
Chapter 5: Police services

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 (AFP) and other national non police law enforcement bodies such as the Australian Crime Commission (ACC) are not included in the Report.

Indigenous data

The police chapter in the *Report on Government Services 2004* contains the following data items on Indigenous people:

- Indigenous staff (sworn and unsworn) as a proportion of the Indigenous population aged 20–64 years.
- Deaths in police custody and custody-related operations, 1998 to 2002.

Supporting tables

Supporting tables for data within the police services chapter of the compendium are contained in the attachment to the compendium. These tables are identified in references throughout this chapter by an 'A' suffix (for example, table 5A.3 is table 3 in the police services attachment to the compendium). As the data are directly sourced from the Report on Government Services 2004, the compendium also notes where the original table, figure or text in the Report on Government Services 2004 can be found. For example, where the compendium refers to 'ROGS 2004, p. 5.15' this is page 15 of chapter 5 and 'ROGS 2004, 5A.2' is attachment table 2 of attachment 5 of the Report on Government Services 2004.

Indigenous staffing

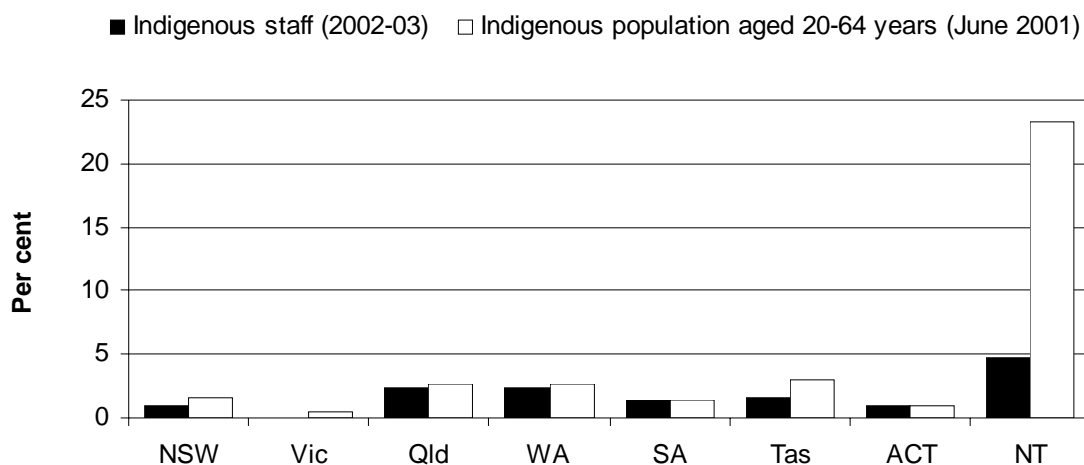
This section focuses on the performance of mainstream services in relation to Indigenous Australians. The process of identifying Indigenous staff members and clients poses challenges, particularly when relying on self-identification. Where Indigenous people are required to identify themselves, then the 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 this chapter, an Indigenous person is one

who self-identifies as being Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. All jurisdictions except Victoria could provide information on Indigenous staffing for 2002-03.

A proxy for assessing the level of Indigenous staff representation in police services is to measure Indigenous staff levels as a proportion of the estimated Indigenous working age population (that is, those old enough to be eligible for police employment). This is important, because a significantly larger proportion of the Indigenous population falls within the younger non working age groupings compared with the non-Indigenous population. Readily available ABS population estimates for people aged 20–64 years in 30 June 2001 provide a close proxy for the estimated working population.

Of the jurisdictions that provided data in 2002-03, the NT had the highest proportion of Indigenous police staff (4.7 per cent), while NSW had the lowest proportion (0.9 per cent) (table 5A.1). 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 (4.7 per cent) was significantly lower than their representation in the 20–64 year-old population (23.3 per cent) (figure 5.1).

Figure 5.1 Proportion of Indigenous staff (sworn and unsworn) and Indigenous population aged 20–64 years^{a, b, c}



^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. ^c Victoria is unable to separate Indigenous and non-Indigenous staff.

Source: State and Territory governments (unpublished); ABS *Population by Age and Sex, Australian States and Territories*, Cat. no. 3201.0, (unpublished); ROGS 2004, p. 5.27; Table 5A.1.

Deaths in police custody and custody-related operations

Nationally, there were 19 deaths in police custody and custody related operations in 2002 (down from 31 in 2001). This total comprised 13 non-Indigenous deaths and six Indigenous deaths. Across jurisdictions, the number of non-Indigenous deaths ranged from six deaths in NSW to no deaths in SA, the ACT and the NT (table 5.1). Three jurisdictions recorded Indigenous deaths in 2002 — NSW (three deaths), the NT (two deaths) and WA (one death). Nationally, the death rate per 100 000 people over the period 1998–2002 was 0.66. This ranged from 4.62 in the NT to 0.21 in Tasmania (with the ACT recording no deaths over the period) (table 5.1).

Table 5.1 Deaths in police custody and custody-related operations^{a, b}

	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Aust
Non-Indigenous deaths									
1998	9	7	2	1	–	–	–	–	19
1999	4	4	3	2	2	–	–	4	19
2000	12	1	2	1	4	–	–	–	20
2001	15	5	4	1	1	–	–	–	26
2002	6	1	3	2	–	1	–	–	13
Indigenous deaths									
1998	2	–	1	1	–	–	–	2	6
1999	1	–	1	3	–	–	–	1	6
2000	2	–	1	1	1	–	–	–	5
2001	–	–	–	2	3	–	–	–	5
2002	3	–	–	1	–	–	–	2	6
Total deaths									
1998	11	7	3	2	–	–	–	2	25
1999	5	4	4	5	2	–	–	5	26
2000	14	1	3	2	5	–	–	–	25
2001	15	5	4	3	4	–	–	–	31
2002	9	1	3	3	–	1	–	2	19
Total 1998-2002	54	18	17	15	11	1	–	9	126
Rate per 100 000 people (1998-2002) ^c	0.83	0.38	0.48	0.80	0.73	0.21	–	4.62	0.66

^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 AFP death in custody in 1999. ^c Rate calculated by using the average population between 1998-2002. – Nil or rounded to zero.

Source: Australian Institute of Criminology (AIC), *Deaths in Custody, Australia* (various years); ROGS 2004, p. 5.60; table 5A.2.

References

ABS (Australian Bureau of Statistics), *Population by Age and Sex, Australian States and Territories*, Cat. no. 3201.0, Canberra.

AIC (Australian Institute of Criminology) 2002, *Deaths in Custody, Australia* (and various years), Canberra.