# 9 Economic participation

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| Strategic areas for action |
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In 2008, COAG agreed to the *National Partnership Agreement on Indigenous Economic Participation* (expired 30 June 2013) (COAG 2008) and the *National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing* (COAG 2009) with the aim of improving employment and economic development opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians.

Economic participation can affect people’s wellbeing in many ways. The indicators in this strategic area for action focus on the key factors that contribute to positive economic outcomes, as well as measures of the outcomes themselves:

* employment by full time/part time status, sector and occupation (section 9.1) — having a job can lead to improved incomes for families and communities, and also enhances self‑esteem and reduces social alienation. This indicator, which is closely associated with the COAG target of employment (section 4.6) examines some of the characteristics of the employment undertaken by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians
* Indigenous owned or controlled land and business (section 9.2) — land can be important to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians for a range of cultural, social and economic reasons. The economic benefits flowing from land depend on factors such as location, property rights, governance arrangements of landholding bodies, and the aspirations of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander landowners. Not all Indigenous businesses are necessarily associated with land.
* home ownership (section 9.3) — home ownership, although not an aspiration of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, is an important indicator of wealth and saving. (The availability of appropriate, affordable and secure housing is covered in section 10.1)
* income support (section 9.4) — although provision of income support can prevent individuals from experiencing deprivation, reliance on income support is correlated with the disadvantages that accompany low socioeconomic status (see discussion of individual and household income in section 4.9) and can contribute to long-term welfare dependency.

As noted above, economic participation is closely related to the COAG employment target (section 4.6) and the headline indicator on household and individual income (section 4.9).

The extent to which people participate in the economy is closely related to their personal circumstances (Hunter and Gray 2012). Other COAG targets and headline indicators that can directly influence economic participation are:

* early childhood education (section 4.3)
* reading, writing and numeracy (section 4.4)
* disability and chronic disease (section 4.8)
* imprisonment and juvenile detention rates (section 4.12).

Outcomes in the economic development area can be affected by outcomes in several other strategic areas, or can influence outcomes in other areas, including:

* governance, leadership and culture (governance capacity and skills) (chapter 5)
* early child development (basic skills for life and learning) (chapter 6)
* education and training (school attendance and engagement, transition from school to work) (chapter 7)
* healthy lives (access to primary health care, potentially preventable hospitalisations, avoidable mortality) (chapter 8)
* safe and supportive communities (alcohol, drug and substance misuse and harm) (chapter 11).

#### Attachment tables

Attachment tables for this chapter are identified in references throughout this chapter by an ‘A’ suffix (for example, table 9A.1.1). These tables can be found on the Review web page (www.pc.gov.au/gsp), or users can contact the Secretariat directly.

### References

COAG (Council of Australian Governments) 2008, *National Partnership Agreement on Indigenous Economic Participation*, http://www.federalfinancialrelations.gov.au/ content/npa/skills/economic\_participation/national\_partnership.pdf (accessed 31 January 2014).

—— (Council of Australian Governments) 2009, *National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing (variation)*, Canberra, http://www.federalfinancialrelations.gov.au/content/npa/housing/remote\_indigenous\_housing/national\_partnership\_variation.pdf (accessed 2 May 2014).

Hunter, B. and Gray, G. 2012, ‘Indigenous Labour Supply following a Period of Strong Economic Growth’, *Australian Journal of Labour Economics*, vol. 15, no. 2, pp. 141–149.

## 9.1 Employment by full time/part time status, sector and occupation[[1]](#footnote-1)

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| Box 9.1.1 Key messages |
| * In 2011–13, almost two-thirds of employed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians aged 18–64 years were in full time employment (65.0 per cent), an increase from 54.5 per cent in 2002, and fewer than 5 percentage points from the proportion of non-Indigenous Australians (69.6 per cent) (table 9A.1.1). * Nationally in 2011, over three-quarters of employed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians aged 15–64 years (76.8 per cent) worked in the private sector, compared with 84.3 per cent of employed non-Indigenous Australians (table 9A.1.5). * The proportion of employed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians aged  15–64 years in professional or managerial positions increased from 16.2 per cent in 2001 to 20.1 per cent in 2011. The proportion for non-Indigenous Australians increased from 32.6 to 34.8 per cent over the same period (tables 9A.1.14–16). * In 2012-13, 20.9 per cent of employed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians aged 18–64 years in remote and very remote areas were employed under the Community Development Employment Program (CDEP), which has characteristics of both employment and ‘work for the dole’. The majority of these CDEP participants were employed part time (83.6 per cent) and most were located in very remote areas (86.3 per cent) (table 9A.1.2). Nearly all CDEP participants are employed in non-professional jobs (Hunter and Gray 2012). |
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| Box 9.1.2 Measures of employment by full time/part time status, sector and occupation |
| There are three main measures for this indicator:   * *Working hours (full time or part time)* is defined as the proportions of employed people that are employed full time and part time. The main data source is the ABS Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey (AATSIHS)/National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey (NATSISS), with the most recent available data for 2012-13. Data for the non‑Indigenous population are sourced from the Australian Health Survey (AHS)/National Health Survey (NHS), with the most recent data for 2011-12. Indicators using both AATSIHS (2012-13) and AHS (2011-12) are referenced as 2011–13. Supplementary data are also available from the Census of Population and Housing, with the most recent available data for 2011. Survey and Census data are not directly comparable.   (continued next page) |
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| Box 9.1.2 (continued) |
| * *Sector* of *employment (public or private)* is defined as the proportion of employed people employed in each sector. The main data source is the Census, with the most recent available data for 2011. AATSIHS/NATSISS data are not available for this measure. * *Occupation* is defined as the proportion of employed people employed in each occupation type. The main data source is the Census, with the most recent available data for 2011. AATSIHS/NATSISS data are not available for this measure.   Data are also reported for a supplementary measure of the proportion of employed people in each industry.  AATSIHS/NATSISS data are reported for persons aged 18–64 years to enable comparisons of outcomes in 2004‑05, 2008 and 2011–13 with those in 1994 and 2002. Census data are available for persons aged 15–64 years.  Data are available for all jurisdictions by age, sex, and remoteness. |
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This indicator is closely related to the employment indicator in section 4.6, which includes data on labour market participation, employment and unemployment rates, and is aligned with the associated National Indigenous Reform Agreement (NIRA) indicator. This section examines some of the characteristics of the employment undertaken by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, including occupation and sector of employment.

### CDEP

Census data are used for reporting on sector of employment and occupation, as they provide the most detailed information. However, these data are influenced by the Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP) program, which has characteristics of both employment and ‘work for the dole’ (more information on CDEP is provided in section 4.6). In the Census, CDEP participants were only separately identified for discrete Indigenous communities (the CDEP item was not asked of people in other areas). These CDEP participants were classed as employed (rather than as unemployed or not in the labour force). The eventual phasing out of CDEP (the program is expected to cease mid-2017) is likely to have affected the characteristics of the employed workforce.

For context, 2012-13 survey data show that 20.9 per cent of employed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians aged 18–64 years in remote and very remote areas were employed under the CDEP. The majority of these CDEP participants were employed part time (83.6 per cent) and most were located in very remote areas (86.3 per cent). Nearly three-quarters (74.0 per cent) of the CDEP participants in very remote areas were employed part time (table 9A.1.2). Nearly all CDEP participants are employed in non‑professional jobs (Hunter and Gray 2012).

### Full time and part time employment status

While many people work part time by preference (ABS 2014), for others it may reflect underemployment — which occurs when an individual would like to, and is available to work more hours. Underemployment has been found to be particularly common among Indigenous employees (Hunter 2002).

In 2012-13, almost two-thirds of employed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians were in full time employment (65.0 per cent), an increase from 54.5 per cent in 2002, and less than 5 percentage points from the proportion for non-Indigenous Australians (69.6 per cent) (table 9A.1.1). The largest increases in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander full time employment were in remote and very remote areas (from 45.3 per cent in 2004-05 to 56.6 per cent in 2012 13) (table 9A.1.1).

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| Figure 9.1.1 Proportion of employed people aged 18–64 years in full time employment, 2002 to 2011–13a,b,c,d |
| |  | | --- | | Figure 9.1.1 Proportion of employed people aged 18-64 years in full time employment, 2002 to 2011-13   More details can be found within the text surrounding this image. | |
| a Includes CDEP employment. b There is no non‑Indigenous comparator available for 2002. c Error bars represent 95 per cent confidence intervals around each estimate. d The 2011–13 reference year includes data for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians from the 2012‑13 AATSIHS. Data for non‑Indigenous Australians are from the 2011–13 AHS (for the period 2011‑12). |
| *Sources*: ABS (unpublished) NATSISS 2002; ABS (unpublished) NATSIHS 2004 05; ABS (unpublished) NHS 2004 05; ABS (unpublished) NATSISS 2008; ABS (unpublished) NHS 2007 08; ABS (unpublished) AATSIHS 2012 13 (core component); ABS (unpublished) AHS 2011–13 (2011 12 Core component); table 9A.1.1. |
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The gap in full time employment between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non‑Indigenous Australians is narrowing (from 11.5 percentage points in 2004-05 to less than 5 percentage points in 2011–13), due to the combination of an increase in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander full time employment and a decrease in non‑Indigenous full time employment (from 71.4 per cent in 2004 05 to 69.6 per cent in 2011–13) (figure 9.1.1).

Data for this measure for people aged 15–64 years by State/Territory, age, sex and remoteness are available from the Census back to 2001 (tables 9A.1.3–4).

### Employment by sector and occupation

Data from the 2011 Census show that over three-quarters (76.8 per cent) of employed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians aged 15–64 years worked in the private sector, with 23.2 per cent working in the public sector. This compares with 84.3 per cent of employed non-Indigenous Australians working in the private sector, and 15.7 per cent working in the public sector. The proportion of employed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians working in the private sector in 2011 decreased (with a corresponding increase in the public sector) as remoteness increased (table 9A.1.5).

Under the National Partnership Agreement on Indigenous Economic Participation [which expired on 30 June 2013] (COAG 2008), COAG agreed to a national target of at least 2.7 per cent of public sector employment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians by 2015, to reflect the expected national Indigenous working age population share. Based on current trends, this target is unlikely to be achieved (ANAO 2014).The 2012−13 State of the Service Report (APSC 2013) showed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation in the Australian (Commonwealth) public sector as at 30 June 2013 was 2.3 per cent, similar to the previous five years.

Professional and managerial occupations require a skill set corresponding to a bachelor degree or higher qualification (Taylor et al. 2012). Information on participation and attainment of tertiary education can be found in section 4.7 of this report. Data from the 2011 Census show that of employed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians aged 15–64 years whose occupation was known, 20.1 per cent were in professional or managerial occupations (table 9A.1.14), an increase from 16.2 per cent in 2001 (table 9A.1.16). The proportion for non‑Indigenous Australians in 2011-12 was 34.8 per cent (table 9A.1.14), an increase from 32.6 per cent in 2001 (table 9A.1.16).

### Employment by industry

In 2011–13, the largest proportion of employed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians aged 18–64 years were in the ‘health care and social assistance’ (14.4 per cent) and ‘public administration and safety’ (12.9 per cent) industry sectors, with these proportions similar to 2008 (tables 9A1.17 and 9A1.19). For non‑Indigenous employed people, the largest proportions were employed in the ‘healthcare and social assistance’ (11.8 per cent) and ‘retail trade’ (10.1 per cent) industry sectors (tables 9A1.18 and 9A1.20).

Census data for 2011 show similar trends (tables 9A.1.21 and 9A.1.23).

### Things that work

A number of programs are targeted at increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment. Box 9.1.3 provides an example of a promising program that is improving employment outcomes.

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| Box 9.1.3 Things that work — improving Indigenous employment |
| Although it has not been formally evaluated, the Steering Committee has identified the Mossman Gorge Centre as a promising program worth further examination, particularly the cost‑effectiveness of the program.  **Mossman Gorge Centre** (Queensland) opened in June 2012. The Centre is an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander eco‑tourism development developed by the Indigenous Land Corporation (ILC) in collaboration with the local Kuku Yalanji people, on land purchased through the ILC’s Land Acquisition program and supported through the Indigenous Employment Program. It offers visitors improved access to the Mossman Gorge World Heritage area (including a café and art gallery, shuttle access to the gorge and a choice of Indigenous cultural tours) as well as providing employment and training opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (ILC 2013). More than 240 000 people have visited the Centre, which is providing a growing income base for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community (ILC nd; Australian Government 2013).  Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment is a key outcome of the centre and after its first year of operation, 90 per cent of the Centre’s staff are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ILC 2013). To assist Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians to achieve employment, a residential training facility for up to 20 students was built adjacent to the Centre. The training facility provides local people with accredited skills that enable them able to work at the Centre and in broader hospitality and tourism industries. In 2012‑13, 21 out of 29 students in a 20‑week Certificate II in Hospitality graduated, and 15 students were placed into employment at the Centre and elsewhere (ILC 2014).  Mossman Gorge Centre received a 2013 Australian Business Award for Community Contribution, in recognition of the long‑term employment and training and economic development benefits provided to the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community (ILC 2013). |
| *Sources*: ILC nd, *Mossman Gorge Centre*, http://www.ilc.gov.au/Tourism-Businesses/Profiles/Mossman-Gorge-Centre (accessed 8 October 2014); ILC 2013*, Annual Report 2012 - 2013*, Australian Government, Canberra; Australian Government 2013, *Closing the Gap Prime Minister’s Report 2013*, Australian Government, Canberra. |
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### Future directions in data

Early time series data for this indicator were only available for people aged 18–64 years. Future reporting on this indicator may include a shorter time series for people aged from 15–64 years to align the scope of reporting with the general employment indicator in section 4.6 (including the associated NIRA indicator) and supplementary Census data.

CDEP status was only partially collected in the Census. Whilst this program is being phased out, if equivalent programs are put in place in the future, it would be useful to have this information collected as part of the Census and other surveys.

In late 2013, the Prime Minister asked Mr Andrew Forrest to lead a Review of Indigenous Training and Employment Programmes. The review was finalised and the report released in August 2014. The Australian Government undertook consultations on the recommendations in the report until 20 September 2014 and at the time of finalising this report was anticipated to provide its response after consideration of the review’s recommendations.

### References

ABS 2014, *Underemployed Workers, Australia, September 2013*, Cat. No. 6265.0, Australian Bureau of Statistics, Canberra, http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf /6265.0 (accessed 3 June 2014).

ANAO 2014, *Indigenous Employment in Australian Government Entities*, Performance Audit, Audit Report No.33 2013–14, Australian National Audit Office, Canberra.

APSC 2013, *State of the Service 2012-13*, Australian Public Service Commission, http://www.apsc.gov.au/about-the-apsc/parliamentary/state-of-the-service/sosr-2012-13 (accessed 10 January 2014).

COAG 2008, *National Partnership Agreement on Indigenous Economic Participation*, http://www.federalfinancialrelations.gov.au/content/npa/skills/economic\_participation/national\_partnership.pdf (accessed 31 January 2014).

Hunter, B. 2002, *Institutional Factors Underpinning Indigenous Labour Force Participation: The Role of the CDEP Scheme and Education*, Working Paper no. 14, Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research, Australian National University, Canberra.

Hunter, B. and Gray, M. 2012, *Continuity and change in the CDEP Scheme*, CAEPR Working Paper No. 84/2012, http://caepr.anu.edu.au/Publications/WP/2012WP84.php (accessed 21 January 2014).

Taylor, J., Gray, M., Hunter, B., Yap, M. and Adamson, J. 2012, *Higher education and the growth of Indigenous participation in professional and managerial occupations*, CAEPR Working Paper 83/2012, http://caepr.anu.edu.au/Publications/WP/ 2012WP83.php (accessed 21 January 2014).

## 9.2 Indigenous owned or controlled land and business[[2]](#footnote-2)

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| Box 9.2.1 Key messages |
| * Ownership and control of land and business can provide a range of social and economic benefits to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, including increased income and employment. * Indigenous Land Corporation data show that, in April 2014, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians collectively owned or controlled 16 per cent of land in Australia. Most of this land (97.9 per cent) was in very remote areas (table 9A.2.2). * Nationally in 2013: * native title had been determined to exist in full or in part in 20.7 per cent of Australia, up from 4.7 per cent in 2004 (figure 9.2.1). Very remote areas had the greatest proportion (25.6 per cent), with less than 3 per cent in all other remoteness areas (table 9A.2.4) * registered Indigenous Land Use Agreements (ILUAs)[[3]](#footnote-3) covered 23.8 per cent of Australia. The cumulative number of ILUAs increased from 84 in June 2003 to 768 in June 2013 (figure 9.2.2). * In 2012‑13, 5.8 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees aged  18–64 years were self‑employed. This proportion has not changed significantly since 1994, whilst the non‑Indigenous proportion has declined over time (from 20.5 per cent in 2001 to 10.5 per cent in 2011‑12) (table 9A.2.13). |
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| Box 9.2.2 Measures of Indigenous owned or controlled land and business |
| There are five main measures for this indicator. The different forms of land tenure reported overlap and cannot be aggregated.   * *Indigenous owned or controlled land* is defined as the proportion of all land which is Indigenous owned or controlled. Indigenous owned or controlled land may be freehold, leasehold, crown, license, Aboriginal Deed of Grant in Trust or not stated tenure. The most recent available data for this measure are from the Indigenous Land Corporation, as at 30 April 2014 (all jurisdictions; remoteness). |
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| Box 9.2.2 (continued) |
| * *Native title* is defined as the proportion of land where native title has been found to exist wholly or partially. This is measured as at 30 June each year. The most recent available data for this measure are for 30 June 2013, from the National Native Title Tribunal (NNTT) (all jurisdictions; remoteness). * *Indigenous land use agreements* (ILUAs) has two sub‑measures, defined as: * the number of ILUAs that intersect each State/Territory * the proportion of land subject to ILUAs   The most recent available data for both measures are for 30 June 2013, from the NNTT (all jurisdictions; remoteness).   * *Economic benefits of Indigenous rights to land* is reported using qualitative information about: home ownership; service delivery; customary economy; tradeable assets; eco‑services/land management and commercial businesses. * *Self‑employment and Indigenous business* is defined as the number of employed people aged 18–64 years who are self‑employed. The main data source is the ABS Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey (AATSIHS)/National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey (NATSISS) with the most recent data for 2012‑13 (all jurisdictions; age; sex; non‑remote areas only). Data for the non‑Indigenous population are sourced from the ABS Australian Health Survey (AHS)/National Health Survey (NHS), with data available for 2011-12. Indicators using both AATSIHS (2012-13) and AHS (2011-12) are referenced as 2011–13. Supplementary data are available from the ABS Census of Population and Housing (Census) with the most recent data for 2011 (all jurisdictions; age; sex; remoteness). |
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Ownership and control of land can provide a range of benefits to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians. Land ownership may lead to greater autonomy and economic independence, and more political influence. It can also deliver commercial benefits like increased income, employment and profits (Altman and Dillon 2004). Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses (which may or may not be associated with Indigenous owned or controlled land) can provide a source of employment and income for individuals and communities.

The focus on this section is on Indigenous owned or controlled land and business as measures of economic participation. The social and cultural importance of land to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians is discussed in section 5.8 (access to traditional lands and waters).

### Indigenous owned and controlled land

This section examines the extent to which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians have communal rights over land that are virtually equivalent to freehold title. Though similar, transfer rights for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander land are quite restricted compared to those for ordinary freehold title.

Data are reported on purchases by the Indigenous Land Corporation (ILC), Native Title decisions and ILUAs. Consolidated data are not available on other mechanisms for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians to own or control land interests, including: management and return of land [held in perpetuity] through bodies such as the Aboriginal Lands Trust in South Australia and the Aboriginal Land Council of Tasmania, and Protected Areas returned by the Tasmanian Government, and the acquisition of private freehold title by individual Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians (some relevant information on private freehold title is in section 9.3 home ownership).

Nationally in 2013, Indigenous owned or controlled land comprised 16 per cent of the area of Australia (table 9A.2.1). Nearly all (97.9 per cent) Indigenous owned or controlled land was in very remote areas of Australia (table 9A.2.2). These data measure the area of land held under different forms of title.[[4]](#footnote-4) However, land area is an imperfect indicator of the economic benefits that may be derived from land. Much of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned or controlled land in Australia is of great cultural significance but low commercial value.

#### Indigenous Land Corporation purchases

The ILC purchases land for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians that cannot be acquired via other means (for example, land that is not available for claim under native title). Between 1995 and 30 June 2013, the ILC acquired 246 properties (of which 170 have been divested), covering almost 6 billion hectares, in remote, rural and urban locations, worth approximately $178 million (ILC 2013) (see table 9A.2.12 for a map of the ILC’s land acquisition activity. An Australian National Audit Office (ANAO) audit in 2013 found that whilst acquisition and divestment results were lower than the ILC targets the ILC had managed to acquire a diverse range of properties, and noted that the timely and successful divestment of properties (to Indigenous organisations/corporations) was recognised by the ILC as a recurring issue (ANAO 2013).

#### Native title

In 1992, the High Court of Australia decided in the Mabo case that the common law of Australia would recognise native title.[[5]](#footnote-5) This decision led to the Commonwealth *Native Title Act 1993*, which provided a process for native title claims to be determined through the court system. The Federal Court or another individual or body can mediate a claim (Coombs 2012).

Native title provides Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians with communal rights and interests, with varying levels of control and management of lands and waters. Native title varies according to the rights and interests under the group’s traditional laws and customs, and the extent to which a government has created or asserted rights that are inconsistent with any claimed native title right. Table 9A.2.9 illustrates the potential effect of existing broad land tenure on the existence of native title, and shows that, as at 30 June 2013, the majority of NSW, Victoria, Queensland and Tasmania have extinguished native title (meaning all native title rights are lost under Australian law).

Applications for determinations of native title commence as proceedings in the Federal Court and remain until they are resolved through determination, withdrawal, strike‑out or dismissal. Following the 2009 amendments to the *Native Title Act 1993*, additional approaches to the settlement of claims were introduced to increase the rate of resolution (for example, settlement packages), and the Federal Court of Australia has resolved native title claims at an increased rate (Federal Court of Australia 2013). Of the 232 native title determinations made since 1994, 182 found that native title existed over the whole or part of the determination area, and 50 found that native title did not exist (NNTT unpublished).[[6]](#footnote-6) As at 30 June 2013, 457 active applications were in the system.

As at 30 June 2013, native title had been determined to exist in full or in part in 20.7 per cent of the total area of Australia, compared with 4.7 per cent in June 2004, with the largest proportions in WA (35.6 per cent) and SA (31.6 per cent) (figure 9.2.1). Tables 9A.2.7–8 show maps of determinations of native title by State and Territory and remoteness.

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| Figure 9.2.1 Proportion of land within states and territories where native title is determined to exist, 2004 to 2013a,b,c |
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| a At 30 June. b Australian total includes Jervis Bay Territory and Commonwealth waters where determinations of native title have been made. c There have been no determinations of title in Tasmania or the ACT. |
| *Source*: NNTT (unpublished); table 9A.2.3. |
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#### Indigenous Land Use Agreements

Indigenous Land Use Agreements (ILUAs) provide an alternative mechanism for resolving native title issues, and may precede or follow a determination of native title, or might be negotiated in the place of such a determination. ILUAs are agreements about the use and management of land and waters, made between one or more native title groups and other parties such as mining companies. ILUAs are made possible by the *Native Title Act 1993*, and must be registered with the NNTT. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians may negotiate agreements that lead to economic benefits, like employment and compensation, or to meet other aspirations in ways not possible under native title (NNTT 2010).

The proportion of land subject to ILUAs refers to the total area of a State or Territory covered by registered ILUAs as a proportion of the total area of the State or Territory. ILUAs can overlap (a place may be subject to multiple ILUAs) but the following figures do not include any double counting. (Data on the gross area of ILUAs is in table 9A.2.5). As at 30 June 2013, 23.8 per cent of the total area of Australia was subject to ILUAs, with most of the land (79.9 per cent) in very remote areas (table 9A.2.6).

The total number of ILUAs increased from 84 at 30 June 2003 to 768 at 30 June 2013 (figure 9.2.2). Most ILUAs were in Queensland with the 500th agreement registered on 25 November 2013 (NNTT 2013).

Tables 9A.2.10–11 contain maps showing the areas covered by registered ILUAs by State and Territory and remoteness.

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| Figure 9.2.2 Indigenous Land Use Agreements, 2003 to 2013a,b |
| |  | | --- | | Figure 9.2.2 Indigenous land use agreements, 2003 to 2013  More details can be found within the text surrounding this image. | |
| a Total number of ILUAs in place as at 30 June in each year; totals are cumulative. b There are no ILUAs in Tasmania or ACT. |
| *Source*: NNTT (unpublished); table 9A.2.5. |
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### The economic benefits of land

The potential to derive economic benefits from activities on land may depend on: the location of the land, particularly in remote areas; the attributes of the land; the extent of ownership and control over the land (for example, communal or otherwise restricted land title may limit selling or leasing the land, or restrict land use); and the capacity and aspirations of the traditional owners.[[7]](#footnote-7) Altman and Dillon (2004) outline seven potential economic benefits that may accrue to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians from rights to land including: home ownership, service delivery, customary economy, land management, tradeable assets, eco‑services and commercial business. Many of these sources of benefit overlap.

#### Home ownership

Private home and land ownership can provide economic benefits from living in, renting out, selling or borrowing against the property (see section 9.3 for more information about home ownership). Many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, particularly in remote and very remote areas, live in community housing built on communally owned land. ‘Inalienable’ communal title means land cannot be sold or mortgaged.[[8]](#footnote-8) This ensures ongoing Indigenous ownership of land but can create barriers to individuals using land for housing or business, or as security for a loan.

In Queensland, the Indigenous trustees of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander land can grant 99 year leases of land, which are perpetual in nature, via Deed of Grant in Trust (DOGIT) to Aboriginal members of the community. The granting of a 99 year lease enables the leaseholder to borrow to purchase an existing dwelling or finance a new dwelling on vacant land. In SA, the Aboriginal Lands Trust can grant 99 year leases of land to individuals under its legislation. Currently, the majority of residential land is leased to Aboriginal community councils for 99 years. In the NT, individual property rights in town areas on Indigenous communally owned land have been encouraged by the introduction of 99 year head leases to government entities, which can subsequently make sub‑leases, which can be used for private home ownership, business or other purposes. The first township lease was entered into for Wurrumiyanga (Nguiu) on the Tiwi Islands in 2007 and has enabled home ownership in the community (FaHCSIA 2013; Terrill 2013). Township leases have since been entered into over the Groote Eylandt region communities of Angurugu, Umbakumba and Milyakburra in 2008 and over the Tiwi Island communities of Milikapiti and Ranku in 2011.

#### Service delivery

Communally owned land can be used to site and deliver services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, such as community housing, aged care and postal services, while income from land investments can enable the funding of services.

#### Customary and hybrid economy

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians can benefit from customary (non‑monetary) activities associated with land. Fishing, hunting and gathering associated with living ‘on country’ remain important parts of some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities (Altman 2001; Fordham et al. 2010). Some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians have adapted customary activities, such as food gathering, to create products for sale, becoming part of a hybrid economy that intersects with the market economy (Altman 2009 cited in Russell 2011) (see section on commercial businesses).

#### Tradeable assets

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians have negotiated land use agreements with governments and others (for example, mining companies and pastoralists). These agreements can yield benefits in the form of monetary payments; support for community services, facilities and infrastructure; employment and training programs; and protection of cultural sites. Amendments to the Tax Laws Act in June 2013 helped clarify the taxation treatment of native title benefits by stating that these benefits are not subject to income tax (including capital gains tax). This may assist Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians to unlock the economic potential of their native title (NNTT unpublished).[[9]](#footnote-9)

#### Eco‑services and land management

Many Commonwealth, State and Territory programs recognise and employ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australian’s land management skills, through joint management of conservation reserves, national parks and marine parks.

Indigenous Protected Areas (IPAs) are areas of Indigenous‑owned land or sea where traditional owners have agreed with the Australian Government to promote biodiversity and cultural resource conservation. As at January 2014, there were 51 agreements in place, spanning over 36 million hectares (Department of the Environment 2014). IPA agreements provide funding that can be used to employ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians to undertake the work required to meet the goals of the IPA.

#### Commercial businesses

Enterprise development, utilising the natural resources found on Indigenous owned or controlled land, provides opportunities for economic development whilst allowing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians to maintain close connection to the land and maintain customary practices (Bawinanga Aboriginal Corporation 2007; Fordham, Fogarty and Fordham 2010). Examples of natural resource enterprises include: carbon abatement programs and eco‑services; wildlife ventures involving the collection of native animals and plants for the medicine, bush food and pet trades; tourism businesses; art enterprises; and pastoral businesses such as beef cattle enterprises and orchards.

### Things that work

A case study of a promising program that supports Indigenous owned or controlled land is presented in box 9.2.3.

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| Box 9.2.3 Things that work — Indigenous owned or controlled land |
| Although the outcomes have not been formally evaluated, the Steering Committee has identified the Indigenous Landholder Services as a promising program worth further examination.  **Indigenous Landholder Services (ILS)** is a collaborative partnership in WA between the Department of Agriculture and Food WA (DAFWA) and the Indigenous Land Corporation (ILC). Established in 1996 in one remote community, ILS has expanded to include 70 properties in six geographic areas. The program focusses on technical support, governance development and business management mentoring to increase economic benefits to Aboriginal pastoral and agricultural producers (DAFWA, 2014). The program employs four Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians full‑time to deliver support and services. As at July 2014, advice and support had been provided to 72 landowners. In 2012‑13, training was delivered on 24 properties with 227 Aboriginal people attending training.  ILS advice and recommendations have contributed to the following improvements:   * 33 properties improved land management practices, * 14 properties increased their annual income, * 24 businesses expanded their operations through improved infrastructure and/or expanded herd size, and * 22 business and property management plans were developed increased viability and profitability have enabled stations to increase employment.   In the six months to June 2014, 72 properties have gained sufficient capability and independence to reduce the need for ILS assistance, while three are now independent (DAFWA ILS 2014).  In 2011, the ILS won the nation’s top award for Indigenous Economic Development from Economic Development Australia (Government of WA, 2011). |
| *Sources*:DAFWA (2014) website, personal communications, ILS Winter Newsletter; Government of WA (2011) media statement. |
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### Self‑employment and Indigenous owned business

Self‑employment and participation in ownership of enterprises can allow individuals to improve overall levels of economic participation through increased financial capacity and independence.

Both the public and private sectors have a direct role in supporting Indigenous business, through programs, finance and other business support (Hunter 2013). Since 2009, the Business Council of Australia (BCA) has surveyed its member companies on their Indigenous engagement. In 2013, 49 of the 95 respondent companies (51.5 per cent) reported that they had knowingly used an Indigenous business in their supply chain (an increase from 16 companies in 2009), whilst 37 per cent of respondent companies said government tender/reporting requirements would influence them in strengthening their Indigenous engagement strategies (BCA 2013).

In 2011–13, 5.8 per cent of employed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians in non‑remote areas aged 18–64 years were self‑employed, compared with 10.5 per cent of non‑Indigenous Australians (table 9A.2.13).

Between 1994 and 2012-13, the proportion of employed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians who were self‑employed remained stable (ranging between 8.6 per cent in 2001 and 5.8 per cent in 2012‑13). The corresponding proportion for non‑Indigenous Australians almost halved over the same period (from 20.5 per cent in 2001 to 10.5 per cent in 2011‑12).

Census data are available for a broader scope of reporting (for remote and non‑remote areas and for people aged 15–64 years). Data from the 2011 Census show that, of employed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians aged 15–64 years, 5.9 per cent were self‑employed. Whilst this proportion has remained fairly constant since 2001, there has been a slight decrease for non‑Indigenous Australians over the same period (from 16.6 per cent to 14.5 per cent) (table 9A.2.15). Data by State and Territory, age, sex and remoteness are available in tables 9A.2.13–15.

### Things that work

A program that supports Indigenous owned or controlled businesses is presented in box 9.2.4.

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| Box 9.2.4 Things that work — Indigenous owned or controlled business |
| **Supply Nation** (formerly Australian Indigenous Minority Supplier Council) was established to assist Indigenous businesses with Certified Supplier status to enter into commercial relationships with some of Australia’s largest corporations and agencies who wish to purchase goods and services (IBA 2014).  Currently Supply Nation works with 141 member organisations and 274 certified Indigenous suppliers. Its member entry requirement is that the business be at least 51 per cent Indigenous owned. Since its inception in 2009, Supply Nation has recorded more than $91.8 million in purchases and more than $98.6 million in contracts between member organisations and Indigenous businesses (Supply Nation, 2014). There are a broad range of Supply Nation certified Indigenous businesses, and cover industries including arts and crafts, transport, hospitality services, security services, employment services and cosmetics (AIHW 2014). |
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| Box 9.2.4 (continued) |
| A post‑implementation review of the former Council indicated the concept was achieving significant success in the first two years of the pilot project which then led to Supply Nation being established (AIHW 2014; DEEWR 2011).  The Closing the Gap Clearinghouse has found the following practices have helped Indigenous businesses and community‑based enterprises:   * government programs that assist Indigenous people to access finance that has otherwise not been available through commercial avenues * services that provide financial and business advice and ongoing support * membership bodies (such as Supply Nation) that link Indigenous businesses into the supply chains of large companies and government agencies (AIHW 2014). |
| *Sources*: Supply Nation (2013, 2014), *Annual Report 2012‑2013*; DEEWR (2011), *Post‑implementation review of the Australian Indigenous Minority Supplier Council*; Indigenous Business Australia (2014), Supply Nation; AIHW (2014), *Success factors for Indigenous entrepreneurs and community‑based enterprises*, Resource sheet no. 30 produced for the Closing the Gap Clearinghouse. |
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### Future directions in data

Self‑employment data by Indigenous status in remote areas are not currently available from ABS surveys — largely due to the difficulty of obtaining a sufficient sample for reliable estimates. An alternative approach to collecting these data should be investigated.

The ABS has developed a statistical definition for an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned business (ABS 2012). However, there is currently no data collection.

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## 9.3 Home ownership[[10]](#footnote-10)

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| Box 9.3.1 Key messages |
| * The proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults who lived in a home owned, with or without a mortgage, by a member of their household increased from 21.5 per cent in 1994 to 27.4 per cent in 2002 and 30.1 per cent in 2012-13 (table 9A.3.3). Earlier data are not available, but the proportion for non‑Indigenous Australians decreased from 73.7 per cent in 2002 to 71.8 per cent in 2011‑12 (table 9A.3.2). * Home ownership declined with remoteness for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, ranging from 38.4 per cent in major cities to 5.1 per cent in very remote areas in 2012‑13 (figure 9.3.1). |
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| Box 9.3.2 Measures of home ownership |
| There are two main measures for this indicator.   * *Living in a home owned with or without a mortgage* is defined as the proportion of people aged 18 years and over, living in homes someone in their household owned, with or without a mortgage. The main data source is the ABS Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey (AATSIHS))/National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey (NATSISS), with the most recent data available for 2012-13 (NATSIHS component). Data for the non-Indigenous population are sourced from the Australian Health Survey (AHS)/National Health Survey (NHS)), with data for 2011-12 (NHS component). Indicators using both AATSIHS (2012-13) and AHS (2011-12) are referenced as 2011–13. Supplementary data are also available from the Census of Population and Housing, with the most recent available data for 2011 (all jurisdictions; age, sex; remoteness). Survey and Census data are not directly comparable. * *Proportion of Indigenous households owning or purchasing a home* is defined as the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households owning or purchasing a home as a proportion of the total number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households. An Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander household is defined as a household where one or more occupants identify as being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin. Data are sourced from the AATSIHS/NATSISS, with the most recent data available for 2012‑13 (NATSIHS component) (all jurisdictions; location; tenure).   Supplementary data are also provided on the proportion of people living in public, community and private rental housing. |
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Home ownership is closely related to outcomes in other indicators in this report, particularly those concerning education, income and employment. Home ownership is an important indicator of wealth and saving, as owning a home provides a secure asset base against which people can borrow, contributes to financial stability and provides opportunity for wealth creation. Home ownership also provides security of tenure and allows control over living arrangements. Research highlights the perceived intergenerational benefits of home ownership for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians (rather than economic benefits such as selling a house for profit) (FaHCSIA 2010; Memmott et al. 2009).

During consultations for previous editions of this report, many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians said that home ownership was an important part of improving wellbeing and an essential indicator in the framework. Some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians said that home ownership was important to them as a connection to the land, particularly in closely settled regions where native title has been extinguished and there are limited opportunities for land grants. Others suggested that not all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians want to own their own homes; people who move frequently for family and cultural reasons may prefer to rent accommodation. Some of those in more remote areas and living more traditional lifestyles may prefer a more communal form of ownership.

Research suggests that some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians may face greater barriers to attaining home ownership than those faced by non‑Indigenous Australians (Birdsall-Jones and Corunna 2008; FaHCSIA 2010; Szava and Moran 2008). Although affordability is a widespread issue in Australia, smaller markets and higher construction costs in remote areas are also problematic for home ownership (Crabtree et al. 2012; FaHCSIA 2013). The availability of appropriate, affordable and secure housing is covered in section 10.1, ‘Overcrowding in housing’.

The Australian National Audit Office (ANAO) found that barriers associated with home ownership for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians included: higher unemployment rates; intergenerational welfare dependency; lower incomes and likely lack of savings; limited access to loans; and lack of information about financial planning. These factors were particularly prevalent amongst those living in remote and very remote areas (ANAO 2010). Additional barriers include access to initial capital, complexities of the lending process, and a shortage of affordable housing (FaHCSIA 2013).

Under COAG agreements, governments have committed to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians having the same housing opportunities as other Australians, and reducing Indigenous disadvantage by improving access to mainstream housing, including home ownership (COAG 2012). Community Land Trusts (CLT) are being explored as a way to increase home ownership amongst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians. A CLT is a not‑for‑profit organisation that purchases or leases land or property to provide affordable housing and community benefit in the longer term (Crabtree et al. 2012). Collective community ownership bestows the benefits of ongoing control of the land and reduces the risk of losing access through the establishment of freehold title (Crabtree et al. 2012; Wensing and Taylor 2012).

A report prepared by FaHCSIA for the then Select Council on Housing and Homelessness (FaHCSIA 2013) divides Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander home ownership into two categories: ‘established market’ and ‘on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander land’. Established markets generally offer higher appreciation in value and hence greater economic opportunities and wealth creation — but can be less affordable. Home ownership on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander land provides ongoing connection to the land. However, challenges in purchasing or acquiring a private interest on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander land include land tenure arrangements. For example, where land is not freehold it cannot be sold and cannot be mortgaged. This ensures its continuing ownership by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, but means that developments on the land need to be pursued through leasing and sub‑leasing arrangements. Australia’s legislative provisions for sub‑leasing and private sector financing are different in every State and Territory. In addition, most communally owned Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander land is located in remote and very remote areas with higher infrastructure, development, construction and maintenance costs, limited access to employment and services. Section 9.2 looks at ‘Indigenous owned or controlled land and business’ in more detail.

The Queensland Government and the Australian Government (in respect of the Northern Territory) have undertaken Indigenous land tenure reform to enable and encourage home ownership by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians. Amendments to land rights legislation have created the potential for varied levels of private property rights on Aboriginal land. Indigenous land ownership in other states and territories is determined by separate legislation in each jurisdiction. More information on Indigenous land tenure is included in section 9.2.

### Living in a home owned by a member of the household

The proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults living in a home owned, with or without a mortgage, by a member of their household increased from 21.5 per cent in 1994 to 27.4 per cent in 2002, and 30.1 per cent in 2012-13 (table 9A.3.3). A marked increase in the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults living in homes owned with a mortgage (an increase of 11.6 percentage points) offset a decrease in the proportion living in homes owned outright (a decrease of 3.0 percentage points).

Earlier data are not available, but the proportion of non-Indigenous Australians living in a home owned, with or without a mortgage, by a member of their household decreased from 73.7 per cent in 2002 to 71.8 per cent in 2011-12 (table 9A.3.2).

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| Figure 9.3.1 Proportion of people aged 18 years and over living in homes owned with or without a mortgage, by remoteness,  2011–13a,b,c,d |
| |  | | --- | | Figure 9.3.1 Proportion of people aged 18 years and over living in homes owned with or without a mortgage, by remoteness, 2011-13  More details can be found within the text surrounding this image. | |
| a The 2011–13 reference year includes data for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians from the 2012‑13 AATSIHS (NATSIHS component). Data for non‑Indigenous Australians are from the 2011–13 AHS (NHS component for the period 2011‑12). b Data are not available for non‑Indigenous people in very remote areas from the 2011‑12 NHS. c Comprises participants in rent/buy schemes and those living in a household in which payments were being made on mortgages or secured loans towards the purchase of the dwelling. d Error bars represent 95 per cent confidence intervals around each estimate. |
| *Sources*: ABS (unpublished) National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey 2012‑13; ABS (unpublished) National Health Survey 2011‑12; tables 9A.3.1-2. |
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In 2011–13, a lower proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults (30.1 per cent) than non‑Indigenous adults (71.8 per cent) lived in a home owned, with or without a mortgage, by a member of their household (figure 9.3.1). For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, this proportion was higher in major cities (38.4 per cent), inner regional (38.1 per cent) and outer regional (29.7 per cent) areas than in remote (19.7 per cent) or very remote (5.1 per cent) areas. There were no significant differences in the proportions for non‑Indigenous Australians across remoteness areas (noting that the data source did not survey non-Indigenous people in very remote areas) (figure 9.3.1).

Tables 9A.3.5–8 contain additional data from the 2011 Census on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non‑Indigenous Australians living in a home owned by a member of the household, by State and Territory, remoteness, age and sex.

### Households owning or purchasing a home

The proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander *households* owning or purchasing a home (as opposed to the proportion of *people*) is an indicator in the National Affordable Housing Agreement (NAHA).

In 2012‑13, almost one-third (31.7 per cent) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households owned or were purchasing a home, similar to the proportion in 2008 (32.5 per cent) (tables 9A.3.9–10). The proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households that owned or were purchasing a home in 2012-13 was higher in capital cities (35.4 per cent) than all other areas combined (29.5 per cent), and higher for households with mortgages (22.8 per cent) than for those without (8.9 per cent) (tables 9A.3.9 and 9A.3.12).

### Rental housing

Data from the 2011 Census indicate that, nationally, around one-third (33.1 per cent) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households were renting privately (compared with 24.7 per cent of non‑Indigenous households). A further 21.5 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households were living in housing provided by a State/Territory housing authority (compared with 3.6 per cent of non‑Indigenous households) and 4.7 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households were living in housing provided by an Indigenous/community housing organisation/church group (compared to 0.5 per cent of non‑Indigenous households) (AIHW 2013, p. 93). More information on social housing provided to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is included in the annual Report on Government Services (SCRGSP 2014).

Historically, in remote areas, a high proportion of houses are located on communally held Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned land, and managed by community housing providers that rent houses to families and individuals. In some regions, this arrangement led to a lack of clear responsibility for the maintenance of the asset itself, which in turn contributed to a reduced occupancy span from an expected 30 years to around seven years. Through the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing, governments are securing tenure over community titled land with long term leases and introducing standardised public housing-like arrangements (Australian Government 2013; Habibis, Phillips and Verdouw 2013).

### Future directions in data

Data for the main measures for this indicator are sourced from the ABS Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey (AATSIHS) and National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey (NATSISS). Data from these surveys are available every three years. Supplementary data are available from the Census on a five yearly cycle.

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## 9.4 Income support[[11]](#footnote-11)

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| Box 9.4.1 Key messages |
| * From 2002 to 2012‑13, there were marked decreases in the proportions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians aged 18–64 years whose main source of income was government pensions/allowances (from 49.5 per cent to 45.6 per cent) and Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP)/other cash income (from 14.9 per cent to 4.7 per cent), with a corresponding increase in the proportion whose main source of income was employee income (from 32.2 per cent to 41.3 per cent) (table 9A.4.1). * From 2002 to 2012-13, the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians in remote/very remote areas with CDEP as their main source of income decreased from 31.5 per cent to 7.2 per cent, with increases in the proportions for employee income (from 20.5 per cent to 34.1 per cent) and government pensions/allowances (from 42.2 per cent to 47.0 per cent) (figure 9.4.2). * From 2002 to 2011‑12, the proportion of non‑Indigenous Australians whose main source of income was employee income fluctuated with no clear trend (62.2 per cent in 2011‑12), while the proportion for government pensions/allowances decreased (from 19.6 per cent to 13.2 per cent). However, from 2004‑05, there was a large increase in ‘not stated’ responses (figure 9.4.1). * From 2003 to 2013, there was a decrease in the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians aged 15–64 years on Parenting Payment Single (from 9.3 per cent to 7.3 per cent) and an increase in Newstart Allowance (from 10.0 per cent to 13.4 per cent). From 2003 to 2011 the proportion receiving Disability Support Pension almost doubled (from 5.5 per cent to 10.4 per cent), but remained stable since (10.6 per cent in 2013) (figure 9.4.4). |
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| Box 9.4.2 Measures of income support |
| There are two main measures for this indicator.   * *Personal cash income* is defined as the proportion of people aged 18–64 years by main source of personal cash income. The main data source is the ABS Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey (AATSIHS)/National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey (NATSISS) with the most recent data available for 2012‑13 (all jurisdictions; remoteness). Data for the non-Indigenous population are sourced from the Australian Health Survey (AHS)/National Health Survey (NHS), with the most recent data for 2011-12. Indicators using both AATSIHS (2012-13) and AHS (2011-12) are referenced as 2011–13.   (continued next page) |
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| Box 9.4.2 (continued) |
| * *People receiving income support payments* is defined as the proportion of people aged  15–64 years receiving income support payments by payment type. The main data source is Centrelink administrative data with the most recent data available for 2013 (all jurisdictions; sex; remoteness).   Results from the survey and administrative data are not directly comparable. |
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Reliance on income support for those of the working age population is a key indicator of social and economic wellbeing. Historically, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians have been over-represented in the Australian income support system. A range of adverse socioeconomic conditions contribute to this high dependence on income support, including poor standards of health, lack of employment opportunities in some local labour markets and lower levels of educational attainment (DEEWR 2009). Low income (often in the form of income support) is associated with a wide range of disadvantages including poor health, shorter life expectancy, poor education, substance abuse, reduced social participation, crime and violence (AHMAC 2012). Welfare dependence was cited by the Cape York Institute (CYI) as attributing to social breakdown in Cape York (FaHCSIA 2012).

Income support is available to all eligible Australians to ensure that they have adequate levels of income to support themselves and their dependents. Income support accounts for the largest component of welfare provided by the Australian Government, with over five million direct beneficiaries at any one time (DSS 2013). Income support payments are paid by Centrelink to the aged, people with a disability, carers, youth and students, families with children, the unemployed, and widows (DHS 2014a).

A relatively high proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians receive income support. The longest running Indigenous-specific program is the Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP), which until 30 June 2009 allowed some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to receive CDEP wages rather than unemployment benefits. From 1 July 2009, new CDEP participants received income support payments (such as Newstart) rather than wages, which has accounted for a shift in the recorded source of income for some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants. From 1 July 2013, CDEP was replaced by the Remote Jobs and Communities Program (RJCP) in 60 remote regions across Australia. Eight locations that were classified as non‑remote had their existing CDEP funding agreements extended for up to 12 months (Australian Government 2013) but from 1 July 2014 participants in these locations have been transitioned to income support payments and are now serviced by mainstream employment service providers.

Recent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander welfare reform initiatives include income management, under which part of a person’s income support and family assistance payments are directed towards priority items such as food, housing, education, clothing, health care and utilities (Buckmaster and Ey 2012). There are a number of different forms of income management:

* Income management was introduced in the NT from 2007 as part of the Northern Territory Emergency Response (NTER), now referred to as Closing the Gap — Northern Territory. From 1 July 2010, NTER income management was replaced by a new model termed New Income Management, extended to all welfare recipients, targeting long term recipients of certain income support payments, recipients of other income support payments who are considered vulnerable, and those who volunteer to participate. It subsets 50 to 70 per cent of fortnightly income support payments to be spent on priority needs (ANAO 2013). As part of the 2014‑15 Budget, income management will continue until June 2015 (DSS 2014).
* The Cape York Welfare Reform project in Queensland, coordinated by the Cape York Institute in partnership with the Queensland and Australian Governments, includes a different form of income management, under which a Family Responsibilities Commission (FRC) can on occasions direct all or part of a person's income support payments to be managed by Centrelink to pay for the priority needs of their family. The trial commenced in July 2008, and a 2012 evaluation found that income management initiated by the FRC is helping to ensure the basic needs of individuals and families are being met (FaHCSIA 2012). In 2013, the Australian Government indicated that it would continue income management as part of this project for another two years (Andrews and Scullion 2013).
* Under the Child Protection Measure, a jurisdictional Child Protection Authority can ask Centrelink to manage a person’s income support payments in situations where it is believed a child is at risk of neglect (Buckmaster and Ey 2012).
* To support people at risk, some State and Territory agencies have the power to refer people for income management in a similar way to which the child protection measure operates (Buckmaster and Ey 2012). For example, in the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands in SA, a young person who is not a full time student or apprentice and who has received the Unreasonable to Live at Home payment may have their income managed (DHS 2014b).
* Voluntary income management is also available to income support recipients. The Measure has operated in WA since 2008 and the NT since 2010, and from July 2012 was expanded to include five trial sites across Australia, including within NSW, Queensland, SA and Victoria (Buckmaster and Ey 2012).

While income management is available to non-Indigenous Australians, it is largely provided to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians. As at 6 April 2012, a total of 17 567 people in the NT were subject to income management, with around 90 per cent identifying as Indigenous. In WA, 232 people were subject to income management under the child protection measure, with around 60 per cent identifying as Indigenous. Also in WA, a total of 1147 people had volunteered to have their Centrelink payments subject to income management, with around 74 per cent identifying as Indigenous (Buckmaster, Ey and Klapdor 2012).[[12]](#footnote-12)

### Personal cash income

In 2012‑13, government pensions and allowances (45.6 per cent) was the main source of personal cash income for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians aged 18−64 years, followed by employee income (41.3 per cent) (table 9.4.1).

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| Figure 9.4.1 Main sources of personal cash income, people aged  18–64 years, 2002 to 2011–13a,b,c |
| |  | | --- | | Figure 9.4.1 Main sources of personal cash income, people aged 18-64 years, 2002 to 2011-13  More details can be found within the text surrounding this image. | |
| a In 2012‑13, CDEP is only able to be separately identified for Indigenous Australians in remote and very remote areas. Therefore, for comparability CDEP is presented in this figure combined with other cash income. b Relative standard errors and 95 per cent confidence intervals should be considered when interpreting these data, and are available in attachment table 9A.4.1. c The 2011–13 reference year includes data for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians from the 2012‑13 AATSIHS. Data for non‑Indigenous Australians are from the 2011–13 AHS (for the period 2011‑12). |
| *Sources*: ABS (unpublished) National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey 2002; ABS (unpublished) National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey 2004‑05; ABS (unpublished) National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey 2008; ABS (unpublished) Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey 2012‑13 (2012‑13 NATSIHS component); ABS (unpublished) General Social Survey 2002; ABS (unpublished) National Health Survey 2004‑05 and 2007‑08; ABS (unpublished) Australian Health Survey 2011–13 (2011‑12 NHS component); table 9A.4.1. |
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Between 2002 and 2012‑13, there has been a significant increase in the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians whose main source of personal cash income was employee income (from 32.2 per cent to 41.3 per cent), with a corresponding decrease in government pensions and allowances (from 49.5 per cent to 45.6 per cent) and CDEP/other cash income (from 14.9 per cent to 4.7 per cent) (figure 9.4.1).

In 2011-12, employee cash income was the main source of personal income for non‑Indigenous Australians (62.2 per cent). From 2002 to 2011‑12, this proportion fluctuated with no clear trend, while the proportion for government pensions/allowances decreased (from 19.6 per cent to 13.2 per cent). However from 2004‑05, there was a large increase in ‘not stated’ responses (figure 9.4.1).

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| Figure 9.4.2 Main source of personal cash income for Indigenous people aged 18–64 years in remote/very remote areas, 2002 to 2012‑13a,b,c |
| |  | | --- | | Figure 9.4.2 Main source of personal cash income for Indigenous people 18-64 years in remote/very remote areas, 2002 to 2012-13  More details can be found within the text surrounding this image. | |
| a Error bars represent 95 per cent confidence intervals around each estimate. b Remote areas include ‘remote’ and ‘very remote’. c In 2012‑13, CDEP is only able to be separately identified in remote and very remote areas. |
| *Sources*: ABS (unpublished) National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey 2002; ABS (unpublished) National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey 2004‑05; ABS (unpublished) National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey 2008; ABS (unpublished) Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey 2012‑13 (2012‑13 NATSIHS component); table 9A.4.3. |
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In 2012‑13, income from CDEP was only able to be separately identified in remote and very remote areas. In remote and very remote areas from 2002 to 2012‑13, the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians aged 18–64 years whose main source of personal cash income was CDEP decreased, from 31.5 per cent to 7.2 per cent (24.3 percentage points) (figure 9.4.2).

The majority of the change in main income source over this period is reflected in an increased proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians with employee income (from 20.5 per cent to 34.1 per cent) with a smaller increase in the proportion receiving government pensions and allowances (from 42.2 per cent to 47.0 per cent) (figure 9.4.2).

Data on main sources of personal cash income for people aged 18–64 years are also reported by State and Territory (tables 9A.4.1-2) and by remoteness (table 9A.4.3). Data are also reported on sources of cash income for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander *households* in tables 9A.4.7–9. Data on people aged 18–64 years receiving government cash pensions and allowances are also reported by sex and State and Territory (table 9A.4.4), sex by remoteness (table 9A.4.5) and by sex by age group (table 9A.4.6).

### People receiving income support payments — administrative data

The following figures use Centrelink administrative data to calculate the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non‑Indigenous Australians aged 15–64 years receiving various types of income support payments. As individuals can receive multiple payment types, these data cannot be aggregated.

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| Figure 9.4.3 People aged 15–64 years receiving income support payments by selected payment types, 2013a,b,c |
| |  | | --- | | Figure 9.4.3 People aged 15-64 years receiving income support payments by selected payment types, 2013  More details can be found within the text surrounding this image. | |
| a Indigenous identification in Centrelink data is voluntary. People whose Indigenous status is unknown are included in the counts for non‑Indigenous people. b Non‑Indigenous people are not eligible to receive Abstudy. c All data are point in time data. Depending on the particular payment type data are reported at various points in time across June. |
| *Sources*: Centrelink (unpublished); ABS 2013, *Australian Demographic Statistics, June 2013* Cat. no. 3101.0; ABS 2014, *Estimates and Projections, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, 2001–2026*, Cat. no. 3238.0; table 9A.4.10. |
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In 2013, a higher proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians than non‑Indigenous Australians received each of the selected income support payment types. Newstart Allowance was the most common income support payment received by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians (13.4 per cent) followed by Disability Support Pension (10.6 per cent) and Parenting Payment Single (7.3 per cent). Disability Support Pension was the most common income support payment received by non‑Indigenous Australians (5.0 per cent) followed by Newstart Allowance (4.0 per cent) (figure 9.4.3).

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| Figure 9.4.4 Indigenous people aged 15–64 years receiving income support payments, by payment type, 2003 to 2013a,b |
| |  | | --- | | Figure 9.4.4 Indigenous people aged 15-64 years receiving income support payments, by payment type, 2003 to 2013   More details can be found within the text surrounding this image. | |
| a Indigenous identification in Centrelink data is voluntary. People whose Indigenous status is unknown are included in the counts for non‑Indigenous people b All data are point in time data. Depending on the particular payment type, data are reported at various points in time across June. |
| *Sources*: Centrelink (unpublished); ABS 2013, *Australian Demographic Statistics, June 2013,* Cat. no. 3101.0; ABS 2014, *Estimates and Projections, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, 2001–2026*, Cat. no. 3238.0; table 9A.4.10. |
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From 2003 to 2013, for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians aged   
15–64 years:

* the proportion receiving Parenting Payment Single decreased from 9.3 per cent to 7.3 per cent
* the proportion receiving Disability Support Pension has almost doubled (increased from 5.5 per cent to 10.4 per cent in 2011, and has been relatively stable since, at 10.6 per cent in 2013)
* the proportion receiving Newstart Allowance increased from 10.0 per cent to 13.4 per cent (figure 9.4.4).

Data on people receiving income support payments for people aged 15–64 years are also available by State and Territory (tables 9A.4.11–12), by sex (table 9A.4.10) and by remoteness (tables 9A.4.13–14).

### Future directions in data

From 1 July 2014, CDEP has been replaced by the RJCP, with the payment of CDEP wages scheduled to cease from July 2017. Identification of RJCP in the ABS surveys is critical to monitoring the impact of future changes in job placement programs.

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1. The Steering Committee notes its appreciation to Ms Heron Loban, James Cook University, who reviewed a draft of this section of the report. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. The Steering Committee notes its appreciation to Ms Heron Loban, James Cook University, who reviewed a draft of this section of the report. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. ILUAs provide an alternative mechanism for resolving native title issues, and may precede or follow a determination of native title, or might be negotiated in the place of such a determination. ILUAs are agreements about the use and management of land and waters, made between one or more native title groups and other parties such as mining companies (NNTT 2010). [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. This includes land that is freehold (alienable and inalienable), leasehold, Crown, licenced, and Aboriginal Deed of Grant in Trust, as well as land for which tenure was not stated. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Native title is the recognition in Australian law that some Indigenous people continue to hold rights to their land and waters, which come from their traditional laws and customs (NNTT 2009). [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. The 50 claims where native title was determined not to exist include applications which were made by land councils in NSW in response to the requirements of the Land Rights Act 1983 (NSW). Of the 50 determinations that native title does not exist that were made up to 30 June 2013, 38 were in response to non-claimant applications made by land councils in NSW (NNTT unpublished). [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. A small proportion (less than one per cent) of Indigenous owned or controlled land in Australia is inalienable freehold land (table 9A.2.1). While inalienable title ensures that Indigenous land remains in the control of Indigenous people, it can restrict people's ability to develop land for uses such as housing and business. The New South Wales jurisdiction is unique, as under the NSW *Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983,* Aboriginal Land Councils hold their land under alienable freehold title. This permits participation in commercial ventures (at the direction of their members and subject to the approval of the peak NSW Aboriginal Land Council) (AA 2014). [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Except in SA, where Aboriginal Land Trust freehold land can be sold with the consent of both Houses of Parliament. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. In an attempt to quantify the potential economic benefits that native title can deliver to Indigenous communities, a House of Representatives inquiry into the taxation treatment of native title benefits reported that mining companies are paying $200 million annually to Indigenous communities in the Pilbara (House of Representatives Standing Committee on Economics 2013). [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. The Steering Committee notes its appreciation to Ms Heron Loban, James Cook University, who reviewed a draft of this section of the report. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. The Steering Committee notes its appreciation to Ms Heron Loban, James Cook University, who reviewed a draft of this section of the report. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. FaHCSIA, Income management summary—6 April 2012, tabled document, Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee, Budget Estimates 2012–13. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)