



Justice outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians

The Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage (OID) report measures the wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians.

This fact sheet includes selected measures from the strategic framework of indicators in the OID report relating to crime and justice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians.

Youth diversion and youth detention

Diversion from the justice system can reduce negative effects

Diversion of young offenders from the criminal justice system can be a swift and economically efficient response to offending, by reducing the negative effects of contact with other offenders and the negative labelling and stigmatisation.

Rates of diversion from formal criminal justice processes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people aged 10–17 years are around one-half to two-thirds those for non-Indigenous young people, and have remained relatively unchanged over recent years.

Detention is considered a last resort for youth

Detention is considered a last resort for youth. In 2012-13, for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth aged 10–17 years, there was a daily average of:

- 1975 youth supervised in the community, compared with 2506 non-Indigenous youth (around 14 times the rate for non-Indigenous youth)
- 454 youth in detention, compared with 329 non-Indigenous youth (around 24 times the rate for non-Indigenous youth).

Adult imprisonment

The majority never commit criminal offences

In 2008, two-thirds of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians aged 15 years or over reported never being formally charged by police.

However, compared to non-Indigenous Australians, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians experience much higher rates of contact with the criminal justice system as both victims and offenders.

For the population that end up in prison, around 1 in 4 are Indigenous

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians made up over a quarter (27 per cent) of the adult prison population on 30 June 2013, but only 2.3 per cent of the adult population.

Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage

Key Indicators 2014

Fact Sheet #6

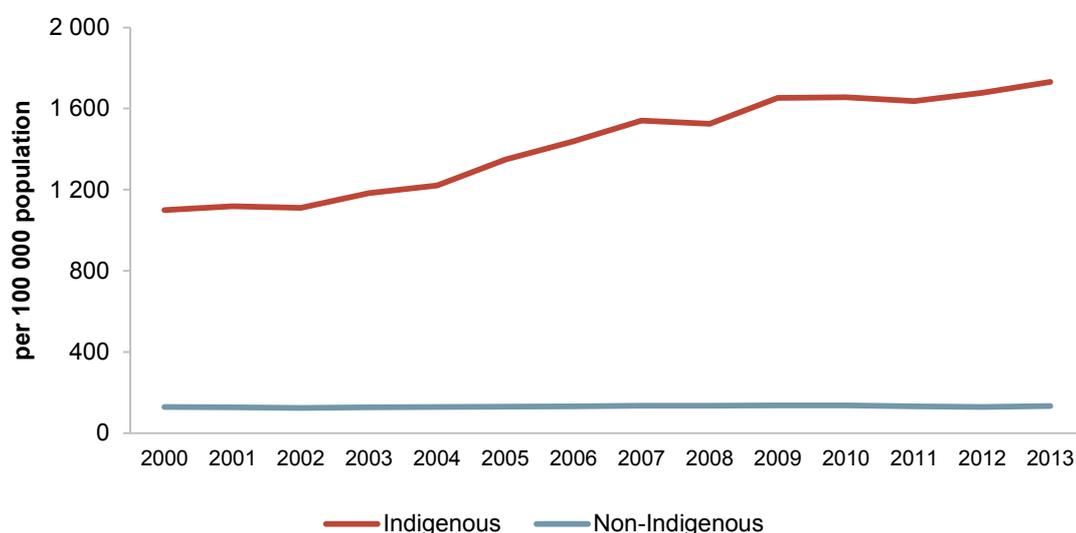


Adult imprisonment (continued)

Rates are increasing and the gap is widening

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults were imprisoned at 13 times the rate for non-Indigenous adults. From 2000 to 2013, the imprisonment rate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults increased by 57 per cent, while the non-Indigenous rate remained fairly constant.

Age standardised adult imprisonment rate, at 30 June



Relatively young prisoner population

Around 46 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander prisoners were aged under 30 years, and half of these prisoners were under 24 years. The median age of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander prisoners at 30 June 2013 was 31 years, 4 years lower than the median age for non-Indigenous prisoners (35 years).

Largely sentenced for acts intended to cause injury

Of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander prisoners, the largest proportion had been sentenced for acts intended to cause injury (30 per cent), whereas the largest proportions of non-Indigenous prisoners had been sentenced for illicit drug offences (15 per cent) and sexual assault and related offences (14 per cent).

2014

Information in this fact sheet is from *Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage: Key Indicators 2014*, published by the Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision. The report can be found on the Review website: www.pc.gov.au/gsp. For further information contact the Secretariat: (03) 9653 2100, gsp@pc.gov.au. Image by Wayne Quilliam, courtesy of Reconciliation Australia and the 2012 Indigenous Governance Awards and finalist Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care. CAUTION: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people should be aware that this publication may contain images of deceased people. No inference is intended that the people or communities shown are the subject of any issue raised in the report.

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Repeat offending and re-incarceration

Three-quarters of prisoners had a known prior imprisonment

Repeat offending and re-incarceration are significant contributors to the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians in the youth justice and criminal justice systems.

In 2012-13, 40 to 47 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander offenders were proceeded against by police on more than one occasion, compared with 20 to 28 per cent of non-Indigenous offenders.

On 30 June 2013, 77 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander prisoners had a known prior imprisonment, compared with 51 per cent of non-Indigenous prisoners.

Family and community violence

1 in 4 adults reported being a victim of violence

Family violence has a significant impact on the short-term and long-term health and welfare of individuals, families and communities.

In 2008, around 23 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults reported being a victim of physical or threatened violence — similar to the rate in 2002. After adjusting for differences in population age structures, this was 2.2 (in 2002) and 1.8 (in 2008) times the rate for non-Indigenous adults, reflecting an increase in the non-Indigenous rate over this period.

Hospitalisation rates for family violence are 25-33 times those for other Australians

Between 2004-05 and 2012-13, hospitalisation rates for family violence-related assault for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians were between 25 and 33 times the rates for other Australians. However, these rates are likely to underestimate the true extent of family violence as not all victims seek medical attention and not all hospitalisations resulting from family violence will be recorded as such.

Alcohol is a significant contributor to violence

Alcohol stands out as a significant contributor to violence in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

In 2011-12, the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander homicides involving both the victim and offender having consumed alcohol at the time of the offence (79 per cent — 15 out of 19) was higher than the proportion for non-Indigenous homicides (15 per cent — 17 out of 115).

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Things that work – case studies

The OID report includes case studies of programs that are making a difference for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians. Justice related case studies are summarised below. The main report includes more detailed information.

Alice Springs Domestic and Family Violence Outreach Service (NT)

- The service provides targeted support to women experiencing domestic and family violence. In 2012-13, almost 400 women were assisted, with around 80 per cent identified as Aboriginal.
- A 2012-13 evaluation found that all of the 19 women interviewed reported their safety had improved. Almost half of the women who had previously used the crisis accommodation services had not used crisis accommodation since receiving outreach services.

Magistrates Early Referral into Treatment drug diversion program (NSW)

- A tailored, case management program that diverts adult defendants in local courts with demonstrable drug problems to an intensive three-month drug treatment program. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander defendants make up around 18 per cent of the program participants.
- A 2009 evaluation found that, compared with similar defendants who did not participate in the program, completion of the program reduced reoffending by 12 per cent over a two-year follow up period.

This fact sheet summarises information about a selection of indicators from the OID report. The overview and main report include more detailed information, and provide information about a range of health, education and economic outcomes, and indicators of wellbeing and culture, all of which affect crime and justice outcomes.

2014

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