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# Justice

## Part B: Justice preface

Governments provide justice services to ensure a safe society by enhancing public order and security, and upholding the rule of law. This provision involves crime prevention, detection and investigation, judicial processes and dispute resolution, prisoner and offender management, and rehabilitation services. The focus of the *Report on Government Services 2004* is on the justice services provided by police, court administration and adult corrective services.

The available information on the interaction of Indigenous people with specific parts of the criminal justice system is of varying quality. The most important reason for the poor quality of Indigenous data is the reluctance of some justice agencies to ask explicitly for a person's Indigenous status. A number of agencies, however, have recently moved to rectify this situation.

New South Wales and WA continue to collect Indigenous status data based on the ABS standard Indigenous questions. The Queensland Government has been collecting statistics on the level of Indigenous representation in the criminal justice system (based on the ABS standard Indigenous questions) from July 2003, as has the NT. The standard Indigenous questions are the ABS's preferred method of identifying Indigenous clients. They endeavour to facilitate self-identification of Indigenous status. An ABS outposted officer is working with police in Tasmania to develop the capacity to collect this type of data early in 2004.

Western Australian courts, with the introduction of the 'ebrief' system now routinely collect Indigenous status data direct from the police service, resulting in Indigenous data being captured in approximately 80 per cent of all police initiated cases.

The data on the deaths of Indigenous people in police custody and custody related operations (for example, most sieges and most cases in which officers were attempting to detain a person, such as pursuits) (see chapter 5), Indigenous representation in prisons and community corrections (see chapter 7), and Indigenous deaths in prison custody (see chapter 7) are of a high quality and are published in the Report.

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Another source of Indigenous data is the Australian Institute of Criminology, which produces statistical and analytical reports on the involvement of Indigenous people in the criminal justice system, particularly in relation to deaths in police and corrective services custody.