

# South Australian child protection expenditure

from the Productivity Commission's  
Report on Government Services 2022

JUNE 2022



**Guardian**  
for Children and  
Young People

The Office of the Guardian for Children and Young People respectfully acknowledges and celebrates the Traditional Owners of the lands throughout South Australia and pays its respects to their Elders and children and young people of past, current and future generations.

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The Hon. Katrine Hildyard, MP  
Minister for Child Protection  
GPO Box 1838  
ADELAIDE SA 5001

Dear Minister

I am pleased to present to you the Office of the Guardian for Children and Young People's report based on an analysis of South Australian child protection expenditure from the Productivity Commission's Report on Government Services 2022.

This report provides a summary of the expenditure on child protection services in South Australia, as well as other child protection data, as detailed in the ROGS 2022.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Penny Wright".

**Penny Wright**  
**Guardian**

21 June 2022



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## Notes<sup>1</sup>

### *Change in the scope of 'out-of-home care'*

National reporting on out-of-home care (OOHC) has been subject to data comparability issues because of variations in the legislation across jurisdictions that determine policies and practices in the OOHC system, in particular, relating to children who are on third-party parental responsibility orders. For national reporting purposes, 'out-of-home care' was previously defined as 'overnight care for children aged less than 18 years who were unable to live with their families due to child safety concerns.' However, the following definition applies from 2018-19

*Overnight care for children aged less than 18 years who were unable to live with their families due to child safety concerns. This includes placements approved by the Department responsible for child protection for which there is ongoing case management and financial payment (including where a financial payment has been offered but has been declined by the carer). This includes legal (court ordered) and voluntary placements, and placements made for the purposes of providing respite for parents or carers.*

*Other living arrangements that were previously included in the scope of out-of-home care will be reported separately as 'other supported placements'.*

Reporting against this definition will result in some jurisdictions reporting fewer children in OOHC from 2018-19 onwards compared to earlier years because some living arrangements will be excluded (and reported, instead, as 'other supported placements'). The most significant difference relates to the exclusion of children in third-party parental responsibility orders and children on immigration orders, noting that some jurisdictions have already excluded these children from national OOHC reporting.

### *Impact of COVID-19 on data*

The Report on Government Services 2022 (ROGS 2022) notes that COVID-19 may have affected data in the Report in a number of ways, including in respect of actual performance (that is, the impact of COVID-19 on service delivery during 2020 and 2021 which is reflected in the data results), and the collection and processing of data (that is, the ability of data providers to undertake data collection and process results for inclusion in the Report). However, for the child protection services section of ROGS 2022, there are no significant changes to the data as a result of COVID-19.

### *All financial data are adjusted to 2020-21 dollars*

The term 'real expenditure' refers to financial data measured in prices from a constant base year to adjust for the effects of inflation. This allows the inter-year comparison of financial levels (prices and/or expenditure) by holding the purchasing power constant. Therefore, all timeseries financial data have been adjusted to 2020-21 dollars.

### *Data may not add up due to rounding*

Decimal points have not been rounded up, which means that some percentages will not total 100.

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<sup>1</sup> Based on explanatory notes in the Productivity Commission, *Report on Government Services 2021* (2021) and Productivity Commission, *Report on Government Services 2022* (2022).

# 1. Introduction and Key Points

The Guardian for Children and Young People examines child protection services as part of her monitoring role under the Children and Young People (Oversight and Advocacy Bodies) Act 2016.

The Productivity Commission's Report on Government Services 2022 (ROGS 2022) contains data that allows us to compare and examine South Australia's delivery of child protection services in the national context. It reflects what the United Nations Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children identifies as a governmental responsibility for ensuring "the development and implementation of coordinated policies regarding formal and informal care for all children who are without parental care" and that such policies "should be based on sound information and statistical data".

Child protection services are intended to promote child and family wellbeing, and to protect children and young people aged 0-17 years who are at risk of abuse and neglect within their families, or whose families do not have the capacity to provide care and protection.

ROGS 2022 presents child protection services data within four program areas –

- protective intervention services (PIS)
- family support services (FSS)
- intensive family support services (IFSS), and
- care services (CS).

On 30 June 2021, 4,366 children and young people were in OOHC in South Australia,<sup>2</sup> 1,637 (or 37.5 per cent) of whom were Aboriginal. There were 654 living in residential care, 15.0 per cent of the OOHC population. An additional 283 children and young people lived in other supported placements.

South Australia continues to have the highest reliance on residential care in Australia, effectively double the national average of 7.3 per cent. The impact of this reliance is evident in South Australia's high expenditure on care services, which accounted for \$500,038,000 (or 78.1 per cent) of child protection services spending. Of this care services expenditure, \$297,884,000 (or 59.6 per cent) was spent on residential care services.

South Australian spending on protective intervention, family support, and intensive family support services continue to be lower than the national average.

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<sup>2</sup> Children and young people living in 'other supported placements', are now excluded from the ROGS definition of OOHC. ROGS Table 16A.3 specifies that there were 283 children and young people living in other supported placements on 30 June 2021. A definition of 'other supported placements' can be found in Attachment 1.

## 1.1 Key points – child protection services and spending in 2020-21

- 78.1 per cent of all South Australian child protection services expenditure in 2020-21 was committed to care services (Chart 2).
- Child protection services expenditure per child aged 0-17 in the population in South Australia increased by \$152.7, from \$1,580.5 in 2019-20 to \$1,733.2 in 2020-21. Child protection services expenditure in South Australia during 2020-21 was 30.6 per cent higher than national average expenditure (Chart 3).
- Real expenditure per child aged 0-17 in the population on protective intervention services was 30.2 per cent less than the national average in 2020-21 (Chart 4a).
- South Australian real expenditure on intensive family support services per child aged 0-17 in the population in 2020-21 was 29.8 per cent lower than the national average in 2020-21 (Chart 4c).
- Real expenditure on care services per placement night in South Australia is 20.3 per cent higher than the national average (Chart 5).
- South Australian average real expenditure per child aged 0-17 in the population on family support services in 2020-21 was 21.9 per cent lower than the national average (Chart 4b), with the South Australian expenditure in this program area increasing by 22.8 per cent since 2019-20 (Chart 11b).

## 1.2 Key points – residential care

- The term ‘residential care’ now includes all children living in independent living placements as well as those living in residential care, and placement and support packages. There were 50 children and young people in independent living arrangements in South Australia at 30 June 2021.<sup>3</sup> The effect of this change is to inflate the proportion of those living in residential care to 15.0 per cent (Chart 7) compared to the way this count was conducted prior to 2018-19.
- South Australia continues to have the highest proportion of those in care living in residential care placements in the nation, with 15.0 per cent of the care population, compared to the national average of 7.3 per cent (Chart 8).
- The State spent 59.6 per cent of its OOHC expenditure on residential care services compared to 40.4 per cent for non-residential care services in 2020-21 (Chart 9).

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<sup>3</sup> ROGS does not separately report on independent living placements. This data was extracted from the DCP Reporting and statistics web page <https://www.childprotection.sa.gov.au/department/reporting-and-statistics>.



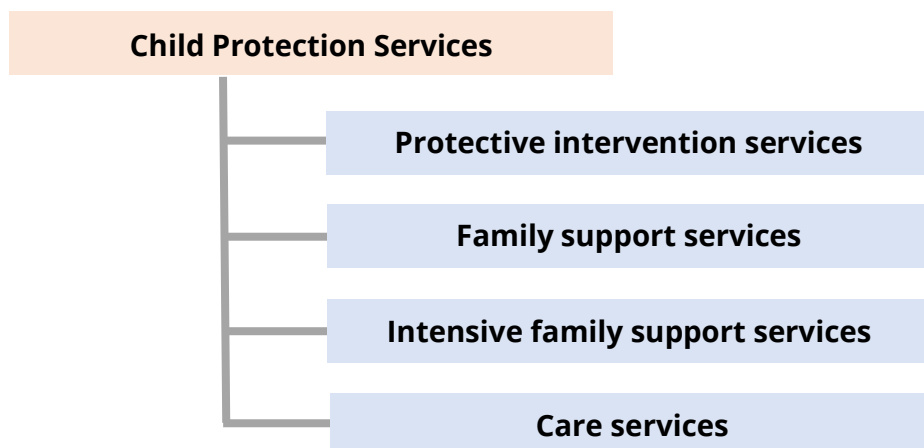
## 1.3 Key points – child protection services expenditure over time

- South Australia ranks second after outlier Northern Territory for total child protection services real expenditure per child aged 0-17 in the population in 2020-21. The national average expenditure is 23.4 per cent lower than in South Australia (Chart 12a).
- South Australian real expenditure on care services per child aged 0-17 in the population has increased by 15.4 per cent from \$1,173.4 per child in 2016-17, to \$1,353.7 per child in 2020-21 (Chart 13d).
- The gap between cost per child in care for South Australian residential and non-residential care services has narrowed, and per child expenditure has decreased by 10.3 per cent in residential care since 2016-17 (Chart 10).
- Spending in non-residential care services has increased by 5.4 per cent since 2016-17, but in 2020-21, per child in care expenditure for residential care services was eight times higher than non-residential care services (Chart 10).
- Total South Australian expenditure on care services compared to other program area spending (as shown for 2020-21 in Chart 2) is relatively high and increased slightly in 2020-21 compared to previous years (Charts 11e and 11f).
- From 2016-17 to 2020-21, South Australian expenditure on protective intervention services per child aged 0-17 in the population has consistently been much lower than the national average, with spending in 2020-21 30.2 per cent lower than the national average (Chart 13a).
- South Australian expenditure on family support services per child aged 0-17 in the population is 21.9 per cent below the national average in 2020-21. South Australian expenditure has consistently remained below that national average, except for 2016-17 when expenditure was 39.7 per cent higher (Chart 13b).
- South Australian expenditure on intensive family support services per child aged 0-17 in the population more than halved from 2016-17 to 2017-18, increasing steadily in the following years to now account for just over two-thirds of the Australian average in 2020-21 (\$64.7 compared to \$92.1), (Chart 13c).

## 2. Reading this report

### 2.1 Scope of child protection services programs

The Report on Government Services 2022 identifies and examines four program areas within Child Protection Services (Attachment 1 has the full definitions).



Protective intervention services (PIS) – refers to governmental functions 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 (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 has already 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.

Care services (CS) refers to the provision of OOHC services and other supported placements. See the current definition of 'OOHC' in Attachment 1. This fiscal reporting does not allow for disaggregation between OOHC, and other supported placements.

This paper draws on ROGS 2022 data, with factors influencing information selection and interpretation discussed below.

Part 3 comments briefly on the situation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in the child protection system. This will be explored in more detail in the forthcoming

companion paper Snapshot of South Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and Young People in Care and/or Detention from the Report on Government Services 2022.

Data on 2020-21 real expenditure is examined in Part 4, with the ongoing prevalence and cost of residential care services in South Australia explored in Part 5.

The paper concludes by examining real expenditure data over time in South Australia and Australian jurisdictions in Part 6.

## 2.2 Data considerations

The Productivity Commission urges caution about completeness and direct comparability and quality of reported data. Data is the most accurate available at the time of data collection, and historical data may have been updated since the previous Report on Government Services.

Readers should therefore refer to the notes provided with an applicable ROGS 2022 table prior to reaching a definitive conclusion about the implications of data presented.

## 2.3 List of Charts

All data presented is drawn from Volume F of the ROGS 2022. All charts provide a reference for the applicable ROGS 2022 source table.

- |                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| <b>Chart 1</b>  | Rate per 1000 children of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal 0-17 year olds in OOHC, South Australia, 2011-12 to 2020-21   |
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- Chart 6** Cost per placement night OOHC and other supported placements services South Australia, 2018-19 to 2020-21
- Chart 7** Proportion of children and young people in out-of-home care living in residential care in South Australia, at 30 June, 2019 - 2021
- Chart 8** Jurisdictional comparison, proportions of all children in OOHC who are in residential care, 30 June 2021
- Chart 9** Comparative expenditure in residential and non-residential care services South Australia 2020-21
- Chart 10** Comparison of real expenditure per child in care in South Australia at 30 June, residential and non-residential care services 2016-17 to 2020-21
- Chart 11a** Total real expenditure, protective intervention services (\$'000) South Australia 2016-17 to 2020-21
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- Chart 12a** Comparative child protection services expenditure per child aged 0-17 in the population, all jurisdictions 2016-17 to 2020-21
- Chart 12b** Comparative child protective services expenditure per child aged 0-17 in the population Northern Territory excluded, 2016-17 to 2020-21
- Chart 12c** Protective intervention services expenditure per child aged 0-17 in the population, all jurisdictions 2016-17 to 2020-21
- Chart 12d** Family support services expenditure per child aged 0-17 in the population, all jurisdictions 2016-17 to 2020-21

- Chart 12e** Intensive family support services expenditure per child aged 0-17 in the population, all jurisdictions 2016-17 to 2020-21
- Chart 12f** Care services expenditure per child aged 0-17 in the population, all jurisdictions 2016-17 to 2020-21
- Chart 13a** Protective intervention services expenditure per child aged 0-17 in the population, South Australia and Australia 2016-17 to 2020-21
- Chart 13b** Family support services expenditure per child aged 0-17 in the population, South Australia and Australia 2016-17 to 2020-21
- Chart 13c** Intensive family support services expenditure per child aged 0-17 in the population, South Australia and Australia 2016-17 to 2020-21
- Chart 13d** Care services expenditure per child aged 0-17 in the population, South Australia and Australia 2016-17 to 2020-21
- Chart 13e** Total child protection services expenditure per child aged 0-17 in the population, South Australia and Australia 2016-17 to 2020-21.

### 3. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people

A companion paper looks in more detail at ROGS 2022 reporting about Aboriginal children and young people in the child protection and youth justice systems.<sup>4</sup> It reflects the reality that Aboriginal children and young people continue to be vastly overrepresented in the South Australian child protection and youth justice systems.

Among other things, the companion paper demonstrates that -

- At 30 June 2021, 37.5 per cent of children in OOHC were Aboriginal (1,637 of 4,366), with just over one in every 11 Aboriginal children and young people in South Australia being in care (90.0 individuals per 1,000 children aged 0–17 years in population).
- 54.8 per cent of Aboriginal children and young people in care were placed with relatives/kin, which is just above the Australian average of 53.5 per cent.
- 13.7 per cent of Aboriginal children and young people in care were placed in residential care, where they comprised 34.3 per cent of all children and young people in residential care (224 of a total of 654).
- Youth diversions by police as a proportion of Aboriginal offenders has improved since 2019-20, when it was at its lowest rate since records began (23.3 per cent). In 2020-21, 27.2 per cent of Aboriginal offenders were diverted away from court. The gap between police diversions for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal children and young people has been narrowed in 2020-21 (27.2 and 48.9 per cent respectively), however there is still a considerable disparity between the two groups.
- The daily average number of Aboriginal 10-17 year olds on community-based supervision orders decreased significantly in 2020-21 to 62 compared to the previous year's figure of 75. There is a downwards trend of Aboriginal 10-17 year olds in detention, with an average of 13 individuals per day in 2020-21.

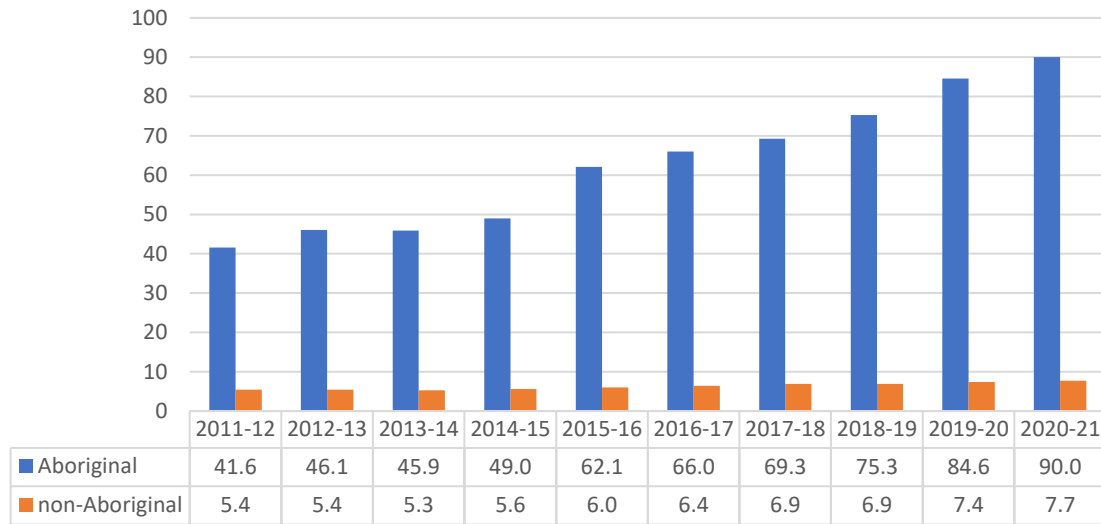
Chart 1 demonstrates the ongoing trend of increase in the rate of Aboriginal children and young people in care, with the rate more than doubling since 2011-12 (an increase of 116.3 per cent). This contrasts with the comparatively steady rate of non-Aboriginal children and young people entering care since 2011-12.

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<sup>4</sup> Snapshot of South Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and Young People in Care and/or Detention from the Report on Government Services 2022 (OGCYP 2022, forthcoming).

Chart 1 (ROGS 2022, Table 16A.2)

Rate per 1000 children of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal 0-17 year olds in OOHC, South Australia, 2011-12 to 2020-21



## 4. Expenditure 2020-21 – South Australia and other jurisdictions

### 4.1 Introduction to 2020-21 spending

Part 4 considers 2020-21 spending on child protection services relating to –

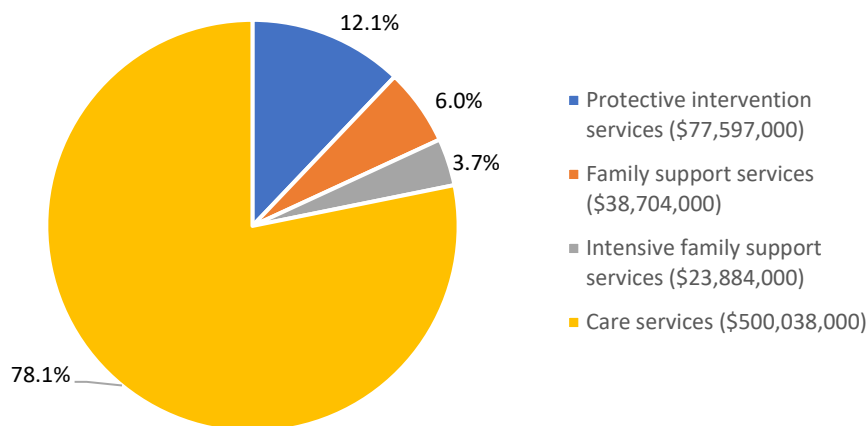
- Total and proportion of South Australian real expenditure on child protection services, by program, 2020-21 (Part 4.2, Chart 2).
- South Australian real expenditure on child protection services, compared to other jurisdictions 2020-21 (Part 4.3, Charts 3 to 4e).
- Real expenditure per placement night in care services (Part 4.4, Charts 5 and 6).

### 4.2 South Australian real expenditure 2020-21 by child protection services program

Chart 2 demonstrates the significant commitment to spending on care services, in 2020-21 making up 78.1 per cent of total expenditure.

**Chart 2** (ROGS 2022, Table 16A.8)

Real expenditure on PIS, FSS, IFSS and CS expressed as percentages, South Australia 2020-21<sup>5</sup>



<sup>5</sup> A redesign of programs/services (family support and intensive family support) within Community Sector Organisations took effect on 1 April 2021, resulting in additional programs being included that previously were excluded. Intensive family support services activity data are compiled from aggregate data provided by Community Sector Organisations (CSOs) and are not provided by all CSOs, and the data provided are not validated. SA has not been able to obtain activity data for all programs, therefore the cost per child receiving IFSS is likely to be overstated and should be interpreted with extreme caution.



## 4.3 Expenditure per child - South Australia and other jurisdictions<sup>6</sup>

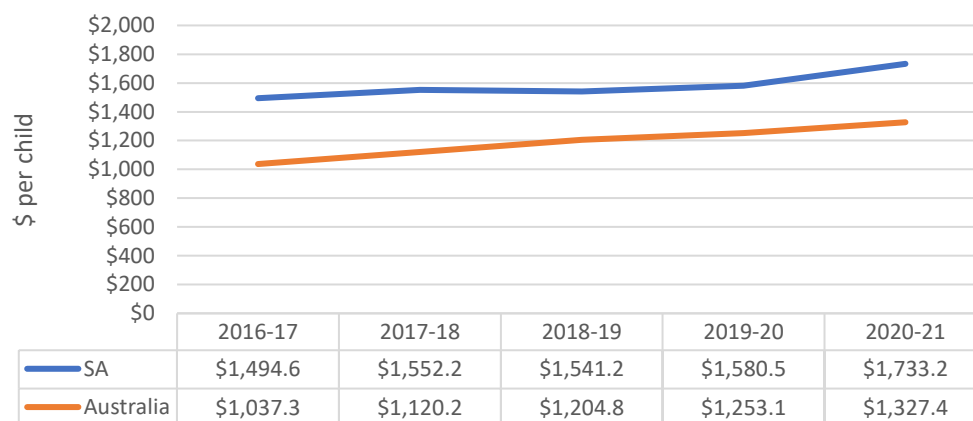
On 30 June 2021, there were 4,366 children and young people in care, of whom, 1,637 (or 37.5 per cent) were Aboriginal. A further 283 children and young people were in other supported placements, meaning there were 4,649 children and young people in out-of-home care or other supported placements at 30 June 2021.<sup>7</sup>

Chart 3 shows that child protection services expenditure per child aged 0-17 in the population in South Australia increased by \$152.7, from \$1,580.5 in 2019-20 to \$1,733.2 in 2021-21. Child protection services expenditure in South Australia during 2020-21 was 30.6 per cent higher than national average expenditure.

All timeseries financial data have been adjusted to 2020-21 dollars.

Chart 3 (ROGS 2022, Table 16A.8)

Child protection services expenditure per child aged 0-17 in the population 2016-17 to 2020-21 CS, PIS, FFS and IFSS - South Australia compared to Australian average



<sup>6</sup> Data are not comparable across jurisdictions but are comparable (subject to caveats) within jurisdictions over time for: unit costs of protective interventions service activity groups, unit costs for support services, and unit costs of out-of-home care and other supported placements.

Data are incomplete for the current reporting period for unit cost for generic family support services (AG2, only Queensland and WA are able to provide all required data), incomplete for unit cost for protective intervention services activity groups (required data for at least one of the measures for this indicator are not available for Victoria, SA, Tasmania and the NT), but are complete for unit cost of intensive family support services (AG3), and out-of-home care and other supported placements (AG8).

2020-21 included a redesign of services (family support and intensive family support) within the Community Sector Organisations, effective from 1st of April 2021. The redesign of programs/services has resulted in additional programs being included that were previously excluded as they were universal to all.

Intensive family support services activity data are compiled from aggregate data provided by Community Sector Organisations (CSOs) and are not provided by all CSOs, and the data provided are not validated. SA has not been able to obtain activity data for all programs, therefore the cost per child receiving IFSS is likely to be overstated and should be interpreted with extreme caution

<sup>7</sup> 'Other supported placements' includes children in third-party parental responsibility orders and children on immigration orders.

Charts 4a to 4e compare real expenditure per child aged 0-17 in the population in South Australia with other States and Territories across the four program areas. South Australia continues to report higher expenditure in care services compared to other jurisdictions. This is discussed further in Part 5 below.

Real expenditure on intensive family support services and protective intervention services is relatively low compared to other jurisdictions. Apart from the ACT, South Australia has the lowest level of expenditure with respect to protective intervention services.

Chart 4a (ROGS 2022, Table 16A.8)

### Jurisdictional comparison of protective intervention services, real expenditure per child aged 0-17 in the population 2020-21

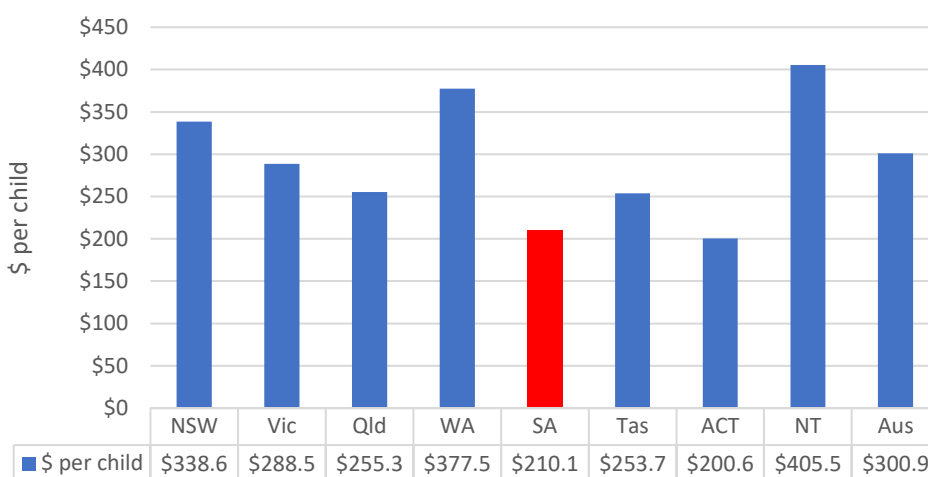
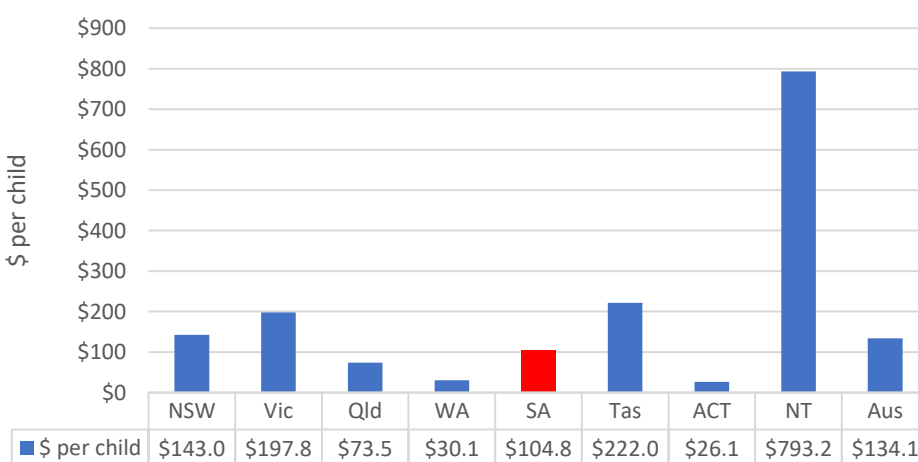


Chart 4b (ROGS 2022, Table 16A.8)

### Jurisdictional comparison of family support services, real expenditure per child aged 0-17 in the population 2020-21<sup>8</sup>



<sup>8</sup> 2020-21 included a redesign of services (family support and intensive family support) within the Community Sector Organisations, effective from 1st of April 2021. The redesign of programs/services has resulted in additional programs being included that were previously excluded as they were universal to all.

Chart 4c (ROGS 2022, Table 16A.8)

Jurisdictional comparison of intensive family support services, real expenditure per child aged 0-17 in the population 2020-21<sup>9</sup>

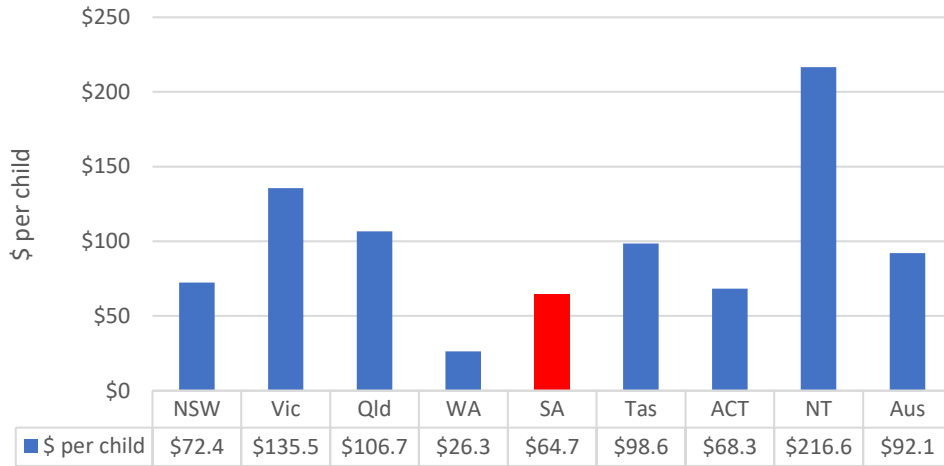
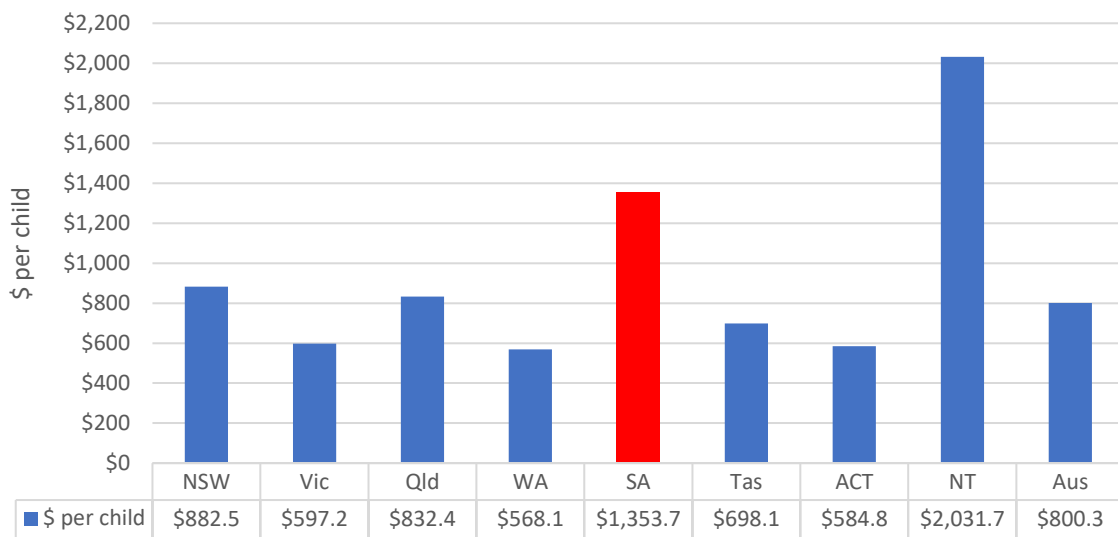


Chart 4d (ROGS 2022, Table 16A.8)

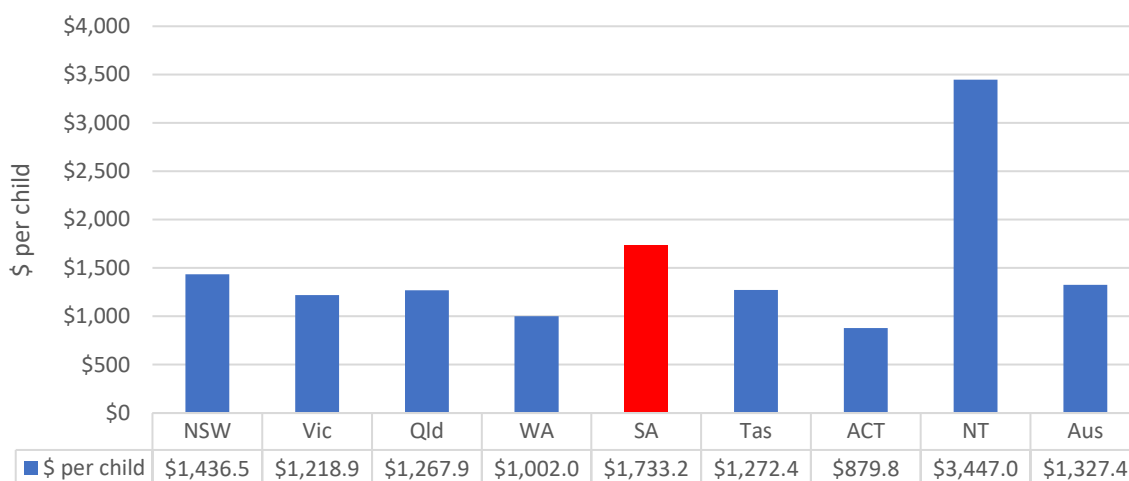
Jurisdictional comparison of care services, real expenditure per child aged 0-17 in the population 2020-21



<sup>9</sup> Intensive family support services activity data are compiled from aggregate data provided by Community Sector Organisations (CSOs) and are not provided by all CSOs, and the data provided are not validated. SA has not been able to obtain activity data for all programs, therefore the cost per child receiving IFSS is likely to be overstated and should be interpreted with extreme caution.

Chart 4e (ROGS 2022, Table 16A.8)

Jurisdictional comparison of child protection services (PIS, CS, FFS and IFSS), real expenditure per child aged 0-17 in the population 2020-21



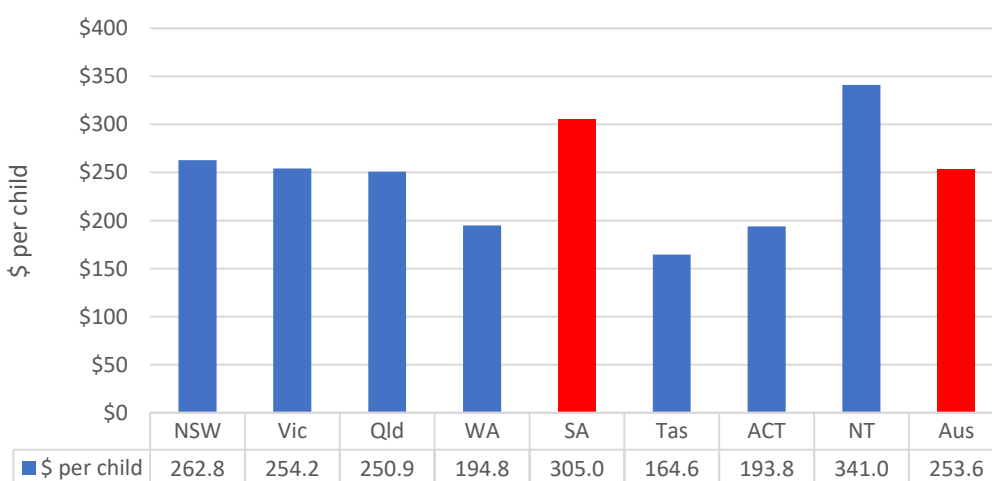
## 4.4 Expenditure per placement night in care services

South Australia and the Northern Territory are consistently child protection system outliers with the cost per placement night in care services, as shown in Chart 5.

South Australia's real expenditure on care per placement night is 20.3 per cent higher than the national average.

Chart 5 (ROGS 2022, Table 16A.35)

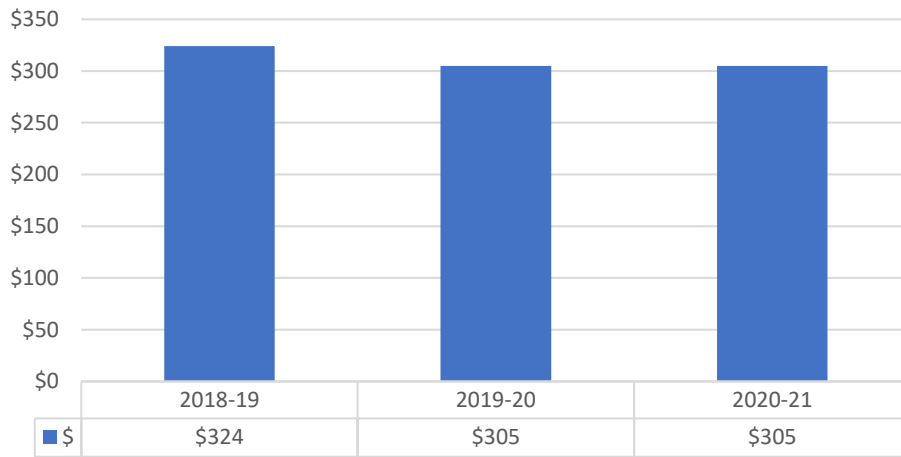
Real expenditure on care services per placement night 2020-21 all jurisdictions<sup>10</sup>



<sup>10</sup> Data are not comparable across jurisdictions but are comparable (subject to caveats) within jurisdictions over time.

Chart 6 (ROGS 2022, Table 16A.28)

Cost per placement night OOHC and other supported placements services South Australia, 2018-19 to 2020-21



As reflected in Chart 6, cost per placement night in care services has decreased by 5.9 per cent in South Australia since 2018-19. However, due to the effects of legislative changes associated with the commencement of the *Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017*, data prior to 2018-19 are not comparable.

## 5. Prevalence and cost of residential care in South Australia

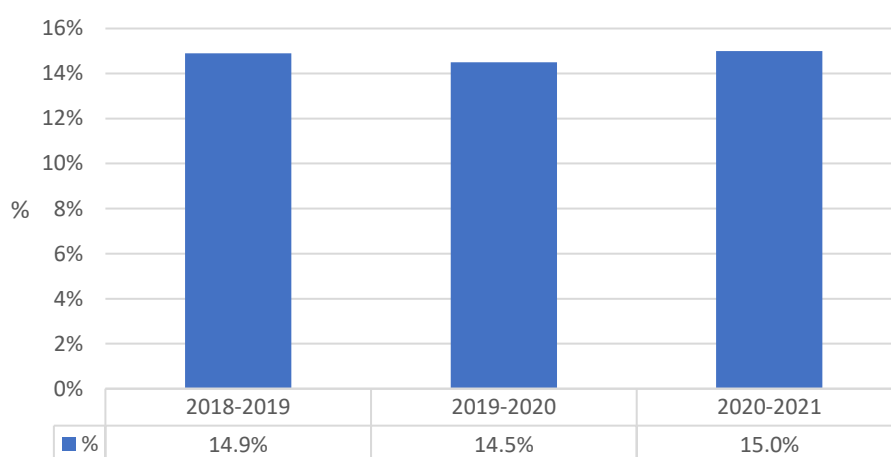
From 2018-19, new counting rules for 'residential care' were introduced.

The term 'residential care' now includes all children living in non-family-based care, including independent living placements. There were 50 children and young people in independent living arrangements at 30 June 2021.<sup>11</sup> The effect of this change is to inflate the proportion of those living in residential care to 15.0 per cent (Chart 7). The experience of those living in residential care is very different to those living in independent placements. The OGCYP would prefer to report on these cohorts separately, however ROGS has consolidated this for national reporting purposes.

Changes to the counting rules and format of ROGS reporting means that longer timeseries data are no longer comparable.

**Chart 7** (ROGS 2022, Table 16A.20)

Proportion of children and young people in out-of-home care living in residential care in South Australia, at 30 June, 2018-2019 to 2020-2021



South Australia utilises residential care at a higher rate than all other Australian jurisdictions. The proportion of individual children and young people in residential care (inclusive of those in residential care, placement and support packages, and independent living) increased slightly to 15.0 per cent in 2021, compared to 14.5 per cent in 2020. There were 654 children and young people living in residential care compared to 601 the previous year.

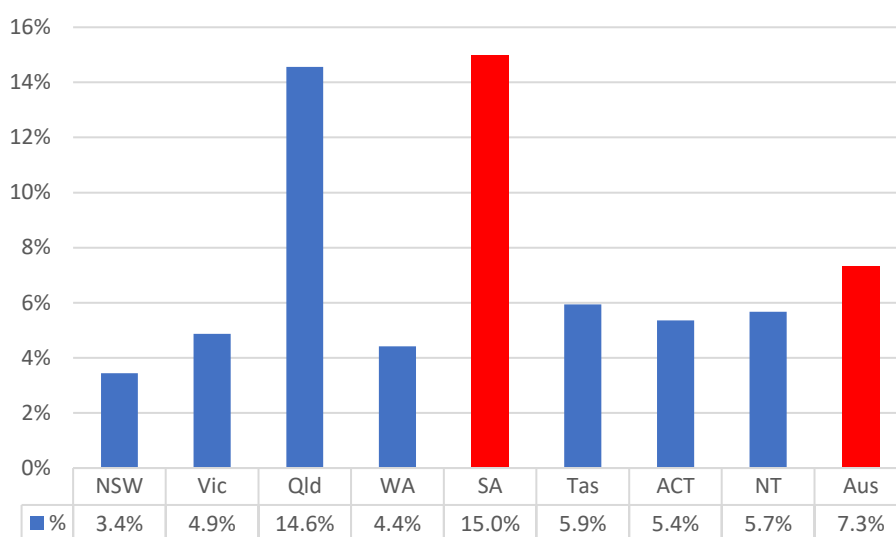
Chart 8 demonstrates South Australia's reliance on residential care. Australia's average proportion of use of residential care is 7.3 per cent, whereas in South Australia, 15.0 per cent of those in OOHC live in residential care.

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<sup>11</sup> ROGS data does not disaggregate independent living arrangements for South Australia. See reporting and statistics, Department for Child Protection <https://www.childprotection.sa.gov.au/department/reporting-and-statistics>.

Chart 8 (ROGS 2022, Table 16A.20)

### Jurisdictional comparison, proportions of all children in OOHC who are in residential care, 30 June 2021

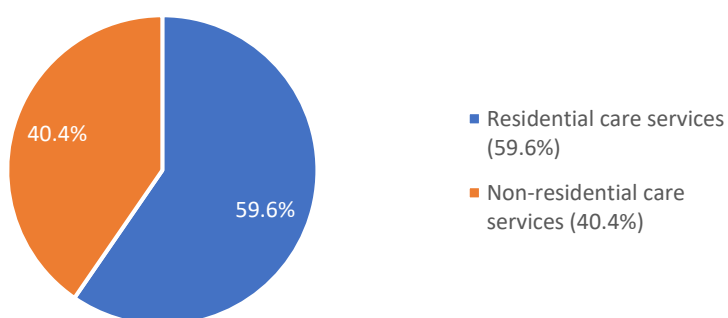


It is also important to note that South Australia accounts for 9.4 per cent (4,366 of 46,212) of all children and young people in care in Australia, but represents 19.3 per cent (654 of 3,382) of all those in residential care. This further demonstrates the reliance of residential care in South Australia.

South Australia spent 59.6 per cent of its care expenditure on residential care services compared to 40.4 per cent for non-residential care services in 2020-21 (Chart 9).<sup>12</sup>

Chart 9 (ROGS 2022, Table 16A.36)

### Comparative expenditure in residential and non-residential care services South Australia 2020-21

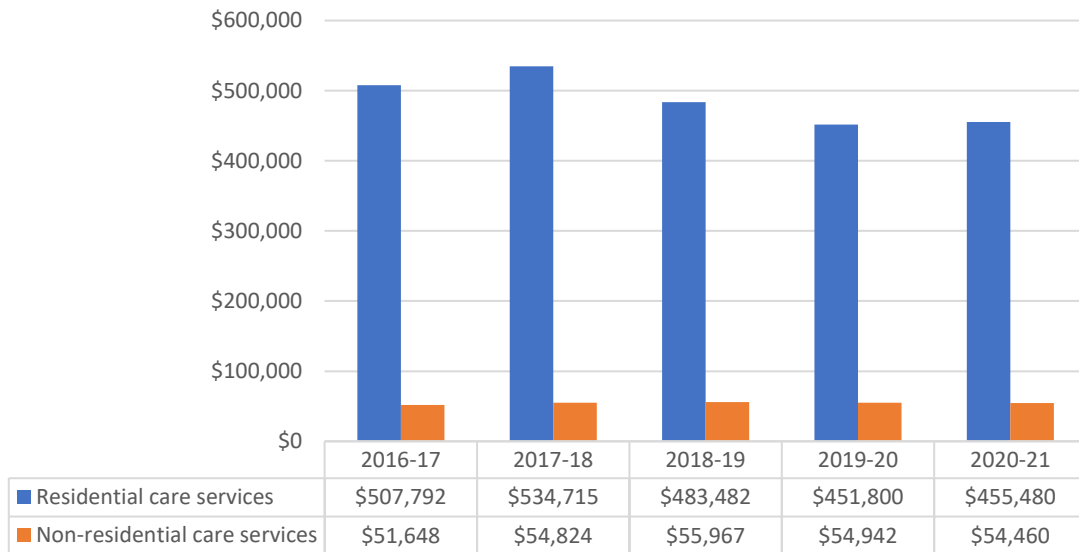


<sup>12</sup> These data need to be interpreted with care because they do not represent and cannot be interpreted as unit cost measures. Expenditure per child in care at 30 June overstates the cost per child because significantly more children are in care during a year than at a point in time. In addition, these data do not reflect the length of time that a child spends in care.

The gap between cost per child in care for South Australian residential and non-residential care placements has mostly been decreasing since reaching its highest point in 2017-18, but remains very large. Per child real expenditure has decreased by 10.3 per cent for residential care services since 2016-17 (Chart 10).

Chart 10 (ROGS 2022, Table 16A.36)

Comparison of real expenditure per child in care in South Australia at 30 June, residential and non-residential care services 2016-17 to 2020-21





## 6. Real expenditure 2016-17 to 2020-21

### 6.1 Introduction to expenditure over time

This section considers child protection expenditure in South Australia and across all jurisdictions for the five financial years 2016-17 to 2020-21 in relation to –

- South Australian total real expenditure over time by program (Chart 2 above and Part 6.2)
- South Australian total real expenditure over time (Part 6.3)
- Real expenditure per child aged 0-17 in the population in a cross-jurisdictional context for the five financial years 2016-17 to 2020-21 (Part 6.4).

### 6.2 South Australian total real expenditure by program

South Australia's real expenditure on child protection services has changed over recent years. Spending for care services shown in Charts 11e and 11f highlight the ongoing commitment to care services for those in OOHC. The 2020-21 South Australian average real expenditure per child aged 0-17 in the population on intensive family support services was 29.8 per cent lower than the national average (see Chart 4c above), and the state halved spending in this program area in 2017-18 and it has been slowly increasing since then (Chart 11c).

Total real expenditure for family support services has followed the same pattern, being significantly cut in 2017-18, and slowly increasing since then (Chart 11b).

All timeseries financial data have been adjusted to 2020-21 dollars.

**Chart 11a** (ROGS 2022, Table 16A.8)

Total real expenditure, protective intervention services (\$'000) South Australia 2016-17 to 2020-21

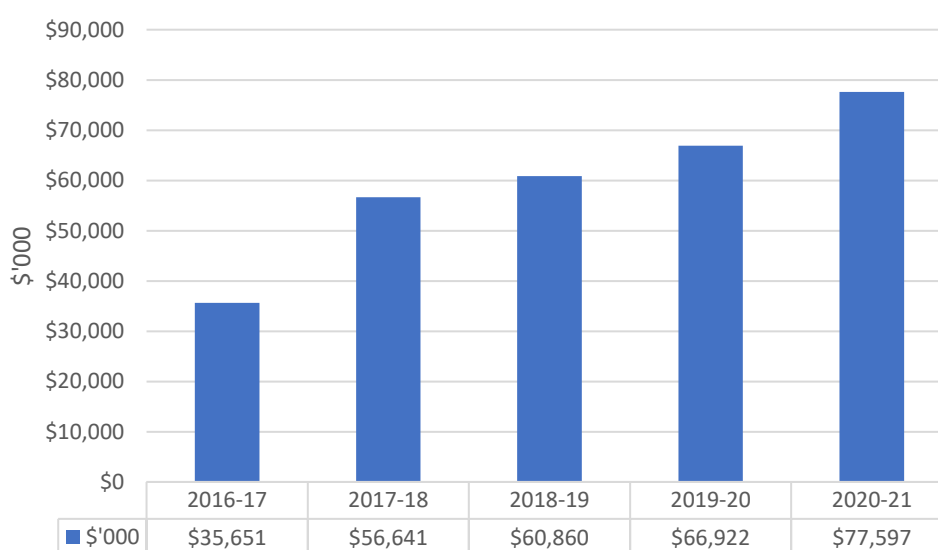


Chart 11b (ROGS 2022, Table 16A.8)

Total real expenditure, family support services (\$'000) South Australia 2016-17 to 2020-21

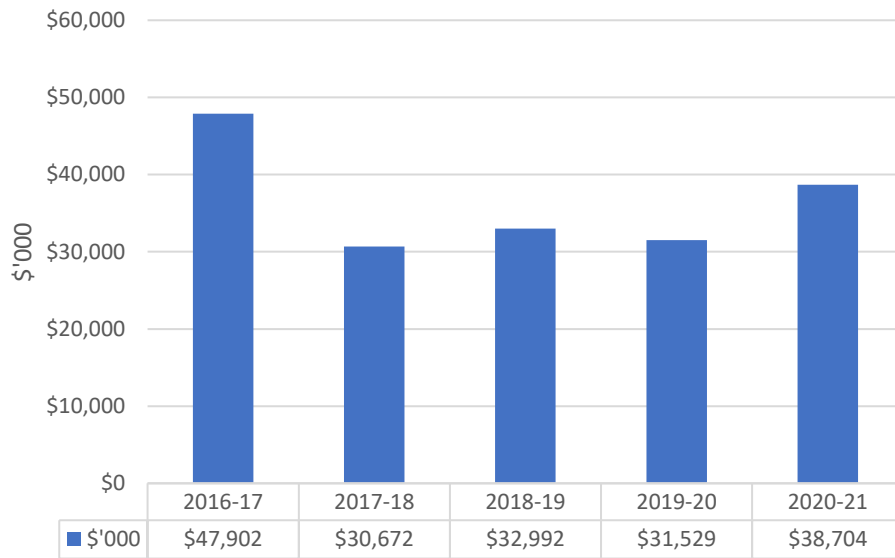


Chart 11c (ROGS 2022, Table 16A.8)

Total real expenditure, intensive family support services (\$'000) South Australia 2016-17 to 2020-21

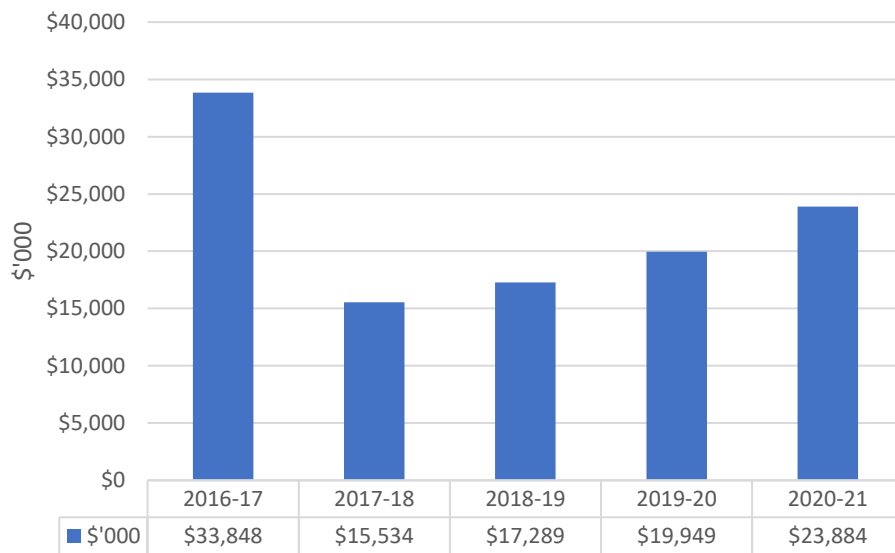
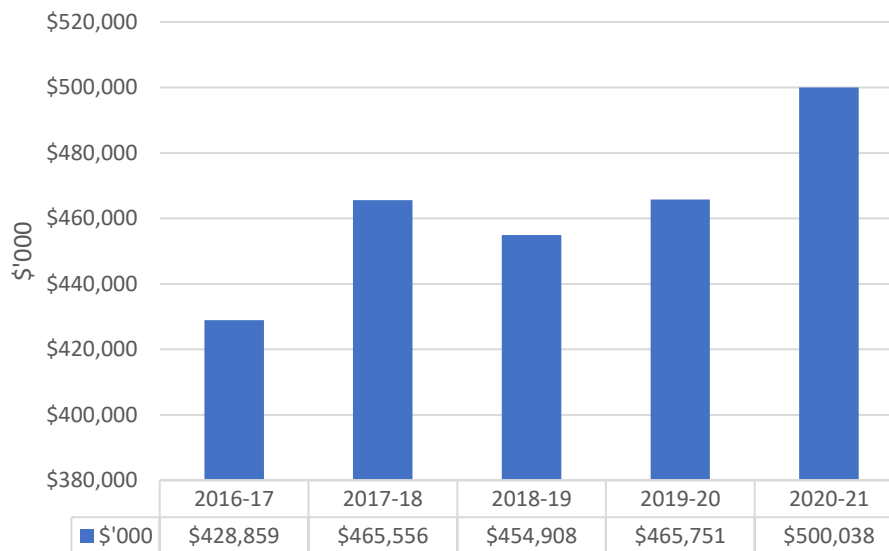


Chart 11d (ROGS 2022, Table 16A.8)

Total real expenditure, care services (\$'000) South Australia 2016-17 to 2020-21



## 6.3 South Australian total real expenditure over time

Chart 11e (ROGS 2022, Table 16A.8)

Total real expenditure, child protection services (\$'000) South Australia 2016-17 to 2020-21

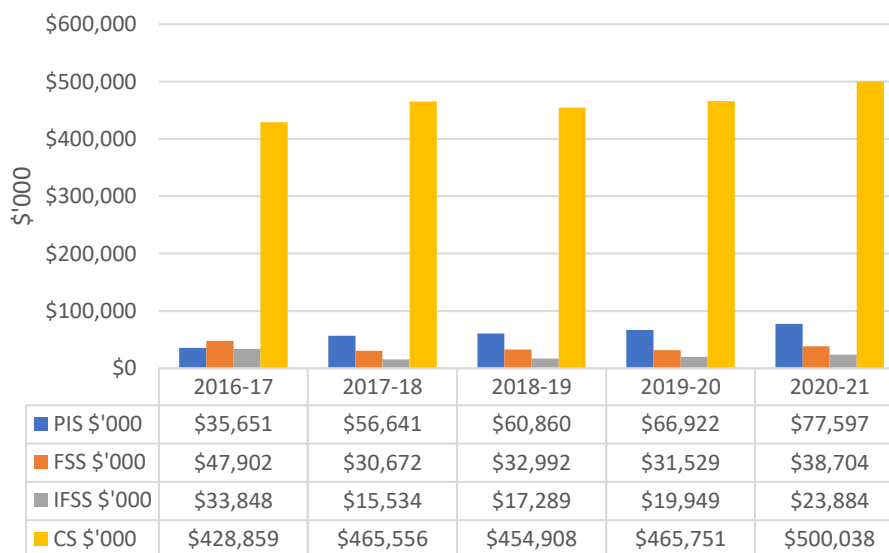
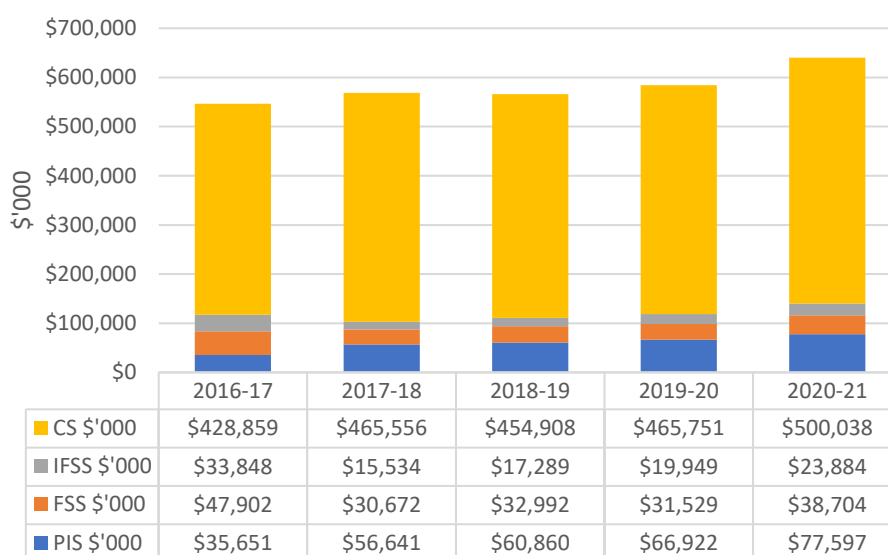


Chart 11f (ROGS 2022, Table 16A.8)

### Combined total real expenditure, child protection services (\$'000) South Australia 2016-17 to 2020-21



## 6.4 Comparative cross-jurisdictional expenditure per child over time

Charts in this section show real expenditure per child aged 0-17 in the population in a cross-jurisdictional context for the five financial years 2016-17 to 2020-21.<sup>13</sup>

Chart 12a compares jurisdictional expenditure and indicates that South Australia has increased expenditure to the point where it ranks second in terms of expenditure per child. The national average expenditure in this category is some 23.4 per cent less than the South Australian rate. Chart 12b illustrates this spending increase relative to other jurisdictions with the 'outlier' circumstances of the Northern Territory removed.

Charts 12c to 12f then disaggregate funding data by the four child protection services program areas for these five financial years.

<sup>13</sup> These data need to be interpreted with care because they do not represent and cannot be interpreted as unit cost measures. Expenditure per child in care at 30 June overstates the cost per child because significantly more children are in care during a year than at a point in time. In addition, these data do not reflect the length of time that a child spends in care. Data relating to annual real expenditure per child in care should be interpreted with caution due to the effect of different proportions of children in residential care across jurisdictions, and differences across jurisdictions in the calculation of child protection expenditure. See ROGS 2022, Table 16.2 for more information.

Chart 12a (ROGS 2022, Table 16A.8)

Comparative child protection services expenditure per child aged 0-17 in the population, all jurisdictions 2016-17 to 2020-21

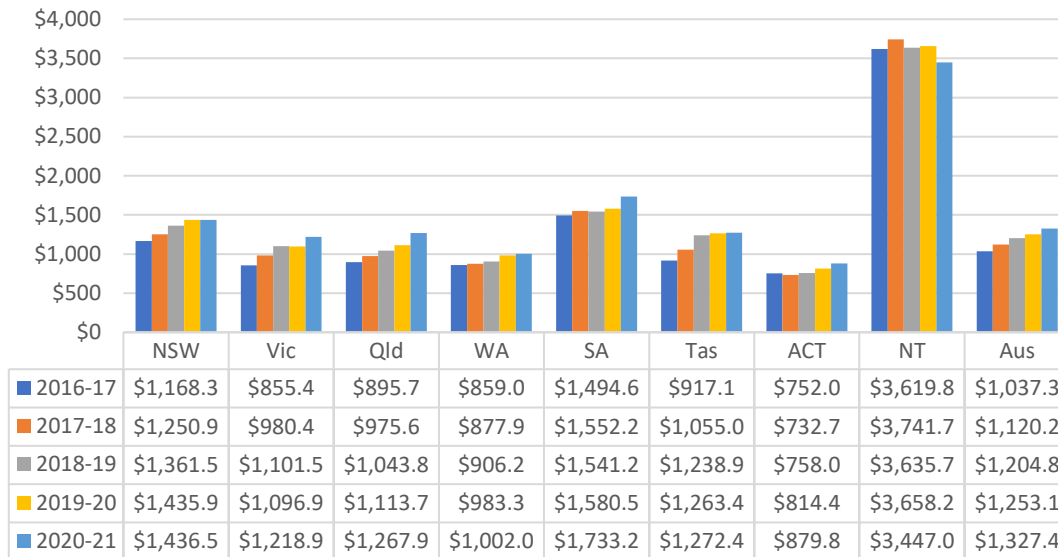


Chart 12b (ROGS 2022, Table 16A.8)

Comparative child protective services expenditure per child aged 0-17 in the population Northern Territory excluded, 2016-17 to 2020-21

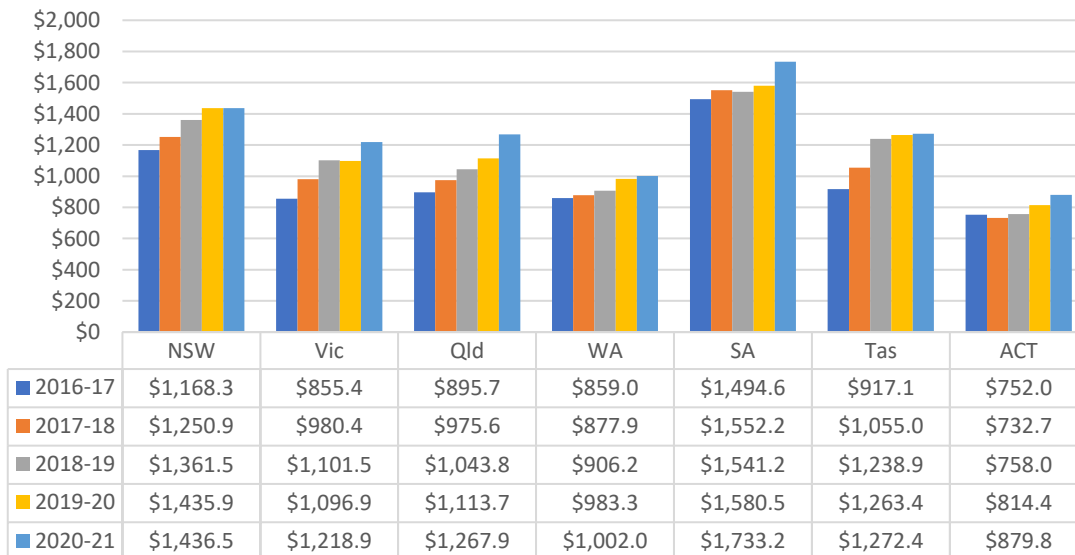


Chart 12c (ROGS 2022, Table 16A.8)

Protective intervention services expenditure per child aged 0-17 in the population, all jurisdictions 2016-17 to 2020-21

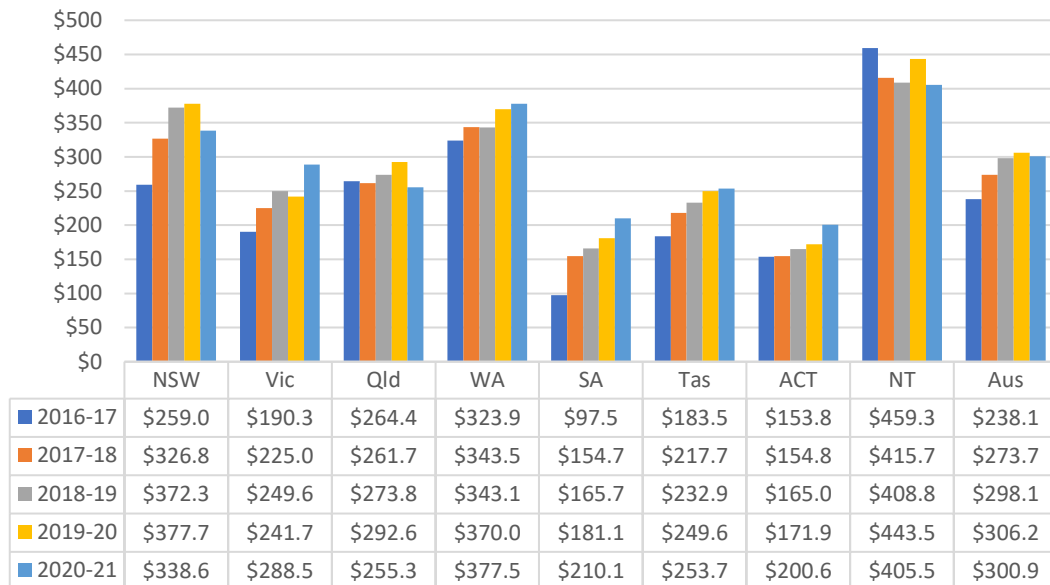


Chart 12d (ROGS 2022, Table 16A.8)

Family support services expenditure per child aged 0-17 in the population, all jurisdictions 2016-17 to 2020-21

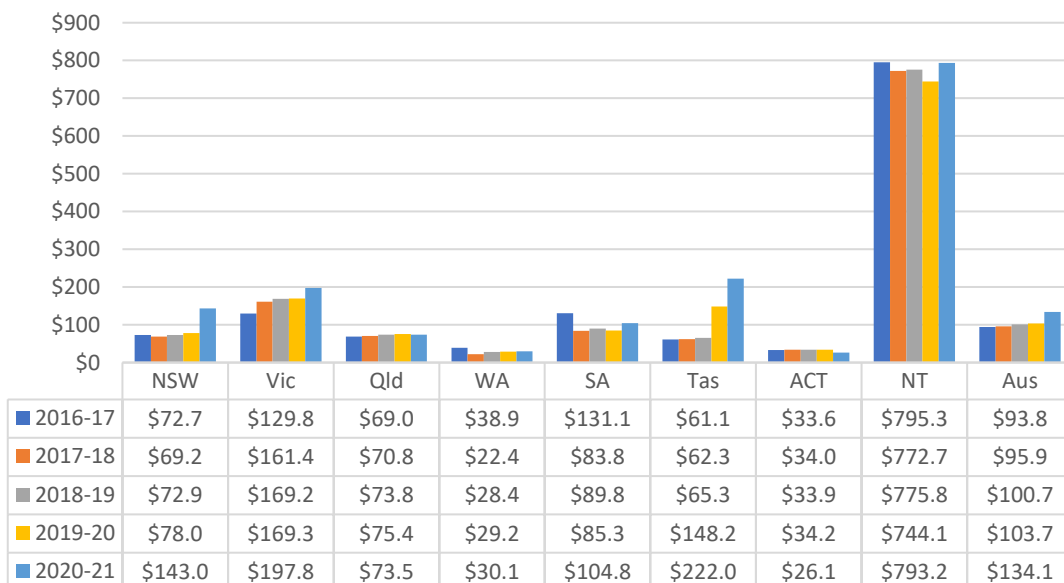


Chart 12e (ROGS 2022, Table 16A.8)<sup>14</sup>

Intensive family support services expenditure per child aged 0-17 in the population, all jurisdictions 2016-17 to 2020-21

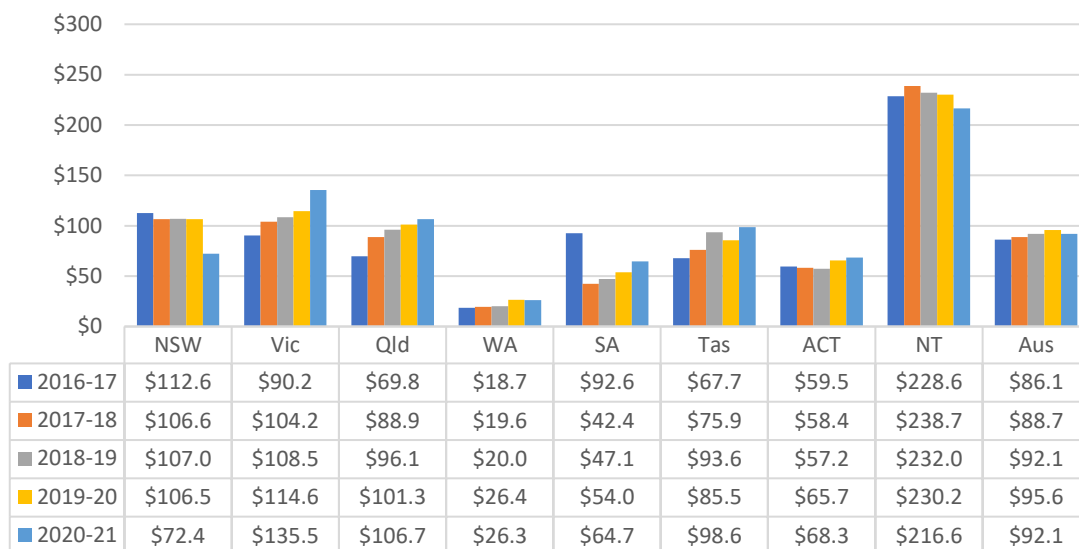
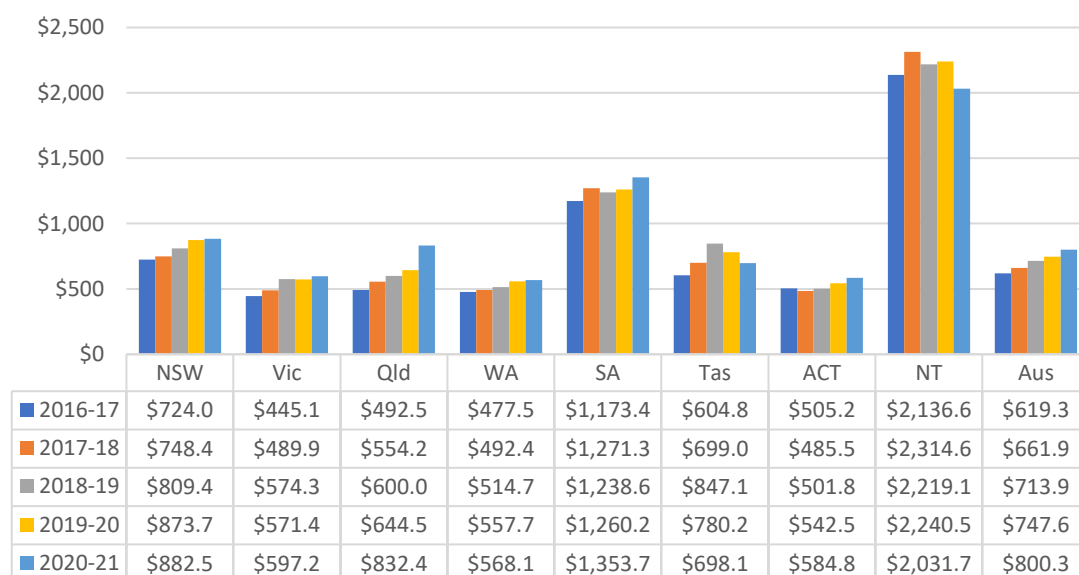


Chart 12f (ROGS 2022, Table 16A.8)

Care services expenditure per child aged 0-17 in the population, all jurisdictions 2016-17 to 2020-21



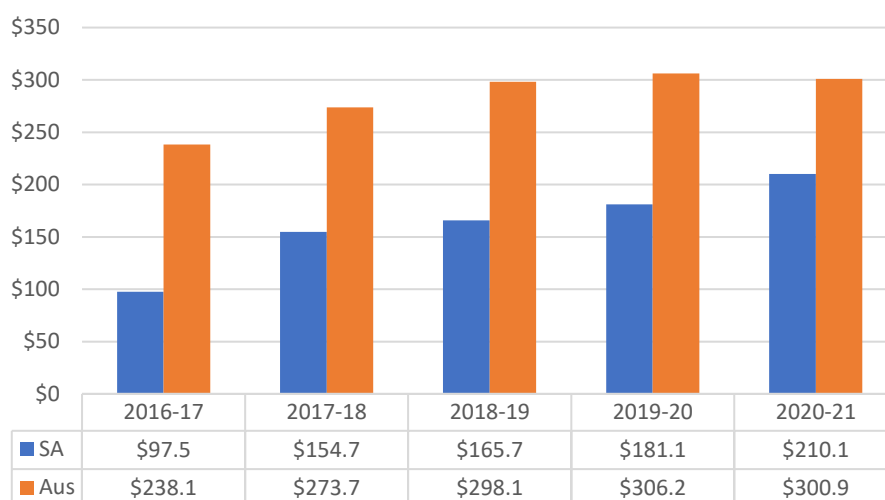
<sup>14</sup> Data is not available for the NT in 2014-15 due to changes in expenditure reporting. For more information, please refer to footnote (I), Volume F, Table 16A.7, ROGS 2022.

Charts 13a to 13e draw on the same data tables to show South Australian expenditure per child aged 0-17 in the population over time compared to the Australian average.

South Australia has consistently spent less than the Australian average across protective intervention services (Chart 13a), family support services (Chart 13b), and intensive family support services (Chart 13c). Despite this, however, South Australian expenditure on care services is so high that our total child protection services expenditure is 30.6 per cent higher than the Australian average (Charts 13d and 13e).

**Chart 13a** (ROGS 2022, Table 16A.8)

**Protective intervention services expenditure per child aged 0-17 in the population, South Australia and Australia 2016-17 to 2020-21**



**Chart 13b** (ROGS 2022, Table 16A.8)

**Family support services expenditure per child aged 0-17 in the population, South Australia and Australia 2016-17 to 2020-21**

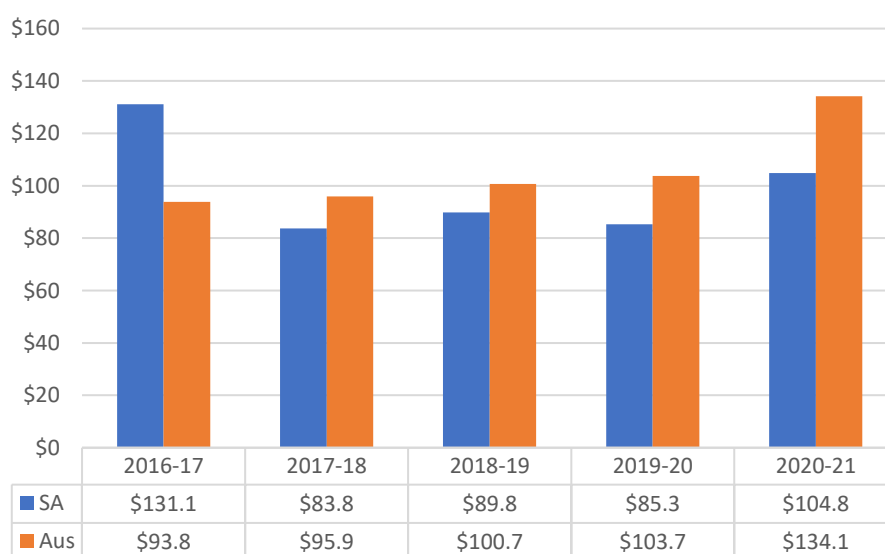




Chart 13c (ROGS 2022, Table 16A.8)

Intensive family support services expenditure per child aged 0-17 in the population, South Australia and Australia 2016-17 to 2020-21

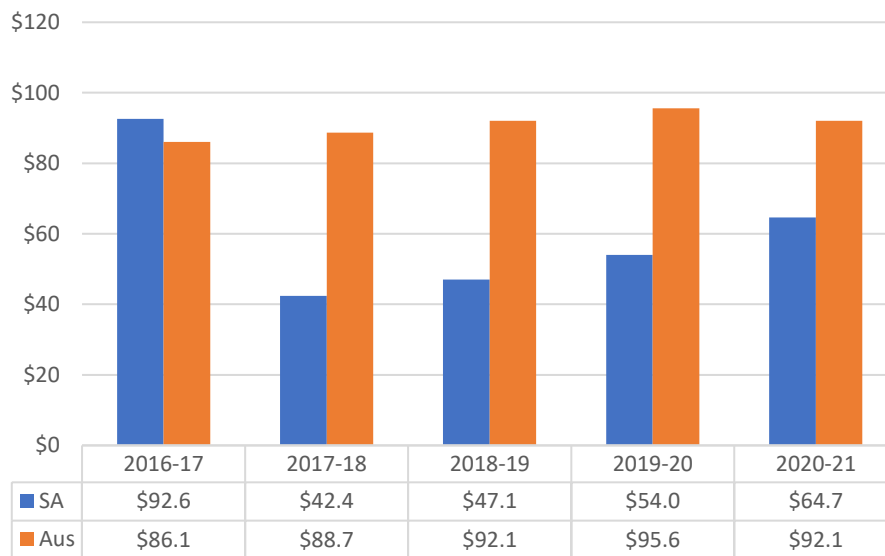


Chart 13d (ROGS 2022, Table 16A.8)

Care services expenditure per child aged 0-17 in the population, South Australia and Australia 2016-17 to 2020-21

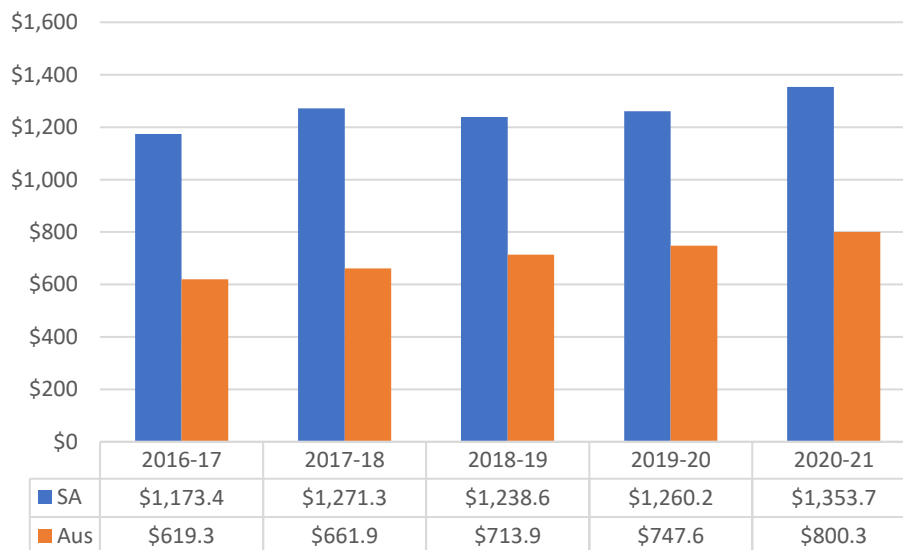
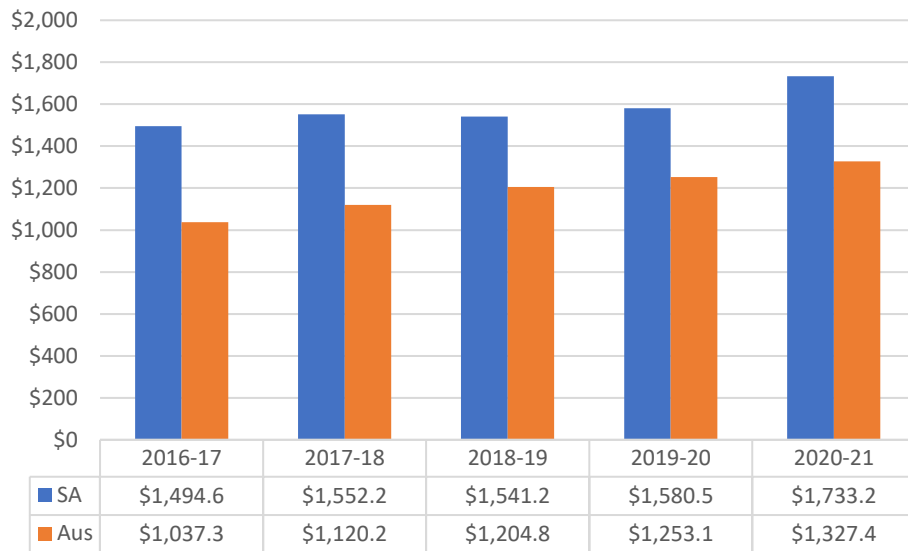


Chart 13e (ROGS 2022, Table 16A.8)

Total child protection services expenditure per child aged 0-17 in the population, South Australia and Australia 2016-17 to 2020-21



## Attachment 1 - Productivity Commission Child Protection Definitions

**PROTECTIVE INTERVENTION 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 for children aged less than 18 years who were unable to live with their families due to child safety concerns. This includes placements approved by the Department responsible for child protection for which there is ongoing case management and financial payment (including where a financial payment has been offered but has been declined by the carer). This includes legal (court ordered) and voluntary placements, and placements made for the purposes of providing respite for parents or carers.

Other living arrangements that were previously included in the scope of out-of-home care will be reported separately as 'other supported placements'.

**OTHER SUPPORTED PLACEMENTS** - Governments may provide financial support for children and young people in living arrangements that are not defined as out-of-home care and will usually have arranged these placements. These placements usually include children on third party parental responsibility orders and children on immigration orders (where funding is provided by the Australian Government and children who do not come through the child protection system). They may also include ongoing placements for children aged 18 years or older.



**Guardian**  
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