

## GOVERNMENT SERVICES AND INDIGENOUS PEOPLE

In May 1997 the Prime Minister, with the support of the Premiers and Chief Ministers, requested that the Review give particular attention to the performance of mainstream services in relation to Indigenous Australians. This request was reinforced by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) at its 3 November 2000.

In April 2004, the Review published a compendium of data on services to Indigenous people from the *Report on Government Services 2004*. A similar compendium, with data from the 2005 Report, will be published soon.

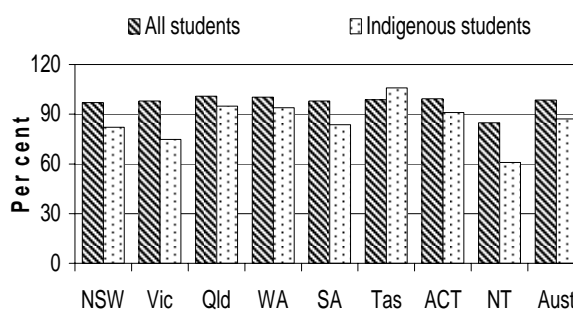
In April 2002, COAG commissioned the Review to produce a new and separate regular report on key indicators of Indigenous disadvantage. The Review published *Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage: Key Indicators* in November 2003. Work is currently underway on the next edition which is to be published in May 2005.

Readers should exercise caution in interpreting data on services to Indigenous people. Indigenous people are not always identified in some administrative data collections and there is variability in the likelihood of Indigenous people voluntarily identifying themselves in different situations and over time. Surveys designed to report on the whole Australian population may not include sufficient numbers of Indigenous people to provide reliable data.

### Selection of results

**School education:** the proportion of Indigenous students achieving national benchmarks in reading and numeracy was lower than for non-Indigenous students in all jurisdictions in 2001 (tables 3A.19 to 3A.33). Indigenous students are, on average, less likely to stay at school through secondary education. The national apparent retention rate from the commencement of secondary school until year 10 for Indigenous students was 87.2 per cent, compared with 98.5 per cent for all students, in 2003 (p. 3.20).

Apparent rates of retention from year 7 or 8 to year 10, full time secondary students, all schools, 2003<sup>a, b, c</sup>



See fourth page for data and footnotes.

**Police services:** In 2003-04, the proportion of police staff who self-reported as Indigenous generally reflected the proportion of working aged Indigenous people in the general population (except in the NT), with Indigenous police staff as a proportion of total staff ranging from 5.2 per cent in the NT to 0.1 per cent in Victoria (pp. 5.26–5.27). In the NT, Indigenous staff accounted for 5.2 per cent of total staff compared with Indigenous representation in the working age population of 23.2 per cent (pp. 5.26–5.27, table 5A.36).

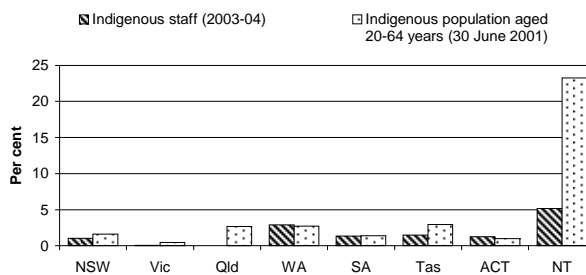
**Corrective services:** Indigenous people were far more likely to be in prison custody in 2002-03 than non-Indigenous people. The national imprisonment rate per 100 000 Indigenous adults was 1850.5 compared with a rate of 115.4 for non-Indigenous adults (p. 7.5). Indigenous imprisonment rates were highest in WA and lowest in Tasmania. Prisoner death rates from apparent unnatural causes in 2003-04 (pp. 7.13 to 7.14) and community corrections offender rates (pp. 7.7 to 7.8) are also reported by Indigenous status.

**Health Preface:** In all jurisdictions for which data are available, the three year average age standardised mortality rate for Indigenous people was higher than for all Australians in 2000–02 (pp. E.20 and E.21). Similarly, in all jurisdictions for which data are available, the Indigenous infant mortality rate was higher than for all Australians in 2000–02 (p. E.22). The accuracy of Indigenous mortality data varies across jurisdictions and across time. The Health preface also includes data on Indigenous causes of death, life expectancy, median age at death and birth weight.

**Health management:** Participation rates for Indigenous women in breast cancer screening are reported, although differences across jurisdictions in the collection and recording of Indigenous status mean that comparisons should be made with care. In most jurisdictions, it appears that participation rates for Indigenous women aged 50–69 are lower than for all females in that age group. However this may be influenced by problems with the identification of Indigenous status (table 11.5, pp. 11.24 and 11.25).

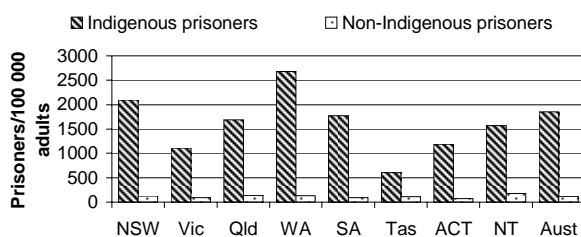
**Aged care:** In 2003-04, the reported use of Home and Community Care (HACC) services showed substantial differences between the proportion of Indigenous and non-Indigenous HACC clients in each age cohort. Indigenous HACC clients tend to be younger, reflecting the difference in morbidity and mortality trends between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people (p. 12.26).

**Proportion of Indigenous police staff (sworn and unsworn) and proportion of the Indigenous population aged 20–64 years, 2003-2004<sup>a, b, c</sup>**



See fourth page for data and footnotes.

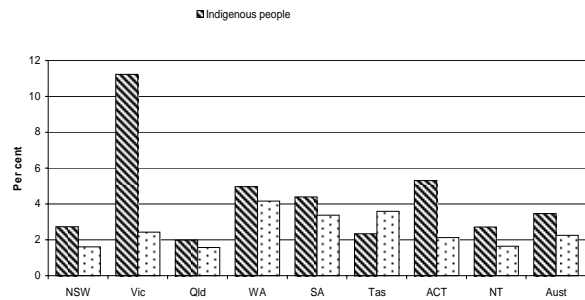
**Indigenous and non-Indigenous imprisonment rates, 2002-03<sup>a, b, c, d</sup>**



See fourth page for data and footnotes.

**Services for people with a disability:** the proportion of the Indigenous population who used community access services from 1 January 2003 to 30 June 2003 (3.5 Indigenous service users per 1000 Indigenous people aged 15–64 years) was higher than the proportion of the total population who used these services (2.2 service users per 1000 people aged 15–64 years). A higher proportion of the Indigenous population than of the total population used community access services in all jurisdictions except Tasmania (pp. 13.29–13.30). Nationally, the proportion of the Indigenous population who used accommodation support and employment services was higher than the proportion of the total population who used these services (pp. 13.27–13.29).

Users of community access services per 1000 people, by Indigenous status, 1 January 2003 to 30 June 2003<sup>a, b, c, d, e, f, g</sup>



See fourth page for data and footnotes.

**Protection and support services:** The number of children who were the subject of child protection substantiations per 1000 children aged 0-16 years was 21.8 for Indigenous children compared with 7.2 for non-Indigenous children (p 15.9). The Report also includes data on the proportion of Indigenous children in out-of-home care placed in accordance with the Aboriginal Child Placement Principle (p. 15.23) and data on access to Supported Accommodation Assistance Program services.

**Housing:** The proportion of new tenancies in State owned and managed Indigenous housing allocated to special needs households in 2003-04 varied from 60.3 per cent in Tasmania to 39.5 per cent in SA (p. 16.61). Indigenous special needs households are those that have a household member with a disability or a principal tenant aged 24 years or under, or 50 years or over. State owned and managed Indigenous housing uses a definition of special needs housing appropriate to the program and different to that used for public housing. Specials needs data for State owned and managed Indigenous housing cannot be compared with data for public housing.

**Data on other services to Indigenous people:** The Report also contains data on Indigenous people in relation to vocational education and training, hospital separations and children's services.

[MORE]

## Data for charts on previous page

### *Apparent retention rates of full time secondary students from year 7/8 to year 10, all schools, 2003<sup>a, b, c, d</sup>*

	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Aust
All students	97.1	98.0	100.8	100.4	98.1	98.9	99.3	85.0	98.5
Indigenous students	82.1	74.8	94.9	94.0	83.5	105.8	91.2	61.0	87.2

<sup>a</sup> The apparent retention rate is the percentage of full time students who continued to years 10–12 from respective cohort groups at the commencement of their secondary schooling. <sup>b</sup> The exclusion of part time students from standard apparent retention rate calculations has particular implications for the interpretation of results for SA, Tasmania and the NT. <sup>c</sup> Provides a historic point of comparison for apparent retention rates to year 12 (total). <sup>d</sup> The small number of Indigenous students in some jurisdictions (the ACT and Tasmania) can result in large fluctuations in the apparent retention rates when disaggregated by gender and school sectors.

Source: table 3A.38.

### *Proportion of Indigenous police staff (sworn and unsworn) and proportion of the Indigenous population aged 20–64 years<sup>a, b, c</sup>*

	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT
Indigenous staff (2003-04)	1.0	0.1	na	2.9	1.3	1.5	1.2	5.2
Indigenous population aged 20–64 years (30 June 2001)	1.6	0.5	2.7	2.7	1.4	2.9	1.0	23.2

<sup>a</sup> Indigenous staff numbers relate to those staff who self-identify as being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent. <sup>b</sup> Information on Indigenous status is collected only at time of recruitment. <sup>c</sup> Queensland was unable to separate Indigenous and non-Indigenous staff.

Source: table 5A.36.

### *Indigenous and non-Indigenous imprisonment rates, 2002-03<sup>a, b, c, d</sup>*

	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Aust
Indigenous prisoners	2 094.5	1 108.2	1 691.9	2 678.4	1 773.3	600.8	1 185.6	1 568.9	1 850.5
Non-Indigenous prisoners	122.6	91.0	139.0	133.0	91.8	109.7	70.2	177.7	115.4

<sup>a</sup> Based on the daily average prisoner population numbers supplied by states and territories, calculated against adult Indigenous and non-Indigenous population estimates (ABS figures supplied by the National Centre for Crime and Justice Statistics). <sup>b</sup> ACT rates include ACT prisoners held in the ACT and in NSW prisons. NSW rates exclude ACT prisoners held in NSW prisons. <sup>c</sup> Excludes prisoners reported as being of unknown Indigenous status. <sup>d</sup> Queensland was unable to report unknown Indigenous status separately and included prisoners of unknown Indigenous status as non-Indigenous prisoners.

Source: table 7A.4.

[MORE]

*Users of community access services per 1000 people, by Indigenous status, 1 January 2003 to 30 June 2003<sup>a, b, c, d, e, f, g</sup>*

	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Aust
Indigenous people	2.7	11.2	2.0	5.0	4.4	2.3	5.3	2.7	3.5
All people	1.6	2.4	1.6	4.2	3.4	3.6	2.1	1.6	2.2

<sup>a</sup> Data for Indigenous users per 1000 were derived by dividing the number of Indigenous service users by the number of Indigenous Australians aged 15–64 years, multiplied by 1000. <sup>b</sup> Where Indigenous status was inconsistently recorded for the same user, the user was counted as an Indigenous Australian. <sup>c</sup> Data for all service users exclude 7615 service users whose Indigenous status was not reported, so totals may differ from other tables. <sup>d</sup> Service users who accessed the service type ‘recreation/holiday programs’ (service type 3.02) were not required to complete the item on Indigenous status; however those who did provide a response are included in the data. <sup>e</sup> Data for users of Commonwealth State/Territory Disability Agreement (CSTDA) funded community access services exclude psychiatric services specifically identified by the jurisdiction. <sup>f</sup> Service user data are estimates after a statistical linkage key is used to account for individuals who received services from more than one service type outlet from 1 January 2003 to 30 June 2003. Individuals might have accessed services from more than one State or Territory over the six month period. <sup>g</sup> The service user data used to derive this indicator have quality issues related to the development of the new CSTDA NMDS. These issues include differences in the proportion of service outlets that responded across jurisdictions. This indicator thus needs to be interpreted with care.

Source: table 13A.28.

---

**Background information:** Robyn Sheen, Head of Secretariat 03 9653 2184/0419 637 068

**Other information:** Clair Angel, Media and Publications 02 6240 3239/0417 665 443

**Please do not approach other parties for comment before Thursday, 27 January 2005.**

*Media copies of this report are available from Clair Angel on 02 6240 3239.*

*Hard copies of this publication are available from Pirion/J.S. McMillan (ph: 02 9795 1200 or email [custserv@jismcmillan.com.au](mailto:custserv@jismcmillan.com.au)). The report can also be accessed via the Internet at <http://www.pc.gov.au/> on the morning of release.*

[END]