

---

## 6 Police services

This chapter reports on the performance of police services. These services comprise the operations of the police agencies of each State and Territory government. They include the ACT community policing function performed by the Australian Federal Police (AFP) under the arrangement between the Minister for Justice and Customs of the Commonwealth and the ACT for the provision of police services to the ACT. The national policing function of the AFP, and other national non-police law enforcement bodies (such as the Australian Crime Commission) are not included in the Report.

Police services are the principal means through which State and Territory governments pursue the achievement of a safe and secure environment for the community, through the investigation of criminal offences, response to life threatening situations, the provision of services to the judicial process and the provision of road safety and traffic management. They also respond to more general needs in the community — for example, assisting emergency services, mediating family and neighbourhood disputes, delivering messages regarding death or serious illness, and advising on general policing and crime issues. Additionally, police are involved in various activities which aim to improve public safety and prevent crime.

### **Indigenous data in the police services chapter**

The police services chapter in the *Report on Government Services 2008* (2008 Report) contains the following data items on Indigenous people:

- proportion of police staff from Indigenous backgrounds relative to the proportion of the general population who are from Indigenous backgrounds, 2006-07
- deaths in police custody and custody-related operations, 2002–2006.

#### *Attachment tables*

Attachment tables for data within the police services chapter of this compendium are contained in attachment 6A of the compendium. These tables are identified in references throughout this chapter by an ‘A’ suffix (for example, table 6A.3 is table 3 in the police services attachment). As the data are directly sourced from the

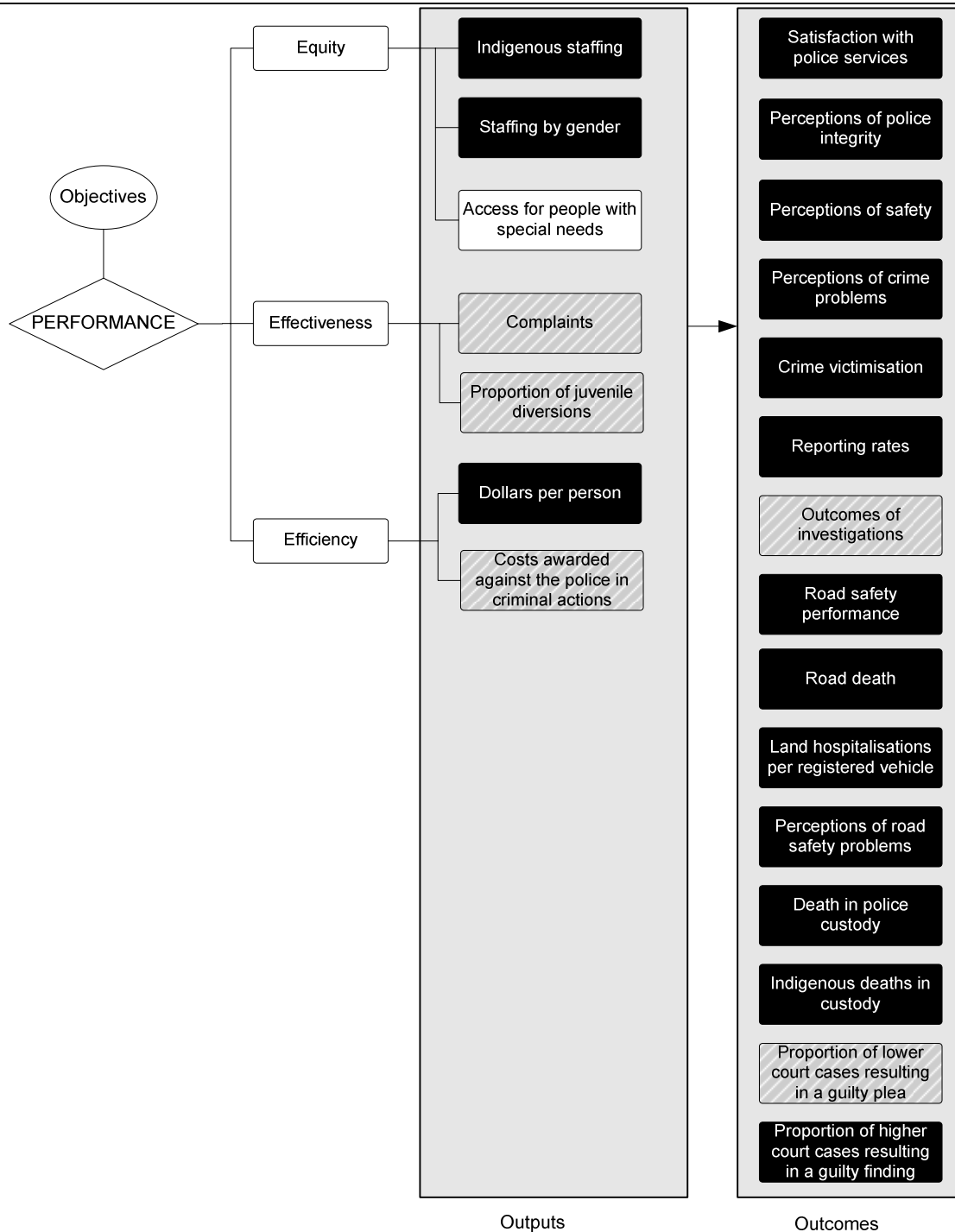
---

2008 Report, the compendium also notes where the original table, figure or text in the 2008 Report can be found. For example, where the compendium refers to ‘2008 Report, p. 6.15’ this is page 15 of chapter 6 of the 2008 Report, and ‘2008 Report, table 6A.2’ is attachment table 2 of attachment 6 of the 2008 Report.

### **Framework of performance indicators**

Data for Indigenous people are reported for a subset of the performance indicators for police services in the 2008 Report. It is important to interpret these data in the context of the broader performance indicator framework outlined in figure 6.1. The performance indicator framework shows which data are comparable in the 2008 Report. For data that are not considered directly comparable, the text includes relevant caveats and supporting commentary.

Figure 6.1 General performance framework for the police services sector



**Key to indicators**

- Text** Data for these indicators comparable, subject to caveats to each chart or table
- Text** Data for these indicators not complete or not directly comparable
- Text** These indicators yet to be developed or data not collected for this Report: chapter contains explanatory text

Source: 2008 Report, figure 6.3, p. 6.6.

---

## Indigenous staffing

This section focuses on the performance of mainstream police services in relation to Indigenous Australians. One indicator of access and equity is ‘Indigenous staffing’ — that is, the proportion of police staff from Indigenous backgrounds relative to the proportion of the general population who are from Indigenous backgrounds (box 6.1).

### Box 6.1 Indigenous staffing

‘Indigenous staffing’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to provide police services in an equitable manner. Indigenous people may feel more comfortable in ‘accessing’ police services when they are able to deal with Indigenous police staff.

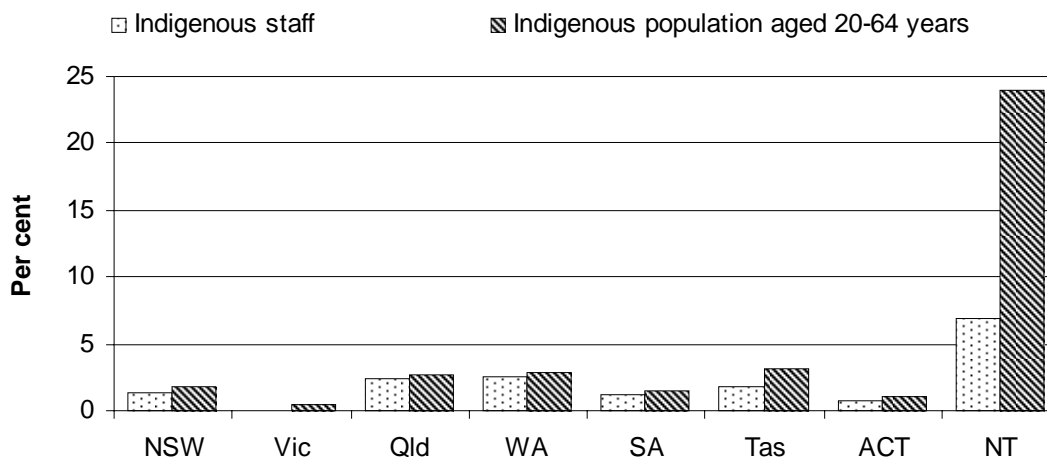
The indicator is defined as the proportion of police staff from Indigenous backgrounds compared to the proportion of the general population aged 20–64 years who are from Indigenous backgrounds. These data are used because a significantly larger proportion of the Indigenous population falls within the younger non-working age groupings compared with the non-Indigenous population. Readily available ABS population projections of people aged 20–64 years at 30 June 2006 provide a proxy for the estimated working population.

A proportion of police staff from Indigenous backgrounds closer to the proportion of the general population aged 20–64 years who are from Indigenous backgrounds represents a more desirable equity outcome.

The process of identifying Indigenous staff members generally relies on self identification. Where Indigenous people are required to identify themselves, 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. In addition, many factors will influence the willingness of the Indigenous population to access police services, including familiarity with procedures for dealing with police, and confidence in the effectiveness of police services. For the purposes of this chapter, an Indigenous person is one who self-identifies as being Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.

The proportion of Indigenous police staff in 2006-07 was similar to the representation of Indigenous people in the population aged 20–64 years for most jurisdictions (figure 6.2).

**Figure 6.2 Proportion of Indigenous staff in 2006-07 and Indigenous population aged 20–64 years<sup>a, b, c</sup>**



<sup>a</sup> Indigenous staff numbers relate to those staff who self-identify as being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent. Indigenous staff are reported as the sum of both the operational and non-operational categories. <sup>b</sup> Information on Indigenous status is collected only at the time of recruitment. <sup>c</sup> Indigenous and non-Indigenous staff were unable to be separated in Victoria.

Source: ABS (2004) *Indigenous population projections aged 20–64 years* Cat. no. 3238.0 (Low Series); State and Territory governments (unpublished); table 6A.9; 2008 Report, figure 6.6, p. 6.13.

## Deaths in police custody and custody-related operations

‘Deaths in custody and custody-related operations’, and ‘Indigenous deaths in custody and custody-related operations’ are indicators of governments’ objective to provide safe custody for alleged offenders, and ensure fair and equitable treatment for both victims and alleged offenders (box 6.2).

### Box 6.2 Deaths in custody and custody-related operations, and Indigenous deaths in custody and custody related operations

‘Deaths in custody and custody-related operations’ and ‘Indigenous deaths in custody and custody-related operations’ are indicators of governments’ objective to provide safe custody for alleged offenders, and ensure fair and equitable treatment for both victims and alleged offenders.

The indicators are defined as the number of non-Indigenous and Indigenous deaths in police custody and custody-related operations.

For both indicators, a lower number of deaths in custody and custody-related operations is a better outcome.

Nationally, there were 22 deaths in police custody and custody-related operations in 2006. This total comprised 14 non-Indigenous deaths, 6 Indigenous deaths and 2 deaths in NSW for which Indigenous status has not been determined. Across jurisdictions, there is a wide variation in the number of deaths (table 6.1).

**Table 6.1 Deaths in police custody and custody-related operations<sup>a</sup>**

	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Aust
Non-Indigenous deaths									
2002	12	7	4	2	–	1	–	–	26
2003	11	4	7	3	2	–	1	–	28
2004	8	4	5	2	2	–	1	–	22
2005	2	5	4	–	1	–	–	–	12
2006	6	3	1	2	1	–	1	–	14
Indigenous deaths									
2002	4	–	–	1	1	–	–	5	11
2003	1	–	2	4	–	–	–	1	8
2004	2	1	2	1	–	–	–	1	7
2005	1	–	1	6	–	–	–	–	8
2006	–	1	1	2	1	–	–	1	6
<b>Total Indigenous deaths 2002-2006<sup>b</sup></b>	8	2	6	14	2	–	–	8	40
Total deaths									
2002	16	7	4	3	1	1	–	5	37
2003	12	4	9	7	2	–	1	1	36
2004	10	5	7	3	2	–	1	1	29
2005	3	5	5	6	1	–	–	–	20
2006	8	4	2	4	2	–	1	1	22
<b>Total 2002-2006</b>	49	25	27	23	8	1	3	8	144

<sup>a</sup> 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 were attempting to detain a person, such as pursuits). <sup>b</sup> In 2006, two deaths occurred in NSW for which Indigenous status has not been determined. – Nil or rounded to zero.

Source: AIC (various years), *Deaths in Custody, Australia*; table 6A.10; 2008 Report, table 6.3, p. 6.57.

---

## Attachment tables

Attachment tables for data within this chapter are contained in the attachment to the compendium. These tables are identified in references throughout this chapter by an 'A' suffix (for example, table 6A.3 is table 3 in the police attachment). The tables included in the attachment are listed below.

<b>Table 6A.1</b>	Police service expenditure, staff and asset descriptors, NSW
<b>Table 6A.2</b>	Police service expenditure, staff and asset descriptors, Victoria
<b>Table 6A.3</b>	Police service expenditure, staff and asset descriptors, Queensland
<b>Table 6A.4</b>	Police service expenditure, staff and asset descriptors, WA
<b>Table 6A.5</b>	Police service expenditure, staff and asset descriptors, SA
<b>Table 6A.6</b>	Police service expenditure, staff and asset descriptors, Tasmania
<b>Table 6A.7</b>	Police service expenditure, staff and asset descriptors, ACT
<b>Table 6A.8</b>	Police service expenditure, staff and asset descriptors, NT
<b>Table 6A.9</b>	Indigenous, sworn and unsworn police staff
<b>Table 6A.10</b>	Number of deaths in police custody and custody-related operations, 2002 to 2006

## References

AIC (Australian Institute of Criminology) 2006, National deaths in custody program, Annual Report 2005 (and various years), Canberra.