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# Household composition

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**Important note: This is an archived metadata standard from the AIHW Knowledgebase. For current metadata standards and related information please access METeOR, the AIHW's Metadata Online Registry at <http://meteor.aihw.gov.au>**

## *Identifying and Definitional Attributes*

Data Dictionary: NHADD  
Knowledgebase ID: 000751                      Version number: 1  
Metadata type: DATA ELEMENT  
Registration Authority: NHDAMG                      Admin status: SUPERSEDED  
Effective date: 13-JUL-03

Definition: The composition of the household based on the relationship between household members.  
Households can contain dependent and non-dependent children as well as non-family members. The differentiation of households is based on the presence or absence of couple relationships, parent/child relationships, child dependency relationships or other blood relationships.

Context: Together with 'family', household is considered one of the basic groups of social aggregation. Information on household numbers and composition aids in identifying groups within the population such as Indigenous households or the number of people living alone.

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## *Relational and Representational Attributes*

Datatype: Numeric  
Representational form: CODE  
Representation layout: NN  
Minimum Size: 1  
Maximum Size: 2

Data Domain: 1                      Family  
                  1.1                      Sole parent with child/ren under 16 only  
                  1.2                      Couple only  
                  1.3                      Couple with child/ren under 16 only  
                  1.4                      Family (with other family member/s present)  
                  1.5                      Family (with other non-related member/s present)  
                  2                        Non family  
                  2.1                      Single (person living alone)  
                  2.2                      Group (unrelated adults)

Guide For Use: A household must contain a member that is 15 years of age or more. If a household does not contain at least one member 15 years of age or over, it should be classified as 'Unknown'.

Unknown includes not available, not collected, not classifiable, not stated, and inadequately described.

It should be noted that only usual residents of a household are considered when describing and categorising households by Household type. Visitors to a household are, by definition, excluded from the household. Usual residence of members of a household is defined as '...that address at which the person has lived or intends to live for a total of 6 months or more' (Census Dictionary 1996).

Other households, including multiple family households may be broken down further to show households with only family members present and those with non-family members present. A family household with only family members present is a household where every individual forms a familial relationship to one of the families belonging to the household. This relates to the ABS Household type definition.

The following ABS standards should be used as a guide to classifying household composition:

**Boarder:** A person aged 15 years or over who is unrelated to any member of a household and who is supplied with meals and lodging in return for payment. Boarders are considered household members (due to the interaction with others at mealtimes), however, they are not considered family members due to the fact that they are unrelated to anyone in the household. If the boarder is found to be related to any person in the household then this familial relationship takes precedence over the fact that the person is also a boarder.

**Family household with family members only present:** A household where every individual forms a familial relationship to one of the families belonging to the household. The definition of family member is limited to persons who are related by blood, marriage (registered or de facto), adoption, step or fostering, and who are usually resident in the same household. A full list and explanation of accepted familial relationships is given in the rules for identifying and coding families in Standards for Statistics on Family Type.

At a more detailed level the category may also be used to indicate the number of families (one, two, three or more), present within a given household. These families may, or may not, be related to each other. This level of detail is not differentiated by the

classification. If such information is required, cross-classification with another variable is necessary.

Family household with non-family members present: A household which contains family members and at least one unrelated individual living with the family.

Group household: A household consisting of two or more unrelated people where all persons are aged 15 years or over. There are no reported couple relationships, parent-child relationships or other blood relationships in these households.

Lodger: A person who lives in the rented quarters of a dwelling occupied by another person or family. A lodger is more independent than a boarder as there is no sharing of meals with other residents of the dwelling and, therefore, the lodger is considered to form a separate household within the dwelling. They are classified as a lone person in the Relationship in Household classification and thus form a single person household.

Lone person (single) household: A household comprised of an individual who makes provision for his or her own food and other essentials for living, without combining with any other person to form part of a multi-person household. A lone person household may be formed by an individual living either on their own or sharing his or her dwelling with others.

Multifamily household: A household where more than one family has been identified, based on the presence of a combination of, or more than one of, the following relationships: couple relationship, lone parent-child relationship, or other blood relationship.

Non-family household: Households whose usual resident(s) do not fulfil any of the family relationships criteria; that is couple relationship, parent-child or other blood relationships. A non-family household can be either a person living alone or a group household.

Non-family member: A person who does not fulfil any of the family criteria of couple relationship, parent-child relationship or other blood relationship with any of the usual residents of the household. They may live within a family household or they may form a non-family household either as a lone person or a group household.

A non-family member is a person who is one of the following: a lone person; a group household member; or an unrelated individual living in a family household.

Other blood relationships: A relationship between individuals related by blood or by marriage who are not in a couple or a parent-child relationship.

There is no numerical limit to the members of a family who can

be considered as being related to the family reference person by direct lineage, that is, from generation to generation. Grandmothers, great-grandmothers and even great-great-grandmothers, for example, are all considered as being related to the family reference person. Similarly, grandchildren, great-grandchildren and great-great-grandchildren are also considered as being related to the family reference person.

The definition is more restrictive, however, when the family structure is considered horizontally. The Family Type classification does not consider any relation beyond the first cousin as being an other blood relationship of the family reference person. A list of the familial relationships that fall within the scope of an other blood relationship is given in Chapter 4 - Standards for Statistics on Family Type, p46.

Other related individual: An individual who is related to members of the household, but who does not form a couple relationship or parent-child relationship according to the priority rules of family coding. He or she can be related through blood, step and in-law relationships and include any direct ancestors or descendants. Relatives beyond first cousin are excluded.

Other related individuals can form their own family type or can be attached to an already existing family. Those related individuals who reside in the same household and who do not form a couple or parent-child relationship with any other person in the household are classified as an other family.

In cases where a couple family or one parent family has been formed, any persons who are related to members of these families and are usual residents of the household are other related individuals. In these circumstances they can be identified at the detailed level of the Family Type classification.

Visitors: Visitors are within the scope of the Relationship in Household classification and are assigned a separate category, but they are, by definition, excluded from family coding. The distinction between visitors and usual residents is made in the Relationships in Household classification to ensure that families comprise only those persons usually resident in the same household.

Related metadata: relates to the data element Age version 1  
relates to the data element Sex version 1

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## *Administrative Attributes*

Source Document: National Housing Assistance Data Dictionary  
Standards for statistics on families. ABS Cat. No. 1286.0  
ABS: Directory of concepts and standards for social, labour and  
demographic statistics, 1995  
AIHW: Data Standardisation Project for the development of a  
national unit record public housing data set, 1998

Source Organisation: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare

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Comments: For the ABS the household is analysed on the basis of the existence or non-existence of family structure and the presence of unrelated household members, rather than on the basis of sex or age, for example.

## *Data Element Links*

*Information Model Entities linked to this Data Element*

*Data Agreements which include this Data Element*

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