Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision

Report on Government Services 2026

Approach to performance reporting (part A)

Produced by the Productivity Commission on behalf of the Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision.

Acknowledgment of Country

The Productivity Commission acknowledges the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia and their continuing connection to land, waters and community. We pay our respects to their Cultures, Country and Elders past and present.

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Report on Government Services 2026

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PART A: RELEASED ON 29 JANUARY 2026

A Approach to performance reporting

Part A includes an introduction to the Report on Government Services 2026, Statistical context for the service-specific parts B to G, the Glossary and the Acronyms and abbreviations list.

About this report

Acknowledgment

This report was produced under the direction of the Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision (SCRGSP).

The Steering Committee comprises the following current members:

Name	Government	Department/Agency
Selwyn Button	Chair	Productivity Commission
James McLean Dreyfus Jaclin Craig	Australian Government	Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet The Treasury
Katie Irvine Xuan Deng	New South Wales	The Cabinet Office NSW Treasury
Kait McCann Sharon Oxlade	Victoria	Department of Premier and Cabinet Department of Treasury and Finance
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Emma Kotzur Shaun Pearson	Northern Territory	Department of the Chief Minister and Cabinet Department of Treasury and Finance
Bindi Kindermann	Specialist Observer	Australian Bureau of Statistics
Louise Gates	Specialist Observer	Australian Institute of Health and Welfare

People who also served on the Steering Committee during the production of this Report include:

Name	Government	Department/Agency
Nadia Phillips	Northern Territory	Department of the Chief Minister and Cabinet

Report on Government Services 2026

PART A, SECTION 1: RELEASED ON 29 JANUARY 2026

1 Approach to performance measurement

The Report on Government Services (the report) provides information on the equity, effectiveness and efficiency of government services in Australia. By encouraging improvements in these services, the report contributes to the wellbeing of all Australians. Governments use the report to inform policy and evaluation, for budgeting (including to assess the resource needs and performance of government agencies) and to demonstrate accountability.

This report provides a dynamic online presentation underpinned by machine readable data in a CSV format as well as data provided in Excel format.

Reasons for measuring performance

Measuring and publicly reporting on the performance of governments in delivering services creates incentives to improve performance by:

- clarifying government objectives and responsibilities
- providing indicators of policy and program performance over time
- enhancing transparency to the community through the provision of relevant information
- highlighting innovation and opportunities for improvement.

A key focus of the report is measuring the *comparative* performance of government services across jurisdictions. Reporting on comparative performance can provide incentives to improve performance where there is no or little competition, and provides a level of accountability to consumers, who have minimal opportunity to express their preferences by accessing services elsewhere.

The terms ‘comparative performance reporting’ and ‘benchmarking’ are sometimes used interchangeably. However, benchmarking typically involves assessing performance against a predetermined standard, which this report generally does not do. Instead, this report measures, for example, the average or median time taken to access particular services (expressed in minutes, days, months) rather than the proportion of people who access services within predetermined 'target' timeframes. Governments can use the information in this report to identify appropriate benchmarks.

Scope of the report

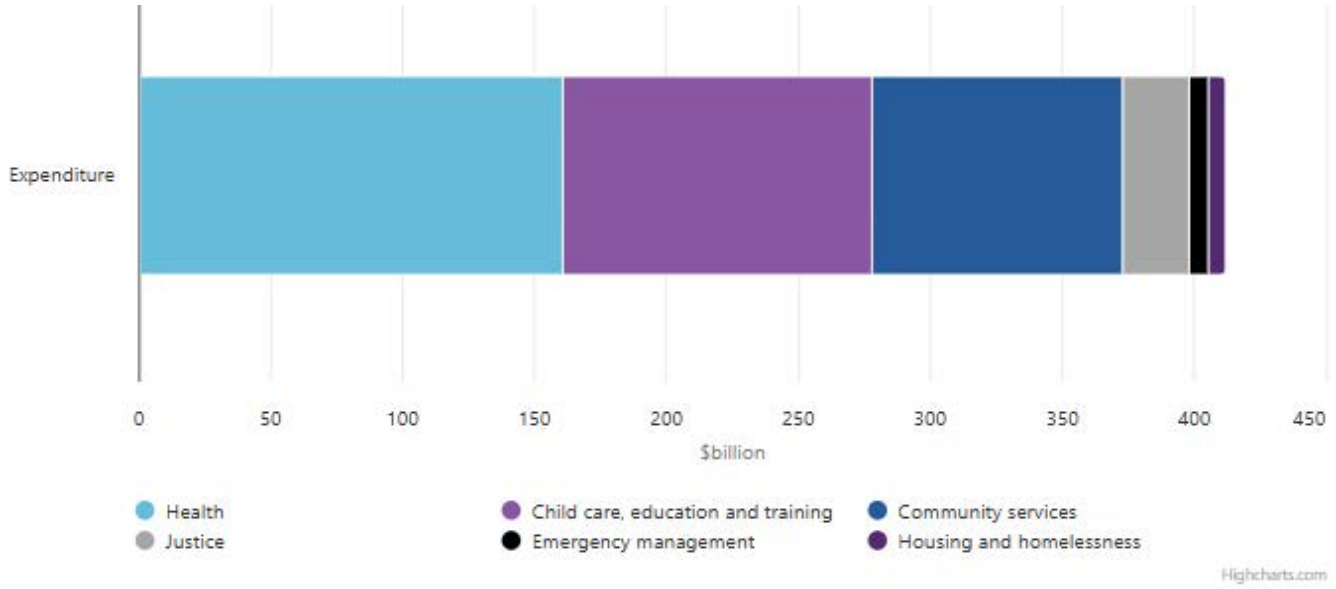
Governments provide a range of services to people, households and the community. This report focuses on measuring the performance of governments delivering social services (such as, health, education, and community services), which aim to enhance wellbeing by improving tangible outcomes (for example, cancer screening rates,

student outcomes) and intangible outcomes (for example, self-reported patient satisfaction, student engagement). The report presents performance information on child care, education and training, health, justice, emergency management, community services, social housing, and homelessness across 17 service areas. The service areas included in the report were chosen based on a set of formal criteria.

Read the formal criteria

Recurrent government expenditure on the services in this report was approximately $412 billion in 2023-24 (2023-24 dollars) (figure 1.1) – a significant proportion (around 70%) of total recurrent government expenditure. This is equivalent to around 15% of gross domestic product (estimates based on 2025 ABS data). Updated financial data for the 2024-25 financial year is available for some sections.

Figure 1.1 – Recurrent government expenditure by sector[a]



a Changes in sector expenditure over time can be partly due to the reallocation of services between sectors in line with broad policy shifts (or changes in the data source). Readers are encouraged to check service areas within each sector to confirm coverage for the relevant year.

Governments use a mix of methods to deliver services to the community, including providing services directly (a 'delivery/provider' role), funding external providers through grants or the purchase of services (a 'purchaser' role) and subsidising users (via vouchers or cash payments) to access services from external providers.

As non-government organisations are often involved in the delivery of services, government funding may not cover the full cost of delivering services to the community. Since the purpose of this report is to inform government decision-making about the effectiveness and efficiency of government purchase or supply of services, the scope is

confined to the cost to government. Similarly, this report does not include detailed information on general government income support. For example, the report covers aged care services but not the age pension and child care services but not family payments (although descriptive information on income support is included in some cases).

Performance across agencies, jurisdictions and over time is influenced by a range of factors outside government control, such as geography, economic circumstances, available inputs and input prices. While the report generally does not adjust results for these factors, some indicators are aligned with other national reporting exercises (for example, casemix adjustment to account for patient complexity when measuring comparative hospital costs in section 12). Instead, the report notes government performance in delivering services is one contributing factor and, where possible, provides data on other key contributing factors, including different geographic and demographic characteristics across jurisdictions. Section 2 contains detailed statistics for each state and territory, which may assist in interpreting the performance indicators presented in the report.

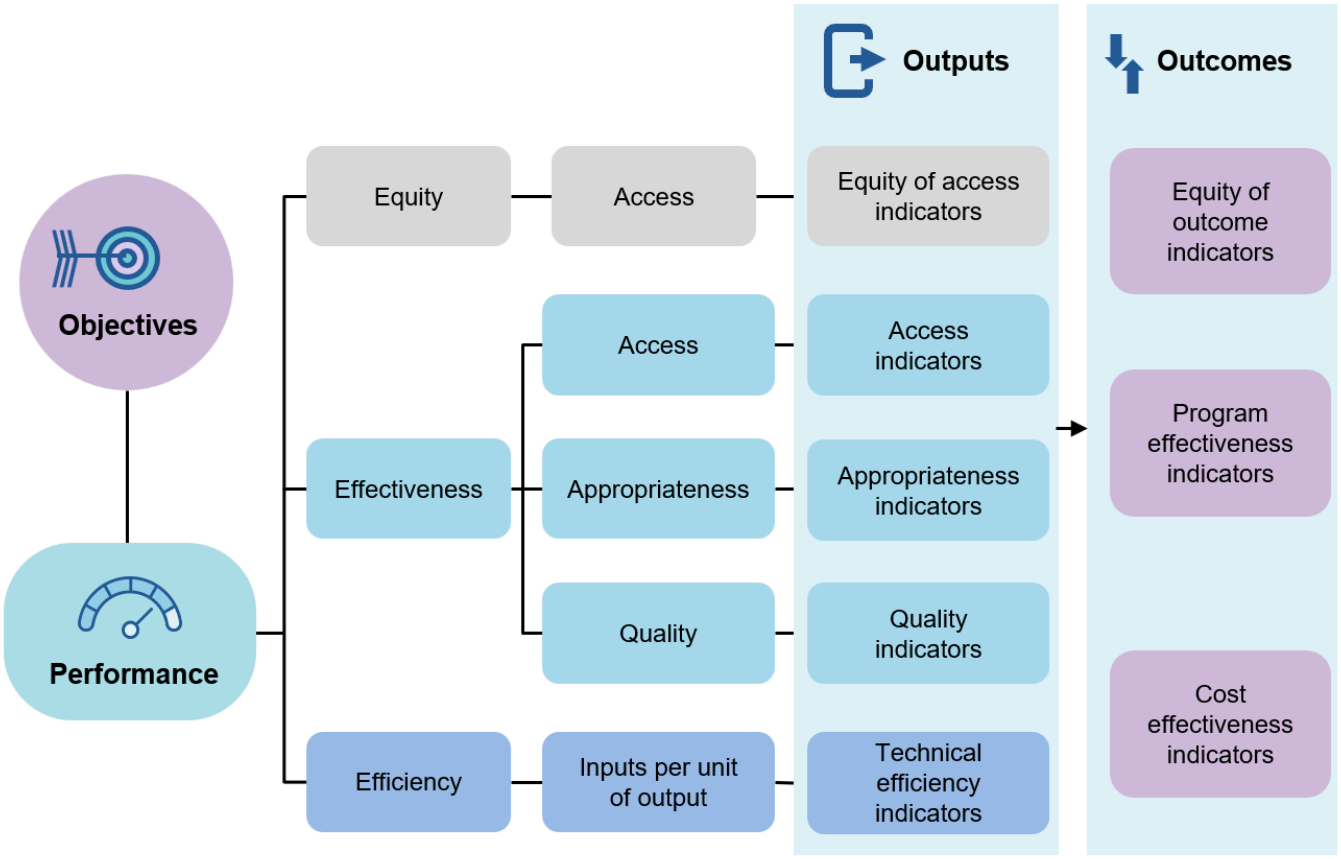
Conceptual approach

The report applies a consistent conceptual approach to measure performance across service areas. This allows for comparisons in performance across services, improvements in reporting within one area to be applied across others and supports a coordinated response to issues that span multiple service areas.

The performance indicator framework

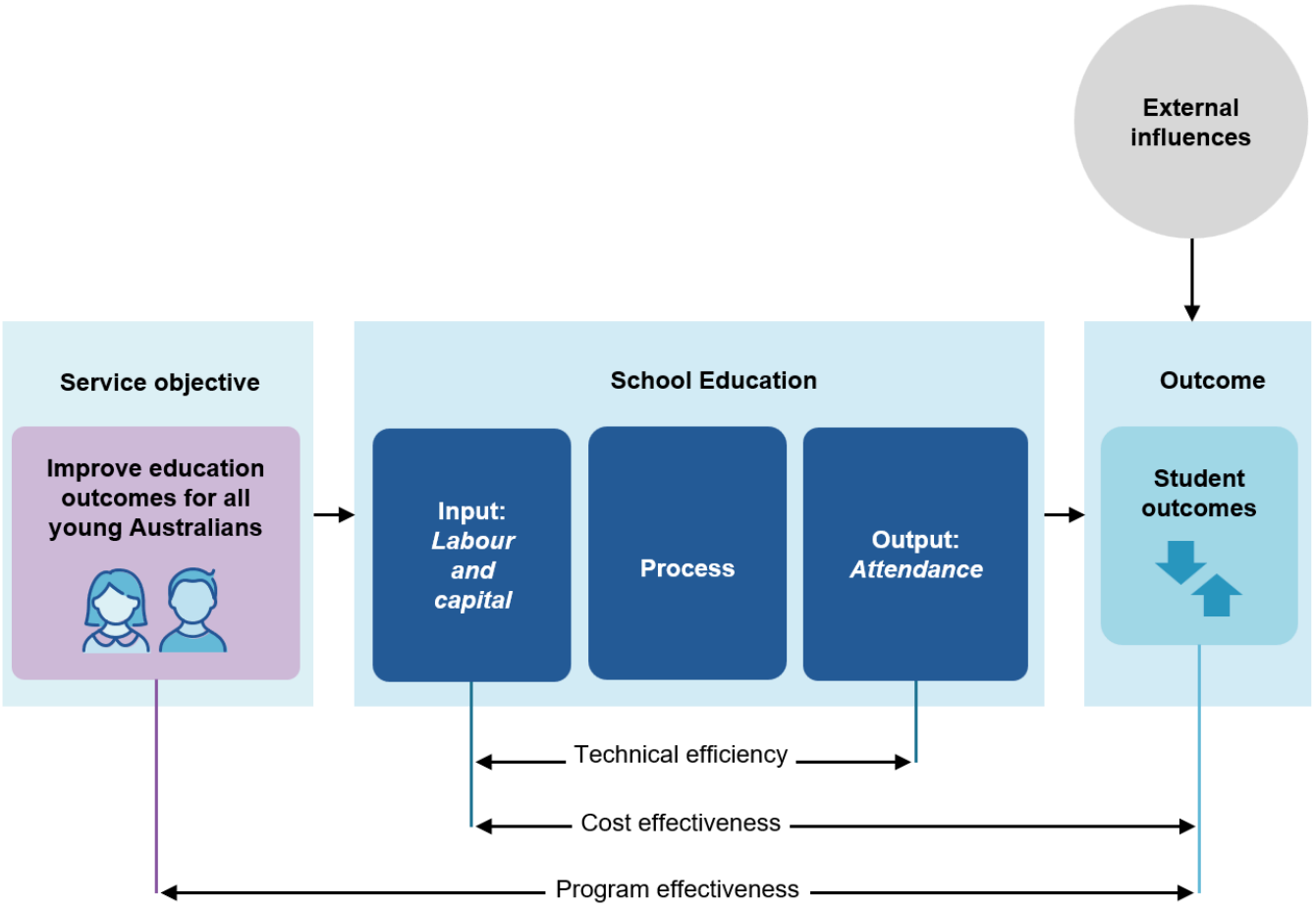
Each service area in the report includes a set of objectives and a performance indicator framework against which government performance is measured (figure 1.2). Performance indicator frameworks include output indicators (grouped according to equity, effectiveness and efficiency domains) and outcome indicators.

Figure 1.2 – General performance indicator framework



The framework reflects the process through which inputs are transformed into outputs and outcomes in order to achieve desired objectives (figure 1.3). Service providers transform resources (inputs) into services (outputs). The rate at which resources are used to make this transformation is known as ‘technical efficiency’.

Figure 1.3 – Example of a service process – school education



The impact of outputs on people, households and the community are the outcomes of a service. In the report, the rate at which inputs are used to generate outcomes is referred to as 'cost effectiveness'. Although no explicit cost effectiveness indicators are currently included in the report, implicit cost effectiveness reporting is achieved through combinations of efficiency and effectiveness indicators, and combinations of efficiency and outcome indicators.

Objectives

Each service area includes a set of objectives, agreed by all governments, against which performance is measured. Objectives are structured consistently across service areas and comprise three key components:

- the high-level vision for a service
- the service delivery characteristics that contribute to effectiveness (for example, quality, safety, timeliness)
- that services are provided in an equitable and efficient manner.

Outcome indicators are linked to the high-level vision, whereas output indicators measure the equity, effectiveness and efficiency of services. These concepts are discussed in more detail below.

Output indicators

While the report aims to focus on outcomes, these can be difficult to measure directly. Therefore, the report includes output measures where there is a relationship between outputs and desired outcomes. Output information is also

critical for equitable, effective and efficient management of government services, and is often the level of performance information most relevant to people who access those services.

Equity, effectiveness and efficiency indicators are given equal prominence in the report's performance indicator framework. Measuring performance across all three domains is essential, as there are often inherent trade-offs in allocating resources and therefore limitations in analysing only some aspects of service performance. For example, a service with higher costs may be more effective than a lower cost service and therefore be more cost effective. In addition, improving service access and outcomes for equity groups may result in higher average unit costs.

Equity indicators

Equity indicators measure how well a service is meeting the needs of people who have specific challenges accessing government services. Equity–access indicators measure whether services are equally accessible to all members of the community regardless of personal characteristics such as cultural background or geographic location. Effectiveness and outcome indicators may also have equity dimensions when assessing gaps in performance between selected equity groups and the comparison/general population (for example, readmissions to hospital within 28 days of discharge, by Indigenous status and achievement of sustained housing, by Indigenous status).

Equity groups for whom disaggregated data is commonly reported across the report include:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- People living in rural or remote areas
- People from a non-English speaking background
- People with disability (whose access to specialist disability services is also reported in section 15).

To assess equity of access, the report often compares the proportion of people in the population in the selected equity group to their proportion in the service use population. This approach is suitable for services provided on a near-universal basis (for example, preschool education) but must be used with caution for other services where service provision is based on assessed need. In such cases, comparisons should ideally be made across selected equity groups on the basis of need (for example, disability services uses potential populations for each selected equity group).

Effectiveness indicators

Effectiveness indicators measure how well the outputs of a service meet its delivery objectives. The performance indicator framework groups effectiveness indicators according to characteristics considered important to the service. For most sections, these characteristics include access, appropriateness, quality, and sustainability.

Access

Access indicators measure how easily the community can obtain a service. Access indicators are generally categorised according to three domains:

- *Overall access* indicators measure how readily services are accessed by people who need them across the eligible or relevant population (for example, access to specialist disability services is measured according to the ‘potential population’ based on disability prevalence). Due to difficulties directly measuring access, indirect

measures are often included, such as measures of unmet need (section 15) or enrolment in preschool (section 3).

- *Timeliness of access* indicators measure the time it takes for consumers to access services (expressed in minutes, days or months using administrative data or self-reported survey data). These measures are important where there is a limited supply of services, which can result in access delays (for example, waiting times for health and aged care services) and where time is critical (for example, emergency services response times).
- *Affordability indicators* measure the cost burden on consumers where they are responsible for part of the cost of a service (for example, child care out-of-pocket costs in section 3 or the proportion of people who delayed or did not fill a prescription due to cost in section 10). These measures are important as affordability might be a barrier to service access.

Appropriateness

Appropriateness indicators measure how well services meet client needs (for example, whether students achieve their main reason for training in section 5). Appropriateness is distinct from access, as it measures performance in meeting the needs of people who already have access to the service.

Appropriateness indicators also seek to identify whether the level of service received is appropriate for the level of need. Some services have developed measurable standards of service need, against which levels of service provision can be assessed (for example, the 'match of dwelling to household size' indicator in section 18 measures the appropriateness of the size of the dwelling relative to the size and composition of the household).

Quality

Quality indicators measure whether services meet expectations and conform to standards and specifications (for example, aged care quality standards, health service accreditation requirements). Information about service quality is important to assess whether efficiency is achieved at the expense of quality, and that all relevant aspects of performance are considered.

The report includes both direct and implied (or proxy) indicators:

- Direct indicators measure the frequency of positive (or negative) events resulting from service delivery.
- Implied or proxy indicators measure the extent to which aspects of a service conform to specifications.

Quality indicators in the report generally relate to one of four categories:

- Standards – whether services are accredited or meeting required standards (for example, compliance with aged care service standards and health service accreditation requirements).
- Safety – whether services provided are safe (for example, deaths in police custody, serious incidents in aged care, sentinel events in hospitals).
- Responsiveness – whether services are client orientated and responsive to client needs (for example, measures of patient satisfaction).
- Continuity – whether services provide coordinated or uninterrupted care over time and across service providers (for example, community follow-up after psychiatric admission).

Sustainability

Broadly defined, sustainability can relate to financial, social, and environmental dimensions of service performance. In this report, the concept of sustainability is typically defined as 'workforce sustainability' and relates to the capacity of a workforce to meet current and projected service demands (for example, the nursing, allied health and medical workforce in the health care sector). In some sectors, volunteers play a vital role. Where relevant, the report includes contextual information on volunteer numbers (for example, firefighting volunteers in the emergency services sector and kinship and foster carers in the child protection system).

Efficiency

Economic efficiency comprises several dimensions:

- *Technical efficiency* means that goods and services are produced at the lowest possible cost.
- *Allocative efficiency* means that the goods and services consumers value most are produced from a given set of resources.
- *Dynamic efficiency* means that, over time, consumers are offered new and better products, and existing products at lower cost.

The report focuses on technical (or productive) efficiency. Technical efficiency indicators measure how well services use their resources (inputs) to produce outputs that contribute to desired outcomes. A common example is government funding per unit of output delivered (for example, cost per annual hour for vocational education and training in section 5).

Some efficiency indicators included in the report are incomplete or proxy measures of technical efficiency. For example, indicators that do not capture the full cost to government of providing services are considered incomplete measures of technical efficiency. Other indicators of efficiency, such as partial productivity measures, are used where there are shortcomings in the data (for example, judicial officers per finalisation in section 7).

In addition, some service areas report on the cost per head of total/eligible population, rather than the cost per person actually receiving the service or another unit of output. These are not measures of technical efficiency, but the cost of providing the service relative to the total/eligible population.

Outcome indicators

Outcome indicators provide information on the overall impact of a service on people and the community, unlike output indicators, which report on the characteristics of service delivery. Outcomes may be short or longer term. For example, in school education, learning outcomes at years 3, 5, 7 and 9 may be considered intermediate outcomes, while completion of year 12 or school leaver destinations may be considered longer term outcomes (section 4). The report includes both types of outcome indicators, as appropriate.

In contrast to outputs, outcome indicators:

- typically depend on multiple service characteristics
- are more likely to be influenced by factors outside the control of governments and service providers.

Guiding principles for the report

The Steering Committee's guiding principles provide the basis for reporting across service areas (box 1.1). These principles are based on schedule C of the Intergovernmental Agreement on Federal Financial Relations (IGA FFR) (IGA FFR 2022). There can be trade-offs when applying these principles. For example, sometimes timely data might have had less opportunity to undergo rigorous validation. The approach in the report is to publish best available, albeit imperfect data, with caveats. This approach supports the Steering Committee to meet its Terms of Reference, including transparency and accountability to the public, while overseeing an annual program of review and continuous improvement. Important information about data quality is included in the relevant sections and data tables. More information on data quality for some indicators and measures is available from external data providers including the ABS and AIHW. Data Quality Statements for National Agreement indicators and datasets maintained by the AIHW can be accessed here:

- AIHW Data Quality Statements

Box 1.1 – Guiding principles for the report

Comprehensive – performance should be assessed against all objectives.

Streamlined – reporting should be concise, measuring performance against indicators aligned to agreed objectives, with contextual information included when necessary to support interpretation.

Meaningful – data should measure what it claims to measure. Proxy indicators should be clearly identified and the development of more meaningful indicators encouraged where practicable.

Understandable – data should be reported in a way that is meaningful to a broad audience, many of whom will not have technical or statistical expertise.

Timely – data for each reporting period should be the most recent possible. Incremental reporting when data becomes available, and then updating all relevant data over recent years, is preferable to waiting until all data is available.

Comparable – data should be comparable across jurisdictions and over time. Where data is not yet comparable across jurisdictions, time series data within jurisdictions is particularly important.

Complete – data should be reported for all jurisdictions (where relevant), but where this is not possible, data should be reported for jurisdictions that can report, rather than waiting until data is available for all.

Administratively simple and cost effective - use acceptable performance indicators that are already in use in other national reporting arrangements, where appropriate, to reduce duplication and minimise reporting burden.

Accurate – data should be of sufficient accuracy to provide confidence in analysis based on information in the report.

Hierarchical – outcome indicators should be underpinned by output indicators and additional disaggregated data where a greater level of detail is required.

A focus on outcomes – performance reporting should focus on outcomes, reflecting whether service objectives have been met, supplemented by input and output measures where they relate to desired outcomes.

Validation – data can vary in the extent to which it has been reviewed or validated (at a minimum, all data is endorsed by the provider and subjected to peer review).

Full costing of services – unit cost estimates should reflect the full cost to government (where possible).

Source: Adapted from schedule C of the Intergovernmental Agreement on Federal Financial Relations (2022).

Costing of services

Consistent with the Steering Committee's guiding principles, expenditure on services should be reported on a comparable basis and capture the full cost to government. Issues that have affected the comparability and coverage of costs in the report include:

- accounting for differences in the treatment of payroll tax (SCRCSSP 1999)
- including the full range of capital costs (SCRCSSP 2001)
- apportioning applicable departmental overhead costs
- reporting non-government sourced revenue.

Payroll tax

The Steering Committee's preference is to remove payroll tax from reported costs, where feasible, so that cost differences between jurisdictions are not caused by differences in payroll tax policies. However, in some sections it has not been possible to separately identify payroll tax, so a hypothetical amount is included in cost estimates for exempt services.

Capital costs

Under accrual accounting, items are accounted for as they are earned or incurred, for example the capital used (or consumed) in a particular year, rather than the cash expenditure incurred in its purchase (such as the purchase costs of a new building). Capital costs comprise two distinct elements:

- Depreciation – defined as the annual consumption of non-current physical assets used in delivering government services.
- User cost of capital – the opportunity cost of funds tied up in the capital used to deliver services (that is, the return that could have been generated if the funds were employed in their next best use).

Both depreciation and the user cost of capital should be included in unit cost calculations (with the user cost of capital for land reported separately). The user cost of capital rate should be applied to all non-current physical assets, less any capital charges and interest on borrowings already reported by the agency (to avoid double counting). The rate applied for the user cost of capital is based on a weighted average of rates nominated by jurisdictions (currently 8%).

Differences in asset measurement techniques can have a major impact on reported capital costs (SCRCSSP 2001). However, the differences created by these asset measurement effects are generally relatively small in the context of total unit costs, because capital costs represent a relatively small proportion of total cost (except for housing). The adoption of national uniform accounting standards across all service areas would be a desirable outcome for the report.

Other costing issues

Other costing issues include the apportionment of costs shared across services (mainly overhead departmental costs) and the treatment of non-government sourced revenue.

- Full apportionment of departmental overheads (i.e., full cost recovery) is consistent with the Steering Committee's guiding principle that the report should capture the full cost to government of providing services. The practice of apportioning overhead costs varies across services in the report.
- The treatment of non-government sourced revenue varies across services in the report. Some services deduct such revenue from their efficiency estimates. Ideally when reporting technical efficiency for services which governments provide directly, the estimates should be reported both including and net of revenues. Some services report net of revenue only. This is usually in cases where the amounts concerned are relatively small (for example, courts). The costs reported are therefore an estimate of the net cost to government.

References

ABS (Australian Bureau of Statistics) 2025, *Australian National Accounts: National Income, Expenditure and Product, Australian National Accounts, June 2025,* *Australian National Accounts: National Income, Expenditure and Product, June 2025 | Australian Bureau of Statistics* (accessed 4 September 2025).

Intergovernmental Agreement on Federal Financial Relations (IGA FFR) 2022, IGA FFR schedule C, The Intergovernmental Agreement on Federal Financial Relations | Federal Financial Relations (accessed 30 September 2025).

Steering Committee for the Review of Commonwealth/State Service Provision (SCRCSSP) 1999, *Payroll Tax in the Costing of Government Services,* Productivity Commission.

—— 2001, *Asset Measurement in the Costing of Government Services,* Productivity Commission.

Report on Government Services 2026

PART A, SECTION 2: RELEASED ON 29 JANUARY 2026

2 Statistical context

The Statistical context contains information to assist interpretation of the performance information in this report. It includes information and data on population, families and households, and income and employment. Information on some of the statistical concepts that are used in the report is available in the Statistical concepts note.

Data referenced by a '2A' prefix (for example, table 2A.1) is included in the data tables, which can be downloaded below.

Data downloads

2 Statistical context data tables (Excel - 570.8 KB)

2 Statistical context dataset (CSV - 1.4 MB)

Refer to the Statistical concepts document and corresponding table number in the data tables above for detailed definitions, caveats, footnotes and data source(s).

Population

The Australian people are the principal recipients of the government services covered by this report. The size, trends and characteristics of the population can have significant influences on the demand for government services and the cost of service delivery.

Population size and trends

More than three-quarters of Australia's 27.2 million people lived in the eastern mainland states as at 30 June 2024. As the majority of Australia's population lives in the eastern mainland states, data for these jurisdictions generally has a large influence on national averages. Nationally, the average annual growth rate of the population between 2020 and 2024 was approximately 1.5% (table 2A.1).

As in most other developed economies, greater life expectancy and declining fertility have contributed to an 'ageing' of Australia's population. However, the age distribution of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is markedly different to that of all Australians (figure 2.1). At 30 June 2024, 12.3% of Australia's population was aged 70 years or over, compared with just 3.1% of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population as at 30 June 2021 (tables 2A.1 and 2A.5).

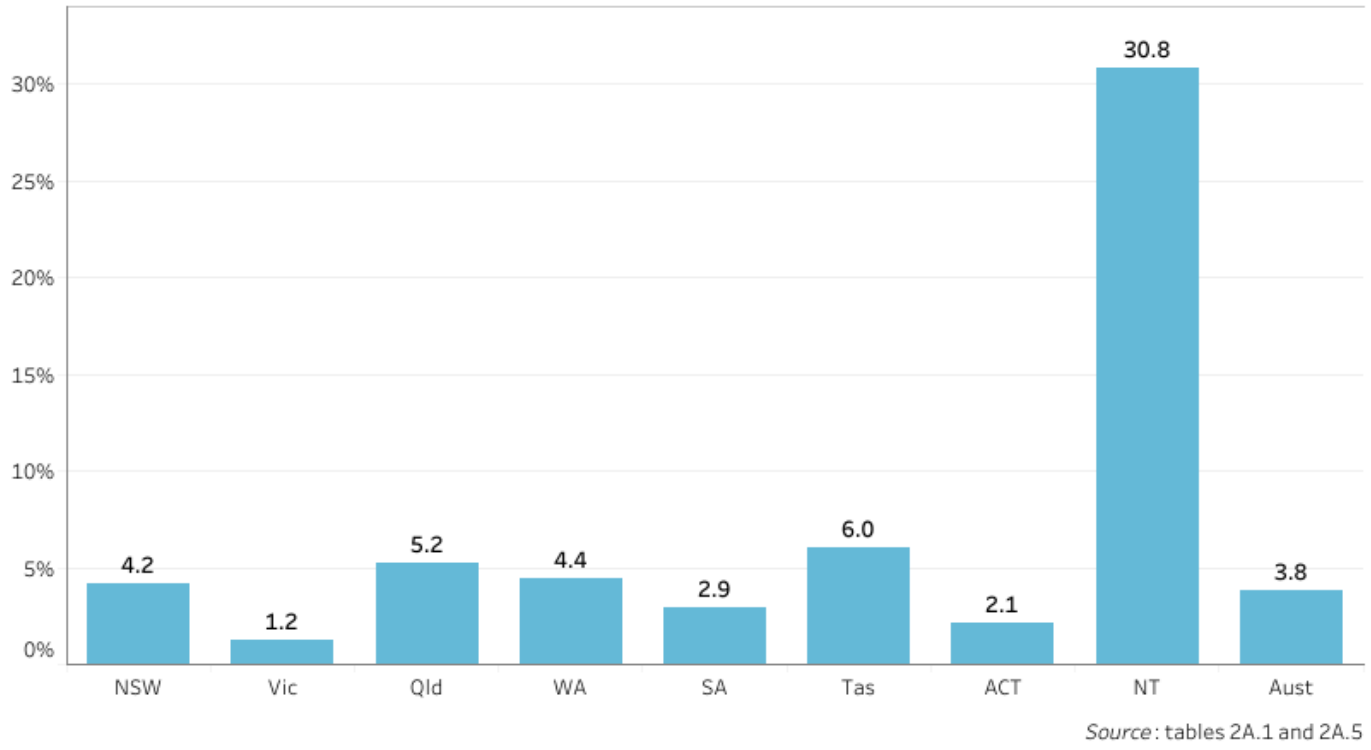
The most recent Census count of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population (2021) is used to make comparisons with the estimated Australian population for the same year (2021). Annual data is based on the 2021 Census of Population and Housing and is available in tables 2A.1 and 2A.5.

Figure 2.1 **Population in Aust, at 30 June 2021**
By age and sex

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population

There were an estimated 983,709 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (49.8% female, similar to the total population) in Australia at 30 June 2021, accounting for approximately 3.8% of the total Australian population in 2021 (figure 2.2).

Figure 2.2 **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as a proportion of the population**
By jurisdiction, 2021



Source: tables 2A.1 and 2A.5

Population, by ethnicity and proficiency in English

Some new Australians face specific problems when accessing government services. Language and cultural differences can be formidable barriers for otherwise capable people. Cultural backgrounds can also have a significant influence on the support networks offered by extended families.

People born outside Australia accounted for 27.7% of the population in August 2021 (8.0% from the main English speaking countries and 19.7% from other countries) (table 2A.8). Of those born outside Australia, 89.4% spoke only English, or spoke another language as well as speaking English well or very well (table 2A.7). Approximately 22.3% of Australians spoke a language other than English at home in August 2021 (table 2A.9).

Population, by geographic location

Those living in remote areas can have greater difficulty in accessing government services, often needing to travel long distances, or facing lower service levels than provided in major cities. The Australian population is highly urbanised, with 72.8% of the population located in major cities as at 30 June 2024 (table 2A.3). The Australian population is equally distributed across the ABS Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage (IRSD) quintiles, with about 20% of the population in each quintile as at 30 June 2024 (table 2A.4).

Family and household

Family structure

There were 7.7 million families in Australia in June 2025. Nationally, 35.5% of families had at least one child aged under 15 years, and 15.4% of families had at least one child aged under five years (table 2A.11). Lone parent families might have a greater need for government support and particular types of government services (such as childcare for respite reasons). Nationally in June 2025, 20.4% of families with children aged under 15 years were lone parent families (table 2A.12).

Employment status also has implications for the financial independence of families. Nationally in June 2025, in 3.2% of couple families with children aged under 15 years neither parent was employed and in 4.3% of lone parent families with children aged under 15 years, the parent was unemployed (table 2A.13).

Household profile

There were a projected 10.6 million households in Australia at 30 June 2025 (based on the 2021 Census), and 26.5% of these were lone person households (table 2A.15). As at 30 June 2025, the proportion of people aged 65 years or over who lived alone (24.7%) was around three times higher than the proportion for people aged 15–64 years (9.1%).

Income and employment

Income and support payments

Nationally in August 2021, 16.8% of people aged 15 years or over had a relatively low weekly individual income of $299 or less (table 2A.17). The proportion was higher for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (24.7%) and more than four times higher for younger people (73.9% for people aged 15–19 years) (tables 2A.18-19).

Nationally, 17.5% of the total population was receiving income support in June 2025, an increase from 17.0% in June 2024 due in part to the increase in the proportion of people receiving a labour market program allowance (an increase from 3.3% in 2024 to 3.6% in 2025). The age pension was received by 9.7% of the population (63.1% of the qualifying population), while 3.0% received a disability support pension and a further 1.2% of the population received a single parent payment (table 2A.20).

Employment and workforce participation

Of the 15.3 million people aged 15 years or over in the labour force in Australia in June 2025, 95.8% were employed. The majority of employed people (68.8%) were in full-time employment (figure 2.3). Nationally, the unemployment rate was 4.2% (table 2A.25). The unemployment rate needs to be interpreted within the context of labour force participation rates (the proportion of the working age population either in employment or actively looking for work). The labour force participation rate for Australia was 67.1% in June 2025 (figure 2.3 and table 2A.25). When compared to June 2024, the unemployment rate has increased (from 3.9%) and the labour force participation rate has remained stable.

Nationally, a lower proportion of females (63.3%) participate in the workforce than males (71.0%) in June 2025. Of those participating, 79.6% of employed males and 57.0% of employed females were engaged in full-time work. A similar proportion of people who were unemployed sought full-time employment (58.1% of females and 75.5% of males) (figure 2.3).

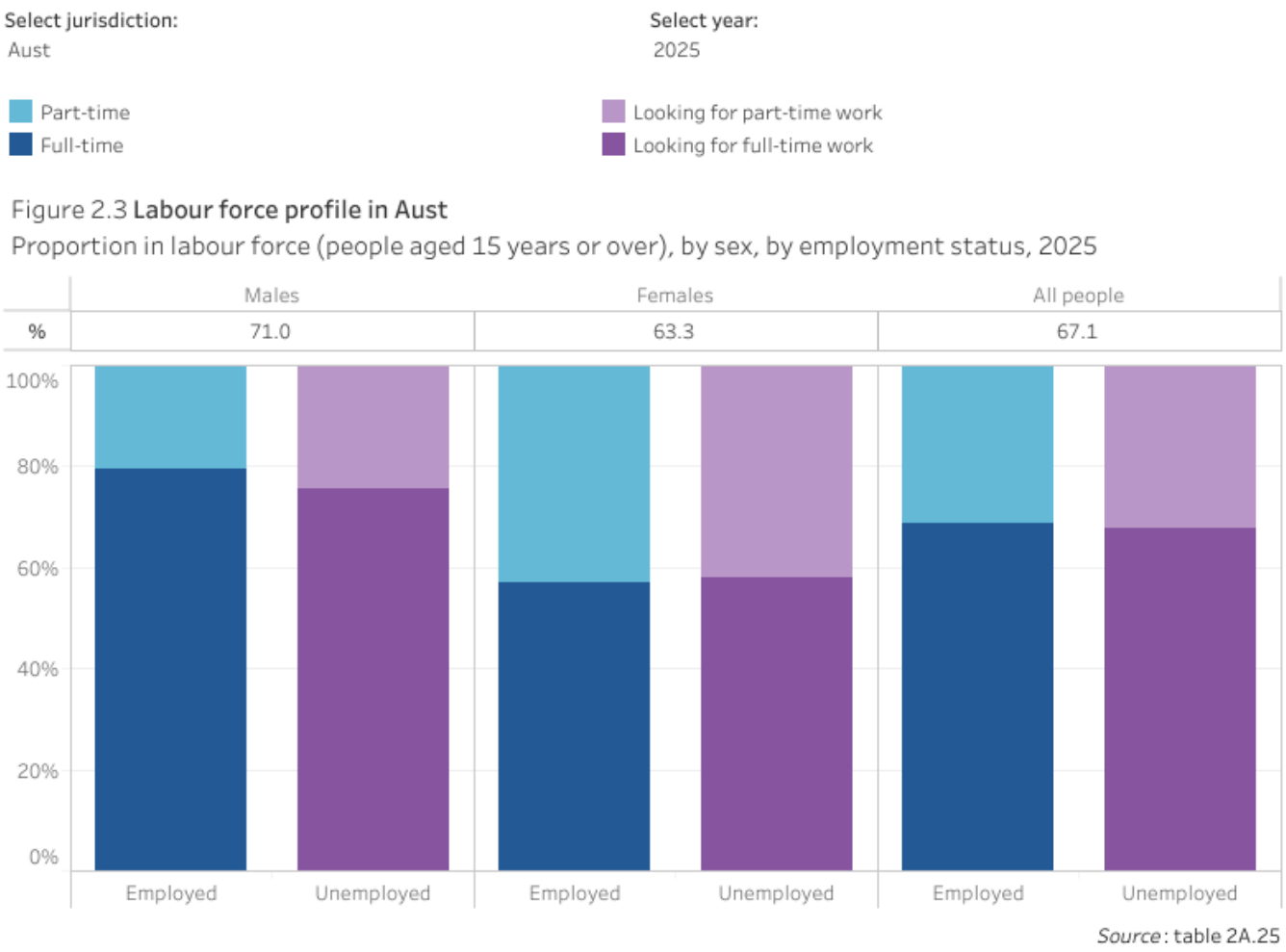


Figure 2.3 **Labour force profile in Aust**
Proportion in labour force (people aged 15 years or over), by sex, by employment status, 2025

Source: table 2A.25

Income and employment are strongly influenced by education. Census data on highest level of schooling and type of educational institution attended is available in tables 2A.21–24. Additional educational data is also available in Part B of this report (Child care, education and training).

Statistical concepts

Adjusting financial data to real dollars

Time series financial data is adjusted to real dollars using an appropriate chain price deflator so that comparisons over time are not affected by inflation.

Most financial data in the report is deflated using the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) general government final consumption expenditure (GGFCE) deflator. The exceptions are the Public hospitals section, the Services for mental health section, the Vocational education and training section and the Emergency services section (insurance claim tables only), which use service specific ABS deflators to calculate real dollars. All sections use an identical process for deflating financial data which consists of two steps: re-basing the deflator and converting nominal dollars to real dollars (box 1).

Box 1 – Deflator formulas

Step 1. The formula used to re-base deflators is

$$D_t = 100 \times \frac{O_t}{B}$$

where:

D_t is the re-based deflator in financial year t ; O_t is the index in June of financial year t ; B is the index in June of the financial year that will be the new base.

Step 2. The formula to convert nominal dollars to real dollars is

$$R_t = \frac{N_t}{D_t} \times 100$$

where, for financial year t :

R_t is real dollars; N_t is nominal dollars; D_t is the deflator.

The process used for deflating financial data is demonstrated below, using the GGFCE deflator as an example.

Step 1. Re-basing a deflator (table 1).

The ABS publishes the GGFCE deflator with the base year lagged two years (for example, for June 2025 the available deflator has a base year of June 2023 = 100). This report requires a base year of 2023-24 and 2024-25. Table 1 shows how the GGFCE deflator is rebased for use in this report. Five GGFCE deflator series are published, from 2020-21 = 100 to 2024-25 = 100 (table 2A.27).

Table 1 – Re-basing the GGFCE deflator[a]

Year	ABS chain price index (June 2023 = 100)	Calculation	Financial year	Re-based GGFCE deflator (June 2025 = 100)
June 2021	92.9	92.9/108.6 × 100	2020-21	85.5
June 2022	95.6	95.6/108.6 × 100	2021-22	88.0
June 2023	100.0	100.0/108.6 × 100	2022-23	92.1
June 2024	104.7	104.7/108.6 × 100	2023-24	96.4
June 2025	108.6	108.6/108.6 × 100	2024-25	100.0

a Based on the chain price index values from ABS (2025).

Source: ABS (2025), 'Table 36. Expenditure on Gross Domestic Product (GDP), Chain volume measures and Current prices, Annual' [time series spreadsheet], *Australian National Accounts: National Income, Expenditure and Product, June 2025,* https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/economy/national-

accounts/australian-national-accounts-national-income-expenditure-and-product/jun-2025, accessed 4 September 2025; table 2A.27.

Step 2. Converting nominal dollars into real dollars (table 2).

Nominal dollars are converted into real dollars by dividing the nominal dollars by the GGFCE deflator for the applicable financial year and multiplying by 100. The deflator used may vary according to the most current year for which financial data is available. For example, if the most current data is for 2023-24 then the data is deflated using the deflator series for 2023-24 = 100. If the most current data is for 2024-25 then the data is deflated using the deflator series for 2024-25 = 100. Table 2 shows how the GGFCE deflator for 2024-25= 100 is applied.

Table 2 – Applying the GGFCE deflator to derive real dollars[a]

Financial year	Nominal expenditure	GGFCE deflator (2024-25 = 100)	Calculation	Real expenditure
2020-21	6,300	85.5	(6,300/85.5) × 100	7,368
2021-22	6,350	88.0	(6,350/88.0) × 100	7,216
2022-23	6,485	92.1	(6,485/92.1) × 100	7,041
2023-24	7,020	96.4	(7,020/96.4) × 100	7,282
2024-25	7,200	100.0	(7,200/100.0) × 100	7,200

a Based on the chain price index values from ABS (2025).

Source: Table 1.

Reliability of estimates

Data for some indicators in this report is based on samples, either from surveys or observations from, for example, administrative data sets. The potential for sampling error (the error that occurs by chance because the data is obtained from a sample and not the entire population) means that the reported estimates might not accurately reflect the true value.

This report indicates the reliability of estimates based on samples generally by reporting either relative standard errors (RSEs) or confidence intervals (CIs). RSEs and CIs are calculated based on the standard error (SE). The larger the SE, RSE or CI, the less reliable the estimate is as an indicator for the whole population (ABS 2015).

Standard error

The SE measures the sampling error of an estimate (box 2). (There can also be non-sampling error, or systematic biases, in data.) There are several types of SE. A commonly used type of SE in this report is the SE of the mean (average), which measures how much the estimated mean value might differ from the true population mean value.

Box 2 – Standard error

The SE of a method of measurement or estimation is the estimated standard deviation of the error in that method. Specifically, it estimates the standard deviation of the difference between the measured or estimated values and the true values. Standard deviation is a measure of how spread out the data is, that is, a measure of variability.

The SE of the mean, an unbiased estimate of expected error in the sample estimate of a population mean, is the sample estimate of the population standard deviation (sample standard deviation) divided by the square root of the sample size (assuming statistical independence of the values in the sample):

$$\mathrm{SE}_{\bar{x}} = \frac{s}{\sqrt{n}}$$

Where:

$\mathrm{SE}_{\bar{x}}$ is the SE of the sample estimate of a population mean, S is the sample's standard deviation (the sample based estimate of the standard deviation of the population), and n is the size (number of items) of the sample.

Decreasing the uncertainty of a mean value estimate by a factor of two requires the sample size to increase fourfold. Decreasing SE by a factor of ten requires the sample size to increase hundredfold.

Relative standard error

The RSE is used to indicate the reliability of an estimate (box 3). The RSE shows the size of the error relative to the estimate and is derived by dividing the SE of the estimate by the estimate. The higher the RSE, the less confidence there is that the sample estimate is close to the true value of the population mean. A rule adopted in this report is that estimates with an RSE of less than 25% are considered reliable, estimates with an RSE between 25% and 50% are to be used with caution, and estimates with an RSE greater than 50% are considered too unreliable for general use.

Box 3 – Relative standard error

The SE can be expressed as a proportion of the estimate – known as the RSE. The formula for the RSE of an estimate is:

$$\mathrm{RSE}(x) = \frac{\mathrm{SE}(x)}{x}$$

Where:

x is the estimate and $\mathrm{SE}(x)$ is the SE of the estimate.

RSEs are multiplied by 100 and expressed as a percentage.

Proportions and percentages formed from the ratio of two estimates are also subject to sampling error. The size of the error depends on the accuracy of both the numerator and the denominator.

For proportions where the numerator is a subset of the denominator, for example the ratio of people who completed a certification over the people who attended the training to get the certification, then an approximation of the RSE can be calculated using the following formula:

$$\mathrm{RSE}\left(\frac{x}{y}\right) = \sqrt{\left[\mathrm{RSE}\left(x\right)\right]^2 - \left[\mathrm{RSE}\left(y\right)\right]^2}$$

Where:

x is the numerator, and y is the denominator, of the estimated proportion.

For proportions where the denominator and numerator are independent estimates (for example, a ratio of rates regarding two separate populations such as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous), and where the RSEs on the denominator and numerator are small, an approximation of the RSE can be calculated using the following formula:

$$\mathrm{RSE}\left(\frac{x}{y}\right) = \sqrt{\left[\mathrm{RSE}\left(x\right)\right]^2 + \left[\mathrm{RSE}\left(y\right)\right]^2}$$

Note that the formulas shown above for approximating the RSE of a proportion are considered unsuitable when the RSE of the numerator is close to, or below, the RSE of the denominator. In this case, it is recommended to use the following formula to calculate the RSE of the proportion:

$$\mathrm{RSE}\left(\frac{x}{y}\right) = \sqrt{\left[\mathrm{RSE}\left(x\right)\right]^2 + \left(1 - \frac{2x}{y}\right) \times \left[\mathrm{RSE}\left(y\right)\right]^2}$$

Source: ABS (2019).

Confidence intervals

Confidence intervals (CIs) are used to indicate the reliability of an estimate. A CI is a specified interval, with the sample statistic at the centre, within which the corresponding population value can be said to lie with a given level of confidence (ABS 2015). Increasing the desired confidence level will widen the CIs (figure 2.4). CIs are useful because a range, rather than a single estimate, is more likely to encompass the real figure for the population value being estimated.

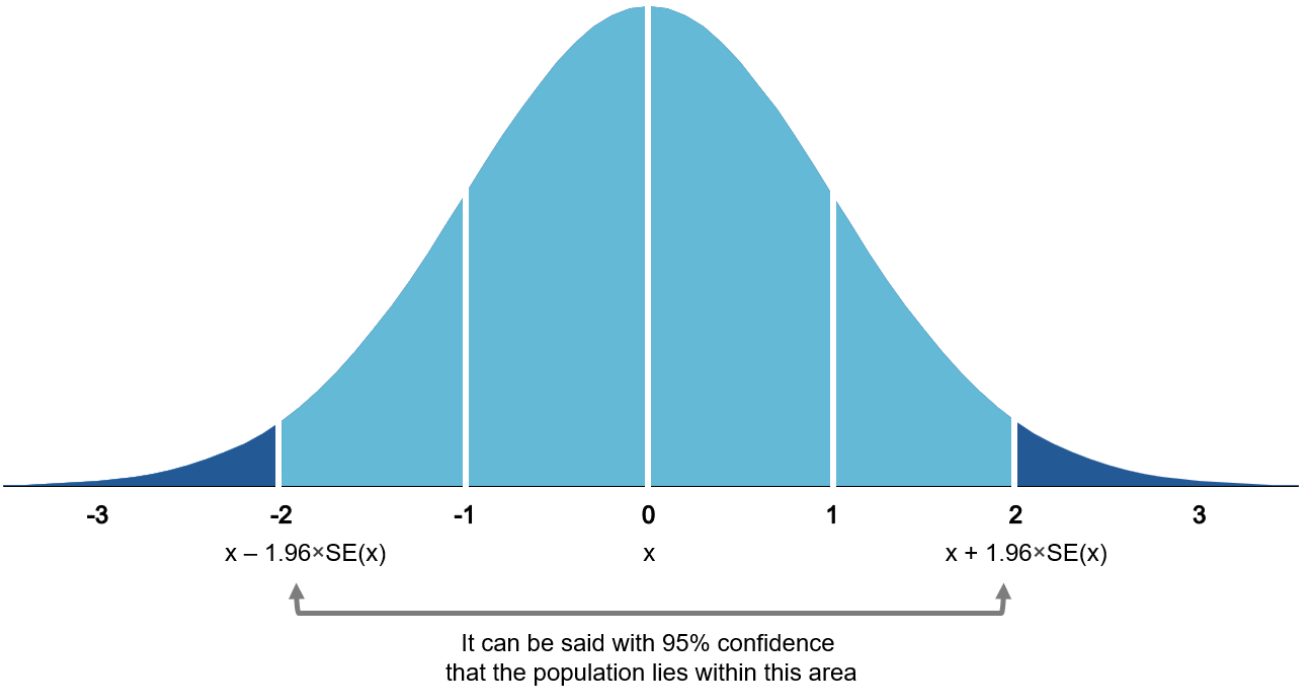
CIs are calculated from the population estimate and its associated SE. The CI used most commonly is calculated for 95% levels of probability, with 95% of all values falling within 1.96 standard errors of the mean. For example, if the estimate from a survey was that 628,300 people report having their needs fully met by a government service, and the associated SE of the estimate was 10,600 people, then the 95% CI would be calculated by:

- $\text{lower confidence limit} = 628{,}300 - (1.96 \times 10{,}600) = 628{,}300 - 20{,}776 = 607{,}524$
- $\text{upper confidence limit} = 628{,}300 + (1.96 \times 10{,}600) = 628{,}300 + 20{,}776 = 649{,}076$

This indicates that we can be 95% sure the true number of people who perceive that their needs are met by a government service is between 607,524 and 649,076.

The smaller the SE of the estimate, the narrower the CIs and the closer the estimate can be expected to be to the true value.

Figure 2.4 – Normal distribution with 95% confidence intervals



CIs also test for statistical differences between sample results (box 4).

Box 4 – Using confidence intervals to test for statistical significance

The CIs – the value ranges within which estimates are likely to fall – can be used to test whether the results reported for two estimated proportions are statistically different. If the CIs for the results do not overlap, then there can be confidence that the estimated proportions differ from each other. To test whether the 95% CIs of two estimates overlap, a range is derived using the following formulas:

$$R_1 = \left(\frac{x_2}{y_2} - \frac{x_1}{y_1}\right) - 1.96\sqrt{\left(\text{RSE}\left(\frac{x_2}{y_2}\right)\times\left(\frac{x_2}{y_2}\right)\right)^2 + \left(\text{RSE}\left(\frac{x_1}{y_1}\right)\times\left(\frac{x_1}{y_1}\right)\right)^2}$$

and

$$R_2 = \left(\frac{x_2}{y_2} - \frac{x_1}{y_1}\right) + 1.96\sqrt{\left(\text{RSE}\left(\frac{x_2}{y_2}\right)\times\left(\frac{x_2}{y_2}\right)\right)^2 + \left(\text{RSE}\left(\frac{x_1}{y_1}\right)\times\left(\frac{x_1}{y_1}\right)\right)^2}$$

If none of the values in this range is zero, then the difference between the two estimated proportions is statistically significant.

For example, consider survey data that estimated that the proportion of people who perceived that their needs were met by government services was 50% in jurisdiction A, with a 95% CI of ±5%, and 25% of people in jurisdiction B, with a 95% CI of ±10%. These results imply that we can be 95% sure the true result for jurisdiction A lies between 55% and 45%, and the true result for jurisdiction B lies between 15% and 35%. As these two ranges do not overlap, it can be said that the results for jurisdiction A and jurisdiction B are statistically significantly different.

Variability bands

Rates derived from administrative data counts are not subject to sampling error but might be subject to natural random variation, especially for small counts. For mortality rates, rates of babies of low birthweight and rates of potentially avoidable deaths, variability bands are used to account for this variation (box 5).

Box 5 – Variability bands

Variability bands can be calculated using the standard method for estimating 95% confidence intervals:

Crude rate (CR)

$$\mathrm{CI}\left(\mathrm{CR}\right)_{95\%} = \mathrm{CR} \pm 100 \times 1.96 \sqrt{\frac{\frac{\mathrm{CR}}{100}\left(1 - \frac{\mathrm{CR}}{100}\right)}{n}} =$$

$$= \mathrm{CR} \pm 1.96 \sqrt{\frac{\mathrm{CR}\left(100 - \mathrm{CR}\right)}{n}}$$

where:

$$\mathrm{CR} = \frac{d}{n} \times 100$$

with:

d as the numerator of the estimated proportion

n as the denominator of the estimated proportion.

When the crude rate is small (relative to 100%), the term $\left(100 - \mathrm{CR}\right)$ can be approximated as 100. In this case, the formula can be simplified to

$$\mathrm{CI}\left(\mathrm{CR}\right)_{95\%} = \mathrm{CR} \pm 1.96 \frac{\mathrm{CR}}{\sqrt{d}}$$

Infant mortality rate (IMR)

Similarly, the variability bands for infant mortality rates can be calculated using the simplified formula as they are very small.

$$\mathrm{CI}\left(\mathrm{IMR}\right)_{95\%} = \mathrm{IMR} \pm 1.96 \frac{\mathrm{IMR}}{\sqrt{d_0}}$$

where:

d_0 is the number of deaths in infants aged under one year.

Age-standardised rate (ASR)

$$\mathrm{CI}\left(\mathrm{ASR}\right)_{95\%} = \mathrm{ASR} \pm 1.96 \sqrt{\sum_{i=1}^{I} \frac{w_i^2 d_i}{n_i^2}}$$

where:

w_i is the proportion of the standard population in age group i

d_i is the number of deaths in age group i

n_i is the number of people in the population in age group i.

Source: AIHW (2013).

Variability bands should be used to analyse trends within a jurisdiction, both at a point in time and over time. They should not be used for comparisons between jurisdictions, as they do not account for differences in data quality or coverage (for example, the under-identification of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people).

Typically, in this standard method, the observed rate is assumed to have natural variability in the numerator count (for example, deaths) but not in the population denominator count. Variations in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's death rates may arise from uncertainty in the recording of Indigenous status on the death registration forms (in particular, under-identification of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's deaths) and in the ABS Census of Population and Housing, from which population estimates are derived. These variations are not considered in this method. Also, the rate is assumed to have been generated from a normal distribution (figure 2.4). Random variation in the numerator count is assumed to be centered around the true value – that is, there is no systematic bias.

Population measures

Data is frequently expressed relative to population in this report. For example, expenditure per person, or proportion of people who utilise a service or who benefit from a service. This enables comparison of data across populations of different sizes using relative numbers – standardised by population size – as distinct from absolute numbers.

Estimated Resident Population (ERP) data is available quarterly – that is, at end March, June, September, and December of each year. The midpoint ERP is typically used for the calculation of population rates in this report – for example, the 30 June ERP for calendar year data (table 2A.1) and the 31 December ERP for financial year data (table 2A.2).

This report uses first preliminary ERP data wherever possible and replaces this with final rebased data when available. For the 2026 report, this equates to:

- for June, ERP for 2015 and 2016 are final based on the 2016 Census of Population and Housing; ERP for 2017 to 2021 are final based on the 2021 Census; ERP from 2022 are first preliminary based on the 2021 Census
- for December, ERP for 2015 is final based on the 2016 Census of Population and Housing; ERP for 2016 to 2020 are final based on the 2021 Census; ERP from 2021 are first preliminary based on the 2021 Census.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population

This year's Report on Government Services uses data from the ABS' estimates and projections of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population, based on the 2021 Census. The 2021 Census-based population data include the estimated resident population as at 30 June 2021, plus an updated time series for previous periods ('backcast') and for forward periods ('projections'). This approach is consistent with RoGS' use of the most up-to-date Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population data available from the ABS at the time of publication.

The use of the 2021 Census-based population series has had a material impact on the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander rates in the report. Across the time series, the 2021 Census-based estimates and projections of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population are about 12% higher than the those based on the 2016 Census. This is due to the growth in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population, which increased by 25.2% between 2016 and 2021. Non-demographic factors (such as changes in the propensity of people to identify as an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person) accounted for the majority of this growth (ABS 2023).

As a result, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander rates in this report are generally lower than rates in the 2024 report and may differ from results published elsewhere. Based on advice from the ABS, the time series for indicators and measures which draw on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population data in this report have been shortened (generally no further back than the penultimate (2016) Census).

Average annual growth rate

This report presents a growth rate to facilitate meaningful comparisons of changes over time. The method used is the *average annual growth rate* (AAGR) which is the uniform growth rate that would need to have applied each year for the value in the first year to grow to the value in the final year of the period of analysis (box 6).

Box 6 – Average annual growth rate

The formula for calculating a compound average annual growth rate (AAGR) is:

$$\mathrm{AAGR}_{(t_0, t_n)} = \left[\left(\frac{P_{(t_n)}}{P_{(t_0)}} \right)^{\left(\frac{1}{t_n - t_0} \right)} - 1 \right] \times 100$$

Where:

$P_{(t_0)}$ is the value in the initial period, $P_{(t_n)}$ is the value in the last period and $t_n - t_0$ is the number of periods (which will be one less than the total number of years).

Age-standardisation of data

Rationale for age-standardisation of data

The age profile of Australian people varies across jurisdictions, periods of time, geographic areas and/or population subgroups (for example, between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and non-Indigenous people). Variations in age profiles are important because they can affect the likelihood of using a particular service (such as a public hospital) or particular 'events' occurring (such as death, incidence of disease or incarceration). Age-standardisation adjusts for the effect of variations in age profiles when comparing service usage, or rates of particular events across different populations.

Calculating age-standardised rates

Age-standardisation adjusts each of the comparison/study populations (for example, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and non-Indigenous people) against a standard population (box 7). The latest standard population used is the final 30 June ERP for the 2001 (AIHW 2015)[1]. The result is a standardised estimate for each of the comparison/study populations.

The report generally publishes age-standardised rates that have been calculated using either one of two methods, as appropriate.

- The direct method is generally used for comparisons between study groups and is recommended by the AIHW (2011) for the purposes of comparing health and welfare outcome measures (for example, mortality rates, life expectancy, hospital separation rates and disease incidence rates) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and non-Indigenous people.
- The indirect method is recommended when the age-specific rates for the population being studied are not known (or are unreliable), but the total number of events is known (AIHW 2015).

The *direct method* has three steps:

- Step 1: Calculate the age-specific rate for each age group for the study/comparison group.
- Step 2: Calculate the expected number of 'events' in each age group by multiplying the age-specific rates by the corresponding standard population.
- Step 3: Sum the expected number of cases in each age group and divide by the total of the standard population.

The *indirect method* has four steps:

- Step 1: Calculate the age-specific rates for each age group in the standard population.
- Step 2: Apply the age-specific rates resulting from step 1 to the number in each age group of the study population and sum to derive the total 'expected' number of cases for the study population.

- Step 3: Divide the observed number of events in the study population by the 'expected' number of cases for the study population derived in step 2.
- Step 4: Multiply the result of step 3 by the crude rate in the standard population.

Box 7 – Direct and indirect age-standardisation

The formula for deriving the age-standardised rate using the *direct method* is:

$$\text{ASR} = \frac{\sum \left(r_i \ P_i \right)}{\sum P_i}$$

The formula for deriving the age-standardised rate using the *indirect method* is:

$$\text{ASR} = \frac{C}{\sum \left(R_i \ p_i \right)} \times R$$

Where:

ASR is the age-standardised rate for the population being studied

r_i is the age group specific rate for age group i in the population being studied

P_i is the population of age group i in the standard population

C is the observed number of events in the population being studied

$\sum \left(R_i \ p_i \right)$ is the expected number of events in the population being studied

R_i is the age group specific rate for age group i in the standard population

p_i is the population for age group i in the population being studied

R is the crude rate in the standard population.

Source: AIHW (2015).

Tables 3–4 contain examples of the application of direct and indirect age-standardisation, respectively. Age-standardised rates are generally multiplied by 1,000 or 100,000 to avoid small decimal fractions. They are then reported as age-standardised rates per 1,000 or 100,000 people (AIHW 2015).

Table 3 – Age-standardisation of data using the direct method

Step 1

Age groups	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people			Non-Indigenous people		
	Population	People with severe / profound limitations	Age-specific severe / profound limitations	Population	People with severe / profound limitations	Age-specific severe / profound limitations
	C1	C2	$C3 = C2 / C1 \times 100$	C4	C5	$C6 = C5 / C4 \times 100$
18–24	54,400	2,800	5.1	1,869,200	34,200	1.8
25–29	36,300	1,600	4.4	1,389,700	24,700	1.8
30–34	34,800	2,800	8.0	1,458,500	37,100	2.5
35–39	31,200	1,600	5.1	1,432,000	43,900	3.1
40–44	26,600	2,800	10.5	1,475,000	70,200	4.8
45–49	20,600	2,000	9.7	1,366,300	43,800	3.2
50–54	17,700	3,000	16.9	1,263,900	47,900	3.8
55–59	12,400	1,400	11.3	1,060,700	63,500	6.0
60–64	7,000	1,100	15.7	816,400	49,700	6.1
65+	12,900	3,200	24.8	2,222,200	283,400	12.8
Total	**253,900**	**22,300**	**8.8**	**14,353,900**	**698,400**	**4.9**

Step 2

Age groups	Standard population	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people expected number of 'events'	Non-Indigenous people expected number of 'events'
	C7	$C8 = C7 \times C3 / 100$	$C9 = C7 \times C6 / 100$
18–24	1,844,162	94,920	33,742
25–29	1,407,081	62,020	25,009
30–34	1,466,615	118,004	37,306
35–39	1,492,204	76,523	45,746
40–44	1,479,257	155,711	70,403

Age groups	Standard population	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people expected number of 'events'	Non-Indigenous people expected number of 'events'
	C7	$C8 = C7 \times C3 / 100$	$C9 = C7 \times C6 / 100$
45–49	1,358,594	131,902	43,553
50–54	1,300,777	220,471	49,298
55–59	1,008,799	113,897	60,393
60–64	822,024	129,175	50,042
65+	2,435,534	604,163	310,607
Total	**14,615,047**	**1,706,787**	**726,098**

Step 3

	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people age-standardised rate	Non Indigenous people age-standardised rate
	$C10 = \sum C8 / \sum C7 \times 100$	$C11 = \sum C9 / \sum C7 \times 100$
Total	**11.7**	**5.0**

Source: AIHW (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare) 2006, *'Potential Population'– Updating the Indigenous factor in disability services performance indicator denominators,* Welfare Working Paper Series Number 50, Cat. no. DIS 45, Canberra;
ABS (2008) *Population by Age and Sex, Australian states and territories* , June 2007, Cat. no. 3201.0, Canberra.

Table 4 – Age-standardisation of data using the indirect method[a,b]

Variable	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Aust
C **– Observed number of imprisonments**									
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people	3,467.0	715.1	3,442.0	2,564.6	728.1	154.3	101.4	1,609.4	12,781.8

Variable	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Aust
C – Observed number of imprisonments									
Non-Indigenous people	8,906.0	5,800.3	6,146.6	3,821.3	2,227.3	479.3	284.7	256.3	27,921.7

Variable	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Aust
p_i – Study populations[c]									
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people									
Non-Indigenous people									
18–19 years	12,862	2,921	10,239	4,277	1,930	1,180	422	2,826	36,659
20–24 years	30,115	7,377	24,177	10,358	4,617	2,752	1,030	6,916	87,359
25–29 years	26,569	6,815	21,728	9,868	4,247	2,380	939	6,752	79,312
30–34 years	22,176	5,693	18,287	9,037	3,723	2,215	762	6,328	68,228
35–39 years	18,630	4,480	15,621	7,797	3,128	2,023	618	5,545	57,851
40–44 years	15,950	3,798	13,615	6,650	2,461	1,659	518	4,825	49,480
45–54 years	32,845	7,573	27,223	12,118	5,149	3,379	920	8,658	97,902
55+ years	46,708	10,093	34,495	14,758	6,540	5,476	1,035	9,257	128,437
18–19 years	168,615	143,731	114,320	57,397	38,107	10,552	10,958	3,137	546,876
20–24 years	468,803	406,987	306,583	154,291	106,107	28,905	33,297	10,072	1,515,231
25–29 years	532,331	475,941	334,619	173,927	115,474	37,411	38,594	16,227	1,724,790
30–34 years	570,246	503,758	348,032	195,839	117,388	37,346	38,174	17,505	1,828,592
35–39 years	565,466	493,192	351,447	202,406	118,528	33,995	36,546	15,425	1,817,348
40–44 years	509,679	430,074	325,301	179,727	106,942	30,589	31,730	12,685	1,627,016
45–54 years	979,947	819,490	656,091	346,796	220,710	66,679	54,848	23,101	3,168,279
55+ years	2,317,824	1,821,544	1,469,114	747,141	578,738	188,368	104,926	38,295	7,267,584

Variable	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Aust
N_i – Number of prisoners (30 June 2001)									
All people									
18–19 years									972
20–24 years									4,681
25–29 years									4,856
30–34 years									3,986
35–39 years									2,889
40–44 years									1,947
45–54 years									2,056
55+ years									1,002
Total									**22,389**

Variable	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Aust
S_i – Standard population (30 June 2001)									
All people									
18–19 years									541,750
20–24 years									1,302,412
25–29 years									1,407,081
30–34 years									1,466,615
35–39 years									1,492,204

Variable	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Aust
S_i – Standard population (30 June 2001) All people									
40–44 years									1,479,257
45–54 years									2,659,371
55+ years									4,266,357
Total									**14,615,047**

Step 1: Calculate R_i as N_i / S_i * 100,000

Variable	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Aust
R_i – Standard population age-specific imprisonment rates per 100,000 adults (30 June 2001)									
18–19 years									179.42
20–24 years									359.41
25–29 years									345.11
30–34 years									271.78
35–39 years									193.61
40–44 years									131.62
45–54 years									77.31
55+ years									23.49
Total									**153.19**

Step 2: $\left(R_i p_i\right)$ / 100,000

Variable	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Aust
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people									
Non-Indigenous people									
18–19 years	23.1	5.2	18.4	7.7	3.5	2.1	0.8	5.1	65.8
20–24 years	108.2	26.5	86.9	37.2	16.6	9.9	3.7	24.9	314.0
25–29 years	91.7	23.5	75.0	34.1	14.7	8.2	3.2	23.3	273.7
30–34 years	60.3	15.5	49.7	24.6	10.1	6.0	2.1	17.2	185.4
35–39 years	36.1	8.7	30.2	15.1	6.1	3.9	1.2	10.7	112.0
40–44 years	21.0	5.0	17.9	8.8	3.2	2.2	0.7	6.4	65.1
45–54 years	25.4	5.9	21.0	9.4	4.0	2.6	0.7	6.7	75.7
55+ years	11.0	2.4	8.1	3.5	1.5	1.3	0.2	2.2	30.2
Total	**376.7**	**92.6**	**307.3**	**140.2**	**59.6**	**36.2**	**12.6**	**96.4**	**1,12**
18–19 years	302.5	257.9	205.1	103.0	68.4	18.9	19.7	5.6	981.2
20–24 years	1,684.9	1,462.8	1,101.9	554.5	381.4	103.9	119.7	36.2	5,445
25–29 years	1,837.1	1,642.5	1,154.8	600.2	398.5	129.1	133.2	56.0	5,952
30–34 years	1,549.8	1,369.1	945.9	532.3	319.0	101.5	103.7	47.6	4,969
35–39 years	1,094.8	954.9	680.4	391.9	229.5	65.8	70.8	29.9	3,518
40–44 years	670.8	566.1	428.2	236.6	140.8	40.3	41.8	16.7	2,141
45–54 years	757.6	633.6	507.2	268.1	170.6	51.6	42.4	17.9	2,449

Variable	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Aust
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people									
Non-Indigenous people									
55+ years	544.4	427.8	345.0	175.5	135.9	44.2	24.6	9.0	1,706
Total	**8,442.0**	**7,314.6**	**5,368.6**	**2,862.0**	**1,844.1**	**555.3**	**555.8**	**218.8**	**27,1**

Step 3: C / ('Total' from Step 2)

Variable	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Aust
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people	9.2	7.7	11.2	18.3	12.2	4.3	8.0	16.7	11.4
Non-Indigenous people	1.1	0.8	1.1	1.3	1.2	0.9	0.5	1.2	1.0

Step 4: (Result of Step 3) × ('Total' from Step 1)

Variable	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT
Age-standardised rate (per 100,000 adults)								
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people	**1,409.9**	**1,182.4**	**1,716.1**	**2,802.3**	**1,870.1**	**652.1**	**1,232.4**	**2,558.2**
Non-Indigenous people	**161.6**	**121.5**	**175.4**	**204.5**	**185.0**	**132.2**	**78.5**	**179.4**

a Rates are based on the indirect standardisation method, applying age group imprisonment rates derived from Prison Census data. **b** Rates are based on the 2021-22 daily average prisoner populations supplied

by states and territories, calculated against adult population figures at December 2021 for people aged 18 or over, reflecting the age at which people are remanded or sentenced to adult custody. **c** The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander study population as at 31 December 2021 is derived as the average of two June projections based on the 2021 Census of Population and Housing, and on the medium series for the fertility assumption. The non-Indigenous study population is calculated by subtracting the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander study population from the total preliminary estimated resident population as at 31 December 2021 based on the 2021 Census. Australia total population includes other territories.

Source: State and territory governments (unpublished); ABS 2024, 'Table 4' [data set] and 'Projected resident population' [Data Explorer], *Estimates and Projections, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, 2011 to 2031*, accessed 11 October 2024; ABS 2022 'Quarterly Population Estimates (ERP)' [Data Explorer], *National, state and territory population, December 2021*, accessed 22 August 2022; ABS 2013, 'Standard population for use in age-standardisation table' [data set], *Australian Demographic Statistics, June 2001*, accessed 23 July 2024; ABS 2002, 'Summary information of all prisoners, by demographic and legal characteristics' [data set], *Prisoners in Australia, 2001*, accessed 21 October 2024; Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision 2025, *Report on Government Services 2025,* table 8A.5.

1. Refer to page 2.27 in SCRGSP (2015) for the background on choice of year for the standard population and timeline for revision.

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Report on Government Services 2026

PART A, GLOSSARY: RELEASED ON 29 JANUARY 2026

Glossary

The glossary of terms used in the Report on Government Services 2026

Term	Definition
Access	Measures how easily the community can obtain a delivered service (output).
Appropriateness	Measures how well services meet client needs including the extent of any underservicing or overservicing.
Comparability	Data is considered comparable if, subject to caveats, it can be used to inform an assessment of comparative performance. Typically, data is considered comparable when it is collected in the same way and in accordance with the same definitions. For comparable indicators or measures, significant differences in reported results allow an assessment of differences in performance, rather than being the result of anomalies in the data.
Completeness	Data is considered complete if all required data for the current reporting period is available for all jurisdictions that provide the service.
Constant prices	Refer to ‘real dollars’.
Cost effectiveness	Measures how well inputs (such as employees, cars and computers) are converted into outcomes for individual clients or the community, expressed as a ratio of inputs to outcomes.
Current prices	Refer to ‘nominal dollars’.
Descriptors	Descriptive statistics included in the report that relate, for example, to the size of the service system, funding arrangements, client mix and the environment within which government services are delivered. This data is provided to highlight and make more transparent the differences among jurisdictions.
Effectiveness	Reflects how well the outputs of a service achieve the stated objectives of that service (also refer to 'program effectiveness').
Efficiency	Reflects how resources (inputs) are used to produce outputs and outcomes, expressed as a ratio of outputs to inputs (technical efficiency), or inputs to outcomes (cost effectiveness). (Also refer to ‘cost effectiveness’, ‘technical efficiency’ and 'unit costs'.)
Equity	Measures the difference between service access, outputs and outcomes for special needs groups compared to the general population. Equity of access relates to all Australians having adequate

Term	Definition
	access to services, where the term adequate may mean different rates of access (depending on need) for different groups in the community.
Inputs	The resources (including land, labour and capital) used by a service area in providing a service.
Latest update	Refers to the date (month) when a data update was made to the Report on Government Services since the initial annual report release (January/February). Details on which indicator(s) have updated data are specified on the relevant report service area webpages.
Nominal dollars	Refers to financial data expressed ‘in the price of the day’ and which is not adjusted for inflation. Nominal dollars do not allow for inter-year comparisons, as reported changes may reflect changes to financial levels (prices and/or expenditure) and adjustments to maintain purchasing power due to inflation.
Output	The service delivered by a service area, for example, a completed episode of care is an output of a public hospital.
Outcome	The impact of a service on the status of an individual or a group, and the extent to which a government service area achieves its overarching or high-level objectives. While a service provider can influence the outcome of a service, external factors can also affect them. For example, a desirable outcome of school education is that students are well positioned to transition to further study or work, but broader economic factors can also influence these outcomes.
Process	Refers to the way in which a service is produced or delivered (that is, how inputs are transformed into outputs).
Program effectiveness	Reflects how well the outcomes of a service achieve the stated objectives of that service (also refer to 'effectiveness').
Quality	Reflects the extent to which a service is suited to its purpose and conforms to specifications.
Real dollars	Refers to financial data measured in prices from a constant base year to adjust for the effects of inflation, enabling inter-year comparisons of financial levels (prices and/or expenditure) by holding purchasing power constant.
Technical efficiency	Measures of how well inputs (such as employees, cars and computers) are converted into service outputs (such as hospital separations, education classes or residential aged care places), reflected as the ratio of outputs to inputs. It is influenced by the size of operations and by managerial practices. Technical efficiency can be improved by increasing the quantity of outputs produced from given inputs, or by reducing the inputs required to produce a certain quantity of outputs.
Unit costs	Measures average cost, expressed as the level of inputs per unit of output. This is an indicator of efficiency.

Report on Government Services 2026

PART A, ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS: RELEASED ON 29 JANUARY 2026

Acronyms and abbreviations

The acronyms and abbreviations used in the Report on Government Services 2026

Abbreviations	Spelt out
AAGR	Average annual growth rate
ABRT	Australian Business Round Table
ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ACARA	Australian Curriculum and Assessment Reporting Authority
ACAT	Aged Care Assessment Teams
ACECQA	Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority
ACQSC	Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission
ACSQHC	Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care
ACT	Australian Capital Territory
ACTCS	Australian Capital Territory Corrective Services
ADHD	Attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder
ADL	Activities of Daily Living
AEDC	Australian Early Development Census
AFP	Australian Federal Police
AG	Activity Group
AHPRA	Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency
AIDR	Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience
AIFS	Australian Institute of Family Studies
AIHW	Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
AMEP	Adult Migrant English Program

Abbreviations	Spelt out
AMI	Acute Myocardial Infarction
AN-ACC	Australian National Aged Care Classification
ANZSCO	Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations
ANZSIC	Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification
AOD	Alcohol and Other Drug
AQF	Australian Qualifications Framework
AQTF	Australian Quality Training Framework
ARIA+	Accessibility/Remoteness Index for Australia
ASGS	Australian Statistical Geography Standard
ASQA	Australian Skills Quality Authority
ASR	Age-Standardised Rate
ATO	Australian Taxation Office
Aust	Australia
AVETMISS	Australian Vocational Education and Training Management Information Statistical Standard
BCC	Basic Community Care
BFSA	Better and Fairer Schools Agreement
BLP	Better Lives Program
BoM	Bureau of Meteorology
C&P	Care and Protection Orders
CALD	Culturally and Linguistically Diverse
CCOPMM	Consultative Council for Obstetric and Perinatal Morbidity and Mortality
CCS	Child Care Subsidy
CCSS	Child Care Subsidy System
CCYP	Commission for Children and Young People
CD	Collection District
CH	Community Housing
CHO	Community Housing Organisation
CHART	Changing Habits and Reaching Targets

Abbreviations	Spelt out
CHBOI	Core Hospital-Based Outcome Indicators
CHS	Canberra Health Services
CHSP	Commonwealth Home Support Programme
CI	Confidence Interval
CNOS	Canadian National Occupancy Standard
COAG	Council of Australian Governments
CR	Crude Rate
CRA	Commonwealth Rent Assistance
DBT	Dialectical Behaviour Therapy
DDA	Disability Discrimination Act 1992
DES	Disability Employment Services
DHDA	Department of Health, Disability and Ageing
DPP	Director of Public Prosecutions
DRG	Diagnosis Related Group
DSS	Department of Social Services
DVA	Department of Veterans' Affairs
ECEC	Early childhood education and care
EDs	Emergency Departments
EQUIPS	Explore, Question, Investigate, Practice, Succeed
ERP	Estimated Resident Population
FCFCOA	Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia
FTB	Family Tax Benefit
FTE	Full-Time Equivalent
GFS	Government Finance Statistics
GGFCE	General Government Final Consumption Expenditure
GP	General Practitioner
GPMP	General Practitioner Management Plan
HPV	Human Papillomavirus

Abbreviations	Spelt out
HRT	Health Round Table
HS	Harm Score
HSMR	Hospital Standardised Mortality Ratio
ICD	International Classification of Diseases
ICD-10-AM	International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems - 10th Revision - Australian modification
ICH	Indigenous Community Housing
ICSEA	Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IEA	International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement
IFSS	Intensive Family Support Services
IHACPA	Independent Health and Aged Care Pricing Authority
IMR	Infant mortality rate
Invns	Investigations
IRSD	Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage
ISR	Incident Severity Rating
JFLIP	Juvenile Fire Lighting Intervention Program
JSA	Jobs and Skills Australia
JSC	Jobs and Skills Council
LAC	Looking After Children
MACR	Minimum age of criminal responsibility
MBI	Modified Barthel Index
MBS	Medicare Benefits Schedule
MCEECDYA	Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs
MMM	Modified Monash Model
MMR	Measles, Mumps and Rubella
MPS	Multi-Purpose Service
MRSA	Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus aureus

Abbreviations	Spelt out
NAP	National Assessment Program
NAPLAN	National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy
NASHH	National Agreement on Social Housing and Homelessness
NCVER	National Centre for Vocational Education Research
NDA	National Disability Agreement
NDDA	National Disability Data Asset
NDS	National Disability Services
NDIA	National Disability Insurance Agency
NDIS	National Disability Insurance Scheme
NECECC	National Early Childhood Education and Care Collection
NEMA	National Emergency Management Agency
NESB	Non-English Speaking Backgrounds
NFD	Not further defined
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
NGPA	National General Practice Accreditation
NHHA	National Housing and Homelessness Agreement
NHMRC	National Health and Medical Research Council
NPA	National Partnership Agreement
NQF	National Quality Framework
NQS	National Quality Standard
NQSC	NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission
NRT	Nationally Recognised Training
NSA	National Skills Agreement
NSCSP	National Survey of Community Satisfaction with Policing
NSHS	National Social Housing Survey
NSMHS	National Standards for Mental Health Services
NSQ	Non-school qualification
NSQHS	National Safety and Quality Health Service

Abbreviations	Spelt out
NSSC	National Schools Statistics Collection
NSW	New South Wales
NT	Northern Territory
Ntfns	Notifications
NYPR	National Youth Participation Requirement
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OOHC	Out-of-home care
OSHC	Outside School Hours Care
PBS	Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme
PCYC	Police and Community Youth Club
PEx	Patient Experience Survey
PH	Public Housing
PIP	Practice Incentives Program
PIRLS	Progress in International Reading Literacy Study
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
PLIDA	Person Level Integrated Data Asset
PRA	Preschool Reform Agreement
PRN	Pro Re Nata
QAC	Quality Assurance Committees
QAS	Queensland Ambulance Service
QI	Quality Indicator
QCS	Queensland Corrective Services
Qld	Queensland
QPCC	Queensland Family and Child Commission
QSG	Quality Surveillance Group
RACGP	Royal Australian College of General Practitioners
RES	Residents' Experience Survey
RN	Registered Nurse

Abbreviations	Spelt out
RoGS	Report on Government Services
RPBS	Repatriation Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme
RSE	Relative Standard Error
RTO	Registered Training Organisation
SA	South Australia
SAB	Staphylococcus Aureus Bacteraemia
SAC	Severity Assessment Code
SCV	Safer Care Victoria
SDAC	Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers
SDQ	Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire
SE	Standard Error
SEE	Skills for Education and Employment
SEIFA	Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas
SES	State Emergency Service
SHS	Specialist Homelessness Services
SIH	Survey of Income and Housing
SIL	Supported Independent Living
SNAICC	Secretariat National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care
SOMIH	State Owned and Managed Indigenous housing
SOS	Speaking Out Survey
SQW	Survey of Qualifications and Work
SRLS	Safety Reporting and Learning System
SRS	Schooling Resource Standard
STES	State and Territory Emergency Services
STRCP	Short-Term Restorative Care Programme
Subns	Substantiations
TAC	Training Accreditation Council
Tas	Tasmania

Abbreviations	Spelt out
TAFE	Technical And Further Education
TCA	Team Care Arrangement
TCP	Transition Care Programme
TIMSS	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study
UCC	User cost of capital
UNODRR	United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction
VET	Vocational Education and Training
VF	Ventricular Fibrillation
VHC	Veteran Home Care
Vic	Victoria
VPP	Violence Prevention Program
VRQA	Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority
VT	Ventricular Tachycardia
WA	Western Australia
WEC	Wellbeing and Engagement Collection
WHO	World Health Organization
WRTAL	Survey of Work–Related Training and Adult Learning
YBFS	Year Before Full-time Schooling
YBS	Youth Bail Services