
2 The compendium of Indigenous data

The primary aim of this compendium is to provide an easily accessible collation of Indigenous data from the *Report on Government Services 2008* (2008 Report).

The data contained in this compendium — focusing on the efficiency and effectiveness of specific areas of service delivery — can provide information that complements the material in the separate *Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage: Key Indicators* report (SCRGSP 2007). The *Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage* report summarises outcomes for Indigenous Australians, rather than assessing the performance of specific services.

Improvements in reporting of Indigenous data

Improvements to the Indigenous data within the 2008 Report were made in the following chapters:

- *Early childhood, education and training:*
 - ‘School education’ (chapter 4) has been improved by including data for Indigenous learning outcomes by geolocation at a national level for 2005. These data provide important information on Indigenous students through further disaggregation of the national learning outcomes data
- *Health:*
 - ‘Health preface’ (part E) has been improved by the introduction of Indigenous data on: health workforce; mortality rates, age standardised for all causes; and infant mortality rates, three year average (per 1000 live births)
 - ‘Public hospitals’ (chapter 10) has been improved by the introduction of hospital procedures measures, which provide data on the proportion of hospital separations for which procedures are recorded. These measures include separations with a procedure recorded by principal diagnosis, by jurisdiction, and by remoteness
 - ‘Primary and community health’ (chapter 11) has been improved by the inclusion of a new indicator of equity — access (‘early detection and early treatment for Indigenous people’). In addition, data for ‘potentially preventable hospitalisations’ were reported for five jurisdictions (previously four), due to improved Indigenous identification in hospital patient statistics

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- ‘Health management issues’ (chapter 12) has been improved by including data for Indigenous people on levels of psychological distress
 - *Community services:*
 - ‘Aged care services’ (chapter 13) has been improved by the introduction of Australian Government expenditure on Indigenous-specific services, by State and Territory
 - *Housing:*
 - ‘Housing’ (chapter 16) has been improved by reporting of descriptive data for Indigenous community housing and development of the Indigenous community housing performance indicator framework.

Indigenous data in the 2008 Report

Table 2.1 provides an overview of data on Indigenous Australians in the 2008 Report. It indicates which service areas reported at least one data item on Indigenous Australians.

Table 2.1 Reporting of at least one data item on Indigenous Australians, 2008 Report

Service area/indicator framework	Descriptive	Outcomes	Outputs		
			Equity	Effectiveness	Efficiency
Early childhood, education and training					
Education preface	✓	x	x	x	x
Children's services	x	x	✓	x	x
School education	✓	✓	✓	✓	x
VET	x	✓	✓	✓	x
Justice					
Justice preface	x	x	x	x	x
Police services	✓	✓	✓	✓	x
Court administration	x	x	x	x	x
Corrective services	✓	x	x	✓	x
Emergency management					
Fire events	x	x	x	x	x
Ambulance events	x	x	x	x	x
Road rescue events	x	x	x	x	x
Health					
Health preface	✓	✓	x	x	x
Public hospitals	✓	x	x	x	x
Maternity services	x	✓	x	x	x
Primary and community health	✓	✓	✓	x	x
Breast cancer	x	x	✓	x	x
Mental health	✓	✓	x	x	x
Community services^a					
Community services preface	✓	x	x	x	x
Aged care services	✓	x	✓	x	x
Services for people with a disability	✓	✓	✓	✓	x
Child protection	✓	x	x	✓	x
Out of home care	✓	x	x	✓	x
SAAP	x	✓	✓	✓	x
Housing					
Public housing	✓	✓	x	x	x
State owned and managed Indigenous housing	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Community housing	✓	x	x	x	x
Indigenous community housing	✓	✓	x	✓	✓
Commonwealth Rent Assistance	x	✓	✓	x	x

^a Descriptive data on Indigenous Australians are also available for juvenile justice services of the 2008 Report (chapter 15), however indicators by Indigenous status are not available while an indicator framework is under development. SAAP = Supported Accommodation Assistance Program. ✓ = At least one data item is reported. X = No data are reported.

Source: 2008 Report, table 2.4, p. 2.20.

Data collection issues concerning Indigenous Australians

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. For those that do, the method and accuracy of identification of Indigenous people vary across jurisdictions. Further, surveys do not necessarily include an Indigenous identifier, and when they do, the sample of Indigenous people may not be large enough to provide reliable results, particularly at the State and Territory level.

Indigenous data issues are discussed in more detail in appendix 4 of the *Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage* report (SCRGSP 2007).

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) and the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) play an important role in improving the collection of Indigenous data. Work being undertaken by the ABS and AIHW includes:

- an ongoing program to develop and improve Indigenous data flowing from Australian, State and Territory administrative systems. Priority is initially being given to the improvement of births and deaths statistics in all states and territories. Other priorities include hospital, community services, education, housing, and crime 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
- an expansion of the ABS Household Survey Program to collect more regular Indigenous statistics, including regular Indigenous surveys, Indigenous sample supplementation in regular health surveys, and annual Indigenous labour force estimates.

The Ministerial Council on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs (MCATSIA) established a working party to develop an Indigenous Demographics paper to identify methodological issues in Indigenous data collections, outline how these are being addressed and identify any remaining gaps. The findings are presented in a paper titled *Population and Diversity: Policy Implications of Emerging Indigenous Demographic Trends*, released in mid-2006 by the Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research (Taylor 2006). In mid-2007, MCATSIA commissioned further work on Indigenous population statistics from Dr John Taylor at the Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research.

In 2006, COAG established an Indigenous Generational Reform working group, whose terms of reference includes agreeing on short- and long-term actions to address gaps in national and administrative data collection to support measurement

of long term outcomes for Indigenous Australians, consistent with the Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage framework. The Review will draw on these initiatives in future reports.

References

SCRGSP (Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision) 2007, *Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage: Key Indicators 2007*, Productivity Commission, Canberra.

Taylor J 2006, *Population and Diversity: Policy Implications of Emerging Indigenous Demographic Trends*, Discussion paper no. 283/2006, Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research, Australian National University, Canberra.