
Chapter 5: Police services (PO)

The police services chapter

This chapter reports on the performance of police services. These comprise the operations of the police agencies of each State and Territory government and the ACT community policing function performed by the Australian Federal Police under the 'Policing arrangement between the ACT and Commonwealth governments'. The national policing function of the Australian Federal Police and other national non-police law enforcement bodies, such as the National Crime Authority (NCA), are not included in the Report.

Indigenous data in the Police services chapter

The police chapter in the *Report on Government Services 2003* (ROGS) contains the following data items on Indigenous people:

- Indigenous staff (sworn and unsworn) as a proportion of the Indigenous population aged 20–64 years, 2001-02; and
- Deaths in police custody and custody-related operations, 1997 to 2001.

Supporting tables

Supporting tables for data within the police services chapter of the compendium are contained in the attachment to the compendium. Supporting tables are identified in references throughout this chapter by the abbreviated chapter name (for example, PO.A5 is table 5 in the police services attachment to the compendium).

As the data are directly sourced from the *Report on Government Services 2003*, the compendium also notes where the original table, figure or text in the Report can be found. For example, where the compendium refers to 'ROGS 2003, p. 6.15' this is page 15 of chapter 6 of the Report and 'ROGS 2003, 6A.2' is attachment table 2 of attachment 6 of the Report.

Indigenous staffing

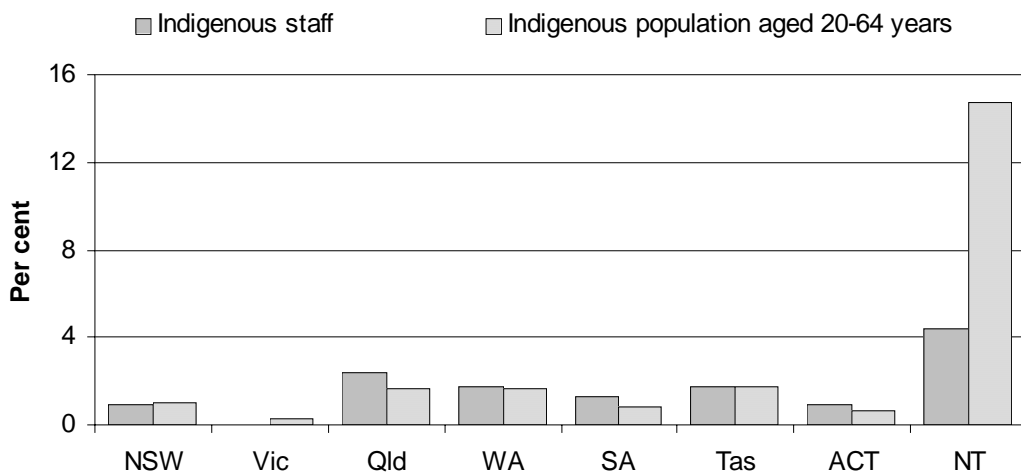
The process of identifying Indigenous staff members and clients poses challenges, particularly when relying on self identification.

Where Indigenous people are required to identify themselves, then the accuracy of the data will partly depend on how they perceive the advantages (or disadvantages) of identification and whether these perceptions change over time. For the purposes of the police services chapter, an Indigenous person is one who self identifies as an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. All jurisdictions except Victoria were able to provide information on Indigenous staffing for 2001-02.

A proxy for assessing the level of Indigenous staff representation is to measure Indigenous staff levels as a proportion of the estimated Indigenous working aged population; that is, those old enough to be eligible for police employment. This is important, as a significantly larger proportion of the Indigenous population falls within the younger non-working age groupings compared with the non-Indigenous population. From the available ABS census data, the 20–64 years old age group provides the closest ‘fit’ for the estimated working population.

Of the jurisdictions that provided data in 2001-02, the NT had the highest proportion of Indigenous police staff (4.4 per cent), while NSW and the ACT had the lowest proportion (0.9 per cent) (table PO.A1). In most jurisdictions, the proportion of Indigenous police staff was broadly in line with the representation of Indigenous people in the population aged 20–64 years. The exception was the NT, where the representation of Indigenous people in police staff (4.4 per cent) was significantly lower than their representation in the 20–64 year old population (14.7 per cent) (figure PO.1).

Figure PO.1 Indigenous staff (sworn and unsworn) as a proportion of the Indigenous population aged 20–64 years^{a, b}



^a Indigenous staff numbers relate to those staff who self identify as being of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent. ^b Information on Indigenous status is only collected at time of recruitment.

Source: State and Territory governments (unpublished); ROGS 2003, p.5.13; tables PO.A1 and SA.A2.

Deaths in police custody and custody-related operations

Deaths in police custody include: deaths in institutional settings (for example, police stations/lockups and police vehicles, or during transfer to or from such an institution, or in hospitals following transfer from an institution); and other deaths in police operations where officers were in close contact with the deceased (for example, most raids and shootings by police). Deaths in custody-related operations cover situations where officers did not have such close contact with the person as to be able to significantly influence or control the person's behaviour (for example, most sieges and most cases where officers are attempting to detain a person, such as pursuits).

Table PO.1 Deaths in police custody and custody-related operations^{a, b, c}

	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Vic</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>WA</i>	<i>SA</i>	<i>Tas</i>	<i>ACT</i>	<i>NT</i>	<i>Aust</i>
Non-Indigenous deaths									
1997	10	6	1	2	1	–	–	3	23
1998	9	7	2	1	–	–	–	–	19
1999	4	4	3	2	2	–	–	4	20
2000	12	1	2	1	4	–	–	–	20
2001	15	5	4	1	1	1	–	–	27
Indigenous deaths									
1997	3	–	–	2	–	–	–	1	6
1998	2	–	1	1	–	–	–	2	6
1999	1	–	1	3	–	–	–	1	6
2000	2	–	1	1	1	–	–	–	5
2001	–	–	–	2	3	–	–	–	5

^a Deaths in police custody include: deaths in institutional settings (for example, police stations/lockups and police vehicles, or during transfer to or from such an institution, or in hospitals following transfer from an institution); and other deaths in police operations where officers were in close contact with the deceased (for example, most raids and shootings by police). Deaths in custody-related operations cover situations where officers did not have such close contact with the person as to be able to significantly influence or control the person's behaviour (for example, most sieges and most cases where officers are attempting to detain a person, such as pursuits). ^b Includes one Australian Federal Police (national, not the ACT) death in custody in 1999. ^c For 2001, three deaths for Victoria have yet to be classified as either Non-Indigenous or Indigenous. – Nil or rounded to zero.

Source: Australian Institute of Criminology *Deaths in Custody in Australia, 2002* (unpublished); ROGS 2003, p.5.51; table PO.A2.

Nationally, there were 35 deaths in police custody and custody-related operations in 2001 (up from 25 in 2000). These comprised 27 non-Indigenous, five Indigenous and three 'unclassified' deaths. Across jurisdictions, the number of non-Indigenous deaths ranged from 15 deaths in NSW to no deaths in the ACT and the NT (table PO.1). There were no Indigenous deaths in 2001 in any jurisdictions apart from WA and SA, which had two and three deaths respectively (table PO.1).

Nationally, between 1997 and 2001, the number of deaths in police custody and custody-related operations increased from 29 to 35. While non-Indigenous deaths rose from 23 to 27, Indigenous deaths fell from six to five over the period. For 2001, three deaths for Victoria are still to be classified (table PO.A2).