
Chapter 2: The compendium of Indigenous data

The major aim of the compendium is to provide an easily accessible collation of Indigenous data from the *Report on Government Services*. Currently, information and data on Indigenous people are contained within the discussion of each specific service delivery area of the Report.

The report on key indicators of Indigenous disadvantage (as part of the COAG reconciliation commitment discussed previously) will be a new report separate from the *Report on Government Services*. However, the data contained in this compendium (and hence in the *Report on Government Services*), with its focus on the efficiency and effectiveness of specific areas of service delivery, can provide information that complements the material on Indigenous disadvantage in the new report.

Indigenous data in the compendium and *Report on Government Services 2003*

A number of improvements were made to the Indigenous data within the *Report on Government Services 2003* since the previous Report, including:

- *Education*: enhanced reporting for Indigenous school students with reporting on learning outcomes for years three and five and apparent retention rates for year 10.
- *Health*: descriptive and contextual information has been included on the use by Indigenous people of general practice services.
- *Community services*: improvements to the performance indicator frameworks in community services include the protection and support chapter providing Supported Accommodation and Assistance Program data relating to Indigenous clients in the areas of income, housing, and labour force status.
- *Housing*: significant improvements have been introduced to the housing chapter this year, including data from the 2001 Community Housing and Infrastructure Needs Survey on Indigenous community housing.

Table 2.1 provides a stocktake of data on Indigenous Australians in the *Report on Government Services 2003*, indicating which services have reported on at least one comparable performance indicator, or have descriptive data, for all jurisdictions. The table does not signify the quality or quantum of the data.

Table 2.1 Reporting of at least one comparable data item on Indigenous Australians for the 2003 Report

<i>Framework/service</i>	<i>Descriptive data</i>	<i>Outcomes</i>	<i>Access and equity</i>	<i>Appropriateness</i>	<i>Quality</i>	<i>Client views</i>	<i>Efficiency</i>
<i>Education</i>							
School education	✓	✓	✓	x	x	x	x
VET	✓	✓	✓	x	x	x	x
<i>Health</i>							
Public hospitals	✓	x	✓	x	x	x	x
Maternity services							
General practice	✓	x	x	x	x	x	x
Breast cancer	x	x	✓	x	x	x	x
Mental health	✓	✓	x	x	x	x	x
<i>Justice</i>							
Police services	x	✓	✓	x	x	x	x
Courts administration	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Corrective services	✓	✓	x	x	x	x	x
<i>Emergency management</i>							
Fire services	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Ambulance services	✓	x	x	x	x	x	x
<i>Community services</i>							
Juvenile justice	✓	x	x	x	x	x	x
Aged care services	✓	x	✓	x	x	x	x
Services for people with a disability	✓	x	✓	x	x	x	x
Children's services	✓	x	✓	x	x	x	x
Child protection and out-of-home care	x	✓	✓	x	x	x	x
Supported accommodation	x	✓	✓	✓	✓	x	x
<i>Housing assistance</i>							
Public housing	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Community housing	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
State and Territory owned and managed Indigenous housing	✓	✓	✓	✓	x	x	✓
Commonwealth Rent Assistance	✓	x	✓	x	x	x	x

✓ Indicates that at least one nationally comparable data item are available. x Indicates that no nationally comparable data are available (although jurisdictions may report data specific to their jurisdiction). Report on Government Services (ROGS) 2003, p. 2.4.

Care in interpreting Indigenous data

Readers should exercise caution in interpreting data on services to Indigenous people both within this compendium and the *Report on Government Services 2003*.

The task of collecting data on Indigenous Australians is complicated by the fact that many administrative data collections do not distinguish between Indigenous and non-Indigenous clients, and there is variability in the likelihood of Indigenous

people voluntarily identifying themselves in different situations and over time. The method and level of identification of Indigenous people also appears to vary across jurisdictions. Further, surveys do not necessarily include an Indigenous identifier, and when they do, may not provide for a large enough sample to provide robust estimates.

Improving Indigenous data

The ABS is playing an important role in improving Indigenous data collections. Some of the work being undertaken by the ABS includes:

- an ongoing program to develop and improve Indigenous data flowing from Commonwealth, State and Territory administrative systems;
- work with other agencies to ensure that Indigenous people are identified in relevant systems and that statistics are of adequate quality. Priority is initially being given to the improvement of births and deaths statistics in all States and Territories. Other priorities include hospitals, community services, education, housing, and law and justice statistics;
- work with other agencies to develop and support national Indigenous information plans, Indigenous performance indicators and Indigenous taskforces on a number of topics; and
- expanding its Household Survey Program to collect more regular Indigenous statistics, including regular Indigenous general social surveys, Indigenous sample supplementation in regular health surveys and annual Indigenous labour force estimates.

The Review will draw on these initiatives in future reports.