support and other relevant services, and intervene to protect children.

Family support services (FSS) are non-intensive services provided to families in need (e.g. identification and assessment of needs; support and diversionary services; some counselling and active linking and referrals to support networks). Funded by government, they may be delivered by government or non-government agencies, typically through voluntary arrangements between the relevant agency and a family (as distinct from being ordered by a court).

Intensive family support services (IFSS) are specialist and intensive services funded to prevent the imminent separation of children from primary caregivers due to child protection concerns and to reunify families where separation already has occurred. They use integrated strategies to improve family functioning. As such, they provide access to services such as assessment and case planning; parent education and skill development; counselling; domestic and family violence support, respite and emergency care; practical and financial support; mediation, brokerage and referral services; and training in problem solving.

Out-of-home care (OOHC) refers to the provision of overnight care (including placement with relatives other than parents) where the government makes a financial payment for children and young people on voluntary or court ordered placements. It excludes placements solely funded by disability services, psychiatric services, youth justice facilities and overnight childcare services.

2.2 DATA REPORTING CONSIDERATIONS

The Guardian received the following advice from the Department for Child Protection (DCP) about changes to reporting practice from that applied for the 2016 and earlier versions of the *Report on Government Services* process.

As part of the preparation of the 2015-16 ROGS return, DCP reassessed the allocation methodology that was used for apportioning expenses between the areas of child protection, out of home care, family support services and intensive family support services.

This was done through reference to the definitions contained in the Child Protection Services Financial data manual, and was reviewed by an independent accounting firm.

To ensure that previous year balances were comparative, the 2014-15 and 2013-14 year balances were restated using a consistent methodology where available.

The main impact of this improvement for the purpose of this GCYP summary is that the baseline year for reporting over time is now 2013-14, which means that only three financial years currently are available for analysis.

Unlike previous GCYP reports on the annual *Report on Government Services*, data summaries this year include expenditures on family support services as well as child protection services, out of home care and intensive family support services.

The productivity Commission again warns against assuming direct comparability between 'counting rules' and data from different states and territories.

In relevant Productivity Commission material, "expenditure per child" relates reported data to the number of children aged 0-17 years in that state or territory's residential population.

2.3 TABLES AND DIAGRAMS

All data used in these tables are drawn from the Productivity Commission's *Report on Government Services 2017*.

- | | |
|-----------------|--|
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| Figure 2 | Family support services expenditure per child, all jurisdictions 2015-16 (2015-16 dollars) |
| Figure 3 | Intensive family support services expenditure per child, all jurisdictions 2015-16 (2015-16 dollars) |
| Figure 4 | Out of home care expenditure per child, all jurisdictions 2015-16 (2015-16 dollars) |
| Figure 5 | CPS, FSS, IFSS and OOHC combined per child, all jurisdictions 2015-16 (2015-16 dollars) |
| Figure 6 | Program expenditure as a percentage of total child protection spend, South Australia 2015-16 |
| Figure 7 | Real expenditure in residential and non-residential out of home care, South Australia at 30 June 2016 |

- Figure 8** Comparative expenditure per child in residential and non-residential out of home care, South Australia at 30 June 2016
- Figure 9** Residential care population (at 30 June) as percentage of all children in residential and home-based out of home care, 2006-2017
- Figure 10** Real expenditure per child in residential and non-residential out of home care, South Australia over time (2015-16 dollars)
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- Figure 12** Child protection services expenditure per child over time, South Australia and Australia (2015-16 dollars)
- Figure 13** Family support services expenditure per child over time, South Australia and Australia (2015-16 dollars)
- Figure 14** Intensive family support services expenditure per child over time, South Australia and Australia (2015-16 dollars)
- Figure 15** Out of home care expenditure per child over time, South Australia and Australia (2015-16 dollars)
- Figure 16** Relative program expenditure South Australia over time (\$'000) (2015-16 dollars)
- Figure 17** Expenditure South Australia CPS, FSS, IFSS and OOHC 2013-14 to 2015-16 (\$'000) (2015-16 dollars)
- Figure 18** Child protection services, real expenditure per child comparisons over time (all jurisdictions) (2015-16 dollars)
- Figure 19** Family support services, real expenditure per child comparisons over time (all jurisdictions) (2015-16 dollars)
- Figure 20** Intensive family support services, real expenditure per child comparisons over time (all jurisdictions) (2015-16 dollars)
- Figure 21** Out of home care, real expenditure per child comparisons over time (all jurisdictions) (2015-16 dollars)
- Figure 22** Real expenditure per child comparisons over time, CPS, FSS, IFSS and OOHC combined (all jurisdictions) (2015-16 dollars)

PART 3 –Expenditure South Australian And Cross Jurisdiction

This part focusses on child protection spending in the most recent reporting year (2015-16) in three areas -

- South Australian compared to 2015-16 child protection expenditure per child in other jurisdictions (*Figures 1 to 5*)
- comparative share by program of overall 2015-16 South Australian child protection expenditure (*Figure 6*)
- South Australian 2015-16 expenditure on residential and non-residential out of home care (*Figures 7 and 8*) and the increase in the residential care population between 2006/07 and 2016/17 (*Figure 9*).

Key conclusions³ are that –

- SA expenditure on **child protection services** per child in 2015-16 was the lowest of all states and territories and 30.6 per cent of the average Australian rate (*Figure 1*)
- SA expenditure on **family support services** per child in 2015-16 was 42.9 per cent of the average Australian rate (*Figure 2*)
- SA expenditure on **intensive family support services** per child in 2015-16 was 36.8 per cent of the average Australian rate and lower than all jurisdictions other than Western Australia (NT did not report expenditure in this category) (*Figure 3*)
- SA expenditure on **out of home care** per child in 2015-16 was above the average Australian rate (which was only 62.5 per cent of the SA rate) and greater than all jurisdictions other than the Northern Territory (*Figure 4*)
- the average Australian rate of **expenditure per child across the four program areas** in 2015-16 (CPS, OOHC, IFSS and FSS) was 94.5 per cent of the SA rate. South Australia's per child figure was exceeded only by New South Wales and the Northern Territory (*Figure 5*)
- 86 per cent of **overall SA child protection expenditure** in 2015-16 was for out of home care (with about 3 per cent each to family support services and intensive family support services and 8 per cent to child protection services) (*Figure 6*)
- SA out of home care expenditure on **residential** compared to **non-residential out of home care** in 2015-16 was 64 to 36 per cent (*Figure 7*)

³ Note should be made of the comparative impact of the outlier position of the Northern Territory in relation to expenditure on family support services and intensive family support services.

- between 2006/07 and 2016/17, SA's residential care population has increased 240 per cent, compared to the home-based care population increase of 86 per cent (Figure 9)
- **Residential out of home care** has a significantly greater cost per child than non-residential care; the comparative ratio in 2015-16 was about 10:1 (Figure 8).

FIGURE 1: – Child protection services expenditure per child, all jurisdictions 2015-16 (2015-16 dollars)⁴ (ROGS 2017, Table 16A.1)

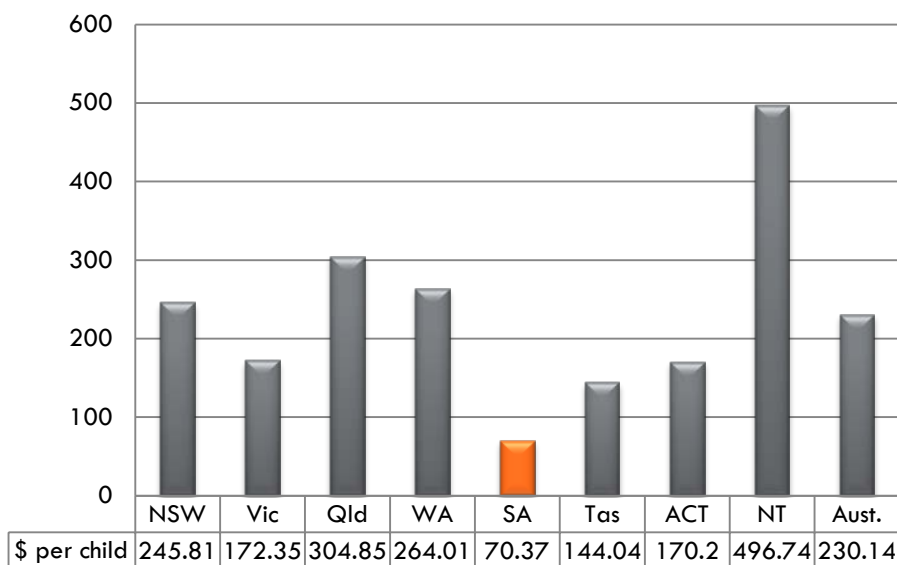
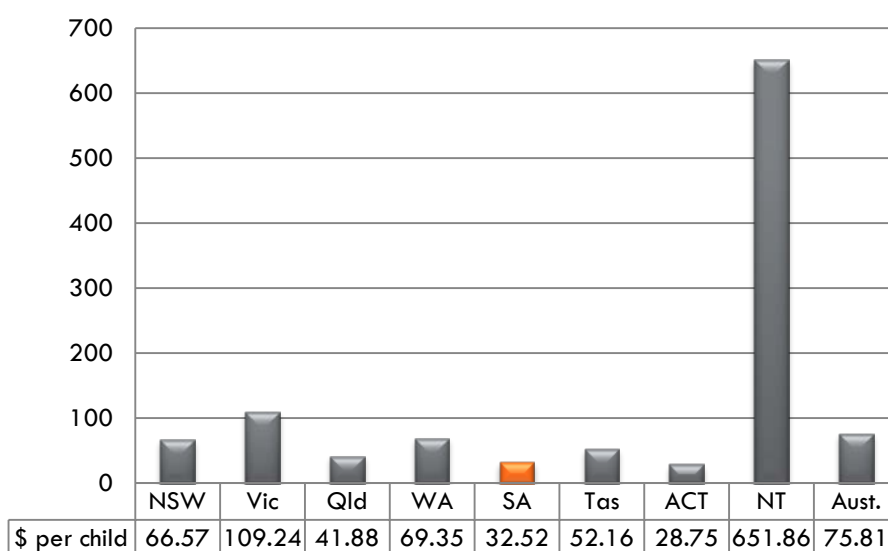


FIGURE 2: Family support services expenditure per child, all jurisdictions 2015-16 (2015-16 dollars) (ROGS 2017, Table 16A.1)



⁴ Note: ROGS 2017 data from Table 16A.1 relate to expenditure *per child* not *per child in care*.

FIGURE 3: Intensive family support services expenditure per child, all jurisdictions 2015-16
(2015-16 dollars) (ROGS 2017, Table 16A.1)

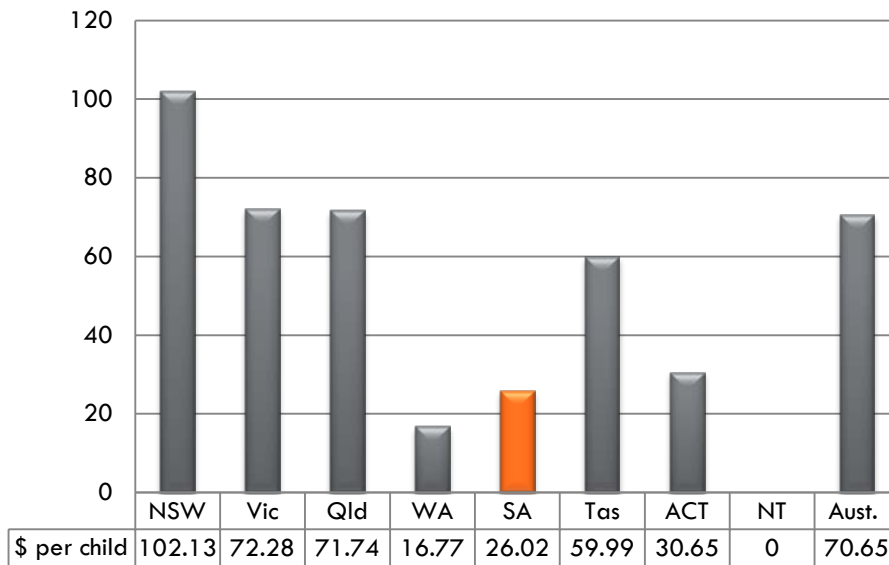
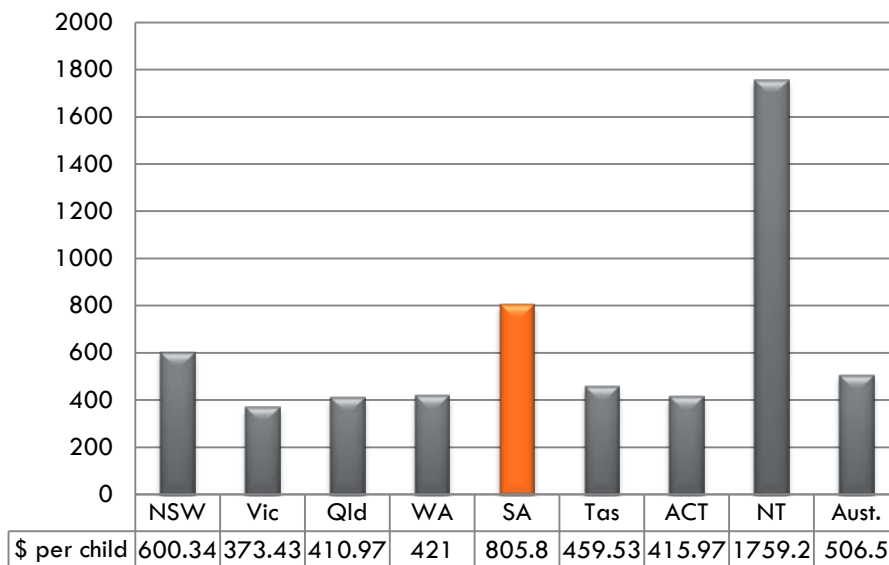
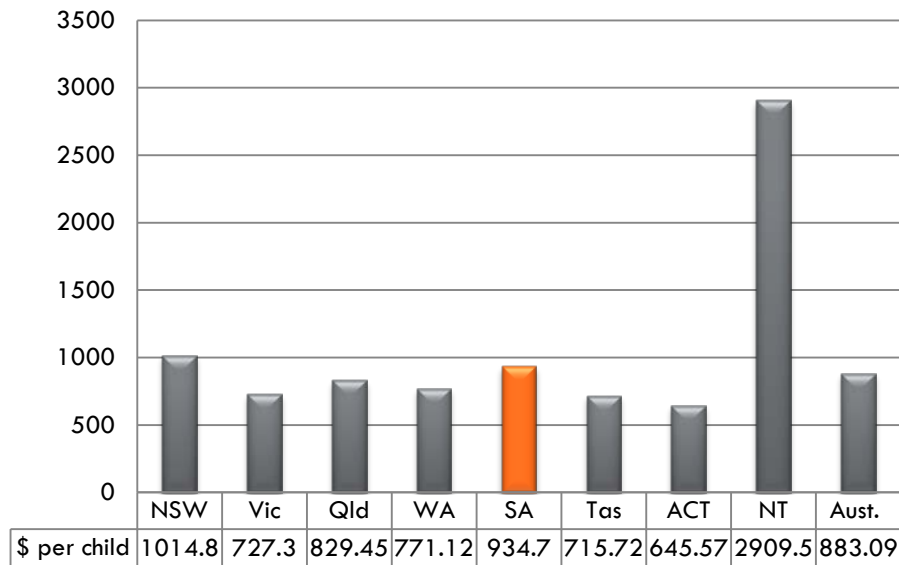


FIGURE 4: Out of home care expenditure per child, all jurisdictions 2015-16
(2015-16 dollars) (ROGS 2017, Table 16A.1)



**FIGURE 5: CPS, FSS, IFSS and OOHC combined per child, all jurisdictions 2015-16
(2015-16 dollars) (ROGS 2017, Table 16A.1)**



**FIGURE 6: Program expenditure as a percentage of total child protection spend
South Australia 2015-16 (ROGS 2017, Table 16A.3)**

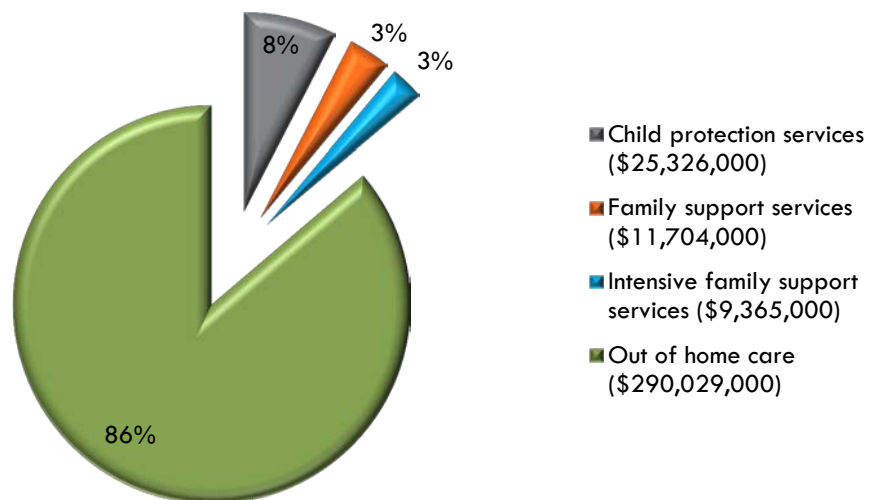


FIGURE 7: Real expenditure in residential and non-residential out of home care, South Australia at 30 June 2016 (ROGS 2017, Table 16A.3)

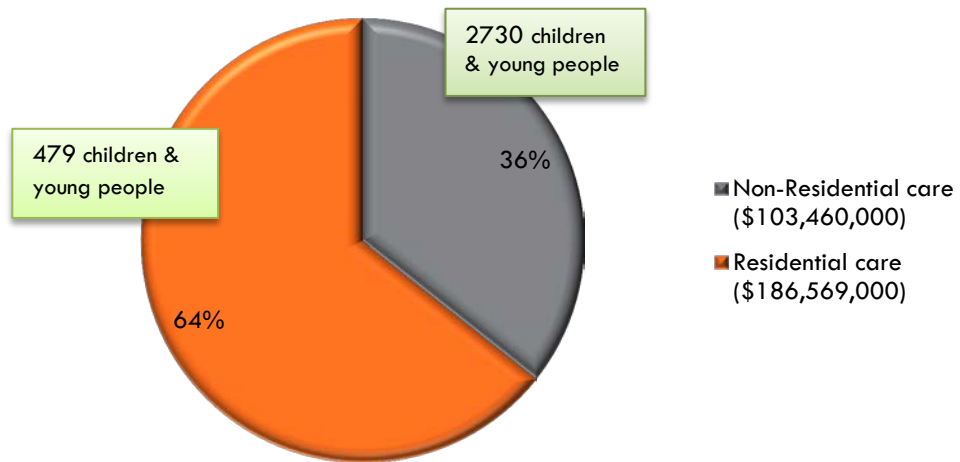
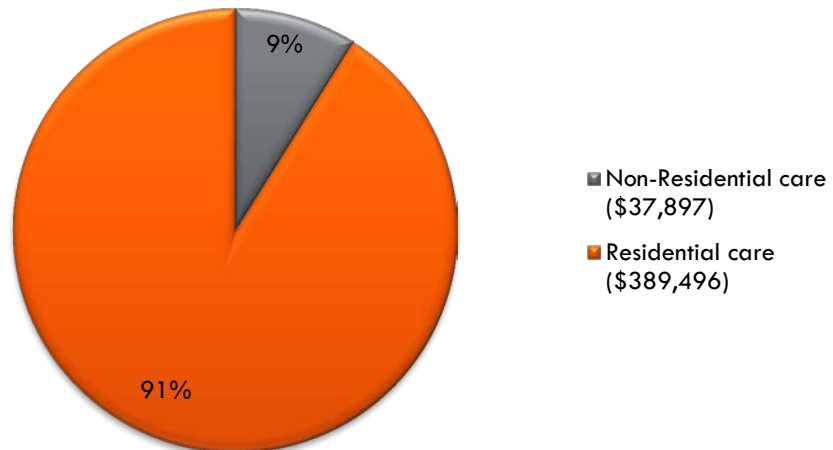
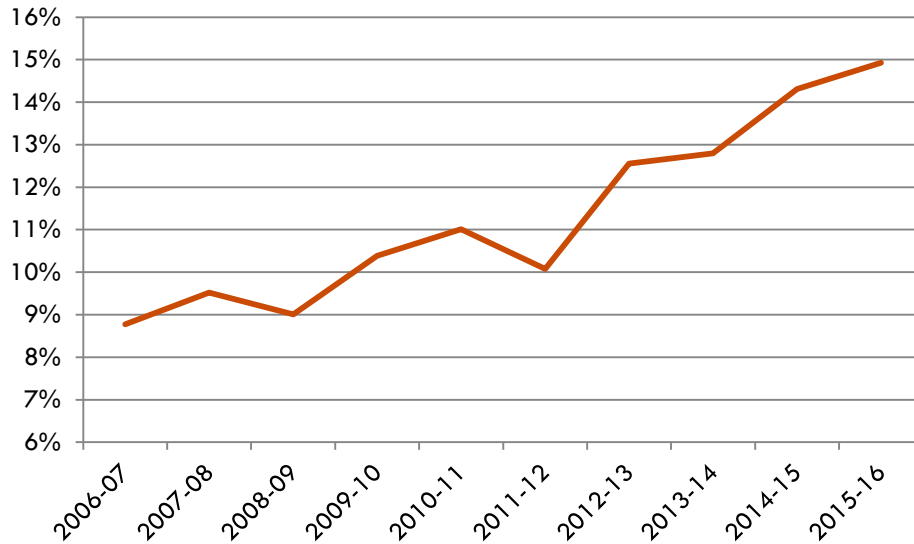


FIGURE 8: Comparative expenditure per child in residential and non-residential out of home care, South Australia at 30 June 2016 (ROGS 2017, Table 16A.3)



The residential care population has increased markedly over the ten years since 2006/07 – an increase of 240 per cent compared to 86 per cent for home based care in the same period.⁵

FIGURE 9: Residential care population as percentage of all children in residential and home-based out of home care, South Australia at 30 June 2016
(ROGS 2017, Table 16A.3)



⁵ Refer ROGS 2017, Table 16A.18.

4 – Expenditure Over Time

This section considers child protection expenditure in South Australia and across all jurisdictions for the three financial years 2013-14 to 2015-16 in relation to -

- expenditure per child in South Australian residential and non-residential out of home care (*Figure 10*)
- overall expenditure by program (*Figure 11*)
- expenditure per child over time, in South Australia (*Figures 15 and 16*) and SA compared to Australia (*Figures 12 to 15*)
- expenditure per child in a cross-jurisdictional context for the three financial years 2013-14 to 2015-16 (*Figures 18 to 22*).

Key conclusions⁶ are that –

- South Australian expenditure per child on non-residential out of home care compared to residential care is low and declined from 2013-14 (12.26%) to 2015-16 (9.73 %) (*Figure 10*)
- the very high proportion of total South Australian spend on **out of home care** compared to the other three program areas as shown in *Figure 6* above for 2015-16 has grown over time (*Figure 11* and *Figures 16* and *17*)
- from 2013-14 to 2015-16, South Australian expenditure on **child protection services per child** declined by a half in absolute terms and decreased from 62.7 to 30.8 per cent of the average Australian rate which remained substantially the same (*Figure 12*)
- from 2013-14 to 2015-16, South Australian expenditure on **family support services per child** increased slightly from 40.1 to 42.9 per cent of the average Australian rate (*Figure 13*)
- from 2013-14 to 2015-16, South Australian expenditure on **intensive family support services per child** decreased significantly from 68.5 to 36.9 per cent of the average Australian rate (*Figure 14*)
- from 2013-14 to 2015-16, average Australian expenditure on **out of home care per child** increased at a relatively consistent rate, whereas the South Australian rate increased markedly (*Figure 15*).

⁶ Note should be made of the comparative impact of the outlier position of the Northern Territory in relation to expenditure on family support services and intensive family support services.

Figures 10 to 16 focus on South Australian expenditure in several program areas and in relation to average Australian expenditures.

FIGURE 10: Real expenditure per child in residential and non-residential out of home care, South Australia over time (2015-16 dollars)⁷ (ROGS 2017, Table 16A.3)

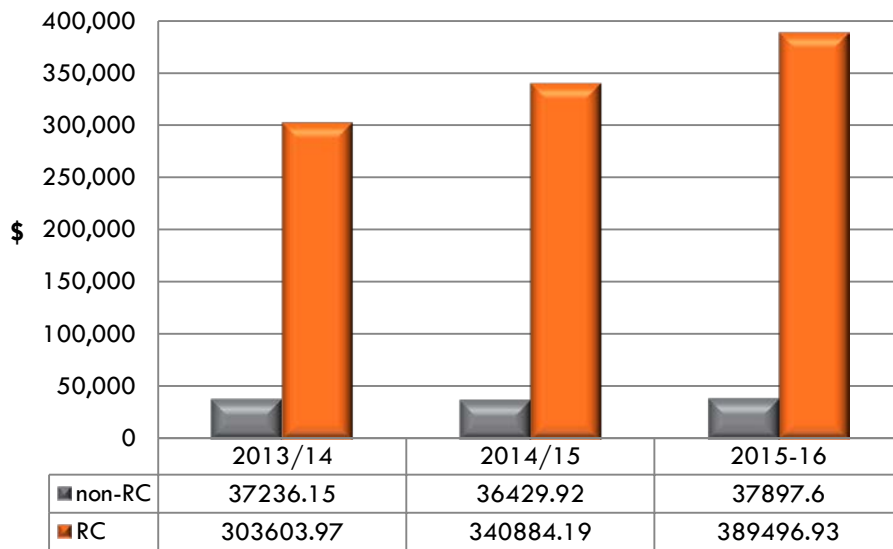
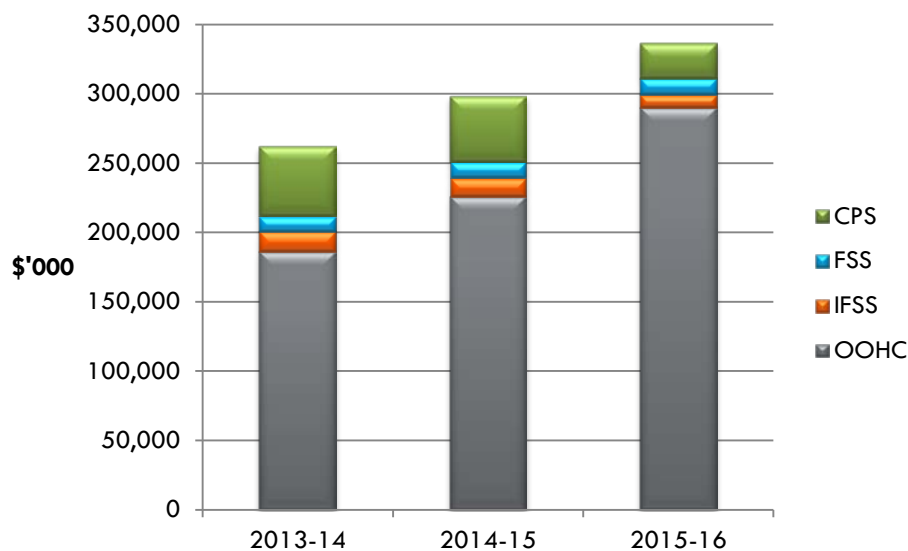


FIGURE 11: CPS, FSS, IFSS and OOHC expenditure South Australia 2013-14 to 2015-16 (2015-16 dollars) (ROGS 2017, Table 16A.1)



⁷ Note: ROGS 2017 data from Table 16A.3 relate to expenditure *per child in care*, not *per child*.

FIGURE 12: Child protection services expenditure per child over time, South Australia and Australia (2015-16 dollars) (ROGS 2017, Table 16A.1)

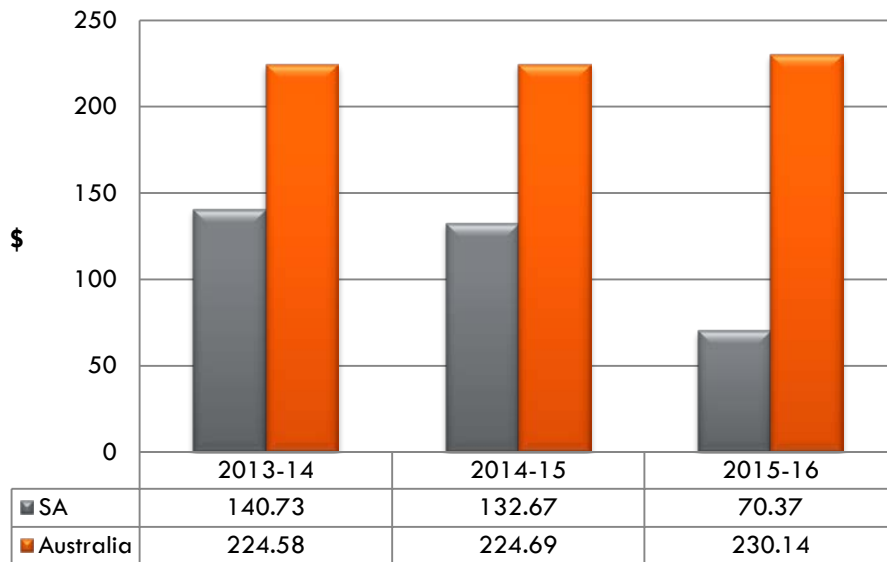


FIGURE 13: Family support services expenditure per child over time, South Australia and Australia (2015-16 dollars) (ROGS 2017, Table 16A.1)

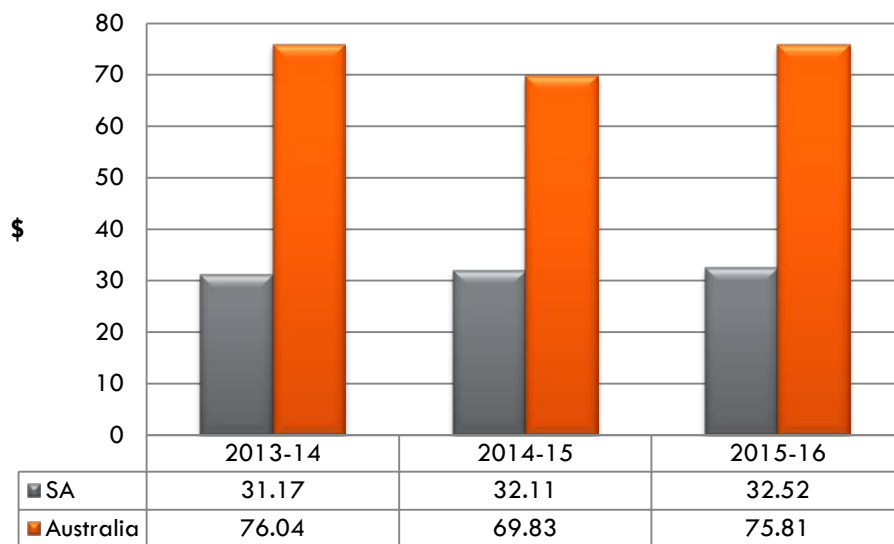


FIGURE 14: Intensive family support services expenditure per child over time, South Australia and Australia (2015-16 dollars)
(ROGS 2017, Table 16A.1)

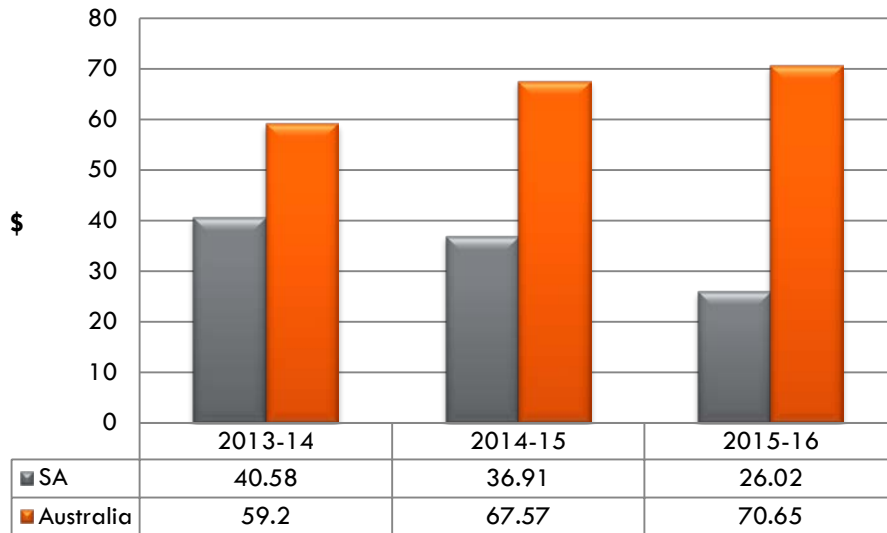


FIGURE 15: Out of home care expenditure per child over time, South Australia and Australia (2015-16 dollars) (ROGS 2017, Table 16A.1)

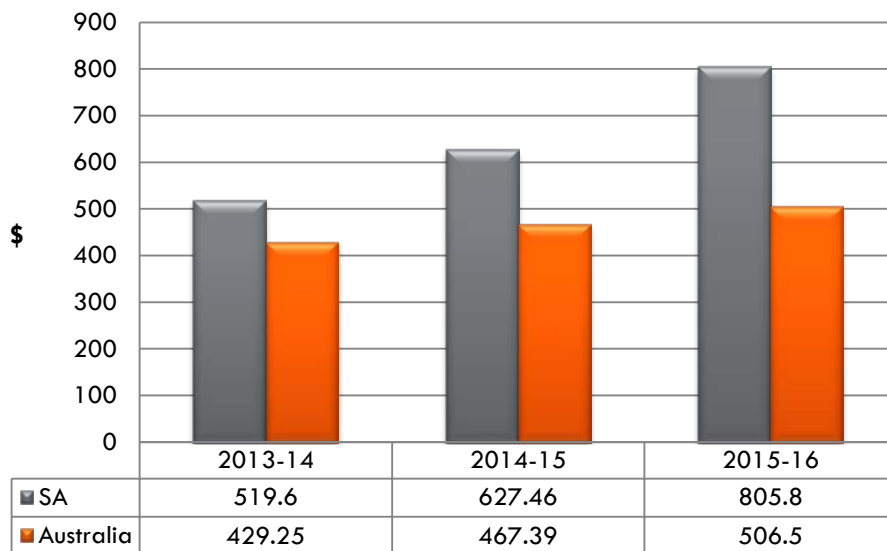


FIGURE 16: Relative program expenditure South Australia over time (\$'000)
(2015-16 dollars) (ROGS 2017, Table 16A.1)

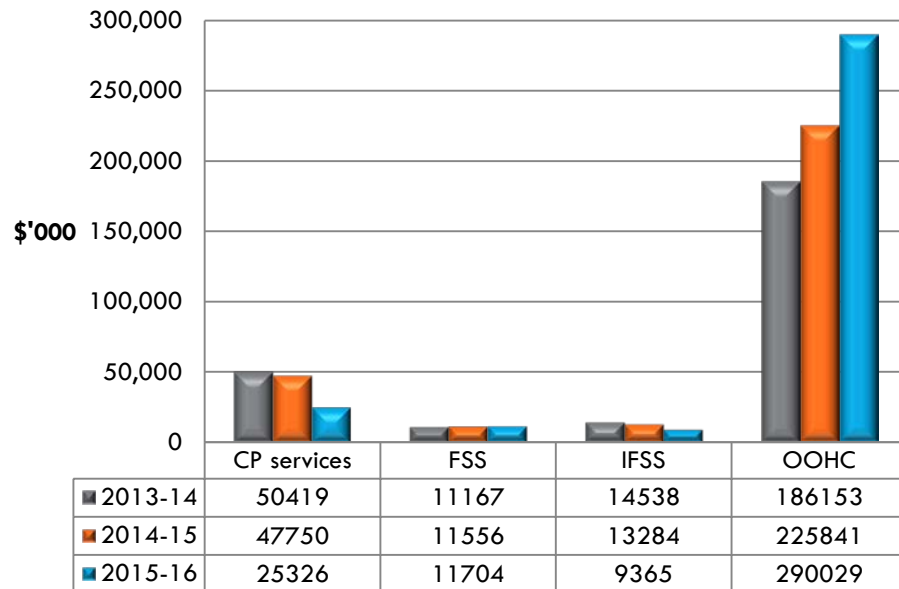
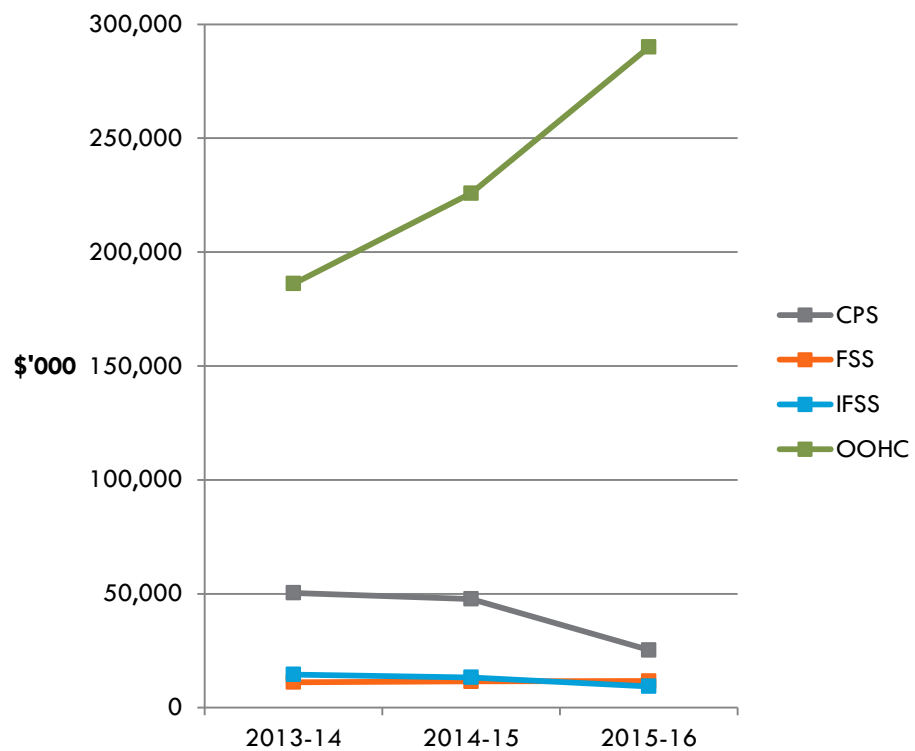


FIGURE 17: Expenditure South Australia CPS, FSS, IFSS and OOHC 2013-14 to 2015-16 (\$'000) (2015-16 dollars) (ROGS 2017, Table 16A.3)



Figures 18 to 22 place expenditure per child in a cross-jurisdictional context for the three financial years 2013-14 to 2015-16 for child protection services, family support services and intensive family support services, and out of home care.

FIGURE 18: Child protection services, real expenditure per child comparisons over time (all jurisdictions) (2015-16 dollars) (ROGS 2017, Table 16A.1)

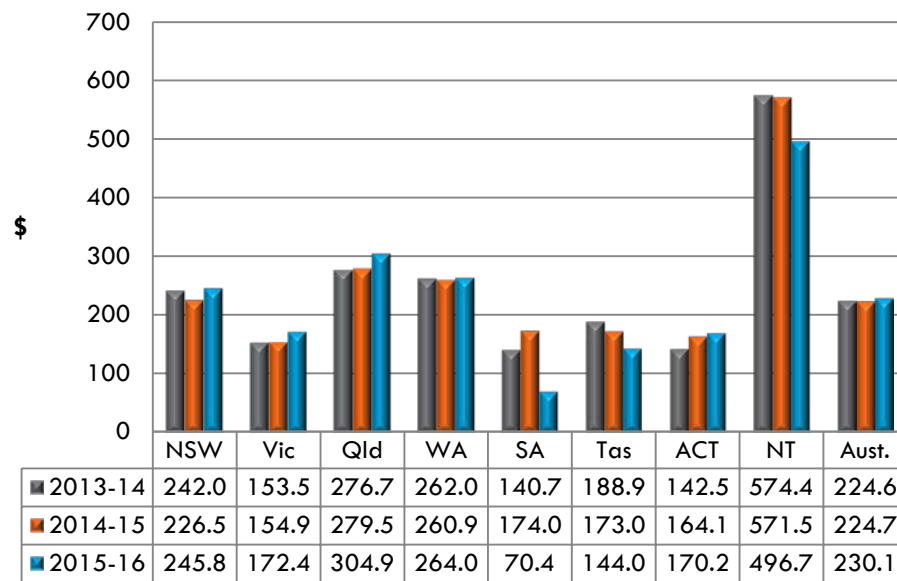


FIGURE 19: Family support services, real expenditure per child comparisons over time (all jurisdictions) (2015-16 dollars) (ROGS 2017, Table 16A.1)

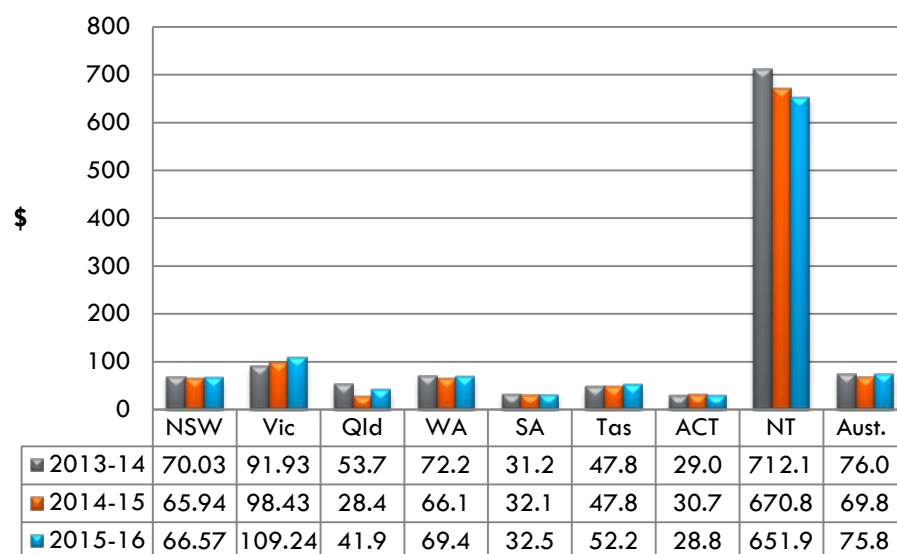


FIGURE 20: Intensive family support services, real expenditure per child comparisons over time (all jurisdictions) (2015-16 dollars)
(ROGS 2017, Table 16A.1)

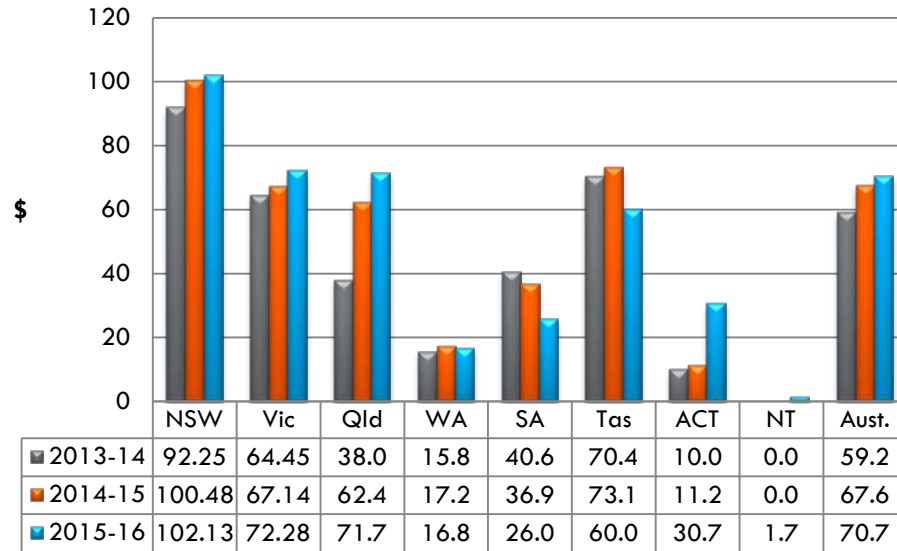


FIGURE 21: Out of home care, real expenditure per child comparisons over time (all jurisdictions) (2015-16 dollars) (ROGS 2017, Table 16A.1)

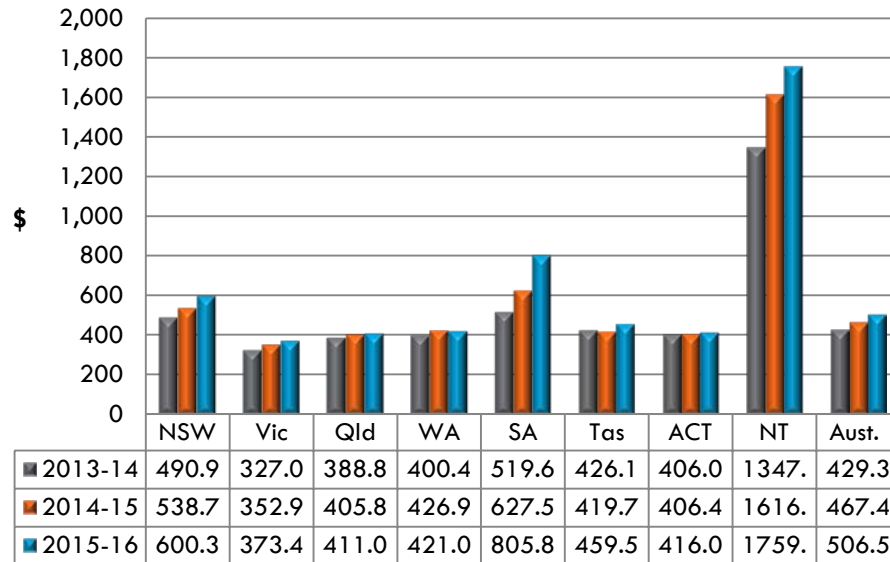
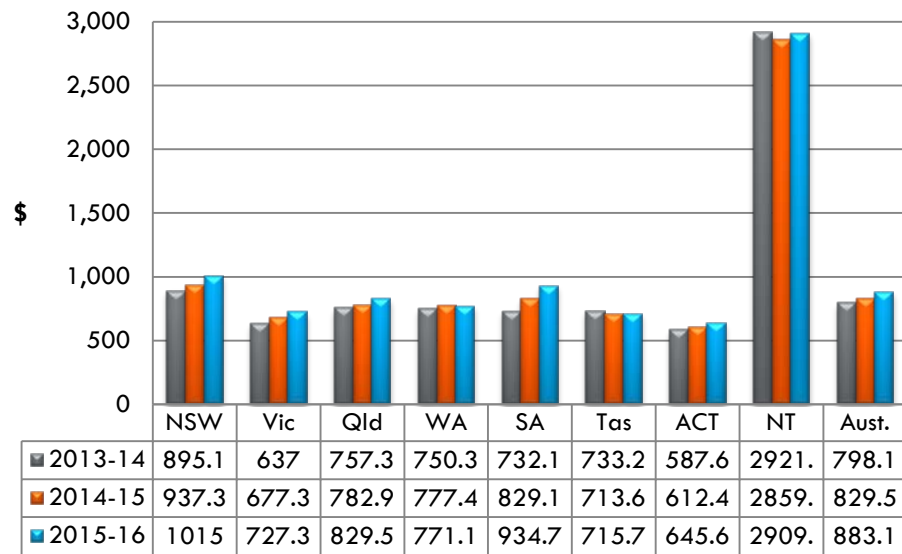


FIGURE 22: Real expenditure per child comparisons over time, CPS, FSS, IFSS and OOH combined (all jurisdictions) (2015-16 dollars) (ROGS 2017, Table 16A.1)



PRODUCTIVITY COMMISSION CHILD PROTECTION DEFINITIONS

The four program areas described in this paper are defined as follows in the Productivity Commission *Report on Government Services 2017* (Volume F, Part 16.4).

CHILD PROTECTION SERVICES - Functions of government that receive and assess allegations of child abuse and neglect, and/or harm to children and young people, provide and refer clients to family support and other relevant services, and intervene to protect children.

FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES - Activities associated with the provision of lower level (that is, non-intensive) services to families in need, including identification and assessment of family needs, provision of support and diversionary services, some counselling and active linking and referrals to support networks. These types of services are funded by government but can be delivered by a child protection agency or a non-government organisation. These services are typically delivered via voluntary arrangements (as distinct from court orders) between the relevant agency and family. This suite of services does not typically involve planned follow-up by the applicable child protection agency after initial service referral or delivery.

INTENSIVE FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES – Specialist services that aim to prevent the imminent separation of children from their primary caregivers as a result of child protection concerns and to reunify families where separation has already occurred. These services:

- are funded or established explicitly to prevent the separation of or to reunify families
- provide a range of services as part of an integrated strategy focusing on improving family functioning and skills, rather than providing a single type of service
- are intensive in nature, averaging at least four hours of service provision per week for a specified short term period (usually less than six months)

Families are generally referred to these services by the statutory child protection agency and will have been identified through the child protection process. Intensive family support services may use some or all of the following strategies: assessment and case planning; parent education and skill development; individual and family counselling; drug and alcohol counselling and domestic and family violence support; anger management; respite and emergency care; practical and financial support; mediation, brokerage and referral services; and training in problem solving..

OUT OF HOME CARE - Overnight care, including placement with relatives (other than parents) where the government makes a financial payment. Includes care of children in legal and voluntary placements (that is, children on and not on a legal order) but excludes placements solely funded by disability services, psychiatric services, youth justice facilities and overnight child care services.