# 13 Measuring multiple disadvantage[[1]](#footnote-1)

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| Box 13.1.1 Key messages |
| * This chapter presents information on the associations between different aspects of disadvantage. Where people who experience one type of disadvantage also tend to experience another kind of disadvantage, the two aspects of disadvantage may be linked or associated in some way. * Section 13.1 presents descriptive statistics drawing on selected measures in this report, with a particular focus on measures of COAG targets and headline indicators. * Nationally in 2011–13, for both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians and non‑Indigenous Australians, there were strong associations between lower educational attainment, low incomes, unemployment and income support and other indicators of socioeconomic disadvantage (figures 13.1.1–4). * Higher proportions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians than non‑Indigenous Australians experienced multiple disadvantage (figures 13.1.1–3; tables 13A.1.7–8). * Section 13.2 presents an overview of recent research into factors associated with the disadvantage experienced by many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians. |
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Analysing the relationship between measures of disadvantage provides insight into the possible causes of disadvantage and helps identify those who might be in particular need of support, and where interventions may be targeted most effectively. Comparing the outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians with the outcomes of non‑Indigenous Australians with the same observable characteristics can provide insights into whether there are Indigenous‑specific causes of disadvantage.

Following suggestions from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, this report has generally adopted a more strengths based approach to reporting (see section 2.2 in chapter 2 for more information). However, this chapter focuses specifically on multiple disadvantage, in order to help understand the interactions between different aspects of disadvantage.

Indicators across this report show that, on average, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians experience poorer outcomes than non‑Indigenous Australians. While not discounting that disadvantage, it is also important to acknowledge the unique aspects and strengths of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures in terms of connection to land, culture, spirituality and ancestry, and family, kinship, and community which contribute to resilience and can moderate the impact of stressful life events (Zubrick et al. 2014).

Different aspects of disadvantage often seem to occur together — for example, poor education may be linked with poor employment outcomes, and both may be linked with low income.

* Section 13.1 presents information on the interactions between selected proxy measures of the COAG targets and headline indicators. The data do not indicate cause and effect relationships between different aspects of disadvantage — that is, the data do not demonstrate that disadvantage in one area is the cause of another poor outcome — rather, they show where there are relationships between different aspects of disadvantage. (For more information about the type of data required to measure causality see Biddle 2014a and Productivity Commission 2013).
* Section 13.2 presents an overview of recent work into Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander multiple disadvantage conducted by other organisations, including the Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research (CAEPR) and the Telethon Kids Institute.

## 13.1 Patterns of disadvantage

This section examines where different aspects of disadvantage tend to occur together for both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non‑Indigenous Australians. Where a particular population that experiences one type of disadvantage also experiences another kind of disadvantage, the two aspects are assumed to be linked or associated in some way; for example, low levels of educational attainment appear to be linked with high levels of unemployment.

The approach to measuring associations between various indicators is described in box 13.1.2. Data are drawn from the ABS Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey (AATSIHS) 2012‑13, with non-Indigenous comparator data sourced from the ABS Australian Health Survey (AHS) for the period 2011-12. Indicators using both AATSIHS (2012‑13) and AHS (2011‑12) are referenced as 2011–13.

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| Box 13.1.2 Measuring associations between the selected proxy measures of the COAG targets, headline indicators and strategic change indicators/areas | |
| The analysis in this section looks at outcomes in education, employment and income, against selected indicators of disadvantage using data from the ABS AATSIHS 2012‑13 and the ABS AHS 2011–13. Subgroups with different education, employment and income characteristics are compared against selected indicators of disadvantage. | |
| Selected measures of disadvantage | COAG target/ headline indicator/strategic change indicator/area |
| Unemployment | 4.6 Employment |
| Long term unemployment | 4.6 Employment |
| Not in the labour force | 4.6 Employment |
| Without a non‑school qualification | 4.7 Post-secondary education |
| Has profound or severe core activity restriction | 4.8 Disability and chronic disease |
| In the lowest quintile of equivalised gross weekly household income | 4.9 Household and individual income |
| In the lowest quintile of personal gross weekly income | 4.9 Household and individual income |
| Household members could not raise $2000 in an emergency | 4.9 Household and individual income |
| Household members ran out of money in the last two weeks for basic living expenses | 4.9 Household and individual income |
| Speaks English not well or not at all | 5.3 Engagement with services |
| Highest year of school completed was year 9 or below | 7 Education and training |
| Has fair/poor self‑assessed health status | 8.1 Access to primary health care |
| Current daily smoker | 8.4 Tobacco consumption and harm |
| Has high/very high psychological distress (K5) | 8.7 Mental health |
| Living in a home not owned by someone in the household | 9.3 Home ownership |
| Principal source of personal income was government pension, allowance or benefits | 9.4 Income support |
| Principal source of personal income was CDEP | 9.4 Income support |
| Living in an overcrowded household | 10.1 Overcrowding in housing |
| Removal – self or a relative has been taken away from family | 11 Safe and supportive communities |
| Alcohol consumption exceeded 2009 lifetime risk NHMRC guidelines | 11.1 Alcohol consumption and harm |
| (continued next page) | |
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| Box 13.1.2 (continued) |
| The analysis:   * classifies the population into various subgroups; (for example has a non‑school qualification or has no non‑school qualification; is employed or is unemployed) * compares the proportions of people in each population subgroup who experience other outcomes (for example, comparing the proportions of people *with* and *without* a non‑school qualification living in an overcrowded household) * compares the proportions of people in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander subgroup who experience selected indicators of disadvantage with a comparable subgroup in the non‑Indigenous population (for example, comparing the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians without a non‑school qualification who have low household income with the proportion of non‑Indigenous people without a non‑school qualification who have low household income). |
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This section provides a brief overview of the data, with more information available in the attachment tables.

The data in this section should be interpreted carefully. The measures used are broad and may cover a range of outcomes; for example, the measure ‘with a non‑school qualification’ includes a wide range of different non‑school qualifications, from certificate I through to postgraduate degrees. If non‑Indigenous Australians have obtained non‑school qualifications at different levels or in different fields to those obtained by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, they may have different income and employment outcomes.

### Non‑school qualifications

In 2012‑13, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians aged 20–64 years *without* a non‑school qualification were more likely than those *with* a non‑school qualification to experience other forms of disadvantage, including:

* being out of the labour force (49.0 per cent compared with 24.3 per cent)
* having a government pension, allowance or benefits as their principal source of income (58.4 per cent compared with 30.7 per cent)
* living in a low income household[[2]](#footnote-2) (51.0 per cent compared with 29.3 per cent)
* living in a home not owned by someone in the household (76.5 compared with 59.7 per cent)
* having left school before completing year 10 (36.2 per cent compared with 15.6 per cent) (figure 13.1.1).

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| Figure 13.1.1 People aged 20–64 years non‑school qualification status — with selected characteristics, 2011–13**a,b,c** |
| Figure 13.1.1 People aged 20-64 yeras non-school qualification status - with selected characteristics, 2011-13 - employment status  More details can be found within the text surrounding this image.Figure 13.1.1 People aged 20-64 years non-school qualification status - with selected characteristics, 2011-13 - income level  More details can be found within the text surrounding this image.Figure 13.1.1 People aged 20-64 years non-school qualification status - with selected characteristics, 2011-13 - home ownership  More details can be found within the text surrounding this image. |
| a See tables 13A.1.1–2 for more information on caveats to these data. b Error bars represent 95 per cent confidence intervals around each estimate. 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) Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey 2012‑13; ABS (unpublished) Australian Health Survey 2011–13; tables 13A.1–2. |
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In 2011–13, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians with the same levels of educational attainment as non‑Indigenous Australians had higher rates for all the selected indicators of disadvantage except for:

* alcohol consumption that exceeded lifetime risk (similar rates around 20 per cent for both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians and non‑Indigenous Australians with and without a non‑school qualification)
* those without a non‑school qualification who spoke English not well or not at all (similar rates around 4 per cent for both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians and non‑Indigenous Australians) (table 13A.1.1–2).

For more information about associations between non‑school qualifications and other characteristics of disadvantage see tables 13A.1.1–2. For more information about non‑school qualifications in general, see section 4.7 ‘Post‑secondary education — participation and attainment’.

### Unemployment and participation in the labour force

In 2012‑13, for those aged 15–64 years:

* among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians who were not in the labour force:
* around three‑quarters or more were living in a home not owned by someone in the household (79.8 per cent), were receiving a government pension, allowance or benefit as their main source of personal income (74.8 per cent), or did not have a non‑school qualification (74.1 per cent)
* higher proportions had a profound or severe core activity limitation (12.9 per cent), than those who were unemployed for less than 12 months (3.5 per cent), or long term unemployed (5.3 per cent)[[3]](#footnote-3) (table 13A.1.3).
* Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians who had been unemployed for less than 12 months had lower rates of disadvantage than the long term unemployed:
* to have a government pension, allowance or benefits as their principal source of personal income (74.8 per cent compared with 86.5 per cent)
* to be living in a low income household (63.5 per cent compared with 74.3 per cent) (table 13A.1.3).

In 2011–13, for those aged 15–64 years, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians who were unemployed or not in the labour force were more likely than non‑Indigenous Australians with the same labour force characteristics to experience other forms of disadvantage (figure 13.1.2).

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| Figure 13.1.2 People aged 15–64 years, not in the labour force and  unemployed — with selected characteristics, 2011–13**a,b,c** |
| **Not in labour force**  **Figure 13.1.2 People aged 15-64 years, not in the labour force and unemployed - with selected characteristics, 2011-13 - Not in labour force  More details can be found within the text surrounding this image.**  **Unemployed less than 12 months**  **Figure 13.1.2 People aged 15-64 years, not in the labour force and unemployed - with selected characteristics, 2011-13 - unemployed less than 12 months  More details can be found within the text surrounding this image.**  **Unemployed long term**  **Figure 13.1.2 People aged 15-64 years, not in the labour force and unemployed - with selected characteristics, 2011-13 - unemployed long term  More details can be found within the text surrounding this image.** |
| a See tables 13A.1.3–4 for more information on caveats to these data. b Error bars represent 95 per cent confidence intervals around each estimate. 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). |
| *Source*: ABS (unpublished) Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey 2012‑13; ABS (unpublished) Australian Health Survey 2011–13; tables 13A.1.3–4. |
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For more information on characteristics of disadvantage for people who were unemployed or not in the labour force, see tables 13A.1.3–4. For more information about unemployment or labour force characteristics in general see sections 4.6 and 9.1.

### Personal gross weekly income

In 2012‑13, for those aged 18 years and over:

* close to three quarters of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians in the lowest quintile of personal gross weekly income lived in a home not owned by someone in the household (76.1 per cent) or had a government pension, allowance or benefit as their main source of income (73.5 per cent) (figure 13.1.3)
* over two‑thirds of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians in the lowest quintile of personal gross weekly income were in the lowest quintile of gross weekly household income (70.3 per cent) or did not have a non‑school qualification (69.1 per cent) (table 13A.1.5)

In 2011–13, for those aged 18 years and over:

* Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians in all quintiles of personal gross weekly income were more likely to experience most other forms of disadvantage than non‑Indigenous Australians in the respective quintiles (that is, even for higher earning individuals, disadvantage is greater for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians than for non‑Indigenous Australians). However, there was no significant difference for:
* those in the highest quintile whose alcohol consumption exceeded lifetime risk (30.4 per cent for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians and 29.4 per cent for non‑Indigenous Australians) and those who had a profound or severe core activity limitation (4.4 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians and 1.5 per cent of non‑Indigenous Australians)
* those in the second to the fourth quintiles whose alcohol consumption exceeded lifetime risk (18.9 per cent for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, and 18.3 per cent for non‑Indigenous Australians)
* those in the lowest quintile who had a profound or severe core activity limitation (7.4 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians and 5.8 per cent of non‑Indigenous Australians) and those who spoke English not well or not at all (5.3 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians and 6.4 per cent of non‑Indigenous Australians) (table 13A.1.5–6).

The lowest and highest quintiles for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians and non‑Indigenous Australians with selected characteristics of disadvantage are presented in figure 13.1.3. For more information on multiple disadvantage by quintiles of personal gross weekly income see tables 13A.1.5–6. Section 4.9 contains more data on income.

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| Figure 13.1.3 People aged 18 years and over, personal gross weekly income — with selected characteristics, 2011–13**a,b,c,d,e** |
| **Lowest quintile**  **Figure 13.1.3 People aged 18 years and over, personal gross weekly income - with selected characterisitcs, 2011-13 - lowest quintile  More details can be found within the text surrounding this image.Highest quintile**  **Figure 13.1.3 People aged 18 years and over, personal gross weekly income - with selected characteristics, 2011-13 - highest quintile  More details can be found within the text surrounding this image.** |
| a Government benefit is not shown for people in the highest quintile due to high relative standard errors (greater than 50 per cent).b See tables 13A.1.5–6 for more information on caveats to these data. c Error bars represent 95 per cent confidence intervals around each estimate. d ‘Lowest quintile’ refers to the 20 per cent of people with the lowest incomes. ‘Highest quintile’ refers to the 20 per cent of people with the highest incomes. e 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) Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey 2012‑13; ABS (unpublished) Australian Health Survey 2011–13; tables 13A.1.5–6. |
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### Principal source of personal income

In 2012‑13, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians aged 18–64 years whose principal source of personal income was:

* a government pension, allowance or benefits, had higher rates of disadvantage across all indicators than those whose principal income was employee cash income, except for: lifetime risk of harm from drinking (which was lower — 17.6 per cent compared with 23.5); and removal of self or relative from family, which were similar between the two groups (48.2 per cent and 46.0 per cent, respectively)
* other cash income (including CDEP) had lower rates of disadvantage for most indicators than those whose primary source of income was a government pension, allowance or benefits (figure 13.1.4 and table 13A.1.7). (In the 2012‑13 AATSIHS, information about CDEP participation was only collected in remote areas (in earlier ABS surveys, CDEP participation was collected in both remote and non‑remote areas). Some of the characteristics associated with people who have CDEP as a principal source of income are likely to reflect the circumstances of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in remote areas.)

In 2011–13 for those aged 18–64 years, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians generally had higher rates of disadvantage than non‑Indigenous Australians regardless of the principal source of personal income. Both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians and non‑Indigenous Australians whose principal source of personal income was a government pension, allowance or benefits were more likely to experience disadvantage than those whose principal source of personal income was employee cash income (tables 13A.1.7–8).

For more information on association of principal source of personal income with indicators of disadvantage see tables 13A.1.7–8. Section 4.6 (‘Employment’) contains general information and analysis on CDEP. Section 9.4 (‘Income support’) contains analysis on government pensions, allowances and benefits. Section 4.9 (‘Household and individual income’) contains more information on income.

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| Figure 13.1.4 Indigenous people aged 18–64 years, principal source of personal income — selected characteristics, 2012‑13**a,b,c** |
| Figure 13.1.4 Indigenous people aged 18-64 years, principal source of personal income - selected characteristics, 2012-13  More details can be found within the text surrounding this image.Figure 13.1.4 Indigenous people aged 18-64 years, principal source of personal income - selected characteristics, 2012-13  More details can be found within the text surrounding this image.Figure 13.1.4 Indigenous people aged 18-64 years, principal source of personal income - selected characteristics, 2012-13  More details can be found within the text surrounding this image. |
| a ‘Other cash income’ includes owners of unincorporated businesses, participants in CDEP programs, and any other source of regular income. b See table 13A.1.7 for more information on caveats to these data.  c Error bars represent 95 per cent confidence intervals around each estimate. |
| *Source*: ABS (unpublished) Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey 2012‑13 (2012‑13 NATSIHS component); table 13A.1.7. |
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## 13.2 Recent research into multiple disadvantage

Work reported in previous *Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage* reports included analysis of the determinants of labour market outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians:

* the 2011 report analysed data from the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey (NATSISS) 2008, and found that better levels of health, more education and additional years of work experience are associated with a greater probability of being in the labour force and being employed. History of arrest was negatively associated with employment and labour force participation, as was imprisonment rates for men (SCRGSP 2011)
* the 2009 report analysed data from the 2006 Census, and found that for both males and females, those who had attained higher than year 8 were more likely to be in the labour force and were less likely to be unemployed than those whose highest level of educational attainment was year 8 or below. This effect was stronger for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians than for non‑Indigenous Australians (SCRGSP 2009).

The remainder of this section presents an overview of recent work into Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander multiple disadvantage conducted by other organisations, including the Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research (CAEPR) and the Telethon Kids Institute.

### Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research

The Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research (CAEPR) is a social science research body focusing on Indigenous economic and social policy, and sits within the Australian National University.

In 2012 and 2013, CAEPR authors released the Indigenous Population Project: 2011 Census Papers, which aim to document the changing composition and distribution of different Indigenous outcomes following the increase in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander identification in the 2011 Census (see chapter 3 for more information). Key results include:

* preschool alone is not enough to ensure all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children start school in the same developmental position as their non‑Indigenous peers. Although Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children who participate in preschool tend to start school with lower rates of developmental vulnerability than those who do not, once preschool is controlled for there are still very large gaps between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non‑Indigenous students. In addition, large gaps in preschool participation still remain between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non‑Indigenous children once geography and other characteristics are controlled for (Bath and Biddle 2013)
* Analysis of the Longitudinal Study of Australian Youth (LSAY) showed that socioeconomic status and school sector explains some, but not all of the difference in maths, reading and science test scores between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non‑Indigenous students aged 15 years old in 2009 (Biddle 2013a)
* although some of the difference in Year 12 completion rates between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians and non‑Indigenous Australians can be explained by geography, even if geographic distribution were the same, completion rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians would still be lower (Bath and Biddle 2011)
* there is great variation in income within the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population as well as great variation between the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population and the non‑Indigenous population. Despite this variation, for almost every demographic, geographic, education and employment combination, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians had a lower average income than their non‑Indigenous counterparts. The only major exception to this was Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females with a degree, who had a slightly higher average income than non‑Indigenous females with a degree (Biddle 2013a)
* factors affected by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians’ location include income and housing tenure. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians in urban areas are more likely to live in areas where their neighbours have a low income or live in community rental housing (Biddle 2013b).

In 2011, CAEPR presented a number of online lectures summarising the evidence on Indigenous wellbeing from the 2008 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey (NATSISS), with a focus on variation in measures of wellbeing across the life course (Biddle 2011). Key findings included:

* health and maintenance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture is a part of, and a determinant of, wellbeing
* being a victim of crime is associated with lower levels of emotional wellbeing, and lower subjective wellbeing is related to a higher chance of future arrest
* Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians living in remote areas had higher levels of emotional wellbeing and self‑assessed health than those in non‑remote areas
* employed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians have higher emotional wellbeing and self‑assessed health than the unemployed (Biddle 2011).

A recent research paper examines factors linking disadvantage and education. Biddle (2014b) analysed the NATSISS, the Longitudinal Study of Indigenous Children (LSIC), the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children (LSAC) and the LSAY to develop a behavioural model that explains patterns of school attendance for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and youth. Biddle found that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are more likely to miss school (with or without permission) than non‑Indigenous children, and that a range of individual, school and family characteristics explain some, but not all, of the difference. Key contributing factors include:

* health: with sick children less likely to attend school
* carers with lower levels of school education: higher levels of absenteeism amongst children in their care
* household stress: housing issues and family crises predict non‑attendance better than children being from families on income support.

### Telethon Kids Institute

The Telethon Kids Institute is a research centre based in Western Australia, which aims to improve the health and wellbeing of children through research. It has an explicit focus on the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their families.

Recent research focuses on socioeconomic factors and aspects of disadvantage which affect the health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations. Shepherd, Li and Zubrick (2012b) analysed the Western Australian Aboriginal Child Health Survey (WAACHS)[[4]](#footnote-4) conducted in 2000–2002, for socioeconomic differences in the physical health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in Western Australia. They found that socioeconomic characteristics of carers (educational attainment of both primary and secondary carers and highest occupational class of carers), families/households (family financial strain, housing tenure, housing quality) and neighbourhoods/communities (two indexes of socio‑economic disadvantage) all have an influence on the physical health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, with the strongest impact seen with area measures of socioeconomic status. Moreover, within the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population aged 0–17 years, the rate of ear infections, recurring chest infections and sensory function problems followed a ‘positive social gradient’ — that is, as socioeconomic status increased the rate of these health problems decreased. However, the reverse phenomena was found for asthma, accidents and injuries, and oral health problems — that is, as socioeconomic status increased, the rate of these health problems also increased. Whilst the factors behind this phenomena were not tested by the authors, they theorised that it could be due to a decrease in early childhood exposure to infections (asthma), a greater availability of recreational activities and facilities (accidents and injuries), and better access to dental health services (detection of oral health problems).

Shepherd et al. (2012) conducted a similar analysis focusing on the mental health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. This study found that higher parental and household socioeconomic status was generally associated with better child mental health outcomes. There was also evidence of a positive social gradient, with a higher risk of ‘clinically significant emotional or behavioural difficulties’ in those experiencing more disadvantage, especially in the areas of housing quality and tenure.

Both the work of CAEPR and the Telethon Kids Institute advocate an understanding of the different impacts of socioeconomic status across Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non‑Indigenous populations, and note that the understanding of concepts such as participation in the labour market, income, and educational attainment may differ between these populations. As such, the extent to which multiple disadvantage can be lessened as a result of improvements in these areas may also be different to how these gains would be made in the non‑Indigenous population (Biddle 2009; Shepherd, Li and Zubrick 2012a, 2012b).

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1. The Steering Committee notes its appreciation to Dr Nicholas Biddle, Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research, who reviewed a draft of this section of the report. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Defined as the lowest quintile of equivalised gross weekly household income. For more on information on equivalised gross weekly household income, see section 4.9. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Because health and disability are age-related, the proportions not in the labour force with these characteristics are higher than the proportions of the unemployed, as people not in the labour force are likely to have an older age profile than the unemployed population (ABS unpublished). [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. The Western Australian Aboriginal Child Health Survey (WAACHS) was undertaken between 2000 and 2001 by the (then) Telethon Institute for Child Health Research and is a project of the Kulunga Research Network. The survey was designed to investigate the health, wellbeing and development of Western Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)