Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision Report titled Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage - Key Indicators Report 2014. Australian Government Productivity Commission. November 2014

Commonwealth of Australia 2014

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Publications enquiries

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The Steering Committee welcomes enquiries and suggestions on the information contained in this report. Contact the Secretariat by phone: (03) 9653 2100 or email: gsp@pc.gov.au

Photographs

**Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people should be aware that this publication may contain images of deceased people.**

The Steering Committee thanks Reconciliation Australia, finalists of the 2012 Indigenous Governance Awards, Mossman Gorge Centre, MoneyMoB Talkabout and Indigenous Landholder Services for providing the photographs reproduced in this report. No inference is intended that the people or communities shown are the subject of any issue raised in the report.

Cover photos

Clockwise from top left: Image by Wayne Quilliam, courtesy of Reconciliation Australia and the 2012 Indigenous Governance Awards and finalist Secretariat of National Aboriginal & Islander Child Care, Photo courtesy of Mossman Gorge Centre, Photo courtesy of finalist Yiriman Project and Reconciliation Australia and the 2012 Indigenous Governance Awards, Image by Wayne Quilliam, courtesy of Reconciliation Australia and the 2012 Indigenous Governance Awards and finalist Martumili Artists.

Following feedback on previous editions of the report, this report generally uses the term ‘Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians’ to describe Australia’s first peoples and ‘non-Indigenous Australians’ to refer to Australians of other backgrounds, except where quoting other sources, and in charts, figures and attachment tables.

# Foreword

This is the sixth report in the Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage (OID) series, which can trace its origins to the final report of the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation in 2000. The report measures the wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, and I would like to thank the many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and individuals that have been actively involved in its production. My particular thanks to the National Congress of Australia’s First Peoples, which participated on the working group that advised the Steering Committee on all aspects of the report.

The OID report serves as a public report card on progress in overcoming Indigenous disadvantage. It can help governments assess the effectiveness of current policies and inform the development of new approaches. It can assist Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians to hold governments to account, and to develop their own responses to the disadvantage that limits the opportunities of too many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians.

For the first time, this report includes a ‘traffic light’ summary of trends in outcomes. Among key national results for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians:

* economic outcomes have improved over the longer term, with higher incomes, lower reliance on income support, increased home ownership, and higher rates of full time and professional employment. However, improvements have slowed in recent years
* several health outcomes have improved, including increased life expectancy and lower child mortality. However, rates of disability and chronic disease remain high, mental health outcomes have not improved, and hospitalisation rates for self-harm have increased
* post-secondary education outcomes have improved, but there has been virtually no change in literacy and numeracy results, which are particularly poor in remote areas
* justice outcomes continue to worsen, with adult imprisonment rates worsening from already high rates, and no change in high rates of juvenile detention and family and community violence.

This edition of the report has benefited from an independent review of the previous report and extensive consultations. On behalf of the Steering Committee, I record our gratitude to all those who have contributed to this report. Special thanks are due to members of the Working Group overseeing the development of the report, particularly its Convenor, Patricia Scott. I am also very grateful for the support of staff in the Secretariat at the Productivity Commission, led by the Head of Secretariat, Lawrence McDonald.

Peter Harris  
Chairman  
November 2014

# Terms of reference

Prime Minister

Canberra

Reference: B08/2004

11 Mar 2009

Mr Gary Banks AO  
Chairman  
Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision

Dear Mr Banks

I am writing in my capacity as Chair of the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) to convey to you updated Terms of Reference for the Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage (OID) Report.

Since it was first published in 2003, the OID report has established itself as a source of high quality information on the progress being made in addressing Indigenous disadvantage across a range of key indicators. The OID report has been used by Governments and the broader community to understand the nature of Indigenous disadvantage and as a result has helped inform the development of policies to address Indigenous disadvantage. The OID report is highly regarded and I commend the Steering Committee for the Review of Government Services (the Steering Committee) for its efforts in preparing the report every two years.

In December 2007 and March 2008, COAG committed to six ambitious targets to close the gap in Indigenous disadvantage:

* closing the life expectancy gap within a generation;
* halving the gap in the mortality rate for Indigenous Children under five within a decade;
* ensuring all Indigenous four year olds in remote communities have access to quality early childhood programs within five years;
* halving the gap in reading, writing and numeracy achievements for children within a decade;
* halving the gap for Indigenous students in Year 12 attainment rates or equivalent attainment by 2020; and
* halving the gap in employment outcomes within a decade.

Without high quality data, it is impossible to understand where we are headed in terms of overcoming Indigenous disadvantage. Through the National Indigenous Reform Agreement, all Governments have committed to ensuring their data is of high quality, and moreover, is available for reporting purposes. This undertaking has been made with specific reference to the need for data to be provided for the OID report.

In August 2008, the Chair of the COAG Working Group on Indigenous Reform (WGIR), the Hon Jenny Macklin MP, wrote to you requesting the Steering Committee work with the WGIR to align the OID framework to the Closing the Gap targets.

As a result, on 29 November 2008, COAG agreed a new framework for the OID report which takes account of the six ambitious targets to Close the Gap in Indigenous disadvantage. The Steering Committee should take account of this new framework in preparing future OID reports thereby ensuring the report continues to provide Governments and the broader community with an understanding of the progress being made to overcome Indigenous disadvantage.

I have copied this letter to the Treasurer, Ms Macklin and the Chair of MCATSIA the Deputy Premier of the Government of Western Australia and Minister for Indigenous Affairs, the Hon Dr Kim Hames MLA.

Yours sincerely

Kevin Rudd

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# Steering Committee

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:

Mr Peter Harris Chairman Productivity Commission

Mr Mark Thomann Aust. Govt. Department of Finance and Deregulation  
Mr Peter Robinson Aust. Govt. The Treasury  
Ms Josephine Laduzko Aust. Govt. Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

Mr Rick Sondalini NSW NSW Treasury  
Ms Janet Schorer NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet

Ms Katherine Whetton Vic Department of Premier and Cabinet  
Mr Jeremy Nott Vic Department of Treasury and Finance

Mr Chris Chinn Qld Department of the Premier and Cabinet  
Ms Janelle Thurlby Qld Queensland Treasury

Ms Marion Burchell WA Department of the Premier and Cabinet  
Mr Barry Thomas WA Department of Treasury

Ms Katrina Ball SA Department of Treasury and Finance  
Mr Chris McGowan SA Department of the Premier and Cabinet

Ms Rebekah Burton Tas Department of Premier and Cabinet

Mr Geoffrey Rutledge ACT Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic   
 Development Directorate

Ms Linda Weatherhead NT Department of the Chief Minister  
Ms Jean Doherty NT Department of the Chief Minister  
Mr Craig Graham NT Department of Treasury and Finance

Mr Peter Harper Australian Bureau of Statistics

Mr David Kalisch Australian Institute of Health and Welfare

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

Ms Madonna Morton Aust. Govt. Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

Mr Kevin Cosgriff NSW NSW Treasury  
Mr Shane McMahon NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet   
Dr Meg Montgomery NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet

Mr Simon Kent Vic Department of Premier and Cabinet

Mr Paul Cantrall Qld Department of the Premier and Cabinet

Mr Coan Harvey WA Department of Treasury

Mr David Reynolds SA Department of Treasury and Finance

Ms Pam Davoren ACT Department of the Chief Minister   
Ms Nicole Masters ACT Department of the Chief Minister

Ms Jenny Coccetti NT Department of the Chief Minister  
Mr Leigh Eldrige NT Department of the Chief Minister   
Mr Bruce Michael NT Department of Treasury and Finance   
Ms Anne Tan NT Department of the Chief Minister

# Acknowledgments

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Ms Patricia Scott Commissioner Productivity Commission  
Mr Matthew James Aust. Govt. Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet  
Ms Kristy Delaney NSW Department of Human Services  
Mr David Robinson Vic Department of Premier and Cabinet  
Ms Emma Ogilvie Qld Department of the Premier and Cabinet  
Mr Stephen Jones WA Department of Aboriginal Affairs  
Ms Katy Burns SA Department of the Premier and Cabinet  
Mr Nick Evans Tas Department of Premier and Cabinet  
Mr Colin Farlow ACT Community Services Directorate  
Ms Linda Weatherhead NT Department of the Chief Minister  
Mr Geoff Scott National Congress of Australia’s First Peoples  
Dr Fadwa Al-Yaman Australian Institute of Health and Welfare  
Ms Julie Nankervis Australian Bureau of Statistics

People who also served on the Working Group during the production of this report include:

Ms Gina Overall Aust. Govt. Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet  
Mr Trevor Fleming Vic Department of Premier and Cabinet  
Ms Prudence Phillips-Brown Qld Department of the Premier and Cabinet  
Mr Garrick Stanley WA Department of Aboriginal Affairs  
Mr Chris Parry WA Department of Aboriginal Affairs  
Ms Lisa Perre SA Department of the Premier and Cabinet  
Ms Michelle Brown NT Department of Regional Development and   
 Women’s Policy  
Mr Scott Avery National Congress of Australia’s First Peoples

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Dr Payi Linda Ford (Northern Institute, Charles Darwin University)  
Ms Heron Loban (James Cook University)  
National Health Leadership Forum  
National Indigenous Drug and Alcohol Committee  
Ms Robynne Quiggin (Australian Indigenous Governance Institute)  
Reconciliation Australia   
Working Group on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Environmental Health

# Acronyms and abbreviations

AA Aboriginal Affairs

AATSIHS Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey

ABS Australian Bureau of Statistics

ABS Census Census of Population and Housing

ACARA Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority

ACCHS Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services

ACER Australian Council for Educational Research

ACIR Australian Childhood Immunisation Register

ACMA Australian Communications and Media Authority

ACT Australian Capital Territory

AEC Australian Electoral Commission

AEDI Australian Early Development Index

AHMAC Australian Health Ministers’ Advisory Council

AHRC Australian Human Rights Commission

AHS Australian Health Survey

AHW Aboriginal Health Workers

AIATSIS Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies

AIC Australian Institute of Criminology

AIEO Australian Indigenous Education Officer

AIEW Aboriginal and Islander Education Worker

AIFS Australian Institute of Family Studies

AIHW Australian Institute of Health and Welfare

AILC Australian Indigenous Leadership Centre

AMP Alcohol Management Plans

ANAO Australian National Audit Office

APY Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara

APSC Australian Public Service Commission

AQF Australian Qualifications Framework

ARCHI Australian Resource Centre for Healthcare Innovations

ASGC Australian Standard Geographical Classification

ASGS Australian Statistical Geography Standard (replaced the ASGC)

ATAR Australian Tertiary Admissions Rank

ATSIHPF Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Performance Framework

ATSIC Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission

ATSIL Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership

BCA Business Council of Australia

BBB Bumps, Babies and Beyond

BMI Body Mass Index

CAEPR Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research

CAFCA Communities and Families Clearinghouse Australia

CAR Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation

CDEP Community Development Employment Projects

CEaCS Childhood Education and Care Survey

CGC Commonwealth Grants Commission

CGRIS Coordinator General for Remote Indigenous Services

CHINS Community Housing and Infrastructure Needs Survey

CIRCA Cultural and Indigenous Research Centre Australia

CLT Community Land Trusts

CNOS Canadian National Occupancy Standard

COAG Council of Australian Governments

CPiCLAS Children’s Participation in Cultural and Leisure Activities Survey

CRC COAG Reform Council

CTGCH Closing the Gap Clearinghouse

CYI Cape York Institute

CYP Cape York Partnerships

CYWR Cape York Welfare Reform

DAFWA Department of Agriculture and Food WA

DEEWR Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations

dmft Decayed, missing or filled deciduous (infant) teeth

DMFT Decayed, Missing or Filled Adult Teeth

DoE Department of Education

DOGIT Deed of Grant in Trust

DoH Department of Health

DOHA Department of Health and Ageing

DSS Department of Social Services

EGWH Equivalised Gross Weekly Household income

FaHCSIA Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs

FATSIL Federation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages

FASD Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder

FRC Family Responsibilities Commission

GDM Gestational Diabetes Mellitus

GP General Practitioner

HILDA Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia survey

HIPPY Home Interaction Program for Parents and Youngsters

HoRSCoATSIA House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs

HREOC Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (now Australian Human rights Commission)

IBA Indigenous Business Australia

ICD-10-AM International Classification of Diseases, 10th Edition, Australian Modification

ICGP Indigenous Community Governance Project

IEP Indigenous Employment Program

IERSC Indigenous Expenditure Report Steering Committee

IGA Indigenous Governance Award

ILC Indigenous Land Corporation

ILS Indigenous Landholder Services

ILUA Indigenous Land Use Agreement

IPA Indigenous Protected Area

JJT Juvenile Justice Team

LSAY Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth

LSAC Longitudinal Study of Australian Children

LSIC Longitudinal Study of Indigenous Children

MBS Medicare Benefits Schedule

MCATSIA Ministerial Council for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs

MCEECDYA Ministerial Council on Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs

MSS Mean Scale Score

NAHA National Affordable Housing Agreement

NPAH National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness

NPARIH National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing

NAPCAN National Association for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect

NAPLAN National Assessment Program — Literacy and Numeracy

NATSIHS National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey

NATSINPAS National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nutrition and Physical Activity Survey

NATSIS National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey

NATSISS National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey

NCVER National Centre for Vocational Education Research

NDSHS National Drug Strategy Household Survey

NECECC National Early Childhood Education and Care Collection

NHMD National Hospital Morbidity Database

NHMP National Homicide Monitoring Program

NHMRC National Health and Medical Research Council

NHS National Health Survey

NMHC National Mental Health Commission

NILS National Indigenous Languages Survey

NIRA National Indigenous Reform Agreement

NITV National Indigenous Television

NMDS National Minimum Data Set

NMS National Minimum Standard

NNTT National Native Title Tribunal

NP National Partnership

NPA National Partnership Agreement

NPARIH National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing

NPC National Preschool Census

NPDC National Perinatal Data Collection

NPRSD National Partnership Agreement on Remote Service Delivery

NPY Ngaanyatjarra, Pitjantjatjara and Yankunytjatjara

NSAC National Schools Attendance Collection

NSSC National Schools Statistics Collection

NSW New South Wales

NT Northern Territory

NTER Northern Territory Emergency Response

NTWD National Teacher Workforce Dataset

NWC National Water Commission

NWI National Water Initiative

OECD Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

OID Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage

OIPC Office of Indigenous Policy Coordination

ORIC Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations

PC Productivity Commission

PISA Programme for International Student Assessment

Qld Queensland

RA Reconciliation Australia

RAP Reconciliation Action Plan

RCADIC Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody

RJCP Remote Jobs and Communities Program

RSE Relative standard error

SA South Australia

SAAAC South Australian Aboriginal Advisory Council

SAAP Supported Accommodation Assistance Program

SAE Standard Australian English

SCRCSSP Steering Committee for the Review of Commonwealth/State Service Provision

SCRGSP Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision

SCSEEC Standing Council on School Education and Early Childhood

SDAC ABS Survey of Disability Ageing and Carers

SE Standard Error

SEWPaC Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Pollution and Communities

SNAICC Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care

SHS Specialist Homelessness Services

SiAS Staff in Australia’s Schools survey

TAFE Technical and Further Education

TAFE OTEN Open Training and Education Network

Tas Tasmania

UNESCO United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

VET Vocational Education and Training

Vic Victoria

WA Western Australia

WAACHS Western Australian Aboriginal Child Health Survey

WGIR Working Group on Indigenous Reform

WHO World Health Organisation

# Glossary

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Aboriginal** | A person who identifies as being of Aboriginal origin. May also include people who identify as being of both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander origin. |
| **Age standardised rates** | Age standardised rates enable comparisons to be made between populations that have different age structures. Age standardisation is often used when comparing the Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations because the Indigenous population is younger than the non-Indigenous population. Outcomes for some indicators are influenced by age, therefore, it is appropriate to age standardise the data when comparing the results. When comparisons are not being made between the two populations, the data are not age standardised. |
| **CDEP** | Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP) is an Australian Government funded program that provides activities for unemployed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians to develop work skills and move into employment. For statistical purposes the ABS classifies participants in CDEP receiving CDEP ‘wages’ as employed rather than as unemployed or not in the labour force see section 4.6). |
| **Core activity limitation (ABS SDAC definition)** | Four levels of core activity limitation are determined based on whether a person needs help, has difficulty, or uses aids or equipment with any of the core activities (mobility, self-care and communication). A person's overall level of core activity limitation is determined by their highest level of limitation in these activities.  The four levels of limitation are:   * profound - the person is unable to do, or always needs help with, a core activity task. * severe - the person: * sometimes needs help with a core activity task, and/or * has difficulty understanding or being understood by family or friends, or * can communicate more easily using sign language or other non-spoken forms of communication. * moderate - the person needs no help, but has difficulty with a core activity task. * mild - the person needs no help and has no difficulty with any of the core activity tasks, but: * uses aids or equipment, or has one or more of the following limitations * cannot easily walk 200 metres * cannot walk up and down stairs without a handrail * cannot easily bend to pick up an object from the floor * cannot use public transport * can use public transport, but needs help or supervision * needs no help or supervision, but has difficulty using public transport. |
| **Confidence intervals** | Survey data, for example data from the Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey, are subject to sampling error because they are based on samples of the total population. Where survey data are shown in charts in this report, error bars are included, showing 95 per cent confidence intervals. There is a 95 per cent chance that the true value of the data item lies within the interval shown by the error bars. See ‘statistical significance’.  See also ‘Error bars’. |
| **Disability (ABS SDAC definition)** | A person has a disabilityif he or she has a limitation, restriction or impairment, which has lasted, or is likely to last, for at least six months and restricts everyday activities. These activities include: loss of sight (not corrected by glasses or contact lenses); loss of hearing where communication is restricted, or an aid to assist with, or substitute for, hearing is used; speech difficulties; shortness of breath or breathing difficulties causing restriction; chronic or recurrent pain or discomfort causing restriction; blackouts, seizures, or fits, or loss of consciousness; difficulty learning or understanding; incomplete use of arms or fingers; difficulty gripping or holding things; incomplete use of feet or legs; nervous or emotional condition causing restriction; restriction in physical activities or in doing physical work; disfigurement or deformity; mental illness or condition requiring help or supervision; long-term effects of head injury, stroke or other brain damage causing restriction; receiving treatment or medication for any other long-term conditions or ailments and still restricted; or any other long‑term conditions resulting in a restriction. |
| **ICD** | ICD is the International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems, endorsed by the World Health Organization (WHO). It is primarily designed for the classification of diseases and injuries with a formal diagnosis. ICD-10-AM is the Australian modification of the tenth revision and was adopted for Australian use from 1 January 1999 (superseding ICD-9). |
| **Equivalised household income** | Equivalised household income adjusts the actual incomes of households to make households of different sizes and compositions comparable. It results in a measure of the economic resources available to members of a standardised household (see section 4.9). |
| **Error bars** | Survey data, for example data from the Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey, are subject to sampling error because they are based on samples of the total population. Where survey data are shown in charts in this report, error bars are included, showing 95 per cent confidence intervals. There is a 95 per cent chance that the true value of the data item lies within the interval shown by the error bars. See ‘statistical significance’.  See also ‘Confidence intervals’. |
| **Hospitalisation** | Hospitalisations recorded in this report refer to ‘hospital separations’. A ‘separation’ is an episode of care, which can be a total hospital stay (from admission to discharge, transfer or death), or a portion of a hospital stay beginning or ending in a change of type of care (for example, from acute to rehabilitation). It is also defined as the process by which an admitted patient completes an episode of care by being discharged, dying, transferring to another hospital or changing type of care. For measuring a hospital’s activity, separations are used in preference to admissions because diagnoses and procedures can be more accurately recorded at the end of a patient’s stay and patients may undergo more than one separation from the time of admission. Admitted patients who receive same day procedures (for example, renal dialysis) are recorded in hospitalisation statistics. |
| **Income ranges** | See ‘quintiles’. |
| **Indigenous** | A person of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin who identifies as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. |
| **Indigenous status not stated/ Indigenous status unknown** | Where a person’s Indigenous origin has either not been asked or not recorded. |
| **Infant mortality** | Deaths of children between birth and exactly one year of age. |
| **Inner regional** | See ‘remoteness areas’. |
| **Jurisdiction** | The Australian Government or a State or Territory Government and areas that it has legal authority over. |
| **Labour force** | The labour force is the most widely used measure of the economically active population or the formal supply of labour. It is a measure of the number of people contributing to, or willing to contribute to, the supply of labour and, as defined by the ABS, comprises two mutually exclusive categories of population: the employed (people who have worked for at least one hour in the reference week, including those who have participated in Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP)), and the unemployed (people who are without work, but had actively looked for work in the four weeks up to the end of the reference week and were available to start work in the reference week). |
| **Major cities** | See ‘remoteness areas’. |
| **Mean and median income measures** | A mean income value is the average value of a set of income data. It is calculated by adding up all the values in the set of data and dividing that sum by the number of values in the dataset. Median value is the middle point of a set of income data. Lining up the values in a set of income data from largest to smallest, the one in the centre is the median income value (if the centre point lies between two numbers, the median value is the average value of the two numbers).  Median value is a better measure for income than mean as mean income values are more influenced by extreme income values (including the lowest and highest incomes). Therefore, median income value is a more accurate measure of income for an average household or average individual income earner.  For example, the gross monthly incomes for 9 households are: $10 000, $5000, $2500, $1500, $1500, $1500, $1000, $450, $450.  The **mean income value** among the 9 households is ($10 000+$5 000+$2500+$1500+$1500+$1500+$1000+ $450+$450)/9=$2655.6. The **median income value** is the fifth value (the mid-point), $1500. |
| **Non-Indigenous** | A person who does not identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. |
| **Non-school qualification** | Non-school qualifications include vocational or higher education qualifications. |
| **Non-remote** | See ‘remoteness areas’. |
| **Outer regional** | See ‘remoteness areas’. |
| **Perinatal mortality** | Feotuses delivered with a gestational age of 20 weeks or more, or weighing at least 400 grams, and all neonatal deaths – infant deaths within 28 days of birth. |
| **Post-school qualification** | Post-school qualifications include vocational or higher education qualifications. |
| **Quintiles** | Income quintiles are groups that result from ranking all people in the population in ascending order (from the lowest to the highest) according to their (as an example) incomes and then dividing the population into five equal groups, each comprising 20 per cent of the population. |
| **Rate ratio** | The rate ratio is the rate for the Indigenous population divided by the rate for the non‑Indigenous (or other) population. See ‘relative Indigenous disadvantage’. |
| **Regional** | See ‘remoteness areas’. |
| **Relative Indigenous disadvantage** | Relative Indigenous disadvantage is measured by comparing the rate of Indigenous disadvantage (for example, the proportion of Indigenous people reporting they do not have a non-school qualification) with the rate for the non-Indigenous (or other) population. See ‘rate ratio’. |
| **Relative standard error (RSE)** | The relative standard error (RSE) of a survey data estimate is a measure of the reliability of the estimate and depends on both the number of people giving a particular answer in the survey and the size of the population. The RSE is expressed as a percentage of the estimate. The higher the RSE, the less reliable the estimate. Relative standard errors for survey estimates are included in the attachment tables. See also ‘statistical significance’. |
| **Remote** | See ‘remoteness areas’. |
| **Remoteness** | See ‘remoteness areas’. |
| **Remoteness areas** | Remoteness areas are defined in the Australian Statistical Geographical Standard (ASGS) developed by the ABS.[[1]](#footnote-1) The ASGS remoteness classification identifies a place in Australia as having a particular degree of remoteness. The remoteness of each place is determined using the Accessibility/Remoteness Index of Australia (ARIA). The ABS generates an average ARIA score for each location based on its distance from population centres of various sizes. Locations are then added together to form the remoteness areas in each State and Territory. Remoteness areas comprise the following six categories:   * major cities of Australia * inner regional Australia * outer regional Australia * remote Australia * very remote Australia * migratory regions (comprising off-shore, shipping and migratory places).   The aim of the ASGS remoteness structure is not to provide a measure of the remoteness of a particular location but to divide Australia into five broad categories (excluding migratory regions) of remoteness for comparative statistical purposes. |
| **Statistical significance** | Statistical significance is a measure of the degree of difference between survey data estimates. The potential for sampling error — that is, the error that occurs by chance because the data are obtained from only a sample and not the entire population — means that reported responses may not indicate the true responses.  Using the relative standard errors (RSE) of survey data estimates, it is possible to use a formula to test whether the difference is statistically significant. If there is an overlap between confidence intervals for different data items, it cannot be stated for certain that there is a statistically significant difference between the results. See ‘confidence intervals’ and ‘relative standard error’. |
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| **Torres Strait Islander people** | People who identify as being of Torres Strait Islander origin. May also include people who identify as being of both Torres Strait Islander and Aboriginal origin. |
| **Unemployment rate** | The unemployment rate is defined as the proportion of people in the labour force who:   * had actively looked for full-time or part-time work at any time in the four weeks up to the end of the reference week, or * were waiting to start a new job within four weeks from the end of the reference week and could have started in the reference week if the job had been available then. |
| **Very remote** | See ‘remoteness areas’. |

1. The ASGS replaced the Australian Standard Geographical Classification (ASGC) from 1 July 2013. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)