
2 The compendium of Indigenous data

The primary aim of this compendium is to provide an easily accessible collation of Indigenous data from the *Report on Government Services 2009* (2009 Report).

The data contained in this compendium — focusing on the efficiency and effectiveness of specific areas of service delivery — can provide information that complements the material in the separate *Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage: Key Indicators* report (SCRGSP 2009 [forthcoming]). The *Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage* report summarises outcomes for Indigenous Australians, rather than assessing the performance of specific services.

Improvements in reporting of Indigenous data

Improvements to the Indigenous data within the 2009 Report were made in the following chapters:

- *Early childhood, education and training:*
 - ‘Children’s services’ (Chapter 3) measure and data for ‘Indigenous preschool attendance’ are reported for the first time.
 - ‘School education (Chapter 4) data have been provided for the first time for Indigenous learning outcomes by geolocation by State and Territory (for 2006 and 2007). (National level data for 2005 were included in the 2008 Report).
 - ‘Vocational education and training’ (Chapter 5) includes reporting by Indigenous status of VET and TAFE graduates who improved their employment circumstances after training.
- *Justice:*
 - ‘Corrective services’ (Chapter 8) has been enhanced to include the reporting of age standardised imprisonment rates for Indigenous and non-Indigenous prisoners, along with the previously reported crude rates.

Indigenous data in the 2009 Report

Table 2.1 provides an overview of data on Indigenous Australians in the 2009 Report. It indicates which service areas reported at least one data item on Indigenous Australians.

Data collection issues concerning Indigenous Australians

The task of collecting data on Indigenous Australians is complicated because many administrative data collections do not distinguish between Indigenous and non-Indigenous service recipients. For those that do, the methods and accuracy of identification of Indigenous people vary across jurisdictions. Further, surveys and other data collection methods using sampling do not necessarily include an Indigenous identifier, and when they do, the sample of Indigenous people may not be large enough to provide reliable results, particularly at the State and Territory level.

Indigenous data issues are discussed in more detail in appendix 4 of the *Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage* report (SCRGSP 2007).

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) and the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) play important roles in improving the collection of Indigenous data. Work being undertaken by the ABS and AIHW includes:

- an ongoing program to develop and improve Indigenous data flowing from Australian, State and Territory administrative systems. Priority is initially being given to the improvement of births and deaths statistics in all states and territories. Other priorities include hospital, community services, education, housing, and crime and justice statistics
- work with other agencies to develop and support national Indigenous information plans, Indigenous performance indicators and Indigenous taskforces on a number of topics
- an expansion of the ABS Household Survey Program to collect more regular Indigenous statistics, including regular Indigenous surveys, Indigenous sample supplementation in regular health surveys, and annual Indigenous labour force estimates.

Table 2.1 Reporting of at least one data item on Indigenous Australians, 2009 Report

<i>Service area/indicator framework</i>	<i>Descriptive</i>	<i>Outcomes</i>	<i>Outputs</i>		
			<i>Equity</i>	<i>Effectiveness</i>	<i>Efficiency</i>
Early childhood, education and training					
Early childhood, education and training preface	✓	✓	✓	x	X
Children's services	x	x	✓	x	X
School education	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
VET	x	✓	✓	✓	X
Justice					
Justice preface	x	x	x	x	X
Police services	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
Court administration	x	x	x	x	X
Corrective services	✓	x	x	✓	X
Emergency management					
Fire events	x	x	x	x	X
Ambulance events	x	x	x	x	X
Road rescue events	x	x	x	x	X
Health					
Health preface	✓	✓	x	x	X
Public hospitals	✓	x	x	x	X
Maternity services	x	✓	x	x	X
Primary and community health	✓	✓	✓	x	X
Breast cancer	x	x	✓	x	X
Mental health	✓	✓	x	x	X
Community services					
Community services preface	x	x	x	x	X
Aged care services	✓	x	✓	x	X
Services for people with a disability	✓	x	✓	✓	X
Child protection and out-of-home care	✓	x	x	✓	X
SAAP	x	✓	✓	✓	X
Housing					
Public housing	✓	✓	x	x	X
State owned and managed Indigenous housing	✓	✓	✓	x	✓
Community housing	✓	x	x	x	X
Indigenous community housing	✓	✓	x	✓	✓
Commonwealth Rent Assistance	x	✓	✓	x	X

SAP = Supported Accommodation Assistance Program. ✓ = At least one data item is reported. x = No data are reported.

Source: 2009 Report, table 2.4, p. 2.22.

The Ministerial Council on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs (MCATSIA) established a working party to develop an Indigenous Demographics paper to identify methodological issues in Indigenous data collections, outline how these are being addressed and identify any remaining gaps. The findings are presented in a paper entitled *Population and Diversity: Policy Implications of Emerging Indigenous Demographic Trends*, released in mid-2006 by the Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research (CAEPR) (Taylor 2006). In mid-2007, MCATSIA commissioned further work on Indigenous population statistics from Dr John Taylor at the CAEPR.

This research activity commenced in late 2007 and is constructed around four projects:

- a detailed regional analysis of relative and absolute change in Indigenous social indicators
- an assessment of social and spatial mobility among Indigenous metropolitan populations
- case-study analyses of multiple disadvantage in select city neighbourhoods and regional centres
- the development of conceptual and methodological approaches to the measurement of short term mobility.

Working Papers related to these projects are co-badged with MCATSIA and released as part of the CAEPR Working Paper Series (CAEPR 2008).

In December 2007, COAG established a Working Group on Indigenous Reform (WGIR) to support the achievement of COAG's Indigenous targets. It is chaired by the Hon Jenny Macklin MP, Australian Government Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs and comprises senior officials from each jurisdiction. The WGIR has developed a Closing the Gaps framework, and the Chair of the WGIR has written to the Chairman of the Steering Committee, requesting that the Review works with the WGIR to align the WGIR framework with the OID framework. At its 29 November 2008 meeting, COAG agreed to a revised framework for the OID report that is aligned with the COAG targets (COAG 2008). This alignment will ensure that the OID continues to reflect COAG's priorities in Indigenous reform. The Steering Committee will also ensure that any relevant WGIR/OID indicators are reflected in indicator frameworks in the Report on Government Services.

The Review will draw on these initiatives in future reports.

References

- CAEPR (Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research) 2008, *MCATSIA Indigenous Population Project*, <http://www.anu.edu.au/caepr/population.php>, accessed 1 March 2009.
- COAG (Council of Australian Governments) 2008, *COAG Communiqué 29 November 2008*, http://www.coag.gov.au/coag_meeting_outcomes/2008-11-29/index.cfm, accessed 1 March 2009.
- SCRGSP (Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision) 2007, *Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage: Key Indicators 2007*, Productivity Commission, Canberra.
- 2008, *Report on Government Services 2008: Indigenous Compendium*, Productivity Commission, Canberra.
- 2009 (forthcoming), *Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage: Key Indicators 2009*, Productivity Commission, Canberra.
- Taylor J 2006, *Population and Diversity: Policy Implications of Emerging Indigenous Demographic Trends*, Discussion paper no. 283/2006, Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research, Australian National University, Canberra.