

# ***A SOCIAL HEALTH ATLAS OF AUSTRALIA***

***Second Edition***

## **Volume 4: Queensland**

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**December 1999**

 Public Health Information Development Unit

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## Related publications and software products

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A Social Health Atlas of Australia, 1992, Vols 1 & 2

HealthWIZ: details available at [www.prometheus.com.au](http://www.prometheus.com.au)

Social health atlas World Wide Web site: [www.publichealth.gov.au](http://www.publichealth.gov.au)

## Foreword

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The publication of this second edition of ***A Social Health Atlas of Australia*** brings together a wide range of information about the health status of Australians by region, and the health service use by the Australian population.

By presenting the data as maps, the atlas provides a graphical image of the distribution of health status, and differences in the patterns and levels of access to and use of health services at the local level throughout the cities, towns, and rural and remote areas of Australia. The format of the atlas makes the information easy to understand and readily accessible to a broad group of users, including public health planners, providers, researchers, students and the general public.

The graphs of the newly developed Accessibility/Remoteness Index for Australia (ARIA) provide useful information for communities, as well as practitioners and managers in the health sector, to better understand the differences in the statistics that describe health status and health service use.

This data is essential for policy development and local area planning, and for monitoring and evaluating health services. It is also of major importance for resource allocation at the broadest level, and between areas, services and population groups. The maps and tabulations presented in this atlas represent a major compilation of information for these purposes.

I congratulate all those who have contributed to this important project.



Dr Michael Wooldridge  
The Minister for Health and Aged Care

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# Executive summary

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## Introduction

The information in this atlas adds to a convincing body of evidence built up over a number of years in Australia as to the striking disparities in health that exist between groups in the population. People of low socioeconomic status (those who are relatively socially or economically deprived) experience worse health than those of higher socioeconomic status for almost every major cause of mortality and morbidity. The challenge for policy makers, health practitioners and governments is to find ways to address these health inequities.

## Background

The primary aims of the first edition of *A Social Health Atlas of Australia* were to illustrate the spatial distribution of the socioeconomically disadvantaged population, and to compare this with patterns of distribution of major causes of illness and death and use of health services. The maps and correlation analysis highlighted associations between social and economic factors in relation to health and illness.

A number of new variables have been included in this second edition, together with many of the variables from the first edition. One of the additions is the presentation of data by the new Accessibility/Remoteness Index of Australia (ARIA). Also included is a cluster analysis, providing profiles at the Statistical Local Area (SLA) level of the socioeconomic status, health status and health service utilisation of the population.

The extent of change (between the editions) in the patterns of distribution in death rates by socioeconomic status is also highlighted.

## Findings

### Correlation analysis

There were correlations of significance at the small area level between the indicators of socioeconomic disadvantage drawn from the 1996 Population Census (Chapter 3) and a number of the health status variables. In **Brisbane**, the strongest of these were with the variables for people reporting their health as fair or poor (as opposed to those reporting their health as being excellent, very good, or good) and the Physical Component Summary (PCS, a measure of physical health) (**Table 8.1**). Similarly strong associations were evident in the correlation analysis with the variables for use of GP services by females and admissions to a public hospital.

There were fewer correlations of significance at the SLA level in the non-metropolitan areas of Queensland than was the case in **Brisbane**. This is, in part, a result of the number of areas with relatively small numbers of cases (population, deaths, hospital admissions, etc.) which reduces the strength of the analysis. However a number of variables are highly correlated with each other: these are the variables for unemployed people, single parent families, Indigenous Australians, people born in non-English speaking countries, people with poor proficiency in English and dwellings without a motor vehicle.

Various sub-sets of these are correlated with measures of health status and use of health services. The strongest correlations with

the measures of socioeconomic disadvantage were with the variables for people reporting their health as fair or poor, and the PCS. Although generally weaker, there was a consistent pattern between socioeconomic disadvantage and the variables for hospital admissions of males and females; and hospital admissions from circulatory and respiratory system diseases.

For the Indigenous population, there were correlations of substantial significance at the SLA level with the variable for years of potential life lost (a summary measure of premature death), single parent families, dwellings without a motor vehicle and admissions for respiratory system diseases.

### Changes in socioeconomic status

Marked variations were recorded between 1986 and 1996 for a majority of the socioeconomic status variables mapped for Queensland (**Table 9.1**). For **Brisbane**, the largest increases were for the population of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (an increase of 94.4 per cent over this ten year period); the occupational grouping of managers and administrators, and professionals (71.9 per cent); housing authority rented dwellings (67.9 per cent); people born overseas in predominantly non-English speaking countries: an increase of 61.2 per cent for those resident for five years or more, of 55.6 per cent for those resident for less than five years, and of 58.3 per cent for those with poor proficiency in English; single parent families (60.8 per cent); and low income families (52.6 per cent). The only decreases recorded over this ten year period were for the variables for early school leavers (down by 3.0 per cent) and unemployment among 15 to 19 year olds (down by 8.4 per cent).

Variations of this order were also recorded in the non-metropolitan areas of Queensland. The major differences from the changes noted for **Brisbane** were the larger increases in the proportion of housing authority rented dwellings and people aged 65 years and over; smaller increases for Indigenous people, the occupations of managers and administrators, and professionals, people born predominantly non-English speaking countries and residents for five years or more, the number of single parent families and low income families; and decreases for the remaining two variables for people born overseas in predominantly non-English speaking countries.

Changes over this period for the major urban centre of **Townsville-Thuringowa** were relatively consistent with those recorded in **Brisbane**. However, there were considerable variations recorded in **Gold Coast-Tweed Heads**, the major differences being for the population aged from 0 to 4 years, people aged 65 years and over, early school leavers, unskilled and semi-skilled workers, the three variables for people born overseas in predominantly non-English speaking countries and housing authority rented dwellings.

Substantial variations were recorded in income support payments to residents of **Brisbane** for all of the payment types analysed, other than the Age Pension, for which there was a small increase (a decrease of 1.9 per cent). The number of each of the other payment types increased substantially, with the number of unemployment beneficiaries more than doubling (an increase of

153.4 per cent) (**Table 9.1**). Similar, although smaller, increases were recorded in the non-metropolitan areas of Queensland for all of these income support payments other than the Age Pension for which there was a small decrease (2.6 per cent). The increases in **Townsville-Thuringowa** were in line with those recorded for the non-metropolitan areas of the State and with those in **Brisbane**. Between 1986 and 1996 substantial increases were recorded in all income support payments to residents of **Gold Coast-Tweed Heads**.

### Changes in death rates

Death rates in Queensland have declined over the years 1985 to 1989 and 1992 to 1995 for the majority of causes studied.

In **Brisbane**, the largest decreases were recorded for the infant death rate (down by 24.7 per cent) and for deaths of people aged from 15 to 64 years from circulatory system diseases (down by 46.5 per cent), respiratory system diseases (down by 38.4 per cent) and cancer (down by 29.6 per cent). All causes mortality was 29.6 per cent lower over this period, marginally more so for males than for females.

There were reductions in death rates for each of the causes studied in **Townsville-Thuringowa**. However, in **Gold Coast-Tweed Heads**, increases were recorded for premature deaths of females from all causes, and of males and females from cancer.

There were also reductions in rates of premature death in the non-metropolitan areas of Queensland for all major causes of death. However the reductions were less than those recorded for **Brisbane** for all except infant deaths and accidents, poisonings and violence. The reduction for all causes mortality was just over two thirds (69.3 per cent) that recorded for **Brisbane**.

### Summary of findings by socioeconomic status of area of residence

Comparisons are made of changes in the health status of the population by socioeconomic status. In the absence of any direct measure of socioeconomic status in the health status data, the socioeconomic status of the SLA of usual residence in the health status records is used. In this analysis socioeconomic status is measured by the Index of Relative Socio-Economic Status (IRSD, see page 19). The SLAs in the major urban centres of **Brisbane**, **Gold Coast-Tweed Heads** and **Townsville-Thuringowa** have been grouped into five groups (quintiles) based on the IRSD score, with Quintile 1 comprising the twenty per cent of SLAs with the highest IRSD scores, and Quintile 5 comprising the twenty per cent of SLAs with the lowest IRSD scores.

#### Health status

Although there is some variability across the quintiles, the pattern is generally for the highest socioeconomic status SLAs (those in Quintile 1) to have the most advantageous (ie. in the majority of cases the lowest) rates and, generally, for the most disadvantaged SLAs (those in Quintile 5) to have the highest rates. The exception is the PCS, for which low scores indicate poorer health (**Figure 9.2**).

Years of potential life lost (YPLL) from deaths between the ages of 15 to 64 years varied from a standardised ratio (SR) in the most advantaged areas of 76 (24 per cent fewer YPLL than were expected from the Queensland State rates) to an SR of 127 in

the most disadvantaged areas (indicating that there were 27 per cent more YPLL than were expected from the State rates). Large differentials were also evident for deaths of 15 to 64 year old males (from an SDR of 72 in Quintile 1 to 129 in Quintile 5) and deaths of 15 to 64 years olds from lung cancer (84 to 122), circulatory system diseases (68 to 135) and respiratory system diseases (57 to 146).

The main differences in the non-metropolitan areas of Queensland from the gradients evident for **Brisbane** and the other major urban centres are for infant deaths (for which the gradient is reversed) and for premature deaths from lung cancer and the Total Fertility Rate, for which there is no notable gradient.

#### Health service utilisation

Although there is some variability across the quintiles, the pattern is generally for the most advantaged SLAs (those in Quintile 1) to have the lowest rates of admission, and for the most disadvantaged SLAs (those in Quintile 5) to have the highest rates. The exceptions include the graphs for admissions to a private hospital, admissions for all cancers, lung cancer and for breast cancer of females aged 40 years and over, and for the surgical procedures of myringotomy, endoscopy and Caesarean section. Others, including the graphs for admissions for psychosis and same day admissions for a surgical procedure, reveal a less consistent pattern (**Figure 9.3**).

In the non-metropolitan areas of Queensland, the main differences from the gradients evident for **Brisbane** and the other major urban centres are for admissions for cancer, psychosis, neurotic, personality or other mental disorders, hysterectomy, endoscopy and Caesarean section. The gradient for general practitioner (GP) services to males and females is the reverse of that in **Brisbane**. This may reflect higher levels of provision of GP services by providers not included in the Medicare data on which this analysis is based (eg. those working in Aboriginal Medical Services and mining companies) (**Figure 9.5**).

### Change in health status by socioeconomic area of residence

As noted above, there has been an overall decrease in death rates in Queensland; there are also differentials in death rates by socioeconomic status of area. It is possible to examine the extent of the change in death rates by socioeconomic status of area. As data was not available for non-metropolitan SLAs in the first edition of the atlas, the following comparisons have been limited to **Brisbane**, **Gold Coast-Tweed Heads** and **Townsville-Thuringowa**.

Death rates in **Brisbane** and **Townsville-Thuringowa** declined between 1985-89 and 1992-95 for all of the causes of death studied, both overall and in each quintile of socioeconomic status of area. In **Gold Coast-Tweed Heads**, death rates declined between 1985-89 and 1992-95 for a majority of the causes studied: the exceptions were deaths of 15 to 64 year old females (an increase of 5 per cent) and deaths in the 'other' causes group (for which there was an increase in overall death rates).

It is clear, however, that despite the overall decline, the strong gradient in death rates between the quintiles remains. In fact, for male residents of **Brisbane**, **Gold Coast-Tweed Heads** and

**Townsville-Thuringowa** aged from 15 to 64 years, the differential in death rates between Quintile 1 (the most advantaged areas) and Quintile 5 (the most disadvantaged areas) increased, from 1.63 times higher in the most disadvantaged areas in 1985-89 to 1.73 times higher in 1992-95. Similar differentials occur for other deaths variables studied.

For females, overall death rates decreased to a similar extent to those for males, and the differential in death rates for female residents aged from 15 to 64 years between Quintile 1 and Quintile 5 also increased, from 1.34 times higher in the most disadvantaged areas in 1985-89 to 1.57 times higher in 1992-95.

Infant death rates in **Brisbane** declined by around one quarter between 1985-89 and 1992-95 (and to a smaller extent in **Gold Coast-Tweed Heads** and **Townsville-Thuringowa**), although the differential in rates between Quintile 1 and Quintile 5 increased, from 1.91 times higher in the most disadvantaged areas in 1985-89 to 2.41 times higher in 1992-95.

Despite a decline in death rates of the 15 to 64 year old population for all cancers, the differential in rates between Quintile 1 and Quintile 5 increased, from 1.05 times higher in the most disadvantaged areas in 1985-89 to 1.21 times higher in 1992-95. There was a larger decline in overall death rates for lung cancer, with the differential between Quintile 1 and Quintile 5 remaining at 1.46.

The overall decline in death rates for deaths of 15 to 64 year olds from circulatory system diseases was the highest among the causes of death studied, dropping to almost half in **Brisbane** and **Townsville-Thuringowa** (down by 46.5 per cent and 48.4 per cent, respectively) and by one fifth (19.5 per cent) in **Gold Coast-Tweed Heads**. The differential in rates between Quintile 1 and Quintile 5 increased from 1.53 times higher in the most disadvantaged areas in 1985-89 to 2.03 times higher in 1992-95.

The gradients in death rates from respiratory system diseases across the quintiles of socioeconomic status of area of residence are particularly strong over both periods. In 1985-89, the differential between Quintiles 1 and 5 was 1.74; by 1992-95 this had increased (by 88.9 per cent) to 3.28. This was the largest differential for any of the causes studied, as well as recording the largest increase in the differential between the two periods.

Death rates of 15 to 64 year old people from the external causes of accidents, poisonings and violence are also highest in the most disadvantaged areas of **Brisbane**, **Gold Coast-Tweed Heads** and **Townsville-Thuringowa**. The differential in 1992-95 is again greater than in 1985-89 (up by 7.5 per cent, from 1.60 to 1.72).

Death rates for 15 to 24 year olds from these external causes show a different pattern. Although rates are down in all quintiles, the largest reductions are in Quintiles 3 to 5, with the result that the differential in rates between Quintiles 1 and 5 has decreased, from 1.29 to 1.15 (a reduction of 11.3 per cent, the only reduction recorded for the causes studied).

## Conclusion

There is clear evidence in the data of an association at the SLA level between high premature death rates (both for deaths from all causes and from most specific causes) and socioeconomic disadvantage, as measured by the IRSD. These associations are generally evident not only between the most advantaged (Quintile 1) and disadvantaged areas (Quintile 5), but also at each of the intervening levels of socioeconomic status (Quintiles 2 to 4) (**Figures 9.2 and 9.4**).

Similarly, there are associations between socioeconomic disadvantage and high rates of use of general medical practitioner services in the major urban centres, and for most of the variables for hospital admission in both the major urban centres and the non-metropolitan areas of Queensland (**Figures 9.4 and 9.5**). The gradients for admissions by socioeconomic status of area are particularly strong in the non-metropolitan SLAs.

It is also clear that, despite an overall improvement in death rates from all causes and for all of the specific causes studied for **Brisbane**, **Gold Coast-Tweed Heads** and **Townsville-Thuringowa** (**Table 9.2, Figure 9.6**), these improvements have not resulted in any significant reduction in the disparities evident in death rates between residents of the most well off areas and those in the poorest areas. In fact, for all but deaths of 15 to 24 year olds from the external causes of accidents, poisonings and violence, the gap in death rates has increased (**Figure 9.6**).

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# Using the *Social Health Atlas*

## The social health atlas package

This second edition of *A Social Health Atlas of Australia* comprises:

- this volume for Queensland and a companion volume (Volume 4.1) containing the data mapped (the numbers and rate/ratio/percentages on which the maps are based); and
- similar volumes for each of the other States and Territories and a separate atlas for Australia as a whole (each of these atlases also has a companion volume containing the data mapped).

Some of the data from the atlas are also available on the **HealthWIZ** statistics database product, which comprises comprehensive health statistics from Australia's hospital systems, cause of death registries, population censuses, cancer registries, Medicare and income support system, as well as details of aged care and child care.

This volume contains general background information to the atlas, as well as maps of selected variables showing patterns of socioeconomic status, health status and health and welfare service use at a small area level. Each of these maps is accompanied by a commentary.

The text and maps can also be downloaded for reading and printing from the Public Health Information Development Unit World Wide Web site at [www.publichealth.gov.au](http://www.publichealth.gov.au). The text (including the maps and graphs) and datasets on which the maps are based are available on CD-ROM (for Windows). Further details are in Appendix 1.1, *Project Resources and Output*.

## Content

The atlas has nine chapters, an appendix, a bibliography and an index. The chapters are:

- 1 Introduction
- 2 Methods
- 3 Demography and socioeconomic status
- 4 Income support payments
- 5 Health status
- 6 Utilisation of health services
- 7 Availability of selected health services
- 8 Statistical analysis
- 9 Summary

Chapters 1 and 2 provide an overview of the purpose of the atlas and the approach taken in analysing and mapping data. These sections contain important information on the limitations of the mapped data. The Appendix provides additional background information, and the *Glossary*, at the end of this section, defines some of the terms used.

Chapters 3 to 7 each provide an introduction to the topic(s) being mapped, as well as the maps and associated commentary.

Chapter 8 shows the results of the correlation and cluster analyses. Chapter 9 presents details of the major changes in the data between this second and the first edition, as well as some summary measures of the health differentials calculated from the health status and health service utilisation data mapped in Chapters 5 and 6.

## Using the atlas

Some people will use the atlas as a reference source, either going to particular maps (eg. of hospital surgical procedures), or using the index to find a particular topic (eg. deaths from circulatory system diseases) or variable (eg. tonsillectomy).

Others may choose to examine the correlation matrices and to then view the maps for variables for which the data are highly correlated. Or they may access the data in a spreadsheet and re-group the SLAs to suit their own purpose, recalculating the percentages or standardised ratios to represent the new spatial groupings.

To assist users in reading the maps, the layout of the two map types used most frequently is described below. The more detailed discussion in Chapter 2 on the way in which the data have been analysed and presented is, however, important in terms of gaining an understanding of how best to use the data and maps in this atlas. Users of the atlas are particularly encouraged to read this chapter to ensure they are aware of the deficiencies in the datasets presented, as well as in the mapping approach used.

## Map of Brisbane, Gold Coast-Tweed Heads and Townsville-Thuringowa

### Area mapped

The area mapped is the Statistical Division of **Brisbane** (generally known as the capital city area) and the Statistical Subdivisions of **Gold Coast-Tweed Heads** and **Townsville-Thuringowa**. These latter two areas are referred to as 'other major urban centre': together with **Brisbane**, they comprise the three major urban centres (urban centres with a population of 100,000 or more) in Queensland. The spatial unit mapped is a group of Statistical Local Areas (SLAs) which approximate (and are, frequently, the same as) individual postcode areas.

Additional details, including key maps to assist in the location and identification of particular SLAs, are in *Appendix 1.2*: a set of clear film overlays to assist in this process is included in a pocket inside the back cover of this atlas.

### Data measures mapped

The map sub-title indicates the format in which the data are presented. In a majority of cases, data are mapped as either a percentage or age (or age-sex) standardised ratio (the process of standardisation is described in Appendix 1.3, *Analysis and presentation of data*). The exceptions are the maps, in Chapter 7, of the location of selected health services; the Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage mapped in Chapter 3; the infant death rate; and the Total Fertility Rate.

The legend shows the data ranges used to indicate the spatial distribution of the characteristic being mapped.

Footnotes on the map page draw attention to particular aspects of the mapped data and the source of data.

#### Description

The text associated with the maps provides background information on the variable being mapped and describes the pattern of distribution of the variable at the small area level.

The commentary in the top section provides information about the topic being mapped, as well as a comparison between the capital cities and, where the data are available, refers to the situation reported in the first edition of the atlas. For variables where the data are age (or age-sex) standardised, these comparisons are made across Australia (with Australia as the standard for comparison).

In the lower two thirds of the page, attention is drawn to other sources of information about the variable, or characteristics of the population under discussion. The pattern of distribution shown in the map is then described, and associations evident in the correlation analysis with other variables are noted. Users should note that in these descriptions, where data has been standardised, it has been re-calculated to a new standard – in this atlas, to the Queensland State rates (rather than the Australian rates). This allows comparisons to be made between the rates for the small areas within **Brisbane**, **Gold Coast-Tweed Heads** and **Townsville-Thuringowa**, and the Queensland rates – ie. in effect the State average. This differs from the commentary on the top of the page, for which comparisons are made with the Australian rates.

Where the numbers of cases are relatively small (and, in particular, where these small numbers are associated with elevated rates), the absolute numbers are included in the commentary. The numbers (as well as the percentages, rates and ratios) are available in printed and electronic forms and should be used in conjunction with the information in this atlas.

#### Map of Queensland: referred to as the 'non-metropolitan areas' of Queensland

##### Area mapped

The spatial units mapped are SLAs: however **Brisbane**, **Gold Coast-Tweed Heads** and **Townsville-Thuringowa** are each mapped as one area (ie. not by groupings of SLAs) to enhance comparisons between these major urban centres and the non-metropolitan areas.

Towns with a population of 7,500 or more (but less than the urban centre cut-off of 100,000) are represented on the maps as

circles. Unfortunately, data for many towns is not available for the datasets in the atlas (other than the Census data).

As noted above in relation to the map of **Brisbane**, additional details are in *Appendix 1.2*: a set of clear film overlays to assist in the location and identification of particular small areas is included in a pocket inside the back cover of this atlas.

#### Data measures mapped

See comments above concerning **Brisbane**.

#### Description

Again, commentary in the top section provides information about the topic being mapped, as well as national comparisons, this time comparing the 'other' major urban centres (those population centres of 100,000 or larger which are not capital cities) and the areas of Australia outside of the capital cities and other major urban centres. These regional/rural/remote areas are referred to in the text as 'non-metropolitan areas'. Where the data are age (or age-sex) standardised, the standard is, again, Australia.

The lower two thirds of the page again draws attention to other sources of information about the variable, or characteristics of the population under discussion. The pattern of distribution shown in the map is then described, and associations evident in the correlation analysis with other variables are noted. Users should note that in these descriptions, where data has been standardised, it has been re-calculated to a new standard – in this atlas, to the Queensland State rates (rather than the Australian rates). This allows comparisons to be made between the rates for the SLAs within the non-metropolitan areas of Queensland and the State rates – ie. in effect the State average.

The cautions in the main introduction and in the introductory notes to each chapter are particularly relevant to the non-metropolitan areas, with their geographically large SLAs and relatively small, scattered populations.

#### Additional information: ARIA Index

In addition to the map, the map page includes a graph showing the average measure for the variable in each of five levels of accessibility/remoteness, as determined by the Accessibility/Remoteness Index for Australia (ARIA). This Index is described in more detail in Chapter 2, under the heading *Accessibility and Remoteness*. In brief, each SLA in Queensland has been allocated to one of five categories, which range from Highly Accessible, through Accessible, Moderately Accessible and Remote, to Very Remote. The average percentage, rate or ratio for each of the five categories is then calculated for each variable and presented as a graph. The graph is accompanied by a brief comment on the distribution across the categories.

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The final responsibility for the content and comment remains with me.

John Glover  
Project Manager  
December 1999

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# Glossary and Explanatory notes

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## Cause of death

Causes of death are classified by the Australian Bureau of Statistics to the Ninth (1975) Revision of the World Health Organisation's International Classification of Diseases (ICD-9) which was adopted for world-wide use from 1979.

The cause of death particulars in this publication relate to the underlying cause of death, which the World Health Organisation has defined as the disease or injury which initiated the train of morbid events leading directly to death. Accidental and violent deaths are classified to the circumstances of the accident or violence which produced the fatal injury. Deaths of infants aged less than one month are classified according to the main condition in the infant which contributed to the death.

Details of the ICD-9 codes applicable to the variables mapped in Chapter 5 are shown in *Appendix 1.4*.

## Coding of hospital admissions

Diagnoses and procedures are classified according to the International Classification of Diseases, Ninth Revision, Clinical Modification (ICD-9-CM October 1988 Revision). External causes are classified according to ICD-9-CM Supplementary Classification of External Causes of Injury and Poisoning ('E' codes) classification codes.

Details of the codes applicable to the variables mapped in Chapter 6 are shown in *Appendix 1.4*.

## Admissions

The technical term describing a completed hospital episode (ie. the discharge, death or transfer of a patient) is a 'separation'.

At the time of admission, the age, sex, address of usual residence and other personal details of the patient are recorded. At the end of the episode, at the time of separation from hospital, details of the episode itself are recorded, including the principal diagnosis (and other diagnoses), principal procedure (and other procedures), and the date, time and method (discharge, transfer or death) of separation. Consequently, hospital inpatient data collections are based on separations. In this atlas the more commonly used term of 'admission' has been used. In an analysis such as this, which excludes long stay patients (other than the few long stay acute patients), there is little difference between the number of admissions and the number of separations in a year. Also, 'admission' is a much more familiar term to many people who will use this atlas.

## Standardised ratios

Data on which many of the variables have been mapped has been adjusted to remove differences in the data between areas mapped where those differences result from differences in the age and/or sex profiles of the populations being examined. This standardisation process is described in Appendix 1.3, *Analysis and presentation of data*.

## Statistical Local Area

The Statistical Local Area (SLA) is a standard geographic area established by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) to cover the whole of Australia, for the purposes of geographically coding data. It is, in a majority of cases, equivalent to a legal local government area (LGA). SLAs comprise whole LGAs; part LGAs (where the LGA has been split for planning, administrative or statistical purposes); or are unincorporated areas. In Queensland there were 125 LGAs and 449 SLAs at 1 July 1996 (ABS 1996).

## Symbols used

n.a.	not available
..	not applicable
-	nil, or less than half the final digit shown
BSD	Brisbane Statistical Division
C	City
S	Shire
T	Town

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