
6 Police services

This chapter reports on the performance of police services. These services comprise the operations of the police agencies of each State and Territory government. The national policing function of the Australian Federal Police (AFP) and other national non-police law enforcement bodies (such as the Australian Crime Commission) are not included in the report.

Performance is reported against four activity areas (community safety, crime, road safety and judicial services). The main efficiency indicator, expenditure on police services per person, combines all the activity areas.

It should be noted that the use of the term ‘offender’ in this chapter refers to a person who is alleged to have committed an offence and is not the same as the definition used in chapter 8 (‘Corrective services’), where the term ‘offender’ refers to a person who has been convicted of an offence and is subject to a correctional sentence.

Police services are the principal means through which State and Territory governments pursue the achievement of a safe and secure environment for the community, through the investigation of criminal offences, response to life threatening situations, the provision of services to the judicial process and the provision of road safety and traffic management. They also respond to more general needs in the community — for example, assisting emergency services, mediating family and neighbourhood disputes, delivering messages regarding death or serious illness, and advising on general policing and crime issues. Additionally, police are involved in various activities which aim to improve public safety and prevent crime.

Indigenous data in the police services chapter

The police services chapter in the *Report on Government Services 2009* (2009 Report) contains the following data items on Indigenous people:

- police service expenditure, Indigenous staff and asset descriptors
- proportion of police staff from Indigenous backgrounds relative to the proportion of the general population who are from Indigenous backgrounds, 2007-08
- deaths in police custody and custody-related operations, 2003–2007.

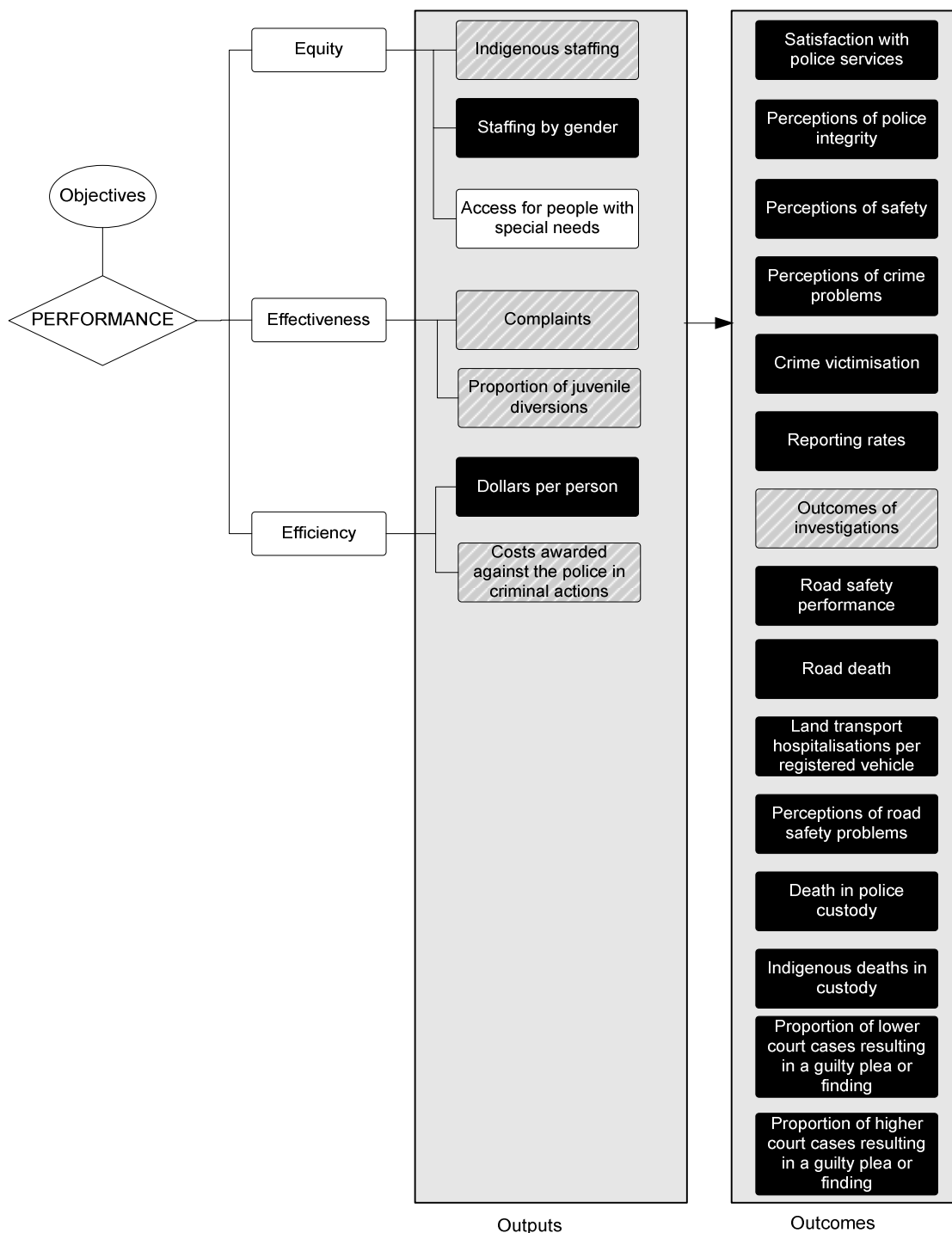
Attachment tables

Attachment tables for data within the police services chapter of this compendium are contained in attachment 6A of the compendium. These tables are identified in references throughout this chapter by an 'A' suffix (for example, table 6A.3 is table 3 in the police services attachment). As the data are directly sourced from the 2009 Report, the compendium also notes where the original table, figure or text in the 2009 Report can be found. For example, where the compendium refers to '2009 Report, p. 6.15' this is page 15 of chapter 6 of the 2009 Report, and '2009 Report, table 6A.2' is attachment table 2 of attachment 6 of the 2009 Report.

Framework of performance indicators

Data for Indigenous people are reported for a subset of the performance indicators for police services in the 2009 Report. It is important to interpret these data in the context of the broader performance indicator framework outlined in figure 6.1. The performance indicator framework shows which data are comparable in the 2009 Report. For data that are not considered directly comparable, the text includes relevant caveats and supporting commentary.

Figure 6.1 General performance framework for the police services sector



Key to indicators

- Text Data for these indicators comparable, subject to caveats to each chart or table
- Text Data for these indicators not complete or not directly comparable
- Text These indicators yet to be developed or data not collected for this Report: chapter contains explanatory text

Source: 2009 Report, figure 6.4, p. 6.8.

Indigenous staffing

This section focuses on the performance of mainstream police services in relation to Indigenous Australians. ‘Indigenous staffing’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to provide police services in an equitable manner. Indigenous people may feel more comfortable in ‘accessing’ police services when they are able to deal with Indigenous police staff (box 6.1).

Box 6.1 Indigenous staffing

‘Indigenous staffing’ is defined as the proportion of police staff from Indigenous backgrounds compared to the proportion of the general population aged 20–64 years who are from Indigenous backgrounds. These data are used because a significantly larger proportion of the Indigenous population falls within the younger non-working age groupings compared with the non-Indigenous population. Readily available ABS population projections of people aged 20–64 years at 30 June 2006 provide a proxy for the estimated working population.

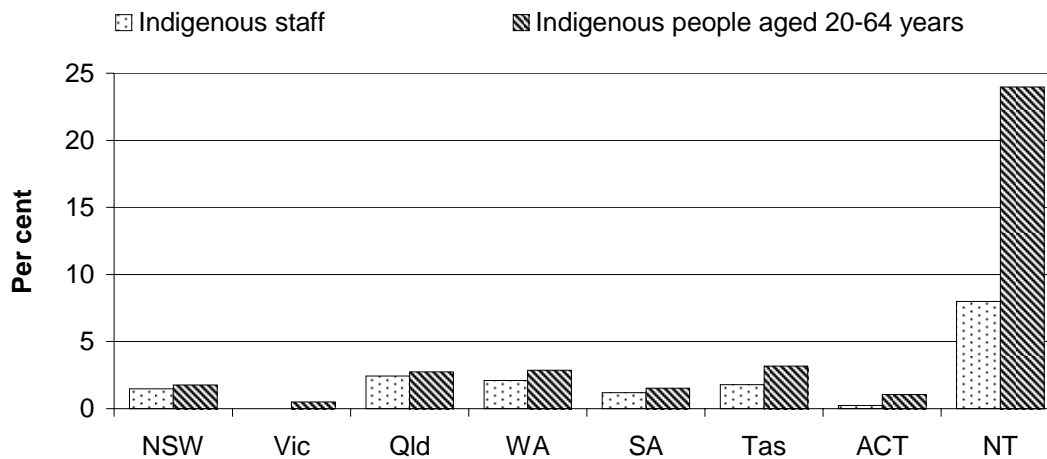
A proportion of police staff from Indigenous backgrounds closer to the proportion of the general population aged 20–64 years who are from Indigenous backgrounds represents a more equitable outcome.

The process of identifying Indigenous staff members generally relies on self-identification as being Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. Where Indigenous people are asked to identify themselves, the accuracy of the data will partly depend on how they perceive the advantages (or disadvantages) of identification and whether these perceptions change over time. In addition, many factors will influence the willingness of Indigenous people to access police services, including familiarity with procedures for dealing with police and confidence in the effectiveness of police services.

Data reported for this indicator are not complete and not directly comparable.

The proportion of Indigenous police staff in 2007-08 was similar to the representation of Indigenous people in the population aged 20–64 years for most jurisdictions (figure 6.2).

Figure 6.2 Proportion of Indigenous staff in 2007-08 and Indigenous population aged 20–64 years^{a, b, c}



^a Indigenous staff numbers relate to those staff who self-identify as being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent. Indigenous staff are reported as the sum of both the operational and non-operational categories. ^b Information on Indigenous status is collected only at the time of recruitment. ^c Indigenous and non-Indigenous staff data were unable to be separated in Victoria.

Source: ABS (2004) *Indigenous population projections aged 20–64 years* Cat. no. 3238.0 (Low Series); State and Territory governments (unpublished); table 6A.9; 2009 Report, figure 6.6, p. 6.13.

Deaths in police custody and custody-related operations

‘Deaths in custody and custody-related operations’, and ‘Indigenous deaths in custody and custody-related operations’ are indicators of governments’ objective to provide safe custody for alleged offenders, and ensure fair and equitable treatment for both victims and alleged offenders (box 6.2).

Box 6.2 Deaths in custody and custody-related operations, and Indigenous deaths in custody and custody related operations

‘Deaths in police custody and custody-related operations’ and ‘Indigenous deaths in custody and custody-related operations’ are defined as the number of non-Indigenous and Indigenous deaths in police custody and custody-related operations.

A lower number of deaths in custody and custody-related operations is a better outcome.

Data reported for these indicators are comparable.

Nationally, there were 30 deaths in police custody and custody-related operations in 2007 (up from 22 in 2006). This total comprised 26 non-Indigenous deaths and 4 Indigenous deaths (table 6.1).

Table 6.1 Deaths in police custody and custody-related operations^{a, b}

	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Vic</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>WA</i>	<i>SA</i>	<i>Tas</i>	<i>ACT</i>	<i>NT</i>	<i>Aust</i>
Non-Indigenous deaths									
2003	11	4	7	3	2	–	1	–	28
2004	9	4	5	2	2	–	1	–	23
2005	3	5	6	–	1	–	–	–	15
2006	8	3	1	2	1	–	1	–	16
2007	5	7	3	4	4	–	–	2	26
Indigenous deaths									
2003	1	–	2	4	–	–	–	1	8
2004	2	1	2	1	1	–	–	1	8
2005	1	–	1	6	–	–	–	–	8
2006	–	1	1	2	1	–	–	1	6
2007	–	–	2	–	2	–	–	–	4
Total Indigenous deaths 2003–07^c	4	2	8	13	4	–	–	3	34
Total deaths									
2003	12	4	9	7	2	–	1	1	36
2004	11	5	7	3	3	–	1	1	31
2005	4	5	7	6	1	–	–	–	23
2006	8	4	2	4	2	–	1	1	22
2007	5	7	5	4	6	–	–	2	30
Total 2003–07	40	25	30	24	14	–	3	5	142

^a Deaths in police custody include: deaths in institutional settings (for example, police stations/lockups and police vehicles, or during transfer to or from such an institution, or in hospitals following transfer from an institution); and other deaths in police operations where officers were in close contact with the deceased (for example, most raids and shootings by police). Deaths in custody-related operations cover situations where officers did not have such close contact with the person as to be able to significantly influence or control the person's behaviour (for example, most sieges and most cases where officers were attempting to detain a person, such as pursuits). ^b The AIC Deaths in police custody and custody-related operations for 2006-07 are preliminary (unpublished) and final data in other publications might differ. ^c In 2006, two deaths occurred in NSW for which Indigenous status has not been determined. – Nil or rounded to zero.

Source: AIC (various years, unpublished), *Deaths in Custody*, Australia; table 6A.10; 2009 Report, figure 6.4, p. 6.61.

Attachment tables

Attachment tables for data within this chapter are contained in the attachment to the compendium. These tables are identified in references throughout this chapter by an 'A' suffix (for example, table 6A.3 is table 3 in the police attachment). The tables included in the attachment are listed below.

Table 6A.1	Police service expenditure, staff and asset descriptors, NSW
Table 6A.2	Police service expenditure, staff and asset descriptors, Victoria
Table 6A.3	Police service expenditure, staff and asset descriptors, Queensland
Table 6A.4	Police service expenditure, staff and asset descriptors, WA
Table 6A.5	Police service expenditure, staff and asset descriptors, SA
Table 6A.6	Police service expenditure, staff and asset descriptors, Tasmania
Table 6A.7	Police service expenditure, staff and asset descriptors, ACT
Table 6A.8	Police service expenditure, staff and asset descriptors, NT
Table 6A.9	Indigenous, sworn and unsworn police staff
Table 6A.10	Number of deaths in police custody and custody-related operations, 2003 to 2007