



Measuring the wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians

The Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage (OID) report measures the wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians and this factsheet aims to provide a snapshot of reporting in this area.

The OID report provides information about a range of health, education, justice and economic outcomes, all of which affect wellbeing in some way. However, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians have identified a number of other factors that are particularly important to their conception of wellbeing.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander concepts of wellbeing in the OID report

The OID report includes the following indicators around culture and wellbeing:

- *Valuing Indigenous Australians and their cultures* — mutual respect between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians (section 5.1 in the main report)
- *Participation in decision making* — a key part of self-determination (section 5.2 in the main report).
- *Engagement with services* — both access to services and culturally appropriate delivery (section 5.3 in the main report)
- *Indigenous language revitalisation and maintenance* — an important cultural signifier for many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians (section 5.5 in the main report).
- *Indigenous cultural studies* — educating all students about Australia's Indigenous peoples and cultures (section 5.6 in the main report)
- *Participation in community activities* — including cultural activities (section 5.7 in the main report)
- *Access to traditional lands and waters* — can provide physical, spiritual, emotional and cultural benefits (section 5.8 in the main report)
- *Community functioning* — ability and freedom of community and members to determine the context of their lives and translate their capabilities into positive actions (section 11.5 in the main report)

This fact sheet summarises information about a selection of these indicators from the OID report Overview. The main report includes more detailed information.

Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage

Key Indicators 2014



Fact Sheet #2

Valuing Indigenous Australians and their cultures

Valuing of cultures In 2012, **four out of five people in the general community** regarded Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and history as important, and **half** reported feeling personally proud of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture.

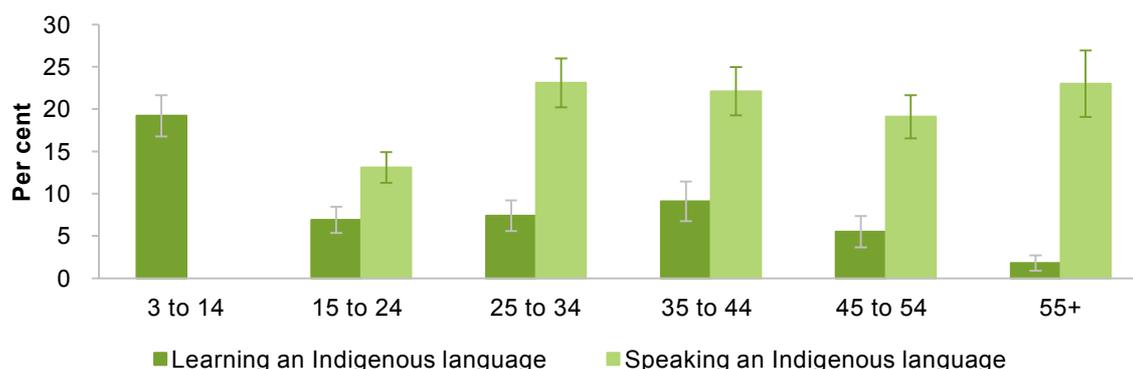
Knowledge of cultures While four out of five Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians rated their knowledge of Aboriginal cultures as 'high' fewer than one in three people in the general community did.

Indigenous language revitalisation and maintenance

Learning the language In 2008, **around one in ten (11 per cent)** Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians aged 3 years and over were learning an Indigenous language, with the **proportion highest for the youngest age group** (19 per cent for 3–14 year olds).

Spoke the language In 2008, **17 per cent** of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians aged 15 years and over spoke an Indigenous language, with the proportion **highest in remote areas** (49 per cent).

Proportions of Indigenous people learning and speaking Indigenous language, 2008



Indigenous cultural studies

Taught culture In 2008, **almost two-thirds** of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander 5–24 year olds reported being taught Indigenous culture as part of their studies. Data are not available to provide a comparator for non-Indigenous Australians.

2014

Information in this fact sheet is from Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage: Key Indicators 2014, published by the Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision. The report can be found on the Review website: www.pc.gov.au/gsp. For further information contact the Secretariat: (03) 9653 2100, gsp@pc.gov.au. Image by Wayne Quilliam, courtesy of Reconciliation Australia and the 2012 Indigenous Governance Awards and finalist Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care. CAUTION: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people should be aware that this publication may contain images of deceased people. No inference is intended that the people or communities shown are the subject of any issue raised in the report.

Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage

Key Indicators 2014

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Things that work – case studies

The OID report includes case studies of programs that are making a difference for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians. Some of the wellbeing case studies are summarised below.

- National Indigenous Television (NITV)**
- A free to air channel that aims to inform, entertain and educate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous audiences.
 - As noted in a Productivity Commission report into broadcasting in 2000, Indigenous radio and television helps to sustain language and culture; provide a vital channel of information for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians; and can facilitate better communication between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous Australians.
 - A positive 2009 review resulted in continued Australian Government funding to the broadcaster. The 2009 review was endorsed by a further review in 2010, which also made a number of recommendations to enhance the broadcaster's operations.
- Australian Electoral Commission's Indigenous electoral participation program**
- This program aims to empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians to exercise their right to vote.
 - A 2011 evaluation found that the program's early results were positive: '[it] has a significant role to play in addressing the barriers to participation of Indigenous people in democratic processes'.
- Yiriman Project (Kimberly region, WA)**
- The 2012 Indigenous Governance Awards report noted that: The project 'takes young people and elders on trips back to country to immerse them in the stories, songs and knowledge that are their cultural heritage.'
 - Outcomes include the healing of young people as they walk on country, and meaningful employment that values and maintains culture.
 - Builds on young people's confidence and improves their self-worth, and is considered to have helped curb suicide, self-harm and substance abuse.
- Cape York Welfare Reform (CYWR)**
- Reforms that aim to change social norms and behaviours across the areas of social responsibility, education, housing and economic opportunities.
 - The 2012 CYWR evaluation report found that 'overall there is clear evidence that the wellbeing of residents in the four CYWR communities (Aurukun, Coen, Hope Vale and Mossman Gorge) has improved over the CYWR years. Crime rates are down, infrastructure and services have improved, school attendance has risen or been maintained at high levels, and people appear happier. In no major dimension have outcomes deteriorated in these communities.'

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