
12 Outcomes for Torres Strait Islander people

Box 12.1 Key messages

- Between 2001 and 2006:
 - the proportion of Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years or over who had completed year 12 or an equivalent increased from 27.4 per cent to 32.2 per cent (figure 12.1) and the proportion aged 25–64 years with a non-school qualification increased from 21.8 per cent to 28.5 per cent (figure 12.2)
 - the proportion of Torres Strait Islander people aged 15–64 years who were employed increased from 49.5 per cent to 55.1 per cent (figure 12.3)
 - after adjusting for the effects of inflation, median individual incomes for Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years and over increased by 3.9 per cent (figure 12.4)
 - there was little change in the proportion of Torres Strait Islander people living in a home owned or being purchased by a member of the household (around 28 per cent) (figure 12.7) or in the proportion living in overcrowded housing (around 25 per cent) (figure 12.9).

12.1 Selected outcomes for Torres Strait Islander people

The estimated Indigenous population of Australia at 30 June 2006 was 517 043, of whom 53 337 (10.3 per cent of the Indigenous population) were Torres Strait Islander people. People who identified as being of Torres Strait Islander origin only comprised 6.4 per cent of the Indigenous population, while the remaining 3.9 per cent identified as being of both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander origin. The majority (61.5 per cent) of Torres Strait Islander people lived in Queensland (ABS 2008). For more information on the distribution of the Indigenous population, including Torres Strait Islander people, see ABS (2007).

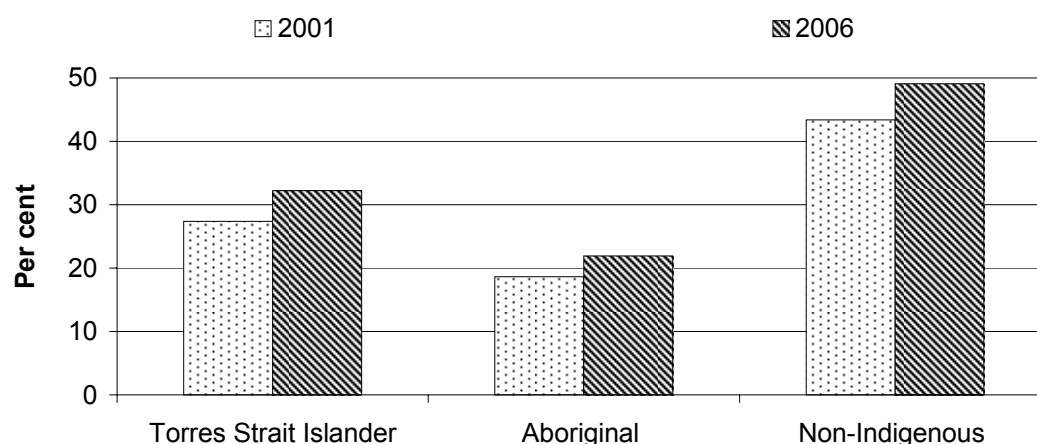
Torres Strait Islander people comprise a small proportion of the Australian population (and of the Indigenous population), making it difficult to extract reliable data on Torres Strait islander people from surveys and administrative data collections. The five-yearly ABS Census provides the most reliable data on Torres Strait Islander people.

This chapter presents a selection of results from the ABS 2001 Census and ABS 2006 Census showing outcomes for Torres Strait Islander, Aboriginal and non-Indigenous people. These outcomes are selected proxy measures of the COAG targets and other headline indicators and the strategic areas for action. In these data, ‘Torres Strait Islander’ comprises people who identified as ‘Torres Strait Islander only’ and people who identified as ‘Both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander’. ‘Aboriginal’ in this section is limited to people who identified as ‘Aboriginal only’.

Data for this chapter are disaggregated into three geographical areas; the Torres Strait Indigenous Region (which was known as the Torres Strait Area in 2001, and is directly comparable), the Balance of Queensland, which comprises the remainder of Queensland, and the Balance of Australia, which comprises the remainder of Australia. This contrasts to other chapters of this report which are geographically disaggregated by remoteness areas and by State and Territory. The three geographical areas used in this section of the report better reflect the distribution of Torres Strait Islander people across Australia. Data for each of these areas includes a small number of people whose usual residence was not stated or inadequately described.

Highest year of school completed

Figure 12.1 Proportion of people aged 15 years and over who had completed year 12 or equivalent^{a, b, c}



^a Excludes people still attending secondary school and those who did not state their highest year of school completed. ^b Torres Strait Islander includes people who identified as Torres Strait Islander only or both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander origin. Aboriginal includes people who identified as being of Aboriginal origin. ^c Calculations exclude those who did not state their highest year of schooling completed.

Source: ABS (unpublished) derived from the 2006 Census of Population and Housing; 2001 Census of Population and Housing; table 12A.2; table 12A.4.

Between 2001 and 2006, for those aged 15 years and over:

- the proportion of Torres Strait Islander people who had completed year 12 or an equivalent increased from 27.4 per cent to 32.2 per cent (figure 12.1)
- the proportion of Aboriginal people who had completed year 12 or an equivalent increased from 18.6 per cent to 21.9 per cent (figure 12.1)
- the proportion of non-Indigenous people who had completed year 12 or an equivalent increased from 43.4 per cent to 49.1 per cent (figure 12.1)
- the proportion of Torres Strait Islander people who had completed year 12 or an equivalent increased from 32.4 per cent to 38.5 per cent in the Torres Strait Indigenous Region (tables 12A.2 and 12A.4) increased from 32.1 per cent to 36.5 per cent in the Balance of Queensland (tables 12A.2 and 12A.4) and increased from 21.5 per cent to 25.5 per cent in the Balance of Australia (tables 12A.2 and 12A.4).

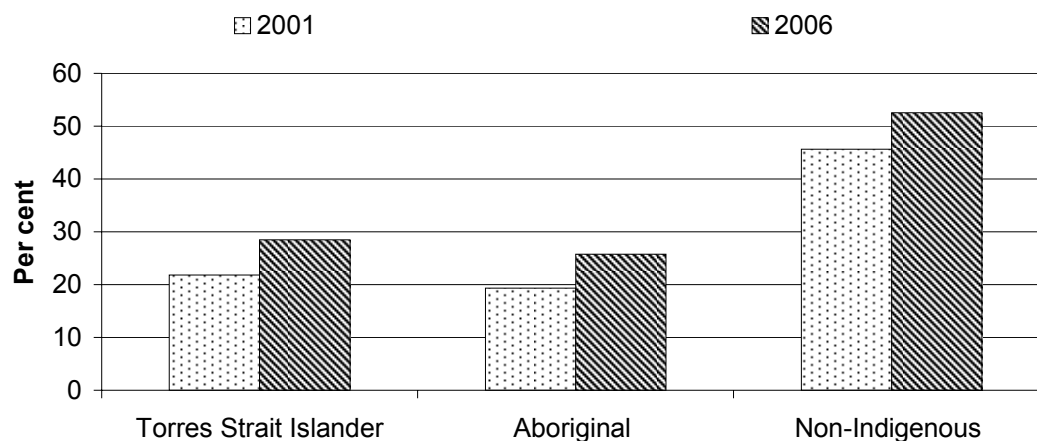
The proportion of Torres Strait Islander people who had completed year 12 or an equivalent increased for those aged 25–34, 35–44, 45–54, 55–64 and 65 years and over (tables 12A.2 and 12A.4).

In both 2001 and 2006 the proportion of Torres Strait Islander people who had completed year 12 or an equivalent was highest amongst those aged 25–34 years, and lower among older age groups (tables 12A.2 and 12A.4).

In both 2001 and 2006 the proportion of Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years and over who had completed year 12 or an equivalent was slightly higher amongst those who lived in the Torres Strait Indigenous Region than in the Balance of Queensland and much higher than those who lived in the Balance of Australia.

Post secondary education

Figure 12.2 Proportion of people aged 25–64 with a non-school qualification^{a, b, c, d}



^a Includes 'Certificate Level', 'Advanced Diploma & Diploma Level', 'Bachelor Degree Level', 'Graduate Diploma & Graduate Certificate Level', 'Postgraduate Degree Level' and 'Level of education inadequately described'. ^b The denominator for this calculation includes 'Persons who have a qualification that is out of scope of this variable', 'Persons with no qualifications' and 'Level of education not stated.' ^c Denominator for calculation includes 'Level of education not stated'. ^d Torres Strait Islander includes people who identified as Torres Strait Islander only or both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander origin. Aboriginal includes people who identified as being of Aboriginal origin only.

Source: ABS (unpublished) derived from the 2006 Census of Population and Housing; 2001 Census of Population and Housing; table 12A.6; table 12A.8.

In both 2001 and 2006, for people aged 25–64 years, the proportion of Torres Strait Islander people with a non-school qualification was slightly higher than for Aboriginal people, but much lower than for non-Indigenous people.

Between 2001 and 2006, for people aged 25–64 years:

- the proportion of Torres Strait Islander people with a non-school qualification increased from 21.8 per cent to 28.5 per cent (figure 12.2)
- the proportion of Aboriginal people with a non-school qualification increased from 19.3 per cent to 25.8 per cent (figure 12.2)
- the proportion of non-Indigenous people with a non-school qualification increased from 45.7 per cent to 52.5 per cent (figure 12.2).

In both 2001 and 2006, for people aged 25–64 years, the proportion of Torres Strait Islander people with a bachelor degree or higher was slightly lower than for Aboriginal people, and much lower than for non-Indigenous people (tables 12A.6 and 12A.8).

Between 2001 and 2006, for people aged 25–64 years:

- the proportion of Torres Strait Islander people with a bachelor degree or higher increased from 3.6 per cent to 4.7 per cent (tables 12A.6 and 12A.8)
- the proportion of Aboriginal people with a bachelor degree or higher increased from 4.0 per cent to 5.2 per cent (tables 12A.6 and 12A.8)
- the proportion of non-Indigenous people with a bachelor degree or higher increased from 17.4 per cent to 21.5 per cent (tables 12A.6 and 12A.8).
- the proportion of Torres Strait Islander people with Certificate III or IV as their highest non-school qualification increased from 10.0 per cent to 13.4 per cent (tables 12A.6 and 12A.8)
- the proportion of Aboriginal people aged 25–64 with Certificate III or IV as their highest non-school qualification increased from 8.5 per cent to 11.7 per cent (tables 12A.6 and 12A.8)
- the proportion of non-Indigenous people with Certificate III or IV as their highest non-school qualification higher increased from 16.0 per cent to 17.0 per cent (tables 12A.6 and 12A.8).

In both 2001 and 2006, for people aged 25–64 years, the proportion of Torres Strait Islander people with a Certificate III or IV as their highest non-school qualification was slightly higher than for Aboriginal people but slightly lower than for non-Indigenous people.

In both 2001 and 2006, the proportion of Torres Strait Islander people with a non-school qualification was highest in the 25–34 and 35–44 years age groups. A similar pattern occurred for Aboriginal and non-Indigenous people. More information on the age breakdown of non-school qualifications can be found in tables 12A.5 to 12A.8.

In both 2001 and 2006, the proportion of Torres Strait Islander people aged 25–64 years with a non-school qualification varied substantially across Australia.

Between 2001 and 2006, for Torres Strait Islander people aged 25–64 years:

- the proportion with a non-school qualification increased significantly in the Torres Strait Indigenous Region (from 15.7 per cent to 35.1 per cent) (tables 12A.6 and 12A.8) – mainly due to an increase in the proportion of males and females with a certificate level 3 or 4
- the proportion with a non-school qualification increased slightly in the Balance of Queensland (from 22.1 per cent to 27.4 per cent) and in the Balance of Australia (from 23.3 per cent to 27.3 per cent) (tables 12A.6 and 12A.8).

In both 2001 and 2006, Torres Strait Islander, Aboriginal and non-Indigenous males aged 25–64 years were more likely than females to have a non-school qualification – primarily a certificate 3 or 4 (tables 12A.6 and 12A.8). However, between 2001 and 2006 the proportion of Torres Strait Islander, Aboriginals and non-Indigenous females aged 25–64 years with a non-school qualification increased, and at a faster rate than for males, closing the relative and absolute gap (tables 12A.6 and 12A.8).

Labour force status

This section presents data for employment, unemployment and persons not in the labour force as proportions of the population of working age (aged 15–64 years). This is a different approach to measures of employment and unemployment as a proportion of the labour force.

Figure 12.3 **Labour force status, people aged 15–64 years, 2001 and 2006^{a, b}**



^a Torres Strait Islander includes people who identified as Torres Strait Islander only or both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander origin. Aboriginal includes people who identified as being Aboriginal only. ^b Calculations exclude those who did not state their labour force status.

Source: ABS (unpublished) derived from the 2006 Census of Population and Housing; 2001 Census of Population and Housing; table 12A.21; table 12A.22.

In both 2001 and 2006, for 15–64 year olds, a higher proportion of Torres Strait Islander people were employed than Aboriginal people. However, a much lower proportion of Torres Strait Islander than non-Indigenous people were employed.

Between 2001 and 2006, for 15–64 year olds:

- the proportion of Torres Strait Islander people who were employed increased from 49.5 per cent to 55.1 per cent (figure 12.3)

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- the proportion of Aboriginal people who were employed increased from 42.5 per cent to 47.2 per cent (figure 12.3)
 - the proportion of non-Indigenous people who were employed increased from 68.0 per cent to 71.7 per cent (figure 12.3).

In both 2001 and 2006, for those aged 15–64 years, similar proportions of Torres Strait Islander and Aboriginal people were unemployed. A much lower proportion of non-Indigenous people were unemployed (figure 12.4).

Between 2001 and 2006, for 15–64 year olds:

- the proportion of Torres Strait Islander people who were unemployed decreased from 11.0 per cent to 7.7 per cent (figure 12.3) — this equates to a fall in the unemployment rate of 6 percentage points (from 18.2 per cent to 12.3 per cent)
- the proportion of Aboriginal people who were unemployed decreased from 10.8 per cent to 9.0 per cent (figure 12.3) — this equates to a fall in the unemployment rate of 4 percentage points (from 20.3 per cent to 16.1 per cent)
- the proportion of non-Indigenous people who were unemployed decreased from 5.3 per cent to 3.9 per cent (figure 12.3) — this equates to a fall in the unemployment rate of 2 percentage points (from 7.3 per cent to 5.1 per cent).

In both 2001 and 2006, for 15–64 year olds:

- lower proportions of Torres Strait Islander people were not in the labour force than Aboriginal people. However, much lower proportions of non-Indigenous people were not in the labour force (figure 12.3).

Between 2001 and 2006, for 15–64 year olds:

- the proportion of Torres Strait Islander people who were not in the labour force decreased from 39.5 per cent to 37.2 per cent (figure 12.3)
- the proportion of Aboriginal people who were not in the labour force decreased from 46.7 per cent to 43.8 per cent (figure 12.3)
- the proportion of non-Indigenous people who were not in the labour force decreased from 26.7 per cent to 24.5 per cent (figure 12.3).

Table 12.1 Employed people as a proportion of the population, Torres Strait Islander people aged 15–64 years, 2001 and 2006^{a, b}

	2001	2006
	%	%
Torres Strait Indigenous Region	63.6	68.9
Balance of Queensland	45.2	51.2
Balance of Australia	49.2	54.3
Australia	49.5	55.1

^a Torres Strait Islander includes people who identified as Torres Strait Islander only or both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander origin. Aboriginal includes people who identified as being of Aboriginal origin and not Torres Strait Islander origin. ^b Calculations exclude those who did not state their labour force status.

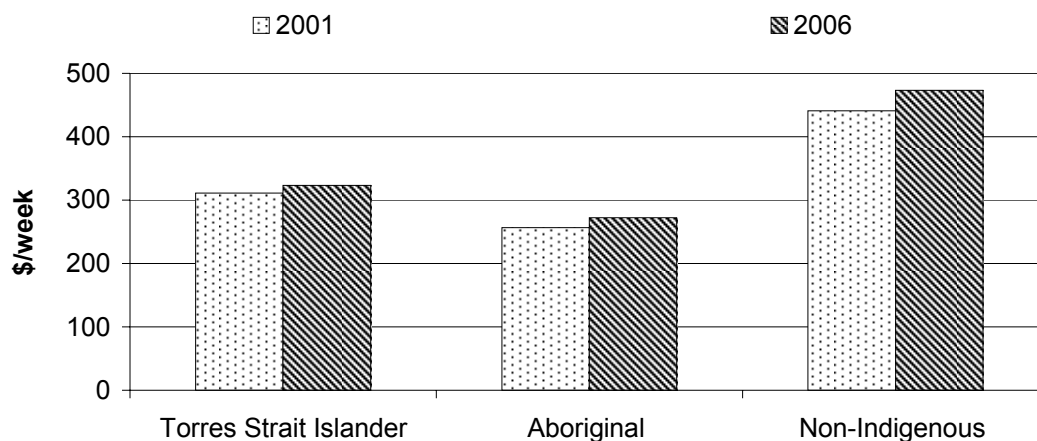
Source: ABS (unpublished) derived from the *2006 Census of Population and Housing*; *2001 Census of Population and Housing*; table 12A.21 and 12A.22.

For people aged 15–64 years:

- in both 2001 and 2006, a much higher proportion of Torres Strait Islander people living in the Torres Strait Indigenous Region were employed than for Torres Strait Islander people living elsewhere in Australia (table 12.1). However, CDEP participation accounts for a much larger proportion of employment for Indigenous people in the Torres Strait Indigenous Region than in other parts of Australia (table 12A.23)
- between 2001 and 2006, the proportion of Torres Strait Islander people who were employed increased in the Torres Strait Indigenous Region, the Balance of Queensland and the Balance of Australia (table 12.1)
- in 2006, in the Torres Strait Indigenous Region, 52.4 per cent of employed Torres Strait Islander people participated in CDEP (32.5 per cent part time, 15.8 per cent full time and 4.1 per cent were employed but away from work) (table 12A.23). Section 4.6 of this report contains more information on CDEP participation for Indigenous people.

Income

Figure 12.4 **Median real gross weekly individual income, people aged 15 years and over, (2006 dollars)^{a, b, c}**



a Torres Strait Islander includes people who identified as Torres Strait Islander only or both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander origin. Aboriginal includes people who identified as being Aboriginal only. **b** Real income is adjusted for the effects of inflation, and allows comparisons to be made between incomes in different years, by holding purchasing power constant. The 2001 data are adjusted for inflation using the Consumer Price Index for the September quarter 2001 and the September quarter 2006. **c** Calculations exclude those who did not state their income.

Source: ABS (unpublished) derived from the *2006 Census of Population and Housing; 2001 Census of Population and Housing*; ABS (2008), *Consumer price index* Cat. no. 6401.0, Canberra, <http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/6401.0Dec%202008?OpenDocument> (accessed 19 January 2009): tables 12A.15 and 12A.19.

For people aged 15 years and over:

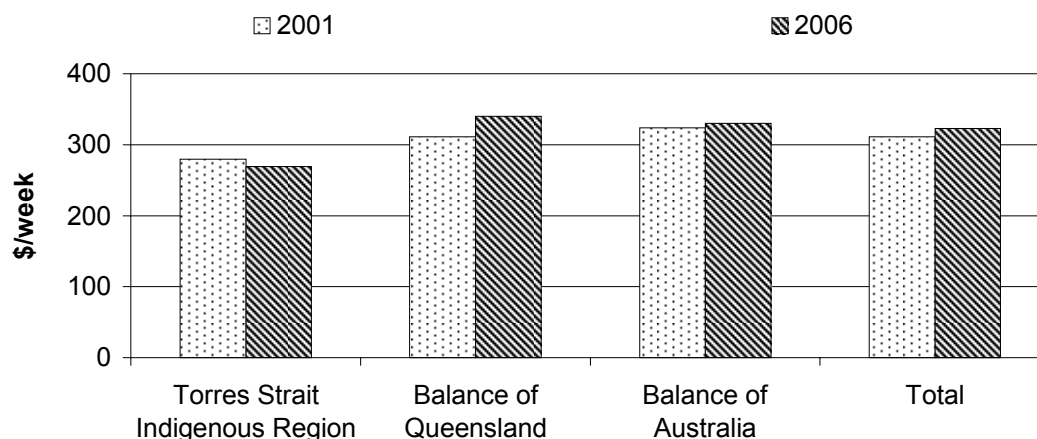
- in 2006, the individual median income for Torres Strait Islander people was \$323, which was higher than for Aboriginal people (\$272 per week) but much lower than for non-Indigenous people (\$473 per week) (figure 12.4).

After adjusting for the effects of inflation:

- between 2001 and 2006, there were increases in real individual median incomes for Torres Strait Islander, Aboriginal and non-Indigenous people (3.9 per cent, 6.1 per cent and 7.3 per cent, respectively) (figure 12.4)
- in 2006, individual weekly median incomes for Torres Strait Islander people were equivalent to 68.3 per cent of those for non-Indigenous people, and in 2001, were equivalent to 70.5 per cent (figure 12.4)
- in 2006, individual weekly median incomes for Aboriginal people were equivalent to 57.5 per cent of those for non-Indigenous people, and in 2001, were equivalent to 58.2 per cent (figure 12.4)

- data on mean average individual incomes are shown in tables 12A.15 and 12A.19.

Figure 12.5 Median real gross weekly individual income for Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years and over (2006 dollars)^{a, b, c}



^a Torres Strait Islander includes people who identified as Torres Strait Islander only or both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander origin. Aboriginal includes people who identified as being Aboriginal only. ^b Real income is adjusted for the effects of inflation, and allows comparisons to be made between incomes in different years, by holding purchasing power constant. The 2001 data are adjusted for inflation using the Consumer Price Index for the September quarter 2001 and the September quarter 2006. ^c Calculations exclude those who did not state their income.

Source: ABS (unpublished) derived from the *2006 Census of Population and Housing; 2001 Census of Population and Housing*; ABS (2008), *Consumer price index* Cat. no. 6401.0, Canberra, <http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/6401.0Dec%202008?OpenDocument> (accessed 19 January 2009); tables 12A.15 and 12A.19.

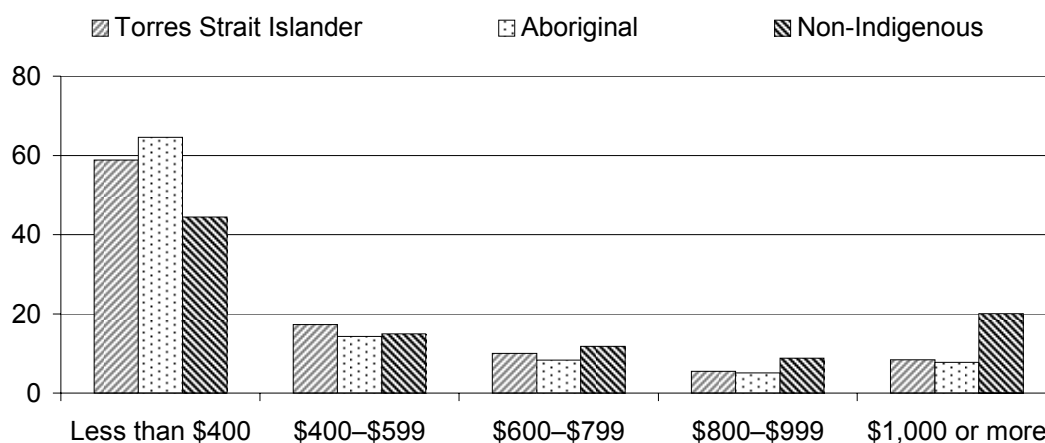
In both 2001 and 2006, for people aged 15 years and over, median gross weekly individual income for Torres Strait Islander people was much lower for those living in the Torres Strait Indigenous Region than in other parts of Australia (figure 12.5).

After adjusting for the effects of inflation, between 2001 and 2006, for people aged 15 years and over:

- median real gross weekly individual income for Torres Strait Islander people living in the Torres Strait Indigenous Region decreased by 3.8 per cent (from \$280 to \$269) (figure 12.5)
- median real gross weekly individual income for Torres Strait Islander people living in the Balance of Queensland increased by 9.3 per cent (from \$311 to \$340) (figure 12.5)

- median real gross weekly individual income for Torres Strait Islander people living in the Balance of Australia increased by 1.9 per cent (from \$324 to \$330) (figure 12.5).

Figure 12.6 Distribution of gross weekly individual income, Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years and over, 2006^{a, b}



^a Torres Strait Islander includes people who identified as Torres Strait Islander only or both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander origin. Aboriginal includes people who identified as being Aboriginal only. ^b Calculations exclude those who did not state their income.

Source: ABS (unpublished) derived from the 2006 Census of Population and Housing; 2001 Census of Population and Housing; table 12A.18.

Figure 12.6 above shows the distribution of gross weekly individual incomes amongst Torres Strait Islander, Aboriginal and non-Indigenous people for Australia.

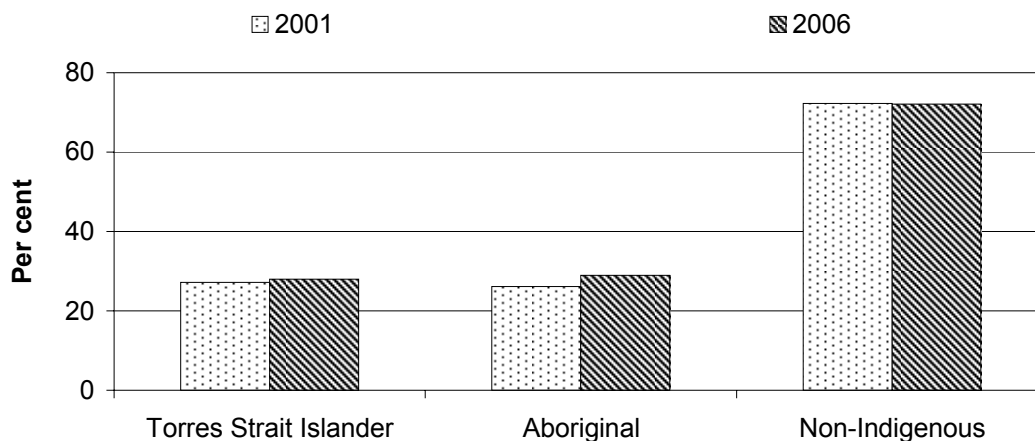
In 2006:

- the majority of both Torres Strait Islander and Aboriginal people had incomes of below \$400 a week (58.9 per cent and 64.6 per cent, respectively) (figure 12.6)
- a similar proportion of Torres Strait Islander and Aboriginal people earned \$1000 or more per week (8.4 per cent and 7.7 per cent, respectively). A much higher proportion of non-Indigenous people earned \$1000 or more per week (20.0 per cent) (figure 12.6).

More detailed data on the distribution of income for Torres Strait Islander people, and comparisons for Aboriginal and non-Indigenous people in 2001 and 2006 are presented in tables 12A.13–20. Additional data on the distribution of household and individual income for Indigenous people and comparisons with non-Indigenous people are contained in section 4.9 and the attachment tables for chapter 4.

Housing Tenure

Figure 12.7 Proportion of people living in a home owned or being purchased by a member of the household, 2001 and 2006^{a, b}



^a Torres Strait Islander includes people who identified as Torres Strait Islander only or both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander origin. Aboriginal includes people who identified as being Aboriginal only. ^b Includes dwellings 'Fully owned', 'Being purchased', and 'Being purchased under a rent/buy scheme'.

Source: ABS (unpublished) derived from the 2006 Census of Population and Housing; 2001 Census of Population and Housing; tables 12A.10 and 12A.12.

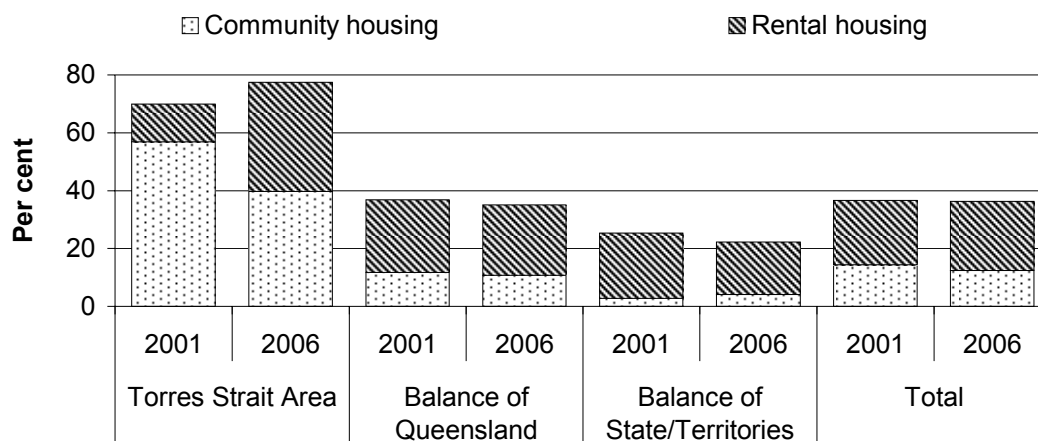
In both 2001 and 2006, the proportion of Torres Strait Islander people and Aboriginal people living in a home owned or being purchased by a member of the household was much lower than for non-Indigenous people (figure 12.7).

Between 2001 and 2006, the proportion of people living in a home owned or being purchased by a member of the household:

- increased slightly for Torres Strait Islander people (from 27.2 per cent to 28.0 per cent) (figure 12.7)
- increased slightly for Aboriginal people (26.1 per cent to 29.0 per cent) (figure 12.7)
- changed little for non-Indigenous people (72.3 per cent in 2001 and 72.1 per cent in 2006) (figure 12.7).

Much higher proportions of Torres Strait Islander and Aboriginal people lived in rented homes in both 2001 and 2006 than non-Indigenous people (around 65 per cent compared to around 25 per cent) (tables 12A.10 and 12A.12).

Figure 12.8 **Proportion of Torres Strait Islander people living in community or public rentals, 2001 and 2006^{a, b}**



^a Torres Strait Islander includes people who identified as Torres Strait Islander only or both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander origin. Aboriginal includes people who identified as being Aboriginal only. ^b Community rental comprises rental from 'Housing co-operative/community/church group'; 'Community or co-operative housing group'.

Source: ABS (unpublished) derived from the 2006 Census of Population and Housing; 2001 Census of Population and Housing; tables 12A.10 and 12A.12.

A large proportion of Torres Strait Islander people lived in public or community rentals.

Between 2001 and 2006:

- in Australia, the proportion of Torres Strait Islander people who were living in community rental housing decreased from 14.4 per cent to 12.4 per cent (figure 12.8)
- the proportion of Torres Strait Islander people in the Torres Strait Indigenous Region who were living in community rental housing decreased from 56.9 per cent to 39.7 per cent (figure 12.8)
- the proportion of Torres Strait Islander people in the Balance of Queensland who were living in community rental housing decreased from 11.8 per cent to 10.7 per cent (figure 12.8)
- the proportion of Torres Strait Islander people in the Balance of Australia who were living in community rental housing increased from 2.8 per cent to 4.1 per cent (figure 12.8).

Between 2001 and 2006:

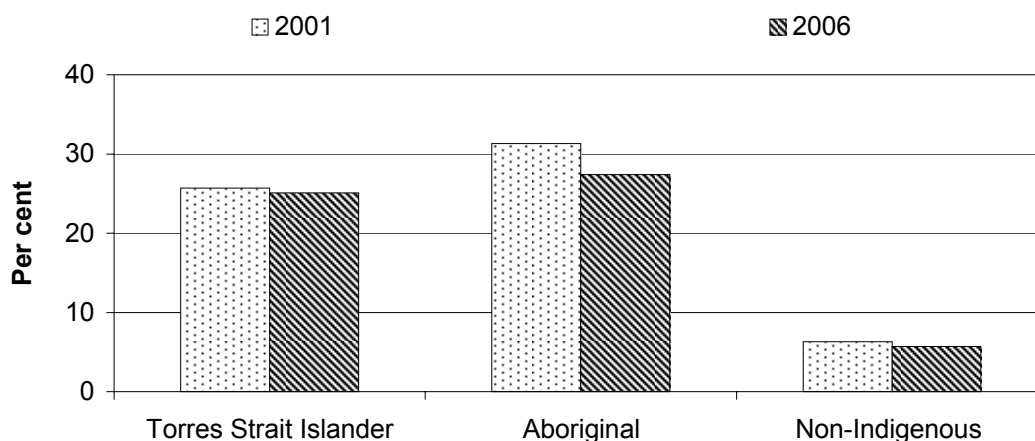
- in Australia, the proportion of Torres Strait Islander people who were living in public rental housing increased from 22.3 per cent to 23.9 per cent (figure 12.8)

- the proportion of Torres Strait Islander people in the Torres Strait Indigenous Region who were living in public rental housing increased from 13.0 per cent to 37.7 per cent (figure 12.8)
- the proportion of Torres Strait Islander people in the Balance of Queensland who were living in public rental housing decreased from 25.1 per cent to 24.4 per cent (figure 12.8)
- the proportion of Torres Strait Islander people in the Balance of Australia who were living in public rental housing decreased from 22.5 per cent to 18.1 per cent (figure 12.8).

More detailed information on tenure type for Torres Strait Islander people can be found in tables 12A.9–12.

Overcrowding in housing

Figure 12.9 Overcrowding in housing, 2001 and 2006^{a, b}



^a Torres Strait Islander includes people who identified as Torres Strait Islander only or both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander origin. Aboriginal includes people who identified as being Aboriginal only. ^b Based on the Canadian National Occupancy Standard for housing appropriateness. Rates are based on households for which utilisation could be determined.

Source: ABS (unpublished) derived from the 2006 Census of Population and Housing; 2001 Census of Population and Housing; tables 12A.27 and 12A.31.

In both 2001 and 2006 a slightly lower proportion of Torres Strait Islander than Aboriginal people lived in overcrowded housing. However, a much higher proportion of Torres Strait Islander than non-Indigenous people lived in overcrowded housing.

Between 2001 and 2006:

- the proportion of Torres Strait Islander people living in overcrowded housing changed little (25.7 per cent in 2001 and 25.1 per cent in 2006) (figure 12.9)
- the proportion of Aboriginal people living in overcrowded housing decreased from 31.3 per cent to 27.4 per cent (figure 12.9)
- the proportion of non-Indigenous people living in overcrowded housing changed little (6.3 per cent in 2001 and 5.7 per cent in 2006) (figure 12.9).

Table 12.2 Proportion of Torres Strait Islander people living in overcrowded housing, 2001 and 2006^{a, b}

	2001	2006
	%	%
Torres Strait Indigenous Region	46.8	41.1
Balance of Queensland	27.7	27.9
Balance of Australia	16.6	15.4
Australia	25.7	25.1

^a Torres Strait Islander includes people who identified as Torres Strait Islander only or both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander origin. Aboriginal includes people who identified as being Aboriginal only. ^b Based on the Canadian National Occupancy Standard for housing appropriateness. Rates are based on households for which utilisation could be determined.

Source: ABS (unpublished) derived from the 2006 Census of Population and Housing; 2001 Census of Population and Housing; table 12A.27; table 12A.31.

Between 2001 and 2006, the proportion of Torres Strait Islander people living in overcrowded housing fell slightly in the Torres Strait Indigenous Region, the Balance of Australia and Australia, but was unchanged in the Balance of Queensland (table 12.2).

In both 2001 and 2006:

- the proportion of Torres Strait Islander people living in overcrowded housing was highest in the Torres Strait Indigenous Region (table 12.2)
- around 30 per cent of Torres Strait Islander young people (under 25 years of age) were living in overcrowded housing. Rates tapered off for older age groups (to around 10 per cent for those aged 65 years and over) (tables 12A.27 and 12A.31)
- a similar proportion of male and female Torres Strait Islander people lived in overcrowded housing. This pattern was similar for the Aboriginal and non-Indigenous populations (tables 12A.27 and 12A.31).

For more information on overcrowding in housing for Indigenous and non-Indigenous people see section 9.1 of this report.

Disability

The 2001 and 2006 Census did not collect data on long term health conditions. In the 2007 report, data were presented on long term health conditions from the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey (NATSIHS). Similar proportions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 18 years and over reported having a long term health condition in 2004-05 (tables 12A.1.5 and 12A.1.6 from the 2007 report). This section contains information on the proportion of Torres Strait Islander people and other Australians who needed assistance with one or more core activities (self-care, mobility and communication) and those who provided unpaid assistance to people with a disability, long term illness or problems relating to old age. For more information on these topics, and comparisons with non-Indigenous people, see section 4.8 of this report.

Core activity need for assistance is a disability measure that was included in the 2006 Census. Core activity need for assistance data are often age standardised because the age structure of the Indigenous population is significantly different to the non-Indigenous population. The Indigenous population is much younger than the non-Indigenous population and disabilities are generally much more common among older age groups. Therefore, non age standardised data can understate the prevalence of disability among Indigenous people. This section includes some information by age groups (table 12.3), as well as age standardised data for sub-populations. Section 4.8 (disability and chronic disease) includes age standardised core activity need for assistance data for both the Indigenous and non-Indigenous population.

In 2006, for Australia, for people aged 15 years and over, 5.4 per cent of Torres Strait Islander people had a core activity need for assistance. Similar proportions of Aboriginal and non-Indigenous people had a core activity need for assistance (6.1 per cent and 5.0 per cent, respectively) (table 12.10).

Table 12.3 Core activity need for assistance, by age group, 2006^{a, b}

	<i>Torres Strait Islander</i>	<i>Aboriginal</i>	<i>Non-Indigenous</i>
15–24	1.9	2.4	1.4
25–34	2.2	2.7	1.3
35–44	4.2	4.8	1.9
45–54	7.0	8.3	2.9
55–64	10.7	14.7	5.1
65+	21.2	29.5	18.2
15 years and over (not age standardised)	5.4	6.1	5.0
15 years and over (age standardised)	7.4	9.7	4.8

^a Torres Strait Islander includes people who identified as Torres Strait Islander only or both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander origin. Aboriginal includes people who identified as being Aboriginal only. ^b Calculations exclude those people who did not state whether they had a core activity need for assistance.

Source: ABS (unpublished) derived from the *2006 Census of Population and Housing*; table 12A.33–4.

In 2006:

- in each age group, Torres Strait Islander people had lower rates of core activity need for assistance than Aboriginal people and higher rates than non-Indigenous people. Rates of core activity need for assistance for Torres Strait Islander people were particularly high relative to non-Indigenous people in the 35–44, 45–54 and 55–64 years age groups (table 12.3)
- the proportion of Torres Strait Islander people who had a core activity need for assistance was lowest in the Torres Strait Indigenous Region (3.7 per cent) and higher in the Balance of Queensland and the Balance of Australia (4.7 and 6.8 per cent, respectively) (table 12A.33).

Rates of core activity need for assistance alone do not fully account for the impact of disabilities on peoples' lives. Many people provide unpaid assistance to people with a disability, long term illness or problems related to old age. Table 12A.36 presents rates of unpaid assistance (care) to a person with a disability amongst Torres Strait Islander, Aboriginal and non-Indigenous people. Rates have been calculated for the 15 years and over population, excluding those who did not state their carer status.

In 2006, for people aged 15 years and over, 12.7 per cent of Torres Strait Islander people provided unpaid assistance to a person with a disability. A similar proportion of Aboriginal and non-Indigenous people provided unpaid assistance to a person with a disability (13.3 per cent and 11.2 per cent, respectively) (table 12A.36).

After adjusting for differences in the age structure of the two populations, Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years and over were 1.2 times as likely as all Australian people to have provided unpaid assistance in 2006 (table 12A.37).

The proportion of Torres Strait Islander people who provided unpaid assistance varied across age groups. Torres Strait Islander people in the 45 to 54 and 55 to 64 years age groups were most likely to have provided unpaid assistance (15.7 and 15.2 per cent, respectively) (table 12A.36). Torres Strait Islander people in younger and older age groups were less likely to have provided unpaid assistance.

The proportion of Torres Strait Islander aged 15 years and over who provided unpaid assistance did not vary much between the Torres Strait Indigenous Region, the Balance of Queensland and the Balance of Australia (table 12A.36).

12.2 Attachment tables

Attachment tables are identified in references throughout this chapter by an ‘A’ suffix (for example, table 12A.2 is table 2 in the attachment tables for chapter 12). The files containing the attachment tables can also be found on the Review web page (www.pc.gov.au/gsp) or can be obtained by contacting the Secretariat directly.

12.3 References

- ABS (Australian Bureau of Statistics) 2008, *Experimental Estimates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, June 2006*, Cat. no. 3238.0.55.001, ABS, Canberra.
- ABS (Australian Bureau of Statistics) 2007, *Population Distribution, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, 2006*, Cat. no. 4705.0, ABS, Canberra.