
Chapter 2: The compendium of Indigenous data

The primary aim of the compendium is to provide an easily accessible collation of Indigenous data from the *Report on Government Services*. Currently, information and data on Indigenous people are contained within the discussion of each specific service delivery area of the Report.

Table 2.1 provides a stocktake of performance related data on Indigenous Australians in the 2004 Report on Government Services, indicating which services have reported on at least one comparable performance indicator, or have descriptive data, for all jurisdictions. It does not signify the quality of the data. Table 2.1 is not comparable with table 2.1 in the 2003 Indigenous compendium due to the new approach (outcomes focus) adopted in most chapters in the 2004 Report on Government Services (see chapter 1 for details of the new approach).

Improvements in reporting of Indigenous data

Improvements to the Indigenous data within the 2004 Report on Government Services were made in a number of areas, as discussed below.

Education

- Nationally comparable learning outcomes (2001 data) for writing literacy for years 3 and 5 were reported for the first time for all students, including Indigenous students.
- For vocational education and training (VET), rates of participation in VET by Indigenous Australians were compared with those of the total population.

Health

- The former chapter on general practice (chapter 10) was broadened in the 2004 Report on Government Services with the aim of incorporating primary and community health services more generally. (This chapter is now titled Primary and community health.) The expanded coverage includes a comparison of hospitalisation rates for diabetes for Indigenous and non-Indigenous people.

Table 2.1 Reporting of at least one comparable data item on Indigenous Australians, 2004 Report^a

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

SAAP = Supported Accommodation Assistance Program. ✓ At least one comparable data item is reported.
x No comparable data are reported.

^a Table 2.1 is not comparable with table 2.1 in the 2003 Indigenous compendium due to the new approach implemented in most chapters in the 2004 Report on Government Services. The new approach (and the new framework) focuses on outcomes with outputs representing the services delivered. The outputs of a service are assessed through equity, effectiveness and efficiency indicators (see chapter 1 for details). ^b

Source: Report on Government Services 2004, p. 2.17.

Care in interpreting Indigenous data

Readers should exercise caution in interpreting data on services to Indigenous people within this compendium and the *Report on Government Services 2004*.

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. The method and level of identification of Indigenous people appear to vary across jurisdictions. Further, surveys do not necessarily include an Indigenous identifier; when they do, they may not provide for sufficient sampling to allow an adequate confidence interval. In other cases, the numbers are sometimes so small that for privacy reasons, they cannot be published.

Improving Indigenous data

The ABS has an important role in this area. Work being undertaken by the ABS includes:

- an ongoing program to develop and improve Indigenous data flowing from Australian, State and Territory administrative systems
- work with other agencies to ensure Indigenous people are identified in relevant systems and that statistics are of adequate quality. Priority is initially being given to the improvement of births and deaths statistics in all States and Territories. Other priorities include hospitals, community services, education, housing, and law 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 its Household Survey Program to collect more regular Indigenous statistics, including regular Indigenous general social surveys, Indigenous sample supplementation in regular health surveys and annual Indigenous labour force estimates.

The Review will draw on these initiatives in future reports.