

Income unit—income unit composition, code N

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Identifying and definitional attributes

Metadata item type:	Data Element
Short name:	Income unit composition
METEOR identifier:	351139
Registration status:	Community Services (retired) , Standard 31/08/2007
Definition:	The composition of the income unit within a household, as represented by a code.
Data Element Concept:	Income unit—income unit type
Value Domain:	Income unit composition code N

Value domain attributes

Representational attributes

Representation class:	Code
Data type:	Number
Format:	N{.N}
Maximum character length:	2

	Value	Meaning
Permissible values:	1	Couple only
	2	Couple with dependent children
	3	One parent
	4	One person
Supplementary values:	9	Not stated/inadequately described

Collection and usage attributes

Guide for use:	CODE 1 Couple only An income unit comprising two partners in a couple relationship. CODE 2 Couple with dependent children income unit An income unit comprising two partners in a couple relationship and all of their dependent children. CODE 3 One parent An income unit comprising a lone parent and all of his or her dependent children. CODE 4 One person income An income unit comprising a person who is not party to either a couple or parent/dependent child relationship. Specifically this includes all persons identified as a non-dependent child, other related individual or non-family member. CODE 9 Not stated/inadequately described This option refers to those cases where there is insufficient data to identify and classify the component income unit.
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Data element attributes

Collection and usage attributes

Collection methods:

'Income unit composition' is coded from data obtained from 'Relationship in household'. The procedures for allocation of individuals to income units follow the same rules and procedures as the rules for identifying families explained in detail in the ABS Standard Variable 'Family composition', with the exception that persons not in couple income units or one-parent income units are not allocated to any form of 'Other family' income unit. Such persons form *One person* income units. The procedures are as follows:

Where a *couple* relationship is identified, the couple will form the nucleus of an *Income unit*. If 'Relationship in household' data reveal the presence of one or more natural, adopted, step, or foster dependent children of that couple, the couple and the dependent children will be coded as a *Couple with dependent children income unit*. A couple without dependent children will be coded as a *Couple only* income unit.

Once any couple relationships have been identified in the household, if there is a lone parent with one or more natural, adopted, step, or foster dependent children, that parent and the children will be coded as a *One parent* income unit.

Any person in a household aged 15 or over who is not allocated to an income unit using these procedures will be coded as a *One person* income unit. Specifically, non-dependent children of any age, lone parents without dependent children, other related individuals and non-family persons in family households; and all persons in group households and lone person households comprise *One person* income units.

Any child under 15, who is not the natural, adopted, step or foster child of anyone in the household, is allocated to an income unit as a 'nominal child'. The ABS uses the concepts of the 'nominal child' and 'nominal parent' where to all intents and purposes a 'parent-child' relationship exists, to facilitate a more accurate and analytically useful picture of the arrangements that may exist in the household. Children under 15 who are not the natural, adopted, step or foster child of anyone in the household are allocated to an income unit in the same way as a 'nominal child' is allocated to a 'nominal parent' in family coding. See the ABS Standard Variable 'Family composition' for more detail. The rules for allocating a nominal child are applied in the following order:

- Sibling aged 25 or more. The nominal child's eldest sibling who is over the age of 25 is assigned as the nominal parent.
- Closest other relative. The nominal child's closest non-sibling relative aged 25 or more is assigned as the nominal parent. If necessary relationships by lineage (vertical) take precedence over other types of relationships. For example, grandmother over aunt, or aunt over cousin.
- Couple relationship. Persons in a couple relationship are assigned as the nominal parents of the nominal child.
- Child to female parent. The nominal child is assigned a female nominal parent in preference to a male nominal parent. For example, aunt over uncle.
- Eldest person rule. The nominal child is assigned the eldest person usually resident in the dwelling as their nominal parent.

Where an unattached child under 15 is allocated to an income unit in accordance with the procedures detailed above, the child is treated in the same way as a natural, adopted, step or foster child. The income unit composition of the nominal parent's income unit is then established in accordance with the procedures set out above. This may result in a *Couple only* income unit becoming a *Couple with dependent children* income unit or a *One person* income unit becoming a *One parent* income unit.

In summary:

- Couple relationships are identified first. Each identified couple, along with their own dependent children, comprises a separate *Couple only* or *Couple with dependent children* income unit.
- Any lone parents and their own dependent children form separate *One parent* income units.
- Any other person aged 15 or over forms a separate *One person* income unit.
- Children under 15 who are not the children of any couple or lone parent in the household are attached to an income unit as prescribed above.

Source and reference attributes

Origin: Australian Bureau of Statistics 1995. [Standards for Statistics on the Family 1995. Cat. no. 1286.0](#). Canberra: ABS.