

Title: *Poverty and Disadvantage among Australian Children: a Spatial Perspective*

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Much research about child poverty and disadvantage provides national estimates of child wellbeing, due to the ready availability of microdata at the national level. However, an increasing body of evidence suggests that there can be major differences in well-being between children living in different geographic areas. In addition, much recent debate has focussed on moving beyond income poverty to broader measures of social exclusion. This paper describes results from an innovative use of the 2001 Australian census microdata, in which tables were commissioned from the Australian Bureau of Statistics which focussed on well-being and disadvantage from the child's perspective. Using this data, a composite index of child social exclusion risk at a small area level was constructed and then regional differences in risk analysed. The paper also analyses the specific indicators of social exclusion which form the index. Substantial differences in child social exclusion, and in specific characteristics related to social exclusion, are found across local areas. The extent of correlation between a more traditional income-based measure of economic wellbeing and the composite index is also examined.