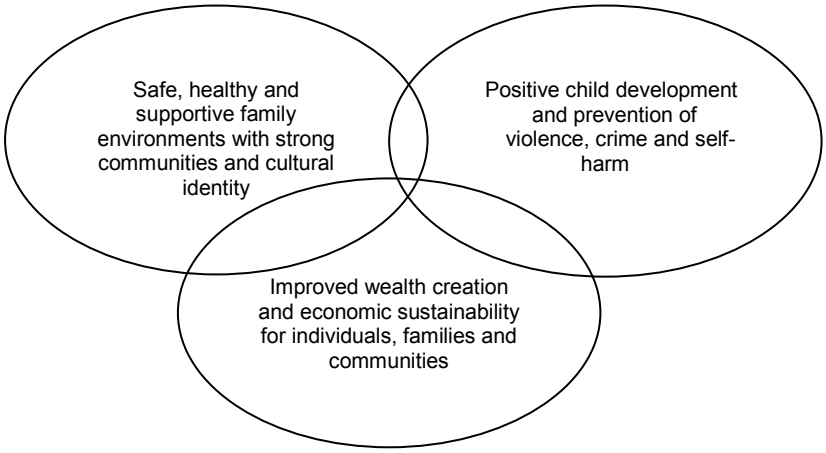
3 Headline indicators



Headline indicators

- Life expectancy at birth
- Disability and chronic disease
- Years 10 and 12 retention and attainment
- Post secondary education — participation and attainment
- Labour force participation and unemployment
- Household and individual income
- Home ownership
- Suicide and self-harm
- Substantiated child abuse and neglect
- Deaths from homicide and hospitalisations for assault
- Family and community violence
- Imprisonment and juvenile detention rates

As noted, the three priority outcomes which sit at the apex of this Report's framework depict wellbeing at the highest level. They are not isolated outcomes, but are interdependent. 'Positive child development and prevention of violence, crime and self-harm' are key determinants in the achievement of 'safe, healthy and supportive family environments with strong communities and cultural identity'. And, without these conditions in place, the potential to achieve 'improved wealth creation and economic sustainability' is impaired.

The headline indicators reflect the extent to which this vision is becoming a reality. Generally, improvements in those indicators are only likely to be apparent over the

medium to long-term, and then only if there have been effective strategies in place in the 'strategic areas for action' identified in the framework (see following chapters). Nevertheless, small improvements have been identified for some indicators and are described later in this chapter.

As discussed previously, few of the headline indicators are likely to improve solely as the result of a single policy or a single agency. Positive change will generally require action across a range of areas. In keeping with the priority outcomes themselves, there is a strong thread of interdependence in the headline indicators. For example, post-secondary educational attainment is linked to years 10 and 12 retention and attainment; which in turn are linked to household income and family and community violence, and so on. Again, improvements in these areas have the capacity collectively to make a positive impact on priority outcomes.

Attachment tables

Attachment tables for this chapter are identified in references throughout this chapter by an 'A' suffix (for example, table 3A.2.3). A list of attachment tables is in section 3.14. These tables can be found on the Review web page (www.pc.gov.au/gsp). Users can also contact the Secretariat to obtain the attachment tables.

3.1 Life expectancy at birth

Box 3.1.1 **Key messages**

- The life expectancy of Indigenous people is estimated to be around 17 years lower than that for the total Australian population (figure 3.1.1).
- The most recent estimates indicate that life expectancy at birth is 59 years for Indigenous males compared with 77 years for males in the total population, and 65 years for Indigenous females compared with 82 years for females in the total population (figure 3.1.1).
- In 2005, death rates in all age groups were higher for Indigenous than non-Indigenous people. The greatest differences were for those aged between 35 and 54, where the Indigenous death rates were five to six times those for non-Indigenous people (table 3.1.2).

Life expectancy is an indicator of health status and refers to the average number of years a person of a given age and sex can expect to live, if current trends (age

specific death rates[1]) continued throughout his or her lifetime. Life expectancy is widely viewed as a key measure of the health of populations. As well as being a fundamental health indicator, studies have found life expectancy to be highly correlated with a range of other factors including employment, education and overall economic wellbeing (Becker, Philipson and Soares 2003; Carson et al. 2007).

There are no new data on Indigenous life expectancy available since the 2005 Report was published. In 2008, the ABS will analyse 2006 Population Census results and final death registration data for 2001 to 2006, to compile 2001 to 2006 Indigenous life tables and life expectancy. This Report includes some additional data on Indigenous mortality (median age at death and leading causes of death).

Life expectancy

Life expectancy is an indicator of the long-term health and wellbeing of Indigenous Australians. Improvements in outcomes across all of the strategic areas for action have the potential to affect life expectancy.

Disparities in life expectancy can be influenced by differences in income and education levels, the quality of the health system and the ability of people to access it, genetic and social factors, and environmental factors including overcrowded housing, lack of clean drinking water and adequate sanitation (see sections 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 9.3, 9.7, 10.1, 10.2 and 10.3 for more information on these factors). People from lower socioeconomic groups tend to suffer from higher rates of ill health and death, and are more likely to exhibit behaviour risk factors such as the consumption of tobacco and excessive alcohol, poor nutrition, and lack of exercise.

Environmental factors also influence life expectancy. The lack of clean drinking water and adequate sanitation, for example, can accentuate risks to health, particularly for infants and young children. Overcrowding of households can increase the chances of contracting and spreading disease. Improving the quality and level of access to health services can have a positive impact on life expectancy through increased levels of preventative care, increased early diagnosis of diseases (such as diabetes) and effective treatment of chronic diseases.

[1] Age-specific death rates are the number of deaths registered (or occurring) during a calendar year at a specified age, per 100 000 of the estimated resident population of the same age (ABS 2006).

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) has advised that:

- While the life expectancy estimates presented here are the best that can be compiled with currently available data, it is not possible to present time-series or trend statistics for Indigenous life expectancies.
- Variation in life expectancies between Indigenous males and females and for Indigenous Australians in different states and territories should be interpreted with care as they are sensitive to the demographic assumptions and differential quality of data across jurisdictions.

State and Territory breakdowns should be interpreted with care. At present, the ABS can only publish, with confidence, individual jurisdiction Indigenous life expectancy estimates for Queensland and the Northern Territory. In order to produce more reliable estimates, the ABS combines data for Victoria with NSW and SA with WA (giving two pairs of geographically nearby jurisdictions). Due to a combination of poor data quality and small numbers, estimates have not been produced for Tasmania and the ACT (for these jurisdictions the ABS suggests using the NSW/Victoria estimates) (ABS 2004a; 2004b).

The calculation of national Indigenous life tables using conventional direct methods is not possible due to the absence of complete and consistent (over time) identification of Indigenous status in death registrations in all six states and the ACT. Consequently, the ABS does not publish time series of Indigenous life expectancy. (Indigenous identification in deaths data for the NT has been much more accurate since the 1960s — research on mortality over time in the NT is reported later in this section.)

Table 3.1.1 **Estimated Indigenous life expectancies at birth, 1996–2001**[a, b]

Sex	*NSW and Victoria*	*Queensland*	*SA and WA*	*NT*	*Australia*
Male	60.0	58.9	58.5	57.6	59.4
Female	65.1	62.6	67.2	65.2	64.8

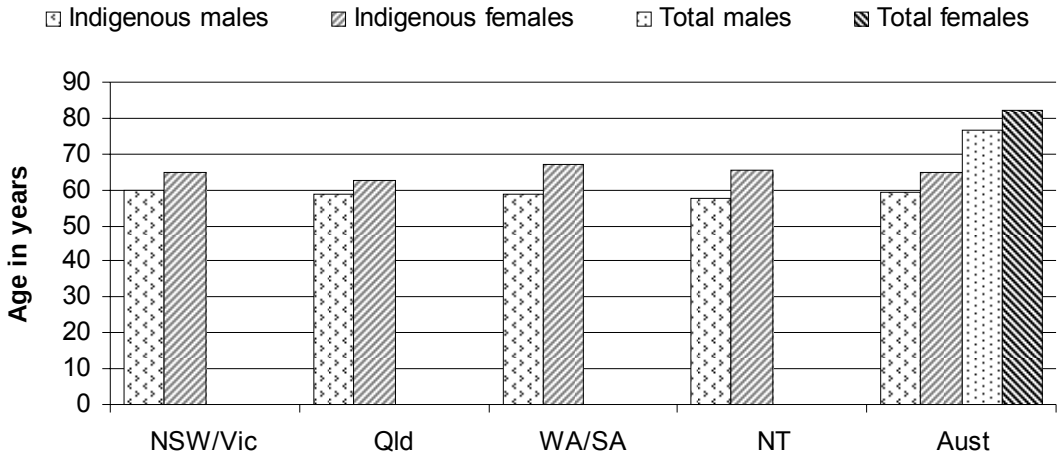
[a] For Tasmanian and ACT estimates, use NSW/Victorian data. [b] Data are subject to a degree of uncertainty and apparent differences in life expectancy estimates between jurisdictions may not be statistically significant.

Source: ABS (2004b); table 3A.1.1.

- The ABS estimates that, for both males and females, life expectancy at birth in the Indigenous population is 17.2 years less than in the total Australian population (table 3.1.1, figure 3.1.1).
- The life expectancy of Indigenous males born between 1996–2001 is 59.4 years compared with 76.6 years for total males born in a similar period (1998–2000),

while the life expectancy of Indigenous females is 64.8 years compared with 82.0 years for total females.[2]

Figure 3.1.1 **Life expectancy at birth, Indigenous 1996–2001, total population 1998–2000**[a, b, c, d]



[a] Indigenous data are for the Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population, and include an adjustment for undercoverage of Indigenous deaths. [b] Indigenous life expectancy excludes Tasmania and the ACT. For Tasmania and the ACT, use data for NSW and Victoria. [c] Life expectancy data for Indigenous males and Indigenous females are for the period 1996–2001. Data for total males and females cover the period 1998–2000, the approximate mid-point of the Indigenous data. [d] Data are subject to a degree of uncertainty and apparent differences in life expectancy estimates between jurisdictions may not be statistically significant.

Source: ABS (2004b); table 3A.1.1.

- In both the Indigenous and total populations, females tend to live longer than males. Life expectancies at birth for Indigenous females are currently 5.4 years higher than for Indigenous males. The size of the 'gender gap' in the total Australian population is also 5.4 years (figure 3.1.1).

The NT is the only State or Territory where Indigenous identification in mortality has been of sufficient and sustained quality to allow time series analysis. A recent study by Wilson, Condon and Barnes (2007) found that the life expectancy of Indigenous people in the NT had risen by eight years for men (from 52 to 60 years) and 14 years for women (from 54 to 68 years) over the past 40 years (1967 to 2004). Over the same period, total Australian life expectancy rose from 68 to 78 years for males and from 74 to 83 years for females. The gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous life expectancies in the NT remains large, however, for

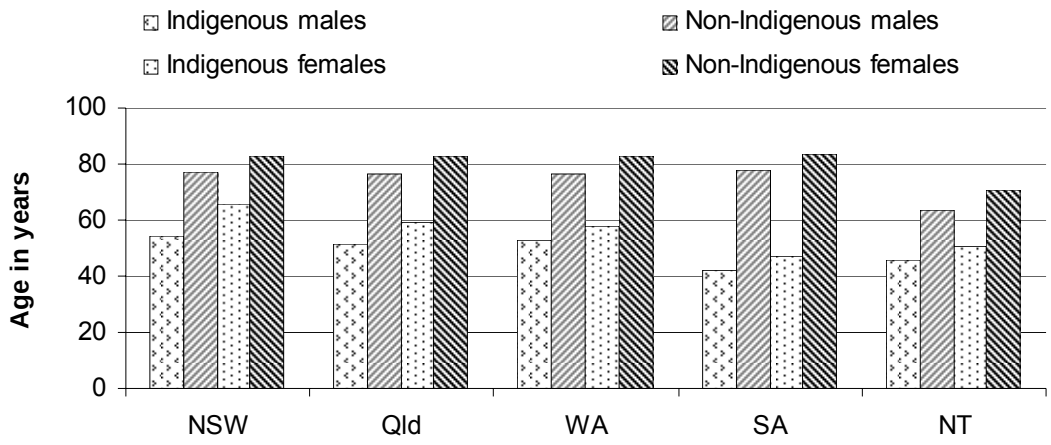
[2] The ABS has not produced estimates of total male and female life expectancies for the period 1996–2001. The total population life expectancy data presented are for the period 1998–2000, which is the approximate mid-point of the 1996–2001 period covered by the Indigenous data.

females, the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous life expectancy has narrowed from 20 to 15 years (Wilson, Condon and Barnes 2007).

Median age at death and age specific death rates

Median age at death is another way of looking at Indigenous mortality, however, differences in coverage rates by age can lead to biased summary results. For example, higher coverage of infant deaths than deaths in older age groups may lead to underestimates of median age at death. The Indigenous population has a younger age structure than the non-Indigenous population, which also influences median age at death values (ABS 2006), therefore, estimates should be treated with caution.

Figure 3.1.2 **Median age at death, 2005**



a Victoria, Tasmania and the ACT are excluded due to poor coverage rates or small numbers. **b** Care should be exercised when comparing median age at death of Indigenous and non-Indigenous people because of differential rates of Indigenous identification by age and different age structures in the two populations.

Source: ABS (2006) *Deaths Australia 2005*; table 3A.1.2.

- In 2005, median ages at death in all states and territories for which data were available were significantly lower for Indigenous males and females than non-Indigenous males and females (figure 3.1.2).
- Median ages at death for Indigenous people fluctuated between 2000 and 2005 but no overall trend was apparent (table 3A.1.2).

Table 3.1.2 **Age specific death rates, 2001–2005**[a, b, c]

	Males			*Females*		
Age (years)	*Indigenous*[d]	*Non-Indigenous*	*Rate ratio*[e]	*Indigenous*[d]	*Non-Indigenous*	*Rate ratio*[e]
0[f]	15.0	4.8	3.1	10.4	4.1	2.5
1–4	74.1	29.2	2.5	70.5	20.3	3.5
5–14	29.8	13.5	2.2	23.0	9.7	2.4
15–24	207.7	76.6	2.7	96.0	28.6	3.4
25–34	416.3	106.6	3.9	185.2	39.8	4.7
35–44	823.6	141.3	5.8	469.0	77.4	6.1
45–54	1393.5	286.2	4.9	850.8	173.5	4.9
55–64	2543.9	711.3	3.6	1723.2	410.1	4.2
65 years and over	6270.0	4325.5	1.4	4956.9	3690.6	1.3

[a] Data for Queensland, WA, SA and the NT combined. [b] Deaths per 100 000 population except age zero. [c] Data are subject to a degree of uncertainty and apparent differences in mortality estimates between jurisdictions may not be statistically significant. [d]Indigenous rates are based on observed Indigenous deaths and are, therefore, likely to be underestimated. [e] Indigenous rate divided by the non-Indigenous rate. [f] Infant deaths per 1000 live births.

Source: ABS (2006) *Deaths Australia 2005*.

- In 2005, age specific death rates (deaths per 100 000 population) were higher for Indigenous than non-Indigenous people for all age groups (table 3.1.2).
- For all age groups below 65 years, the age-specific death rates for Indigenous people were at least twice the rate for non-Indigenous people.
- The greatest differences were for those aged between 35 and 54, where the rates were about five to six times those for non-Indigenous people.

An independent examination of mortality for the NT only, over a long period (1967–2000), reported that Indigenous all-cause mortality rates in the NT declined overall and for all age groups. Declines were greater for females than males, and greater in younger and older age groups than in the early and middle adult years (25–64 years). The declines in Indigenous mortality, however, 'did not keep pace with the relative decline for the total Australian population. NT Indigenous mortality declined for communicable, maternal and nutritional conditions and injury but did not decline for non-communicable diseases' (Condon et al. 2004).

Table 3.1.3 **Causes of death by Indigenous status, Qld, WA, SA and the NT, 2001–2005**[a]

	Indigenous	*Non-Indigenous*	*Indigenous*	*Non-Indigenous*	*Ratio*
	%	%	Age standardised rate per 100 000	Age standardised rate per 100 000	
Underlying cause of death					
Circulatory diseases	26.6	36.8	783.9	228.9	3.4
Accidents, poisonings and violence	16.2	6.3	123.5	39.3	3.1
Cancer	15.1	29.7	306.9	179.8	1.7
Lung cancer	3.6	5.7	79.3	34.9	2.3
Cervical cancer	0.4	0.2	5.8	1.1	5.3
Endocrine, metabolic & nutritional disorders	9.0	3.5	204.3	21.6	9.5
Diabetes	8.0	2.4	202.8	14.8	13.7
Respiratory diseases	8.7	8.7	243.2	54.1	4.5
Digestive diseases	5.7	3.3	131.0	20.6	6.4
Conditions originating in the perinatal period	2.8	0.4	7.9	2.9	2.7
Nervous system diseases	2.5	3.3	50.4	20.7	2.4
Infectious and parasitic diseases	2.3	1.2	39.1	7.3	5.4
Kidney diseases	2.0	1.5	64.0	9.6	6.7
Other causes	9.1	5.3	143.7	37.1	3.9
All causes	100.0	100.0	2043.7	621.7	3.3
Number of deaths	7 544	227 393			

[a] Calculations of rates for the Indigenous population are based on ABS Experimental Projections, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians (low series, 2001 base). There are no comparable population data for the Non-Indigenous population. Calculations of rates for the Non-Indigenous population are based on data derived by subtracting Indigenous population projections from total population estimates and should be used with care.

Source: ABS 2006, Causes of Death 2005, Cat. no. 3303.0 (unpublished); table 3A.1.3.

- In the period 2001 to 2005, age standardised death rates from all causes combined were more than three times as high as for Indigenous people as those for non-Indigenous people (2043.7 per 100 000 compared with 621.7 per 100 000) (figure 3.1.3).
- Indigenous death rates were higher than non-Indigenous rates for all categories of disease (figure 3.1.3).
- Indigenous people died from diabetes at nearly 14 times the rate for non-Indigenous people.

3.2 Disability and chronic disease

Box 3.2.1 **Key messages**

- In non-remote areas in 2002, Indigenous adults were twice as likely to report a disability resulting in a profound or severe core activity limitation than non-Indigenous adults.
- From 2001 to 2004-05, there was an increase in the number of long term health conditions for which Indigenous people reported higher rates than non-Indigenous people. In 2001, Indigenous people reported higher rates of asthma, diabetes/high sugar levels and kidney disease than non-Indigenous people. In 2004-05, Indigenous people also reported higher rates of arthritis, back pain/problems and heart and circulatory diseases (figure 3.2.1 and table 3A.2.1).
- In 2004-05, the greatest difference between Indigenous and non-Indigenous rates was for kidney disease; where the Indigenous rate was 10 times as high as the non-Indigenous rate. This gap is widening — in 2001 the Indigenous rate was 5 times as high as the non-Indigenous rate (table 3A.2.1).
- In 2004-05, Indigenous people were 3 times as likely as non-Indigenous people to have diabetes (figure 3.2.1). There was no improvement in the reported incidence of diabetes among Indigenous people between 2001 and 2004-05 (table 3A.2.1).

The 2005 Report included data on the incidence of disability and the degree of core activity limitation among Indigenous people, sourced from the 2002 ABS NATSISS (the major findings are summarised in the first part of this section). As no new data on disability have become available since the 2002 ABS NATSISS, this Report compares the rates of selected long term health conditions (that may cause disability) among Indigenous and non-Indigenous people (obtained from the 2004-05 ABS NATSIHS). These rates are accompanied by standardised hospitalisation rates for selected long term health conditions for Indigenous people sourced from the AIHW National Hospital Morbidity Database.

A ‘disability’ is generally defined as a limitation, restriction, impairment, disease or disorder which limits a person’s ability to perform everyday activities (for example, work, study, self care, mobility and communication) for long periods (that is, at least six months) (ABS 2004). Rates of disability and chronic disease have been selected as a headline indicator because they can have a bearing on, and reflect, the relative wellbeing of a population group.

Generally, chronic diseases are not caused by infection or passed on by contact. Instead, they develop over long periods of time and are the result of numerous risk factors acting in combination, such as:

- biomedical factors (for example, obesity, high blood pressure and high cholesterol levels)
- genetics (for example, genetic makeup and family history)
- risk behaviours (for example, smoking, excessive alcohol consumption, physical inactivity and poor diet)
- environment (for example, poor living conditions)
- psychological factors (for example, neglect, violence and death of family members)
- socioeconomic factors (for example, poverty, unemployment, low educational attainment, limited access to social services and discrimination/racism) (AIHW 2006).

Adverse socioeconomic and environmental conditions are the likely underlying causes of the behavioural factors that contribute to poor health among Indigenous people (Carson et al. 2007). A family history of poor health and chronic disease may also influence whether an individual has a genetic predisposition to certain long term health conditions (AIHW 2006). Some successful programs aimed at preventing the development of chronic diseases among Indigenous people through education, primary health care and disease management have been implemented across Australia. An example of a successful program by the NSW Department of Health and a range of collaborators is provided in box 3.2.2.

Box 3.2.2 **'Things that work' – disease prevention programs for Indigenous people in NSW**

NSW Aboriginal Vascular Health Progam

In July 2000, the NSW Department of Health established the Aboriginal Vascular Health Program based on the premise that there are shared risk factors and risk conditions and common disease management approaches for a number of preventable vascular diseases including diabetes, cardiovascular disease, renal disease, stroke and hypertension. Since 2001, the NSW Department of Health has funded 23 Aboriginal Vascular Health project sites in locations throughout the state, with an additional nine sites operating through Justice Health. These projects work through local partnerships and collaborations between service providers and communities to develop culturally acceptable approaches for use in the prevention and management of Aboriginal chronic disease. The Aboriginal Vascular Health program continues to make significant gains, including: increasing access to care, improving service and program co-ordination, and supporting disease self-management for those identified with vascular disease. Critical to the success of the programs has been the recruitment of designated Aboriginal Vascular Health Workers to work as part of the local primary health care team.

Health services for Indigenous people in custody, NSW

Indigenous people in custody in NSW have access to a range of culturally sensitive healthcare services and disease prevention programs. These services and programs are provided through working partnerships between Justice Health, NSW Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services and Area Health Services. Currently, 41 per cent of Indigenous men and 58 per cent of Indigenous women in custody have access to this range of dedicated services. Justice Health has specific health promotion and education programs targeted at the Indigenous population in the correctional environment. In 2006, 338 participants accessed disease prevention programs and 375 participants took part in Aboriginal Men's Health and Indigenous Games exercise activities.

The potentially debilitating long term health conditions reported in this chapter include: arthritis, asthma, back pain/problems, diabetes/high sugar levels, ear/hearing problems, eye/sight problems, heart and circulatory problems/diseases, kidney disease, neoplasms/cancer and osteoporosis. For diabetes/high sugar levels, the rates are also disaggregated by the type of usual daily activities affected by the condition (for example, work, study and other day to day activities).

In addition to serious illness, Indigenous people have high exposure to a range of other 'personal stressors' that may contribute to the development of long term health conditions. Most prevalent among these stressors are death of a family member or close friend, alcohol and drug problems, family member(s) sent to prison or currently in prison, overcrowding at home, and not being able to get a job

(ABS and AIHW 2005). An attachment table reports the proportions of Indigenous people with selected long term health conditions disaggregated by the types of personal stressors experienced by the individual, their family or friends (table 3A.2.7).

Rates for long term health conditions should be interpreted with caution. In particular, rates among Indigenous Australians may be underreported:

- Definitions of 'long term health condition' and/or 'disability' used by non-Indigenous health professionals might not necessarily be the same as definitions used by Indigenous people.
- Research has shown that a person's perception of their own disability/long term condition is dependent on their knowledge of available aids and services. This may have a substantial impact on reporting rates of disability/long term health conditions, particularly when the methodology depends on self reporting (AIHW and DHFS 1998).

Disability and/or core activity restriction among Indigenous people

In the 2002 NATSISS, disability or core activity restriction was defined as a limitation, restriction, impairment, disease or disorder, which had lasted, or was likely to last for six months or more, and which restricted a person's ability to perform everyday activities. Some people were identified as having a schooling or employment restriction only, while others were restricted in the performance of one or more core activities such as self care, mobility and communication, which had lasted, or was likely to last, for at least six months and restricted everyday activities (ABS 2004).

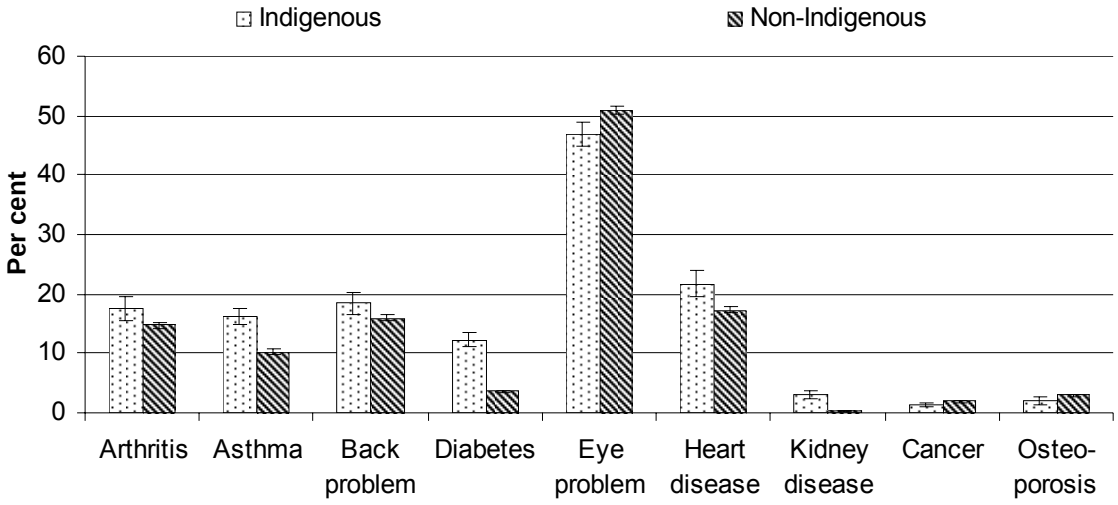
Around 36 per cent of the Indigenous population aged 15 years or over reported a disability or long term health condition in 2002 (ABS 2004). Data from the 2002 NATSISS indicated that Indigenous Australians living in remote and non-remote areas reported broadly similar levels of disability.

After taking into account the different age structures of the Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations, the proportion of Indigenous people in non-remote areas (aged 18 years and over) reporting a disability resulting in a profound or severe core activity limitation (10.5 per cent) was 2.1 times as high as that reported by non-Indigenous people (5.0 per cent) in 2002 (ABS and AIHW 2005). Significant differences in the proportions of Indigenous and non-Indigenous people with profound or severe core activity limitation were evident across all age groups (ABS and AIHW 2005).

In 2002, the proportion of Indigenous people aged 18 years and over in non-remote areas experiencing a disability or long term health condition was higher than for non-Indigenous people for all types of disability (including sight, hearing and speech, physical, intellectual, and psychological disability) (ABS and AIHW 2005). Indigenous people in non-remote areas were about one and a half times as likely as non-Indigenous people to have a physical disability and over three times as likely to have an intellectual disability (ABS and AIHW 2004).

Rates for long term health conditions

Figure 3.2.1 **People with selected long term conditions, age-standardised, by type of condition and Indigenous status, Australia, 2004-05[a]**



[a] Error bars represent 95 per cent confidence intervals around each estimate (see chapter 2 for more information).

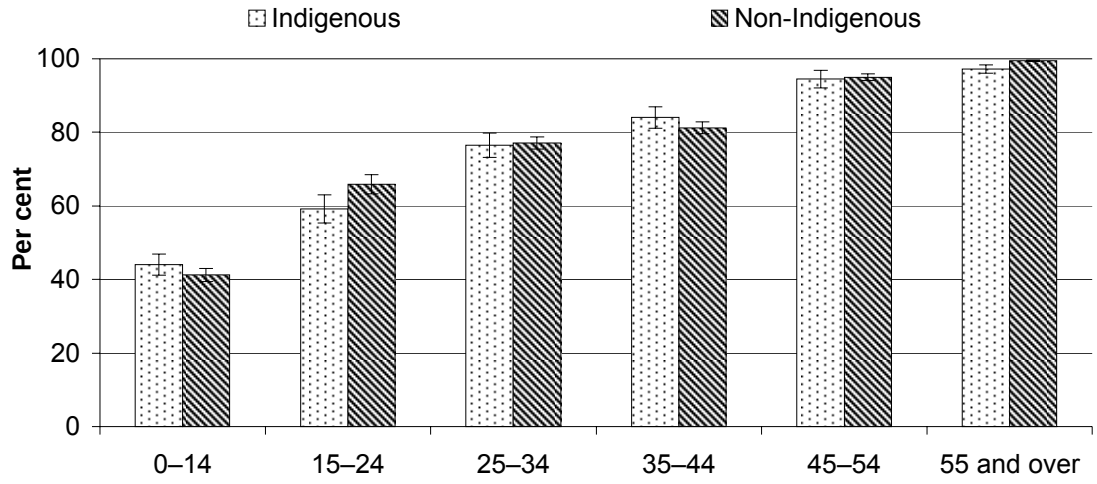
Source: ABS 2004-05 NATSIHS, NHS (unpublished); table 3A.2.1.

- Age standardised rates for six of the nine long term health conditions presented in figure 3.2.1 were significantly greater for Indigenous people than non-Indigenous people in 2004-05 (arthritis, asthma, back pain/problems, diabetes, heart and circulatory diseases, and kidney disease). In 2001, the rates for three out of nine long term conditions were significantly greater for Indigenous people (asthma, diabetes and kidney disease) (table 3A.2.1).
- The greatest difference between Indigenous and non-Indigenous rates was for kidney disease; the Indigenous rates were 5.3 and 10.0 times as high as the non-Indigenous rates in 2001 and 2004-05, respectively (table 3A.2.1).
- In 2004-05, the rate of Indigenous people with diabetes was 3.4 times as high as the rate of non-Indigenous people with diabetes (12.3 per cent compared to

3.6 per cent) (figure 3.2.1). In 2001, the rate of Indigenous people with diabetes was 3.8 times as high as the rate for non-Indigenous people (table 3A.2.1).

- Indigenous people reported lower rates of cancer and osteoporosis than non-Indigenous people in 2004-05 although overall prevalence was low in both populations (figure 3.2.1).

Figure 3.2.2 **People with one or more long term condition(s), by age group, Australia, 2004-05[a]**



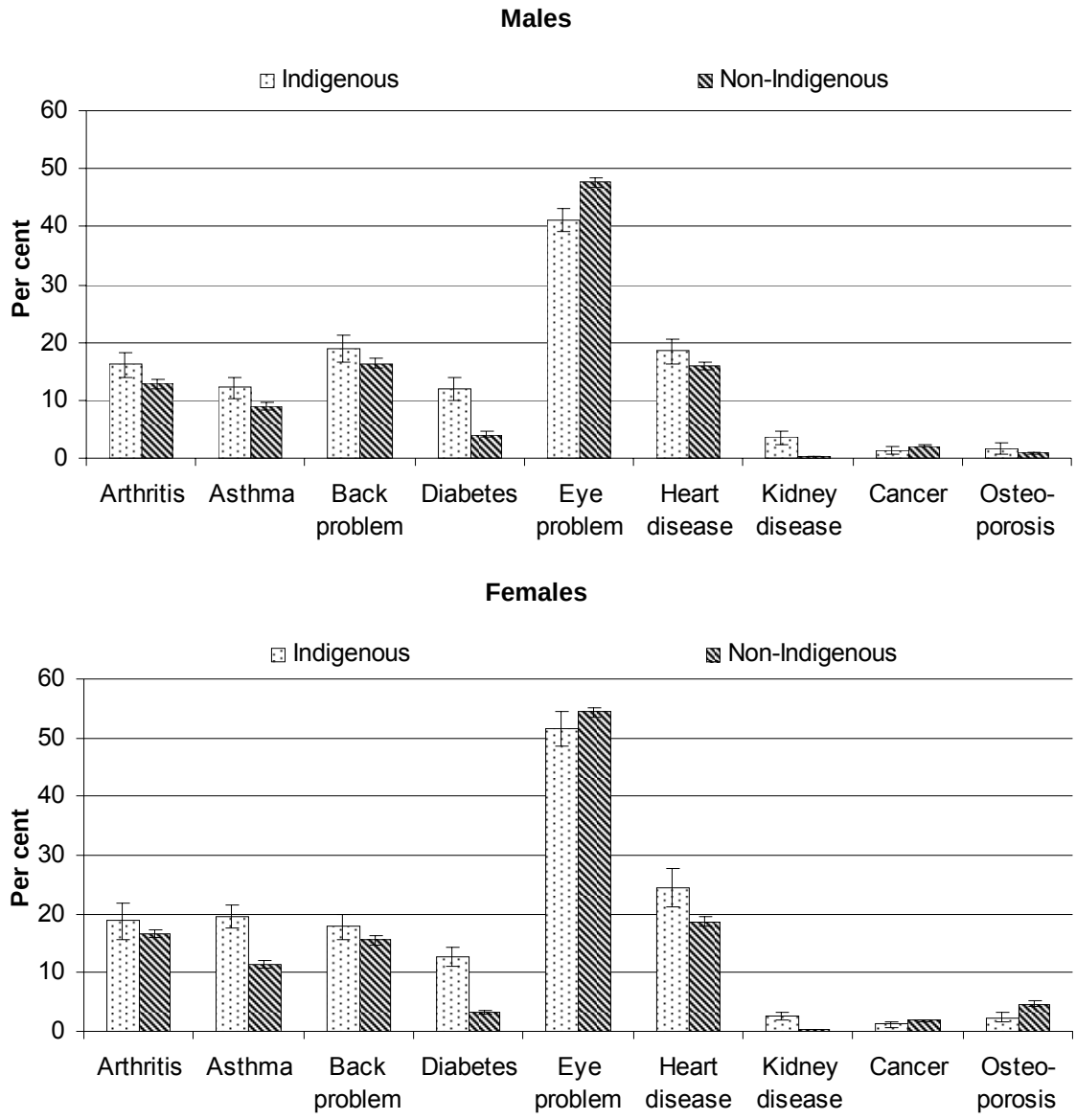
[a] Error bars represent 95 per cent confidence intervals around each estimate (see chapter 2 for more information).

Source: ABS 2004-05 NATSIHS, NHS (unpublished); table 3A.2.2.

- The prevalence of long term health conditions increased with age for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in 2004-05 (figure 3.2.2).
- Indigenous children (aged 0–14 years) were significantly more likely than non-Indigenous children to have asthma or ear/hearing problems (table 3A.2.2).
- Among young people (aged 15–24 years) the Indigenous rates for ear/hearing problems and kidney disease were significantly higher than the non-Indigenous rates for these conditions (table 3A.2.2).
- A further five long term conditions were significantly more prevalent among Indigenous people aged 25–34 years — arthritis, asthma, back problems, diabetes and heart/circulatory problems (table 3A.2.2).
- Among those in the age range 35–54 years, Indigenous people reported significantly higher rates for all selected conditions, apart from eye/sight problems, neoplasms (cancers) and osteoporosis (table 3A.2.2).

- Among older people (aged 55 years and over), the Indigenous rates for asthma, diabetes, heart/circulatory diseases and kidney disease were significantly higher than the non-Indigenous rates for these conditions (table 3A.2.2).

Figure 3.2.3 **People with selected long term conditions, age-standardised, by type of condition, gender and Indigenous status, Australia, 2004-05[a]**



[a] Error bars represent 95 per cent confidence intervals around each estimate (see chapter 2 for more information).

Source: ABS 2004-05 NATSIHS, NHS (unpublished); table 3A.2.3

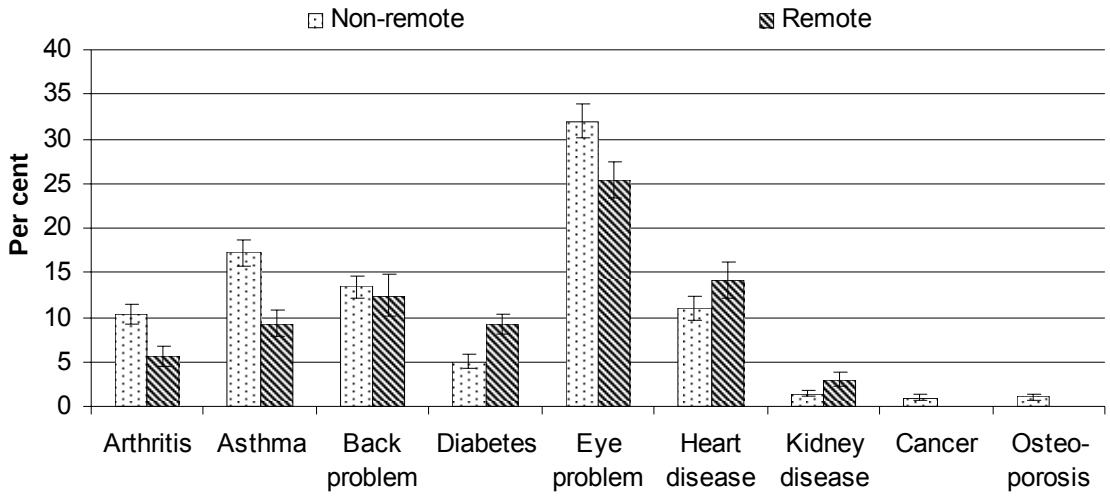
- Indigenous males and females reported significantly higher rates of asthma, back problems, diabetes/high sugar levels, and kidney disease than non-Indigenous males and females in 2004-05 (figure 3.2.3).

- Indigenous females had significantly higher rates of heart/circulatory diseases than non-Indigenous females, while Indigenous males were more likely to have arthritis than non-Indigenous males (figure 3.2.3).
- For both males and females, the greatest difference between Indigenous and non-Indigenous rates was for kidney disease; the rates for Indigenous males and females were 17.5 and 8.3 times as high as the rates for non-Indigenous males and females, respectively (table 3A.2.3).
- The proportion of Indigenous females reporting three or more long term conditions (47.1 per cent) was significantly greater than the proportion of non-Indigenous females with three or more conditions (41.7 per cent) (table 3A.2.3). A significant difference was not observed between Indigenous and non-Indigenous males reporting three or more long term conditions (38.3 per cent compared to 37.0 per cent, respectively) (table 3A.2.3).

Table 3A.2.4 presents the Indigenous and non-Indigenous rates for selected long term conditions by State/Territory in 2004-05.

Figure 3.2.4 compares the rates for nine long term conditions among Indigenous people living in remote and non-remote areas.

Figure 3.2.4 **Indigenous people with selected long term health conditions, by type of condition and remoteness, Australia, 2004-05[a]**



a Error bars represent 95 per cent confidence intervals around each estimate (see chapter 2 for more information).

Source: ABS 2004-05 NATSIHS, NHS (unpublished); table 3A.2.5.

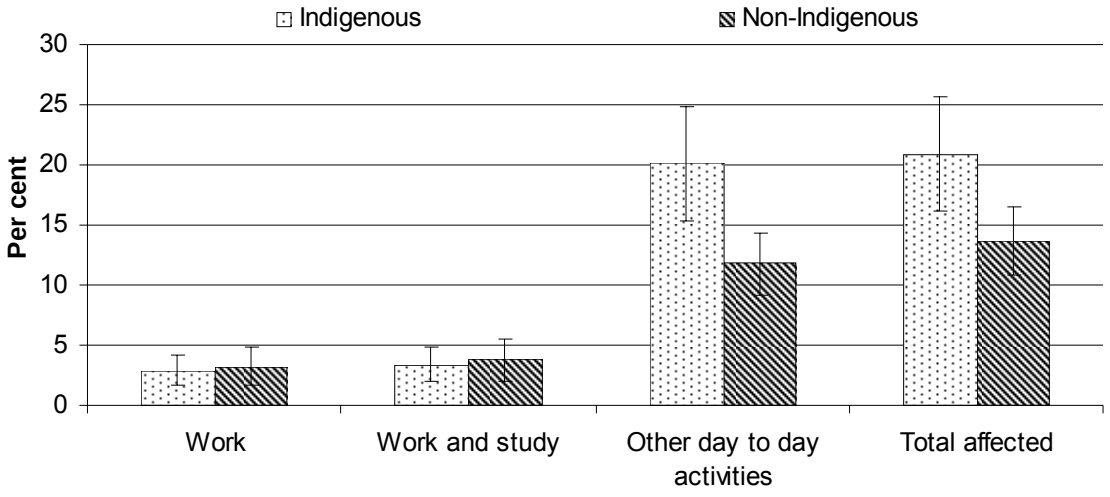
- Overall, 56.5 per cent of Indigenous people in remote areas reported one or more long term health conditions compared to 67.5 per cent in non-remote areas (table 3A.2.5). There were no significant changes in the rates of Indigenous

people with at least one long-term condition (by remoteness) between 2001 and 2004-05 (table 3A.2.5).

- In 2004-05, Indigenous people living in remote areas reported significantly higher rates of diabetes/high sugar levels (9.2 per cent), heart and circulatory diseases (14.1 per cent), and kidney disease (3.0 per cent) than Indigenous people living in non-remote areas (figure 3.2.4). This pattern was also observed in 2001 for diabetes/high sugar levels and kidney disease (table 3A.2.5).
- Indigenous people living in non-remote areas were more likely to report arthritis, asthma, back problems and eye/sight problems than Indigenous people living in remote areas in 2004-05 (figure 3.2.4).

Long term conditions interfering with usual daily activities

Figure 3.2.5 **People with diabetes/high sugar levels who find the condition interferes with their usual daily activities, age-standardised, by type of activity and Indigenous status, Australia, 2004-05[a]**



a Error bars represent 95 per cent confidence intervals around each estimate (see chapter 2 for more information).

Source: ABS 2004-05 NATSIHS; NHS (unpublished); table. 3A.2.6.

- In 2004-05, 20.1 per cent of Indigenous people reported that diabetes/high sugar levels affected 'other day to day activities', considerably greater than the 11.8 per cent of non-Indigenous people whose 'other day to day activities' were affected and much greater than the proportions of Indigenous and non-Indigenous people whose work or study were affected (figure 3.2.5).

Personal stressors and long term health conditions

Potential interrelationships between personal stressors experienced by Indigenous people in the previous 12 months and rates for long term health conditions are presented in table 3A.2.7. Indigenous people with a long term health condition were significantly more likely to have experienced at least one personal stressor than those without a long term health condition (79 per cent compared with 68 per cent). Indigenous people with a long term health condition were more likely than those without a condition to report stresses such as death of a family member, alcohol and drug problems, inability to get a job, discrimination/racism, abuse or violent crime, divorce or separation, a serious accident, and involuntary loss of job (table 3A.2.7).

Age standardised hospitalisation rates for Indigenous people

Hospitalisation rates for long term health conditions are reported in this section. While hospitalisation is not a measure of prevalence of a condition in the community, it does provide an indication of serious illness being treated in hospitals. The age standardised hospitalisation ratios presented in table 3.2.1 are calculated by dividing the Indigenous hospitalisation rate by the non-Indigenous hospitalisation rate. A ratio of one means the underlying rates are the same. A rate of more than one means the Indigenous rate is higher than the non-Indigenous rate.

More information on chronic diseases in the Indigenous population can be found in section 9.3 of this Report, which presents hospitalisation rates for 'potentially preventable chronic conditions' as part of the 'Access to primary health care' strategic indicator.

Table 3.2.1 **Age standardised hospitalisation rate ratios of Indigenous to non-Indigenous people, by type of chronic disease and sex, Queensland, WA, SA and public hospitals in the NT, 2004-05[a, b, c, d, e]**

Type of long term health condition	*Male*	*Female*
Cancer (C00–C96)	0.6	0.6
Lung cancer (C33–C34)	1.6	1.6
Cervical cancer (C53)	..	3.4
Mental and behavioural disorders (F00–F99)	2.1	1.4
Circulatory diseases (I00–I99)	1.6	2.2
Ischaemic heart diseases (I20–I25)	1.8	3.0
Stroke (I60–I69)	1.6	2.8
Hypertension (I10–I15)	3.6	4.2
Rheumatic heart diseases (I05–I09)	3.9	6.8
Other		
Diabetes (E10–E14)	4.2	6.2
End stage renal diseases (N18–N19, Z49)	10.9	21.4
Chronic obstructive pulmonary diseases (J41–J44)	4.9	5.9

a Hospitalisations were based on ICD-10-AM classifications. The principal diagnosis was used to select diseases. **b** The rate ratio is calculated by dividing the Indigenous age-standardised rate by the non-Indigenous age-standardised rate. **c** Rate ratios were calculated using 2001 Australian population data. **d** Indigenous hospitalisations data are reported for Queensland, WA, SA and the NT only. These four jurisdictions are considered to have the highest level of accuracy of Indigenous identification, although the level of accuracy varies by jurisdiction and hospital. Data for these four jurisdictions over-represent Indigenous populations in less urbanised and more remote locations. Hospitalisation data for these four jurisdictions should not be assumed to represent the hospitalisation experience in the other jurisdictions. **e** Non-Indigenous data includes hospitalisations of people identified as not Indigenous as well as those with a 'not stated' Indigenous status. **..** Not applicable.

Source: AIHW National Hospital Morbidity Database (unpublished); tables 3A.2.11 and 3A.2.15.

- In 2004-05, the age standardised rate of hospitalisation was higher for Indigenous males and females than non-Indigenous males and females for all chronic diseases listed in table 3.2.1, except for cancer.
- For all chronic diseases listed in table 3.2.1, except for all cancers, lung cancer and mental and behavioural disorders, the difference between the Indigenous and non-Indigenous hospitalisation rate was greater for females than males (that is, females had a higher rate ratio for each of these chronic diseases) (table 3.2.1).
- The greatest difference between the Indigenous and non-Indigenous hospitalisation rate was for end stage renal diseases; the rates for Indigenous males and females were 10.9 and 21.4 times as high as the rates for non-Indigenous males and females, respectively (table 3.2.1).
- Between 2001-02 and 2004-05, the ratio of Indigenous to non-Indigenous hospitalisation rates for males increased for chronic obstructive pulmonary diseases (3.7 to 4.9) and end stage renal disease (9.6 to 10.9). Hospitalisation

rate ratios for males decreased for diabetes (4.5 to 4.2), hypertension (5.4 to 3.6) and rheumatic heart disease (4.5 to 3.9) (tables 3A.2.8 to 3A.2.11).

- Between 2001-02 and 2004-05, the ratio of Indigenous to non-Indigenous hospitalisation rates for females decreased for diabetes (6.7 to 6.2), hypertension (4.7 to 4.2) and rheumatic heart diseases (7.7 to 6.8), and increased for ischaemic heart diseases (2.5 to 3.0) and end stage renal diseases (18.8 to 21.4) (tables 3A.2.12 to 3A.2.15).

3.3 Years 10 and 12 retention and attainment

Box 3.3.1 **Key messages**

- In 2006, 21 per cent of 15 year old Indigenous people were not participating in school education. Only 5 percent of non-Indigenous 15 year olds were not participating in school education (table 3A.3.2).
- In 2006, Indigenous students were half as likely as non-Indigenous students to continue to year 12 (figure 3.3.4).
- In 2004-05, a smaller proportion (22.1 per cent) of Indigenous people than non-Indigenous people (46.6 per cent) had completed year 12 (table 3A.3.18).
- The proportion of Indigenous students who achieved a year 12 certificate (after being enrolled in year 11 the previous year) changed little between 2001 and 2005 (tables 3A.3.11 and 3A.3.15).

There is persistent evidence showing the importance of finishing school rather than leaving at year 10 (Dusseldorp Skills Forum 2006). Young people who do not complete year 12 are less likely to be fully engaged in study or work than young people who do complete year 12. The fewer the years of schooling completed, the greater the likelihood of being less than fully engaged (Long 2006).

When the period of compulsory education ends the proportion of Indigenous children who no longer attend school is substantially higher than for non-Indigenous students, reducing their chances of academic and vocational success beyond the school years. Initiatives that have been successful in increasing Indigenous secondary school participation can be found in box 3.3.2.

A large body of research emphasises the pivotal role of education in reducing long term disadvantage of Indigenous peoples (ACER 2003, 2004a; Buckskin 2000; OECD 2004; WHO 1986). Improving academic performance and completion of year 12 are key components to improving the economic and social status of Indigenous people. School completion is linked to people's economic and social

wellbeing (and other positive health behaviours) and can also reduce the need for remedial education and social welfare services (Barnett 1993 and Reynolds et al. 2002).

Box 3.3.2 **'Things that work' — increasing secondary school participation and attainment**

***Deadly Vibe* magazine**

Deadly Vibe is a magazine for Indigenous students published by Vibe Australia (an Aboriginal media agency) with funding from the Australian Government. The magazine has been successful in improving educational outcomes. The Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) conducted an evaluation of *Deadly Vibe* and found that the magazine was having a positive impact. Some of the results include:

- 68 per cent of Indigenous students surveyed had been inspired to complete secondary school
- 43 per cent of Indigenous students surveyed were encouraged to go to school more often
- increased engagement with reading translated into improved literacy outcomes (ACER 2004b).

Cape York Higher Expectations Program and St Joseph's Indigenous fund

Non-government sector involvement in Indigenous education has been mainly aimed at secondary and tertiary levels in urban areas. The Cape York Institute's Higher Expectations Program (HEP) and St Joseph's Indigenous fund are two examples of non-government sector sponsorship of successful scholarship programs for children to board at private schools.

The HEP provides Indigenous children living in the Cape York region with access to secondary education at Queensland's most academically successful boarding schools. The HEP provides both financial assistance and ongoing support from a Program Administrator and Student Support Officer. The Program Administrator and Student Support Officer maintain regular contact with students, school staff, parents/guardians and home communities, and assist students and their families with transition and communication issues.

The HEP has gone from having six active scholarship participants in 2005 to 24 for 2006. Though only a fraction of Cape York students will participate in the HEP, their success (completion of secondary school and enrolment in tertiary studies) will greatly impact on Cape York educational statistics and provide Cape communities with a pool of talented and educated future leaders.

The St Joseph's Indigenous fund offers scholarships to Indigenous boys to attend St Joseph's College at Hunters Hill in Sydney. Started in 1998 with one year 7 student from Walgett, the program has more than 40 Indigenous children whose fees are paid

(Continued next page)

Box 3.3.2 (continued)

through assistance from the Australian Government, parents, the school and other donors. Six boys have already completed their higher school certificate and in 2005 one of the boys in year 10 improved his academic ranking from 51st to sixth and topped the class in English.

Both programs demonstrate that Indigenous youth have the capacity to excel and achieve when they have access to an extensive curriculum, quality facilities and specialist staff.

Clontarf Foundation, WA

In WA, the Clontarf Foundation engages and supports young Indigenous men to complete year 12 and then provides assistance to find employment. The Foundation establishes Football Academies in partnership with mainstream schools. In order to remain at the Football Academy, participants must consistently endeavour to attend school regularly, apply themselves to the study of appropriate courses and embrace the Academy's requirements for behaviour and self discipline. The first Football Academy was established in 2000 with 25 students, in 2006 there were six Football Academies and 424 students enrolled.

The Foundation's approach has been very successful, in 2005:

- attendance rates were better than 80 per cent
- year on year retention rates were over 90 per cent
- 75 per cent of school graduates found full time work (Clontarf Foundation 2006).

Remote secondary schooling in the NT

The 2005 Report included a case study on increasing access to secondary education for students in remote and very remote communities in the NT. High school accreditation was given to schools in the communities of Maningrida, Kalkaringi, Minyerri, Yirrkala and Elcho Island.

In 2003, three students at Kalkaringi completed year 12 in their home community. In 2004, there were five students at Kalkaringi studying years 11 and 12 and this increased to 24 students in 2005.

Maningrida began delivering secondary education in 2003, with four students completing the Northern Territory Certificate of Education (NTCE) in 2004. In 2006, 11 students from Maningrida completed the NTCE.

Across the NT, the number of Indigenous students completing the NTCE increased from 106 in 2005 to 130 in 2006. Of these, 30 Indigenous students completed the NTCE in remote communities.

In addition, where on-site secondary education is unavailable, the Northern Territory Open Education Centre (NTOEC) is working closely with small remote schools to support students undertaking secondary subjects. In 2006, 6 NTOEC students from remote communities achieved a NTCE.

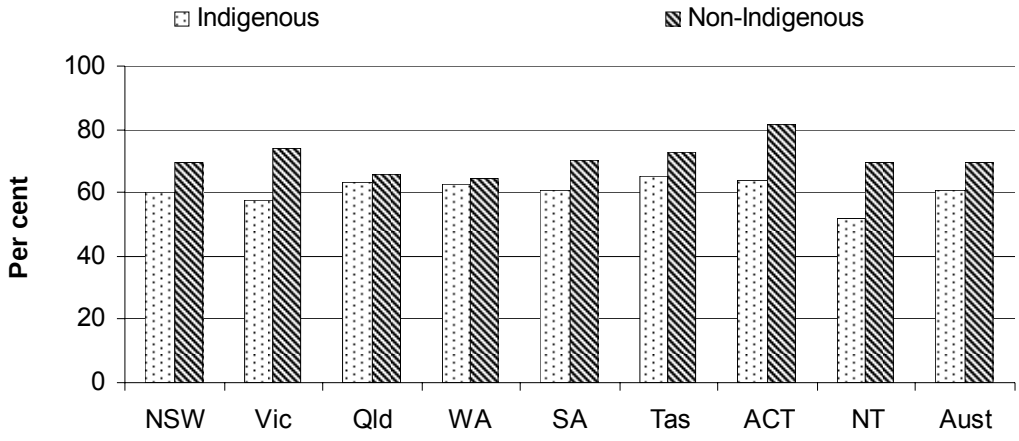
Health and education are intimately connected. If children have poor health outcomes early in life, then by the time they enter school they are unlikely to be able to concentrate fully or participate well socially (Zubrick et al. 2006). Preschool and early education programs have long been known to be associated with increasing levels of school completion and enhancing literacy and social skills necessary for school success (Ou and Reynolds 2004; Reynolds et al. 2001; Schweinhart 2005). The provision of early educational services to children at ages three or four may also provide an opportunity for early intervention to address developmental problems such as hearing, language and visual problems (see section 5.4 regarding hearing impediments).

There is evidence to suggest a connection between educational disadvantage and involvement in crime. An examination of the link between education and crime by Mackenzie (2002) concluded that improving school performance and retention reduced the risk of juvenile involvement in crime. A recent study on correlations between Indigenous contact with the justice system and social factors found that failure to complete year 12 has only a small effect on the risk of imprisonment but a significant effect on the likelihood of being charged (Weatherburn, Snowball and Hunter 2006). The authors of the study noted that their findings were consistent with empirical research but acknowledged that it is unclear whether the relationship between poor school performance and offending is actually causal or a reflection of some other factors (Maguin and Loeber 1996).

Secondary school participation and retention

Apparent retention rates estimate the percentage of full time students who progress through secondary school. These measures are under examination because apparent retention rates do not reflect the increasing number of students who enrol in school part time or choose to pursue their senior secondary studies or an equivalent vocational education and training qualification at TAFE. The method of calculation for apparent retention rates does not take into account impacts of migration and overseas students, and students repeating a year level or moving interstate (ABS 2006). Apparent retention rates do not reflect students who do not make the transition from primary to secondary school. Supplementary age-specific participation measures have been included in this section to provide a comprehensive picture of Indigenous education.

Figure 3.3.1 **School participation rates of full time students aged 12–19 years, all schools, 2006[a, b]**



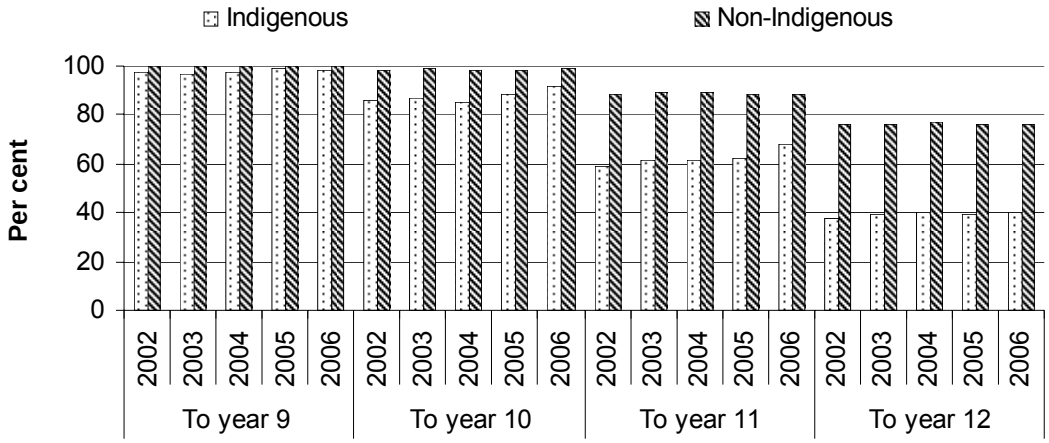
a The participation rate is the number of full time school students of a particular age, expressed as a proportion of the estimated resident population of the same age at June in 2006. **b** Calculations of rates for the Indigenous population are based on ABS Experimental Projections, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians (low series, 2001 base). There are no comparable population data for the non-Indigenous population. Calculations of rates for the non-Indigenous population are based on data derived by subtracting Indigenous population projections from total population estimates and should be used with care.

Source: ABS Schools Australia 2006 (unpublished); table 3A.3.2.

- Nationally in 2006, 60.5 per cent of Indigenous people aged 12–19 years were enrolled in schools compared with 69.7 per cent of non-Indigenous people (figure 3.3.1).
- The participation rate in 2006 for Indigenous and non-Indigenous people aged 12–14 years was generally over 90 per cent. High participation rates are to be expected because school education was compulsory in all states and territories for people between 6 and 15 years of age in 2006 (extending to 16 years of age in SA and Tasmania) (table 3A.3.2).
- The participation rate for Indigenous people 15 years old was 79.4 per cent compared with 95.2 per cent for non-Indigenous people (table 3A.3.2).
- In general, the age of students in year 12 is 17 years (ABS 2007). In 2006, 31.8 per cent of Indigenous people aged 17 years were participating in school education. For non-Indigenous people, 64.7 per cent of 17 year olds were participating in school education (table 3A.3.2).
- Table 3A.3.2 shows that for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, participation rates declined as students exceeded the compulsory school age.

School participation rates by states and territories and by age can be found in table 3A.3.2.

Figure 3.3.2 **Apparent retention rates of full time secondary school students, all schools[a]**

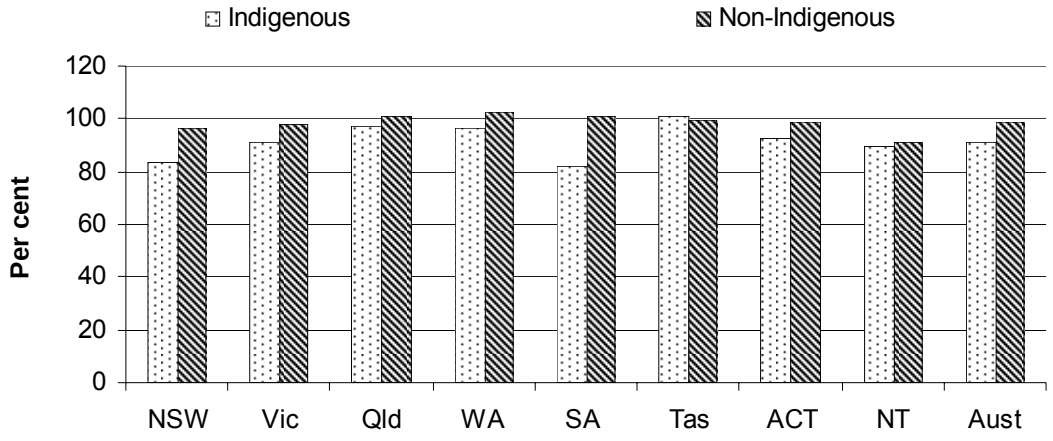


a The apparent retention rate is the percentage of full time students who continued to year 9, 10, 11 and 12 from respective cohort groups at the commencement of their secondary schooling (year 7/8). See notes to table 3A.3.3 for more detail.

Source: ABS Schools Australia 2006 (unpublished); table 3A.3.1.

- Apparent retention rates for Indigenous students from the beginning of secondary school to both year 10 and year 12 have increased over the last five years (figure 3.3.2). The rate to year 10 increased from 86.4 per cent in 2002 to 91.4 per cent in 2006 and the rate to year 12 increased from 38.0 per cent in 2002 to 40.1 per cent in 2006. These rates remain substantially lower than the rates for non-Indigenous students (table 3A.3.1).
- In 2006, the retention rate for Indigenous students decreased from 91.4 per cent in year 10 to 67.7 per cent in year 11 (a difference of 23.7 percentage points). By comparison, the rate for non-Indigenous students decreased less dramatically from year 10 to year 11 from 98.9 per cent to 88.8 per cent (a difference of 10.1 percentage points) (figure 3.3.2).
- The most significant differences between Indigenous and non-Indigenous retention rates were at the post compulsory years 11 and 12.

Figure 3.3.3 **Apparent retention rates from year 7 or 8 to year 10, of full time secondary students, all schools, 2006[a, b, c]**

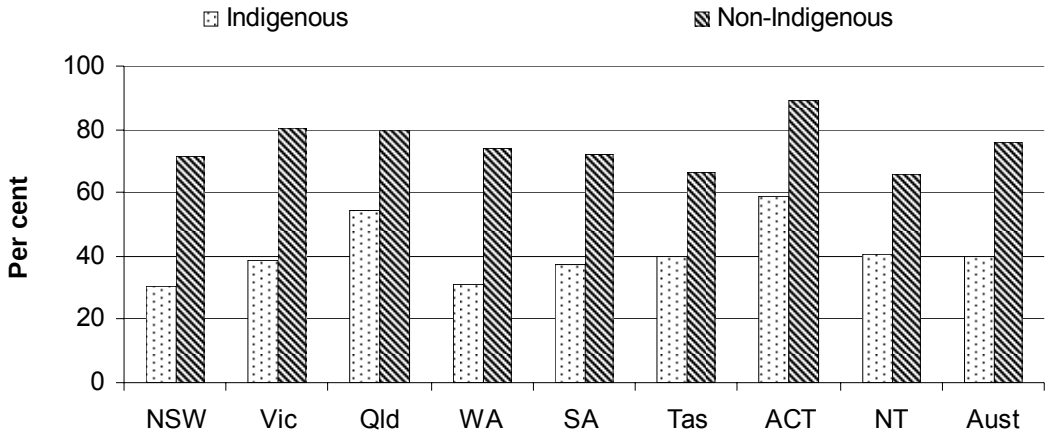


a The apparent retention rate is the percentage of full time students who continued to year 10 from respective cohort groups at the commencement of their secondary schooling (year 7/8). See notes to table 3A.3.3 for more detail. Retention rates are affected by factors that vary across jurisdictions. For this reason, variations in apparent retention rates over time within jurisdictions may be more useful than comparisons across jurisdictions. Retention rates can exceed 100 per cent for a variety of reasons, including student transfers between jurisdictions after the base year. **b** The exclusion of part time students from standard apparent retention rate calculations has implications for the interpretation of results for all jurisdictions, but particularly for SA, Tasmania and the NT where there is a high proportion of part time students. **c** Ungraded students are not included in the calculation of apparent retention rates. This exclusion has particular implications for the NT and as a result, Indigenous apparent retention rates may misrepresent the retention of students in secondary schooling in the NT.

Source: ABS Schools Australia 2006 (unpublished); table 3A.3.3.

- Nationally, the apparent retention rate to year 10 for Indigenous students was 91.4 per cent, or 7.5 percentage points lower than the rate for non-Indigenous students (98.9 per cent) (figure 3.3.3).
- Figure 3.3.3 shows that nationally in 2006, 8.6 per cent of Indigenous students who started secondary school had left school before year 10.

Figure 3.3.4 **Apparent retention rates from year 7 or 8 to year 12, of full time secondary students, all schools, 2006[a, b, c]**



a The apparent retention rate is the percentage of full time students who continued to year 12 from respective cohort groups at the commencement of their secondary schooling (year 7/8). See notes to table 3A.3.3 for more detail. **b** The exclusion of part time students from standard apparent retention rate calculations has implications for the interpretation of results for all jurisdictions, but particularly for SA, Tasmania and the NT where there is a high proportion of part time students. **c** Ungraded students are not included in the calculation of apparent retention rates. This exclusion has particular implications for the NT and as a result, Indigenous apparent retention rates may misrepresent the retention of students in secondary schooling in the NT.

Source: ABS Schools Australia 2006 (unpublished); table 3A.3.3.

- Nationally in 2006, Indigenous students were around half as likely to continue to year 12 as non-Indigenous students (figure 3.3.4).
- Retention rates for Indigenous students were considerably lower than those for non-Indigenous students in all jurisdictions.

Table 3A.3.8 shows apparent retention rates of full time students who continued to year 12 from year 10. Nationally, Indigenous students' retention from year 10 to year 12 in 2006 was 46.7 per cent compared with 77.0 per cent for non-Indigenous students.

Secondary school attainment

Educational attainment is the ability to complete the year and achieve graduation. Evidence from a range of sources indicates that successful completion of year 12 is necessary if young people are to have access to the full range of further education, training, employment and life chances consistent with their abilities (ACER 2004a; OECD 2005). This Report derived attainment data from the Indigenous Education Strategic Initiatives Programme (IESIP) performance reports. The IESIP

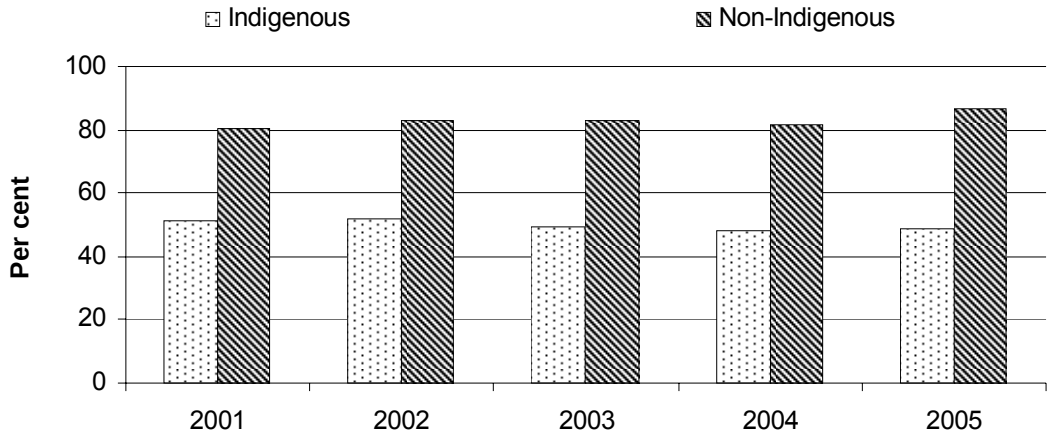
performance reports collected data on students achieving a year 12 certificate in 2005 as a proportion of students who were enrolled in year 11 in 2004.

Data on year 10 attainment are problematic because there is no acknowledged year 10 qualification in some jurisdictions. Jurisdictions that do issue year 10 certificates generally only require reasonable school attendance rather than demonstrated academic achievement.

The ABS 2004-05 NATSIHS and the ABS 2004-05 NHS collected information on the highest level of schooling completed. An analysis of these data show that:

- A smaller proportion (22.1 per cent) of Indigenous people than non-Indigenous people had completed year 12 (46.6 per cent) (table 3A.3.18)
- Indigenous people who had completed year 12 were less likely to be unemployed (9.5 per cent) than those who had only completed year 9 or below (24.3 per cent) (table 3A.3.19).

Figure 3.3.5 **Students who achieved a year 12 certificate (as a proportion of students who were enrolled in year 11 in the previous year), government and Catholic systems, 2001–2005**[a, b, c]



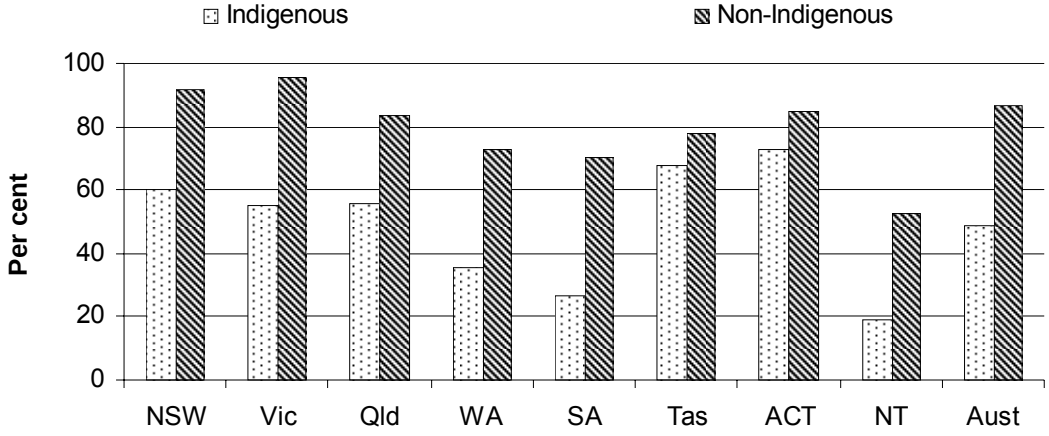
[a] The requirements for the awarding of a year 12 certificate vary in each jurisdiction. [b] Enrolled in year 11 at the time of the annual national school census in August the previous year. [c] Care needs to be taken when comparing attainment outcomes for Indigenous students over the period 2001–2005 because of the small number of Indigenous students represented.

Source: Department of Education, Science and Training (unpublished); tables 3A.3.11–15.

- Many Indigenous students leave school before completing year 10, and of those who enter senior secondary years, results show that they are less likely to obtain a year 12 certificate than their non-Indigenous counterparts (figure 3.3.5). Figure 3.3.2 showed that large proportions of Indigenous students leave school between years 10 and 11 and between years 11 and 12.

- Nationally, the proportion of Indigenous students who achieved a year 12 certificate (as a proportion of students who were enrolled in year 11 in the previous year), decreased from 51.1 per cent in 2001 to 48.7 per cent in 2005. By comparison, the proportion of non-Indigenous students increased from 80.3 per cent in 2001 to 86.8 per cent in 2005 (tables 3A.3.11–15).
- Figure 3.3.5 shows that between 2001 and 2005 the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students who achieved a year 12 certificate (after being enrolled in year 11 the previous year) increased by 8.9 percentage points.
- Indigenous students who obtain a year 12 certificate are less likely than non-Indigenous students to gain a Universities Admissions Index[3] (UAI) (DEST 2002, 2005, 2006).
- Indigenous students who obtain a UAI are less likely than non-Indigenous students to gain a UAI at a level which will enable admission to university (DEST 2002, 2005, 2006).
- Indigenous students are more likely to gain a vocational educational qualification while completing the year 12 certificate than non-Indigenous students (DEST 2002, 2005, 2006).

Figure 3.3.6 **Students who achieved a year 12 certificate in 2005 (as a proportion of students who were enrolled in year 11 in the previous year), government and Catholic systems[a, b]**



a The requirements for the awarding of a year 12 certificate vary in each jurisdiction. **b** Enrolled in year 11 at the time of the annual national school census in August the previous year.

Source: Department of Education, Science and Training (unpublished); table 3A.3.11.

3 Eligibility for admission to a public university in Australia on the basis of merit is determined in each State and Territory through the use of a score – the UAI. Calculating the UAI varies in each State and Territory.

- Nationally, the proportion of Indigenous students who were enrolled in year 11 in 2004 and attained a year 12 certificate in 2005 was 48.7 per cent compared with 86.8 per cent for non-Indigenous students (table 3A.3.11).
- The proportions of Indigenous students who achieved a year 12 certificate in 2005 (after commencing year 11 the previous year) varied significantly across states and territories (figure 3.3.6).
- Between 2001 and 2005, the number of Indigenous students who attained a year 12 certificate increased in all states and territories (tables 3A.3.11 and 3A.3.15).

3.4 Post secondary education — participation and attainment

Box 3.4.1 **Key messages**

- Although not strictly comparable, between 1994 and 2004-05, the proportion of Indigenous people participating in post secondary education increased from 5.0 per cent to 11.4 per cent (table 3A.4.2).
- The proportion of Indigenous people with a qualification of certificate level 3 or above increased from 8.3 per cent in 1994 to 20.8 per cent in 2004-05 (figure 3.4.3).
- In 2004-05, non-Indigenous people were more than twice as likely as Indigenous people to have completed a post secondary qualification of certificate level 3 or above (3A.4.10).
- Higher education success rates (between 2001 and 2004) and TAFE pass rates (between 2002 and 2005) increased for Indigenous students (figures 3.4.4 and 3.4.5).

Post secondary education may lead to more than just better employment prospects and higher incomes. Section 7.5 shows that people with a skilled vocational qualification or higher (equivalent to certificate 3 or higher) are more likely to be employed than those without such qualifications. There are also many potential social effects of an individual's education. These include:

- the schooling of their children — parental education is a positive influence on student performance (OECD 2004; Wolfe and Haveman 2001; Zubrick et al. 2006)
- efficiency of their choices — making the most of the opportunities on offer throughout life (Wolfe and Haveman 2001; Zubrick et al. 2006)

- their health outcomes and their children's health outcomes — accessing health care as required assists in ensuring healthy successive generations (Wolfe and Haveman 2001; Zubrick et al. 2006).

Post secondary education includes both vocational education and training (VET) at institutions such as TAFE colleges, and higher education at universities. Research suggests that young people who are not participating full time in education, training, work or some combination of these activities are more likely to have difficulty in making a transition to full time employment by their mid-20s (Dusseldorp Skills Forum 2006; Marks 2006).

Research undertaken by the Dusseldorp Skills Forum (2006) found that almost as many school leavers were studying at TAFE as at university. TAFE is a particularly important destination for early school leavers (Dusseldorp Skills Forum 2006). Indigenous people, especially young Indigenous people, participate in VET at rates above those for non-Indigenous people (Saunders et al. 2003). Young Indigenous people may be more likely to participate in VET because year 12 Indigenous students are less likely than non-Indigenous students to attain a sufficiently high score to enable admission to university (see section 3.3)[4].

VET provides an opportunity for Indigenous people to attain post school qualifications and improve their employment prospects. In addition, participation in VET may improve self-esteem, literacy and increase confidence (Gelade and Stehlik 2004; O'Callaghan 2005; NCVER 2005).

However, Indigenous VET students do not achieve the same outcomes as their non-Indigenous counterparts. Indigenous VET students tend to study lower level and shorter courses compared with non-Indigenous students (ANTA 2005; Buckskin 2001; Saunders et al. 2003). In 2005, the proportion of Indigenous students in diploma or higher courses was 4.2 per cent compared with 38.3 per cent of other full-time students (NCVER 2006a).

Employment outcomes from VET remain lower for Indigenous students compared with other students (ANTA 2005; Buckskin 2001; NCVER 2006b; O'Callaghan 2005; Saunders et al. 2003). In 2006, 66.1 per cent of Indigenous students were employed after VET training compared with 80.0 per cent of non-Indigenous students (NCVER 2006b).

Locality can influence Indigenous peoples' participation in post secondary education (ACER 2002). There is evidence that Indigenous people in regional and

4 Eligibility for admission to a public university in Australia on the basis of merit is determined in each State and Territory through the use of a score – the Universities Admissions Index (UAI). Calculating the UAI varies in each State and Territory.

remote areas are substantially less likely to participate in higher education than Indigenous people in major cities. In 2004-05, the proportion of Indigenous people currently participating in post secondary education in major cities was 14.8 per cent compared with 7.3 per cent in remote areas (table 3A.4.4).

Although Indigenous people are less likely to participate in post secondary education compared to non-Indigenous people, several programs have been successful in preparing Indigenous students for post secondary education (box 3.4.2).

Box 3.4.2 **'Things that work' — increasing post secondary education attainment**

Construction skills and work readiness training, Robinvale, Victoria

The Australian Master Bricklayers Association (AMBA) and the Victorian Department of Education worked in partnership to provide construction skills and work readiness training to unemployed Indigenous people living in Robinvale.

Fifteen people began the eight week course in 2006 and 8 completed the course and were awarded either a Certificate I in General Construction or statements of attainment. Four participants gained full-time employment since completing the course. Course participants demonstrated high-level skills and aptitude and, with the right motivation and support, are moving into successful careers in a range of trades in the building and construction industry.

Vocational training for prisoners in Queensland

A training culture is emerging in many prisons and there have been positive results for Indigenous prisoners. In Queensland, being involved in a vocational education program before initial release is associated with a 30 per cent decrease in the chance of offenders returning to custody (O'Callaghan 2005; Callan and Gardner 2005).

Construction skills for Indigenous people in NSW

The 2005 Report included an example of a program specifically designed for unemployed Indigenous people interested in working in the building and construction industry. The program was developed in partnership between the Construction Forestry Mining and Energy Union and TAFE NSW and has been operating since 2004. Run over six to eight weeks, the program leads to relevant licences and tickets in the industry. In 2006 two programs were delivered. These programs had a retention rate of around 80 per cent and approximately 40 per cent of program participants were employed in the construction industry.

Although participation itself may have some benefits, the major impact on improved outcomes for Indigenous people results from attainment of a qualification or completion of a course of study. This indicator uses survey data to examine the

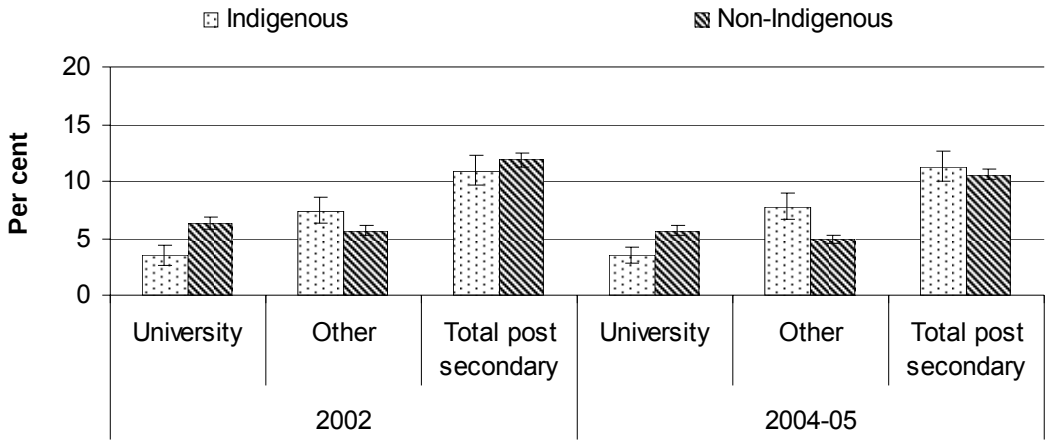
extent to which people over 18 years (1) participate in post secondary education and (2) have attained a particular level of qualification.

The broad types of courses Indigenous people are undertaking at higher education institutions along with load pass rates for VET courses and success rates for higher education are also examined.

Post secondary participation

ABS surveys, including the 1994 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey (NATSIS), 2002 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey (NATSISS), 2002 General Social Survey (GSS), 2004-05 NATSIHS and the 2004-05 NHS, provide information on the proportion of people who had left school and were attending a technical or further educational institution (including TAFE colleges, business colleges and industry skills centres), or university or other higher educational institutions.

Figure 3.4.1 **Participation in post secondary education by persons aged 18 years and over, 2002 and 2004-05[a, b]**



a Error bars represent 95 per cent confidence intervals around each estimate (see chapter 2 for more information). **b** Other includes TAFE, technical college, business college, industry skills centre.

Source: ABS 2002 NATSISS (unpublished); ABS 2002 GSS (unpublished); ABS 2004-05 NHS and NATSIHS (unpublished); table 3A.4.1.

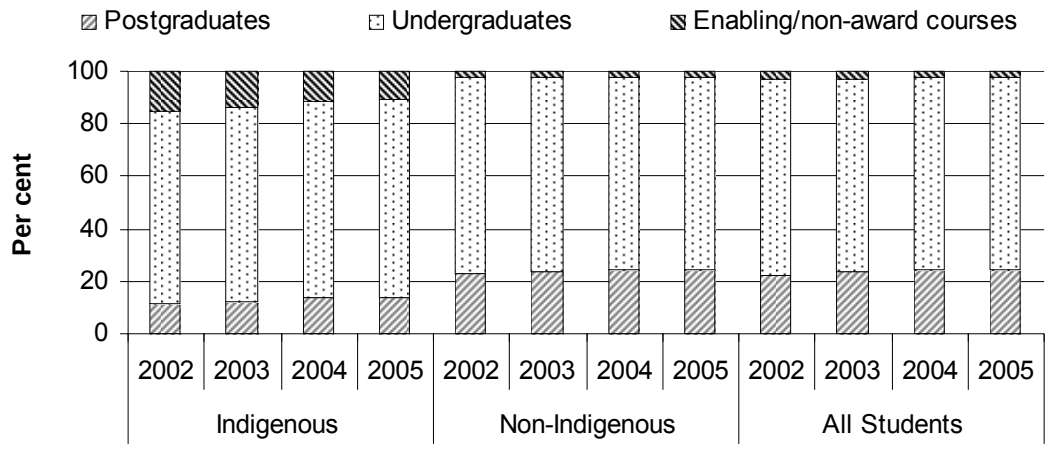
- Figure 3.4.1 shows that there was no significant change in participation in post secondary education for Indigenous people between 2002 and 2004-05.
- Nationally in 2004-05, non-Indigenous people were 1.6 times as likely as Indigenous people to attend a university, while Indigenous people were more

likely to attend a TAFE, technical college, business college or industry skills centre (table 3A.4.1).

- Although not strictly comparable, the proportion of Indigenous people participating in post secondary education increased from 5.0 per cent in 1994 to 11.4 per cent 2004-05 (table 3A.4.2).

More data on post secondary participation across states and territories, by age, sex and remoteness areas can be found in tables 3A.4.1–5.

Figure 3.4.2 **Post secondary participation at higher education institutions, 2002–2005**



Source: DEST higher education statistics collection (unpublished); table 3A.4.6–9.

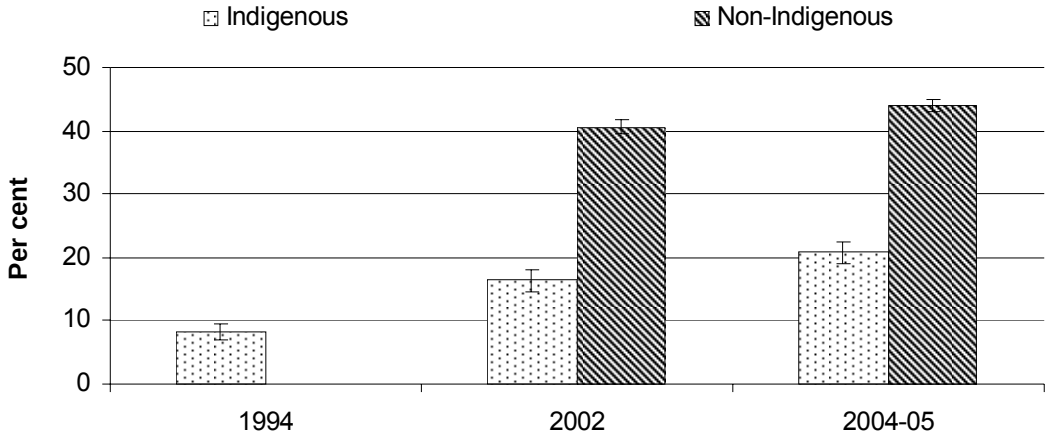
- Figure 3.4.2 shows that Indigenous students were more likely to be enrolled in enabling and non-award courses, and less likely to be enrolled in postgraduate courses, than non-Indigenous students.
- Between 2002 and 2005, the proportion of Indigenous students enrolled in enabling or non-award courses decreased from 15.2 per cent to 10.4 per cent while the proportions enrolled in undergraduate and postgraduate courses increased (73.2 per cent to 75.8 per cent and 11.6 per cent to 13.8 per cent, respectively) (tables 3A.4.6–9).

More data on the types of courses Indigenous people are undertaking by State and Territory can be found in tables 3A.4.6–9.

Post secondary attainment

One measure of attainment is the proportion of the population that have completed a particular level of qualification. Data from the ABS 1994 NATSIS, 2002 NATSISS, 2002 GSS, 2004-05 NATSIHS and 2004-05 NHS on the proportion of people aged 18 years and over who indicated that their highest level of qualification completed was a level 3 certificate or above (that is, post graduate degree, graduate diploma or certificate, bachelor degree, advanced diploma, diploma, and certificate levels 3 and 4) are used to indicate educational attainment.

Figure 3.4.3 **Post secondary attainment of certificate level 3 or above by persons aged 18 years and over, 1994, 2002, 2004-05[a, b, c]**



[a] Error bars represent 95 per cent confidence intervals around each estimate (see chapter 2 for more information). [b] There is no comparable dataset for non-Indigenous post secondary attainment for 1994. [c] Care should be taken when analysing trends between 1994, 2002 and 2004-05 because education data were collected on a different basis.

Source: ABS 1994 NATSIS (unpublished); ABS 2002 NATSISS (unpublished); ABS 2002 GSS (unpublished); ABS 2004-05 NHS and NATSIHS (unpublished); tables 3A.4.10 and 11.

- Although not strictly comparable, between 1994 and 2004-05, the proportion of Indigenous people with a certificate level 3 or above increased from 8.3 per cent to 20.8 per cent (figure 3.4.3).
- In 2002 and 2004-05, non-Indigenous people were more than twice as likely as Indigenous people to have completed a post secondary qualification of certificate level 3 or above (3A.4.10).
- In 2004-05, for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, a higher proportion of people in non-remote areas had attained a post secondary qualification of certificate level 3 or above (25.0 per cent and 44.0 per cent, respectively)

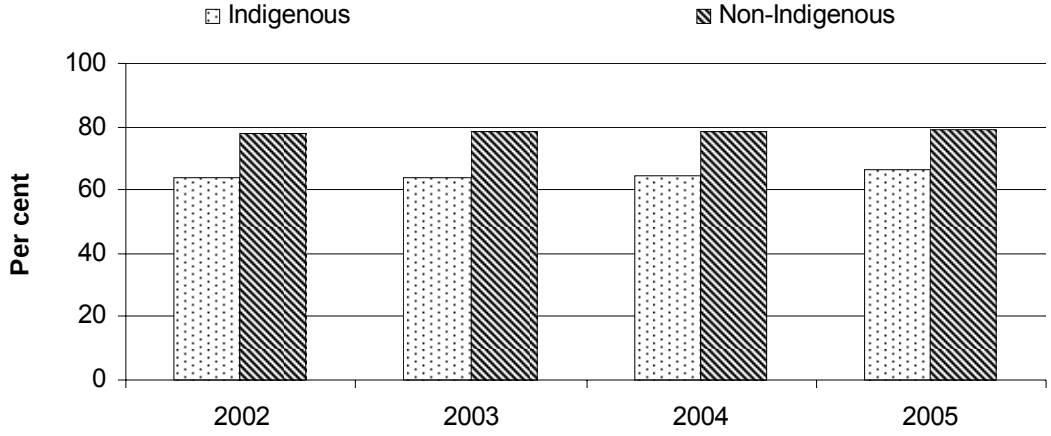
compared with people in remote areas (14.5 per cent and 34.3 per cent, respectively)[5] (table 3A.4.14).

More data on post secondary attainment by State and Territory, age and remoteness areas can be found in tables 3A.4.12–15.

Another measure of attainment is the extent to which people complete or pass the course they are undertaking. This is known in the VET system as the load pass rate and in the higher education system as the success rate. There is a consistent and marked difference in VET load pass rates by age, with younger Indigenous students (15−19 years) having the lowest load pass rates and older Indigenous students the highest (ANTA 2005).

The VET load pass rate indicates the extent to which students pass assessment in an assessable module or unit of competency. Load pass rates are calculated as the ratio of hours attributed to students who passed assessment in an assessable module or unit of competency to all students who were assessed and either passed, failed or withdrew. The calculation is based on the nominal hours supervised for each assessable module or unit of competency. Care needs to be taken in comparing data because average module durations and standards of competencies achieved by students vary across jurisdictions.

Figure 3.4.4 **VET load pass rate, 2002–2005**



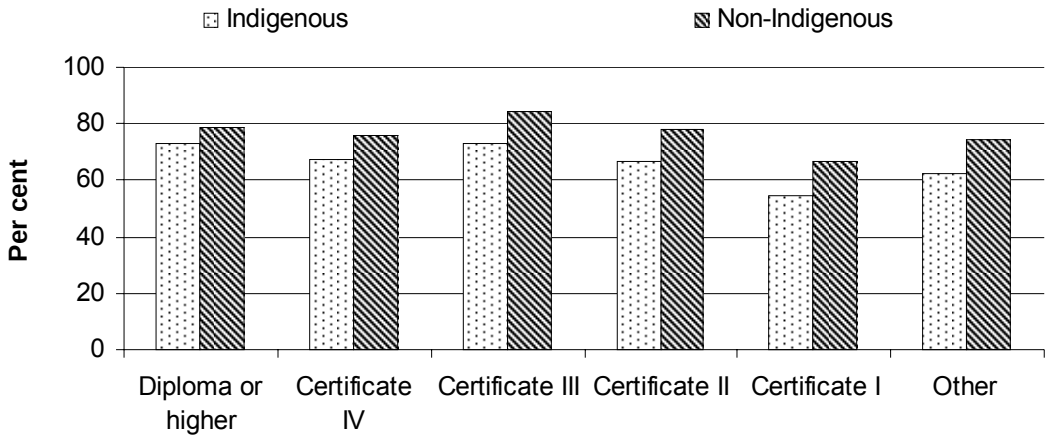
Source: National 2002–2005 VET provider collections (unpublished); table 3A.4.17.

5 Non-remote includes major cities and inner and outer regional areas. Remote includes remote and very remote areas. See glossary for definitions of remoteness areas.

- In 2005, the national load pass rate for Indigenous students (66.6 per cent) was lower than the national load pass rate for non-Indigenous students (79.2 per cent) (figure 3.4.4).
- In 2002 there was 13.9 percentage points difference between Indigenous and non-Indigenous VET load pass rates, in 2005 the gap was 12.6 percentage points.
- The load pass rate for Indigenous students increased nationally from 63.8 per cent in 2002 to 66.6 per cent in 2005. Over the same period, the load pass rate for non-Indigenous students also increased, from 77.7 per cent to 79.2 per cent (table 3A.4.17).

The load pass rates for Indigenous and non-Indigenous students by State and Territory and remoteness areas can be found in tables 3A.4.16 and 17.

Figure 3.4.5 **VET load pass rate by course level, 2005[a]**



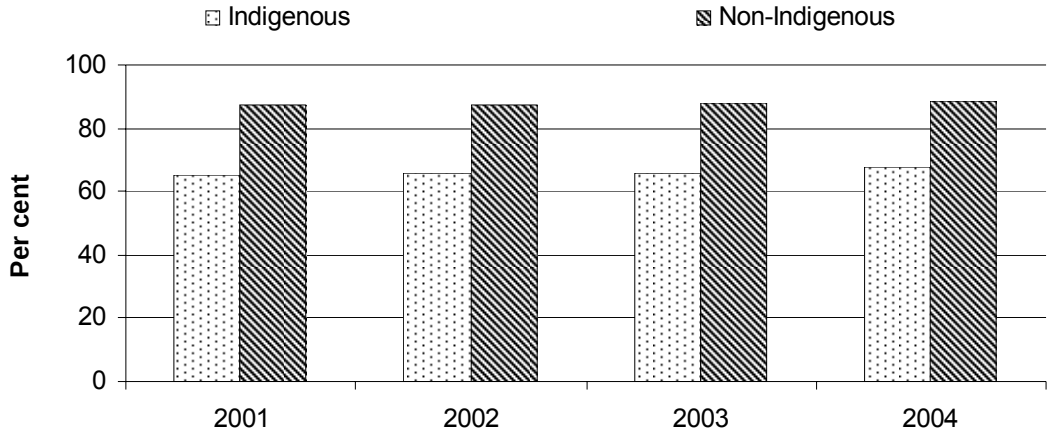
a Other includes senior secondary education and other education (bridging and enabling courses). Does not include non-award courses and individual subjects (no qualification).

Source: National 2002–2005 VET provider collections (unpublished); table 3A.4.18.

- In 2005, the highest national load pass rates achieved by Indigenous students were in the groups who undertook training at certificate level 3 (72.9 per cent) and diploma or higher (72.8 per cent) (figure 3.4.5).
- Between 2002 and 2005 there was an increase in load pass rates for all course levels for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous students (table 3A.4.18).

Although the measures are based on different calculations, the success rate for higher educational institutions shows similar results to the load pass rate for VET. The success rate is the proportion of units passed within a year compared with the total units enrolled.

Figure 3.4.6 **Higher education success rate, 2001–2004[a]**



a Success is defined as the student progress rate, which is the proportion of units passed within a year compared with the total units enrolled.

Source: DEST Selected Higher Education Statistics (unpublished); tables 3A.4.19–22.

- Figure 3.4.6 shows that higher education success rates are lower for Indigenous students than non-Indigenous students.
- In 2001 there was a 22.2 percentage points gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students success rates. In 2004, the gap was 21.0 percentage points (tables 3A.4.19–22).
- The success rate for Indigenous students increased from 65.1 per cent in 2001 to 67.5 per cent in 2004. For non-Indigenous students the success rate also increased, from 87.3 per cent to 88.5 per cent.

3.5 Labour force participation and unemployment

Box 3.5.1 **Key messages**

- In 2004-05, after adjusting for age differences:
  - the labour force participation rate for Indigenous people (58.5 per cent) was about three quarters of that for non-Indigenous people (78.1 per cent) (figure 3.5.3)
  - the unemployment rate for Indigenous people (12.9 per cent) was about 3 times the rate for non-Indigenous people (4.4 per cent) (figure 3.5.6).
- From 1994 to 2004-05:
  - the participation rate for Indigenous women increased from 41.5 per cent to 52.6 per cent. The rate for Indigenous men remained constant (figure 3.5.5)
  - the Indigenous unemployment rate fell from 30.0 per cent to 12.8 per cent. The unemployment rate fell for both men and women (figure 3.5.9)
  - CDEP participation rates remained stable (figure 3.5.2). CDEP participation significantly reduces recorded Indigenous unemployment rates and increases recorded labour force participation rates, particularly in remote areas.

Labour force participation and unemployment has been chosen as a headline indicator because labour market outcomes are directly related to people's living standard and many aspects of their wellbeing. Being employed leads to improved income for families and communities (which in turn has a positive influence on health and the education of children). It also enhances self-esteem, increases opportunities for self development, influences interaction at the family and community levels and reduces social alienation. Employment is discussed in more detail in chapter 11. The focus of this section is the extent to which people are participating in the labour force or are unemployed.

The labour force is the most widely used measure of the economically active population or the formal supply of labour.

The labour force 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 people:

- 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))
- the unemployed (people who are without work, but are actively looking for work and available to start work within four weeks).

The remainder of the population are not in the labour force. There are many reasons why people may not be in the labour force. They may not wish or be able to work because they are in education, retired, caring for family members, have a disability or poor health or have some other means of financial support. Alternatively, they could be discouraged jobseekers who would like work but are not actively looking for work. People may become discouraged jobseekers because they believe that there is not a suitable job in their area, the costs of searching are too great, or they believe that they do not have the appropriate skills or qualifications (Hunter and Gray 1999). It is likely that the extent of unemployment, particularly long term unemployment, is underestimated because of discouraged jobseekers. After people have been unemployed for long periods of time they are more likely to drop out of the labour force. Indigenous people may also be engaged in activities outside of the labour force, through participation in traditional or customary activities, or occupied with activities that often generate income such as the production of Indigenous art but which are not always recorded as employment (Altman et al. 2006).

Data for the labour force participation and unemployment indicator in this Report are from several ABS surveys, including the 2004-05 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey (NATSIHS) and the 2004-05 National Health Survey (NHS), 2002 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey (NATSISS), 2002 General Social Survey (GSS) and the 1994 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey (NATSIS).

Most 2004-05 data for this indicator are reported for the population aged 15 to 64 years, as this is used by the ABS in measuring the economic participation of a population. The age of 15 years is the lowest practical limit above the compulsory schooling age of young people at which it is feasible to measure the participation of young people in economic activity with acceptable accuracy. The age of 64 years is when most people have left the workforce for retirement. Data for people aged 18 to 64 years are also reported to compare outcomes in 2004-05 with those in 1994 and 2002.

When comparing the Indigenous and non-Indigenous labour force in this Report, data are age standardised to take account of the differing age structures of the Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations. Where data by age group are being compared, adjustment for the differing age structures is not required.

The labour force participation and unemployment data used in this chapter are influenced by the Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP) program. The CDEP program is an Australian Government funded initiative that provides activities for unemployed Indigenous people to develop work skills and move into employment. The original aim of the CDEP scheme, when introduced in 1977, was to create local employment opportunities in remote Indigenous

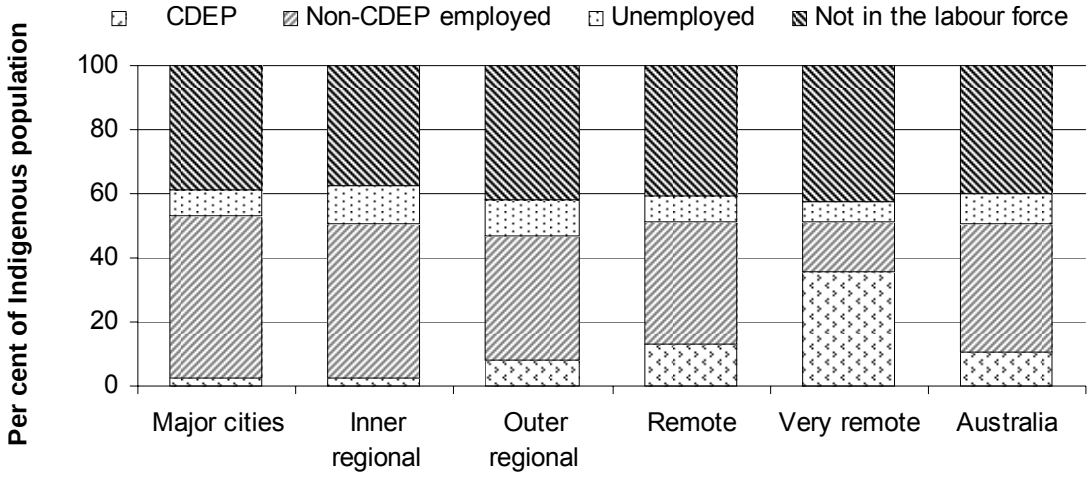
communities where the labour market might not otherwise offer employment. The scheme was later extended to all remoteness areas, but most CDEP organisations continued to be located in regional and remote areas of Australia. Recently announced changes by the Australian Government will remove funding for CDEP in urban and regional centres and the programme will operate once again in remote and limited regional areas only.

Since July 2004, the Australian Government has made changes to CDEP to increase movement of participants into other employment. Changes since 1 July 2006 include the introduction of a youth participant rate to encourage young Indigenous people to complete education. Other changes limited the duration of entitlement to CDEP for new participants in urban and regional centres and required participants in these areas to register as job seekers with a Job Network employment provider. Where no Job Network is available (in many remote areas), CDEP participants must develop a 'participation plan' to move into other employment. More changes from 1 July 2007 will remove funding for CDEP employment in urban and major regional centres with strong employment opportunities. This funding will instead be directed to additional Structured Training and Employment Project (STEP) programs to assist job seekers move into work (DEST 2006). The more substantial changes to CDEP occurred after the 2004-05 NATSIHS was conducted and are not reflected in the data in this Report.

For statistical purposes the ABS classifies participants in CDEP as employed rather than as unemployed or not in the labour force, consequently the employment rate for Indigenous people may be overstated. It is important to consider CDEP when analysing the labour force and unemployment data because:

- CDEP has elements of both unemployment and employment, especially in remote and very remote areas. Some CDEP activities are similar to those undertaken by participants in Work for the Dole, while other activities are essential roles in municipal services, health care, community services, education and other sectors that would be considered employment in mainstream communities and organisations.
- CDEP participant payments are received in place of an income support payment such as NewStart Allowance for which recipients are considered unemployed.

Figure 3.5.1 **CDEP participation, unemployment and labour force participation for Indigenous people aged 15 to 64 years, 2004-05[a]**



a The ABS advise that CDEP participation data in the figure are not directly comparable with those reported in the 2005 Report as different interview questions were used in the 2002 NATSISS and the 2004-05 NATSIHS.

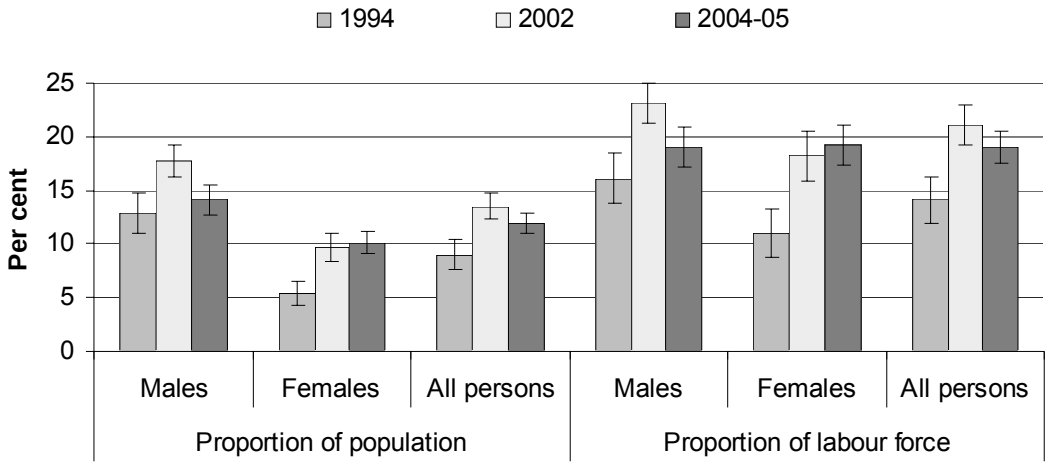
Source: ABS NATSIHS 2004-05 (unpublished); table 3A.5.4.

Nationally in 2004-05 there were over 30 000 Indigenous CDEP participants.[6]

- CDEP participation increased with geographic remoteness, ranging from 2.2 per cent of the Indigenous population in major cities to 35.6 per cent in very remote areas (figure 3.5.1).
- Non-CDEP employment declined with increasing remoteness from 50.9 per cent in major cities to 15.8 per cent in very remote areas (figure 3.5.1) (see detailed discussion of Indigenous employment in chapter 11.).
- The NT had the highest CDEP participation rate (23.9 per cent), with substantial CDEP participation rates also in WA and SA (20.7 and 12.5 per cent respectively) (table 3A.5.5).

6 The 2004-05 NATSIHS estimated 30 600 Indigenous people on CDEP in 2004-05, which was much lower than records in administrative data, for example, DEWR (2005) reported 34 775 CDEP participants as at 30 June 2005.

Figure 3.5.2 **CDEP participation, Indigenous people aged 18–64 years**[a, b, c, d]



[a] Data are not age standardised. [b] Percentages represent proportions of total Indigenous people and total Indigenous labour force.[c] Error bars represent 95 per cent confidence intervals around each estimate (see chapter 2 for more information). [d] The ABS advises that CDEP participation data for 1994 and 2002 are not directly comparable with 2004-05 data as different interview questions were used in the 2005 NATSIHS.

Source: ABS NATSIHS 2004-05 (unpublished); ABS NATSISS 2002 (unpublished); ABS NATSIS 1994 (unpublished); table 3A.5.9.

For the period 1994 to 2004-05:

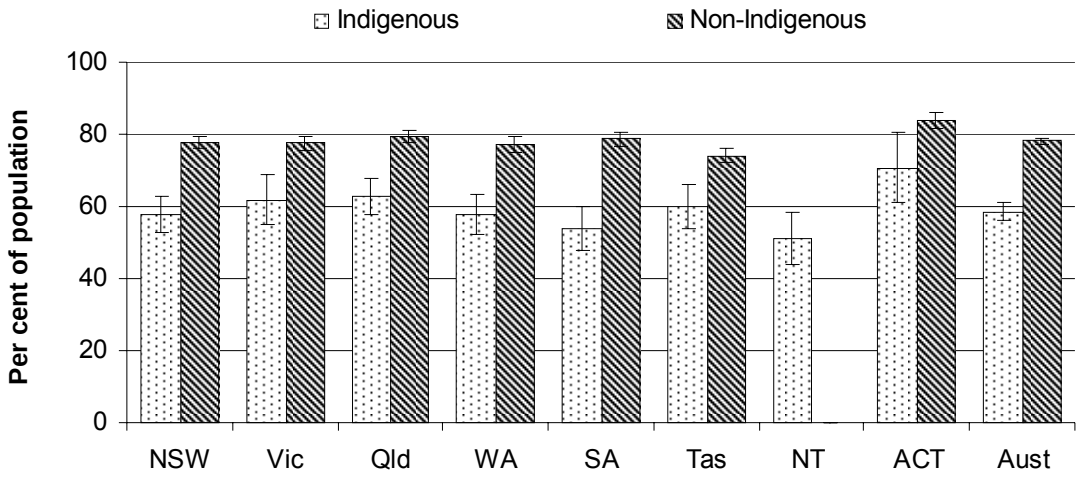
- The CDEP participation rate for Indigenous people remained fairly stable as a proportion of the total adult Indigenous population and as a proportion of the total Indigenous labour force (figure 3.5.2).
- Female CDEP participation, as a proportion of the Indigenous labour force, increased from 11.0 per cent in 1994 to 19.2 per cent in 2004-05. However, this should be treated with caution as the 1994 data are not directly comparable with data for 2002 and 2004-05. CDEP participation remained fairly constant for males (figure 3.5.2).
- Numbers of CDEP participants (from administrative data) for this time period were:
  - 24 098 participants in 1993-94 (ATSIC 1994)
  - 35 182 participants in 2002-03 (ATSIC 2003)
  - 34 775 participants as at 30 June 2005 (DEWR 2005).

Labour force participation

The labour force participation rates used in this section are calculated as the number of people who are employed or are available for work (the labour force), in the age group of interest, divided by the population in that age group.

In general, labour force participation varies through life cycle stages, initially increasing with age as young people move from education and training (often combined with part-time work) into full-time jobs, remaining relatively high during prime working ages, and then declining towards retirement.

Figure 3.5.3 **Age standardised labour force participation as a proportion of the population aged 15 to 64 years, 2004-05[a, b]**



a The sample size in the NT was considered too small to produce reliable estimates for the NT in the ABS 2004-05 NHS, but NT records in the survey have been attributed appropriately to national estimates. **b** Error bars represent 95 per cent confidence intervals around each estimate (see chapter 2 for more information).

Source: ABS 2004-05 NATSIHS and NHS (unpublished); table 3A.5.1.

In 2004-05, after taking into account the different age structures of the Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations:

- Nationally, Indigenous people aged 15 to 64 years had a labour force participation rate of 58.5 per cent compared to 78.1 per cent for non-Indigenous people (figure 3.5.3).
- Labour force participation rates for Indigenous people were lower than those for non-Indigenous people in all jurisdictions for which data were available (figure 3.5.3).

Table 3.5.1 **Labour force participation as a proportion of the population aged 15 to 64 years, 2004-05 (per cent)**

	Indigenous			*Non-Indigenous*		
	Males	*Females*	*Persons*	*Males*	*Females*	*Persons*
15–24	61.3*	50.4*	55.8	75.1*	74.5*	74.8
25–34	83.3	52.1	66.7	94.7	75.1	84.8
35–44	80.7	59.6	69.3	93.5	74.6	84.0
45–54	68.5	52.3	60.0	90.1	75.3	82.7
55–64	30.9*	28.5*	29.6	66.9	45.2	56.1
Total 15–64	69.4	51.4	60.0	85.0	70.1	77.6
AS total 15 years	67.8	50.2	58.5	85.6	70.7	78.1

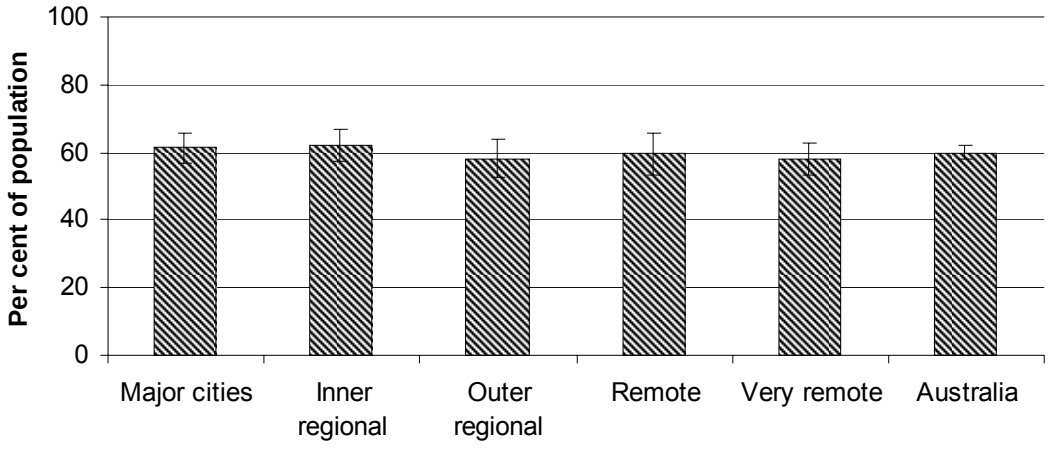
AS = age standardised. * indicates that the difference between data for males and females within the Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations is not statistically significant.

Source: ABS 2004-05 NATSIHS and NHS (unpublished); table 3A.5.1.

In 2004-05:

- Labour force participation rates for Indigenous people were lower than those for non-Indigenous people for both sexes and in all age groups (table 3.5.1).
- Among both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, females were less likely to participate in the labour force than males; and the labour force participation rate was markedly lower for those aged 55 to 64 years than for the younger age groups (table 3.5.1).

Figure 3.5.4 **Labour force participation as a proportion of the Indigenous population aged 15 to 64 years, by remoteness, 2004-05[a, b]**

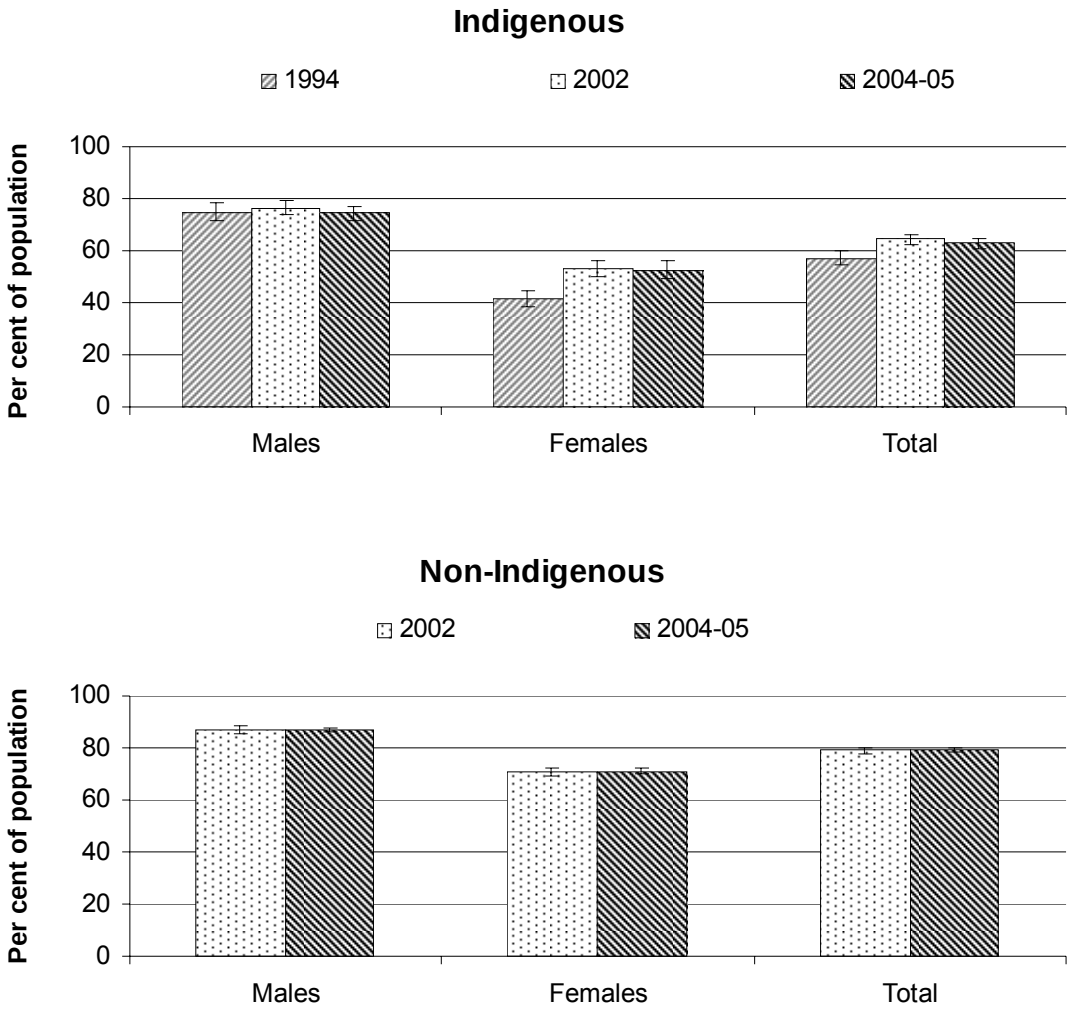


[a] Data are not age standardised. [b] Error bars represent 95 per cent confidence intervals around each estimate (see chapter 2 for more information).

Source: ABS 2004-05 NATSIHS (unpublished); table 3A.5.7.

- There was little variation in the labour force participation rate for Indigenous people across remoteness areas (figure 3.5.4). (The actual national rate in figure 3.5.4 (60.0 per cent) is higher than the age standardised national rate shown in figure 3.5.3 (58.5 per cent)).
- In remote and very remote areas, 13.0 per cent and 35.6 per cent, respectively, of Indigenous people in the labour force participated in CDEP (figure 3.5.1).

Figure 3.5.5 **Labour force participation as a proportion of the population aged 18 to 64 years[a, b, c]**



a Data are not age standardised. **b** Non-Indigenous data for 1994 are not available on a comparable basis with those for 2002 and 2004-05. **c** Error bars represent 95 per cent confidence intervals around each estimate (see chapter 2 for more information).

Source: ABS 2004-05 NATSIHS and NHS, 1994 NATSIS, 2002 NATSISS and GSS (unpublished); table 3A.5.3.

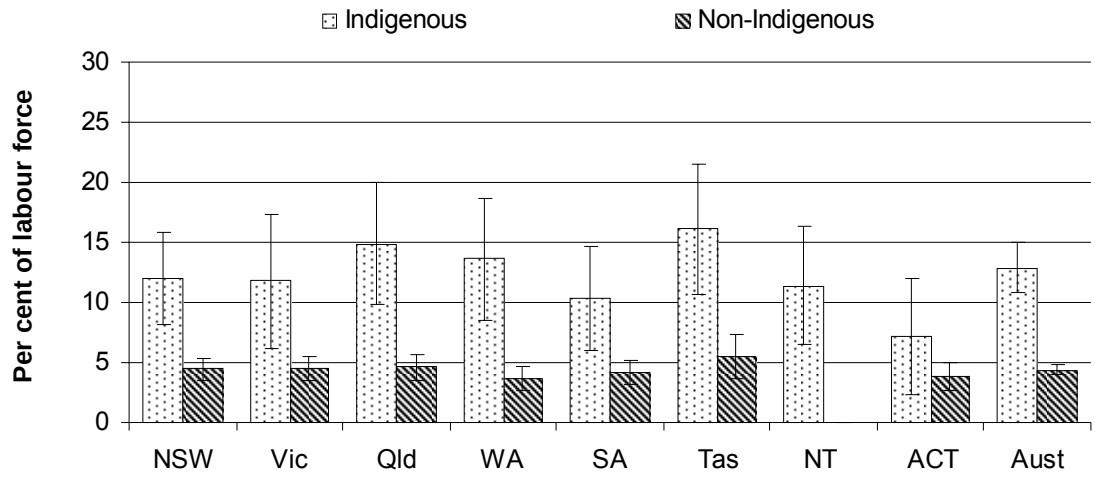
- Nationally, the labour force participation rate for Indigenous people aged 18 to 64 years increased from 57.3 per cent in 1994 to 62.7 per cent in 2004-05, although there was little change between 2002 and 2004-05 (figure 3.5.5).
- The participation rate for Indigenous women increased from 41.5 per cent in 1994 to 52.6 per cent in 2004-05, while there was no statistically significant change in the rate for Indigenous men over the same period.
- Non-Indigenous data for 1994 are not available on a comparable basis with those for 2002 and 2004-05. Between 2002 and 2004-05, for which data are available, there was little change in the labour force participation of non-Indigenous women and men. The ABS (2002, 2006) also found that there had been little change in the participation rate for the Australian population aged 15 years and over from 1995-96 to 2004-05 (63.6 per cent compared to 64.0 per cent).

Unemployment

The unemployment rate, which is the number of unemployed people expressed as a percentage of the labour force (employed plus unemployed people), is a widely used measure of potentially underutilised labour resources in the economy.

The ABS statistical data on unemployment need to be considered alongside data on CDEP participation, especially for Indigenous people in remote areas. CDEP participants are counted as employed rather than unemployed or not in the labour force in ABS statistics. This accounts for a relatively large number of Indigenous people, particularly in remote areas (figure 3.5.1).

Figure 3.5.6 **Age standardised unemployment rate of people aged 15 to 64 years, 2004-05[a, b]**



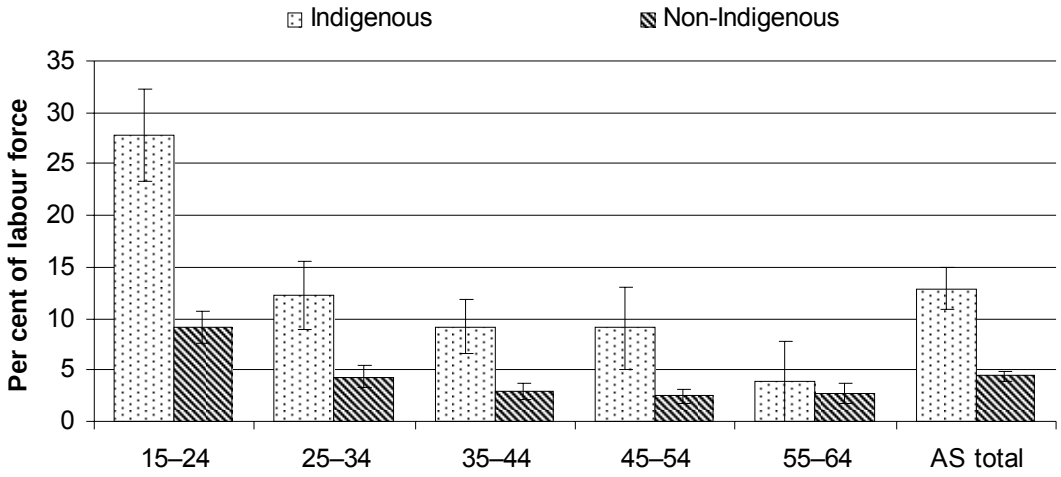
a The sample size in the NT was considered to be too small to produce reliable estimates for the NT in the ABS 2004-05 NHS, but NT records in the survey have been attributed appropriately to national estimates. **b** Error bars represent 95 per cent confidence intervals around each estimate (see chapter 2 for more information).

Source: ABS 2004-05 NATSIHS and NHS (unpublished); table 3A.5.1.

- After taking into account the different age structures of the Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations, the national unemployment rate in 2004-05 for Indigenous people (12.9 per cent) was about three times that for non-Indigenous people (4.4 per cent) (figure 3.5.6).

Regardless of Indigenous status, the likelihood of being unemployed is related to life cycle stages. The unemployment rate for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people tends to be highest among young people. Young people typically have less developed work-related skills and are more likely to be entering the labour force for the first time than older people, which leads to higher unemployment.

Figure 3.5.7 **Unemployment rate of people aged 15 to 64 years, 2004-05[a, b]**



AS = age standardised.

a Error bars represent 95 per cent confidence intervals around each estimate (see chapter 2 for more information). **b** Estimate for Indigenous persons 55–64 has a relative standard error greater than 50 per cent and is considered too unreliable for general use.

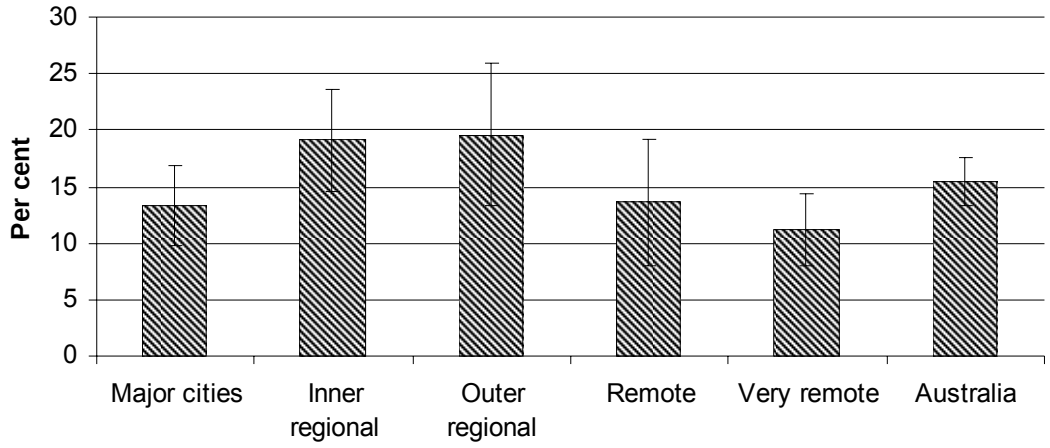
Source: ABS 2004-05 NATSIHS and NHS (unpublished); table 3A.5.1.

In 2004-05:

- Indigenous people aged between 15 and 54 years were more likely to be unemployed than non-Indigenous people in the same age range (figure 3.5.7).
- The unemployment rate for Indigenous people aged 15 to 24 years was three times that for non-Indigenous people of the same age group (27.8 per cent compared to 9.2 per cent) (figure 3.5.7).

Opportunities for work vary across Australia with the nature and strength of the economic base, the relative growth of industries and the skill base of residents (ABS 2001). These factors can be significant for understanding differing rates of unemployment for Indigenous and non-Indigenous people and differences across remoteness areas (see figures 3.5.4 and 3.5.8).

Figure 3.5.8 **Unemployment rate of Indigenous people aged 15 to 64 years, by remoteness, 2004-05[a, b]**



[a] Data are not age standardised. [b] Error bars represent 95 per cent confidence intervals around each estimate (see chapter 2 for more information).

Source: ABS NATSIHS 2004-05 (unpublished); table 3A.5.7.

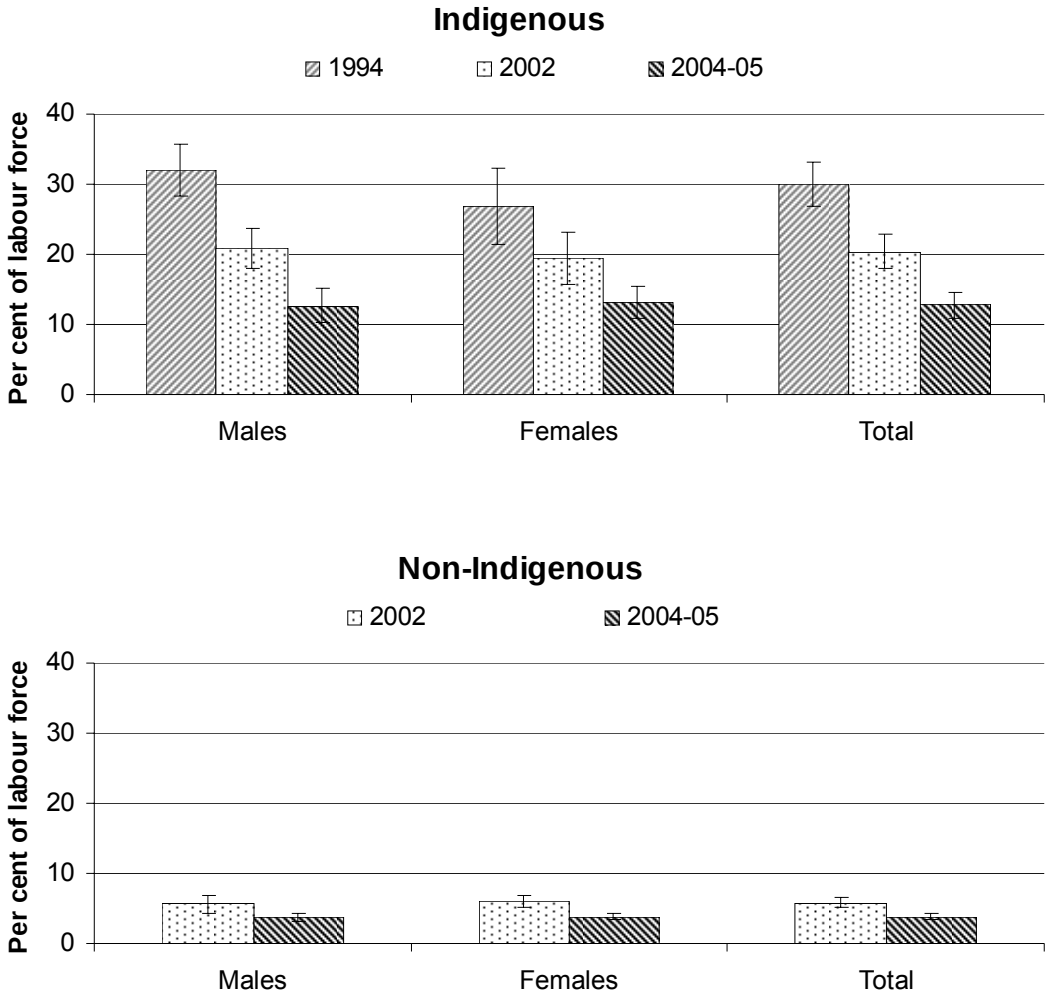
In 2004-05:

- People in inner and outer regional areas were significantly more likely to be unemployed than those in very remote areas (figure 3.5.8). However, in very remote areas, 35.6 per cent of Indigenous people in the labour force participated in CDEP and were classified as employed (figure 3.5.1).

Age standardised unemployment rates for Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in four remoteness areas (major cities, inner and outer regional areas, and remote areas), are included in table 3A.5.7. Indigenous and non-Indigenous comparisons are not possible for very remote areas as non-Indigenous data for very remote areas were not collected in the 2004-05 NHS.

- The age standardised unemployment rates for Indigenous people in the four remoteness areas for which data were available were all significantly higher than those for non-Indigenous people (table 3A.5.3).

Figure 3.5.9 **Unemployment rate of people aged 18 to 64 years**[a, b, c]



[a] Data are not age standardised. [b] Non-Indigenous data for 1994 are not available on a comparable basis with those for 2002 and 2004-05. [c] Error bars represent 95 per cent confidence intervals around each estimate (see chapter 2 for more information).

Source: ABS 2004-05 NATSIHS and NHS, 1994 NATSIS, and 2002 GSS and NATSISS (unpublished); table 3A.5.3.

Nationally, in the period from 1994 to 2004-05 there have been significant falls in the unemployment rate for both Indigenous women and men:

- The unemployment rate for Indigenous people aged 18 to 64 years fell from 30.0 per cent in 1994 to 20.3 per cent in 2002 and 12.8 per cent in 2004-05 (figure 3.5.9).
- This is consistent with an overall declining trend in unemployment that occurred in Australia from the latter part of the 1990s to 2005. The unemployment rate for the total Australian population aged 15 years and over fell from 8.1 per cent in 1995-96 to 5.3 per cent in 2004-05 (ABS 2002, 2006).

For both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, males and females tended to have similar rates of unemployment (figure 3.5.9), although there was some variation between age groups (table 3A.5.3).

The long term unemployed are defined as unemployed people who have been without work for a year or more. People who have been unemployed for long periods may experience greater financial hardship, and may have more difficulties in finding employment because of the loss of relevant skills and employers' perceptions of their 'employability'. The socioeconomic costs of unemployment become greater for those who have been unemployed long term.

Nationally in 2004-05, after taking into account the different age structures of the Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations:

- Indigenous people were 5 times as likely as non-Indigenous people to have been unemployed long term (4.7 per cent of the labour force compared to 0.9 per cent).
- Long term unemployment as a proportion of total unemployment was also higher than for Indigenous people than for non-Indigenous people (41.6 per cent compared to 27.4 per cent) (table 3A.5.6).
- These results on long term unemployment need to be interpreted alongside data on the labour force participation and CDEP participation of Indigenous people, which are likely to mask the unemployment and long term unemployment of Indigenous people, particularly in remote areas (figure 3.5.1).

Figure 3.5.10 **Long term unemployment for Indigenous people aged 18 to 64 years** [a, b, c]

[a] Data are not age standardised. [b] Error bars represent 95 per cent confidence intervals around each estimate (see chapter 2 for more information). [c] Percentages represent proportions of the total Indigenous labour force and total Indigenous people unemployed.

Source: ABS 1994 NATSIS, 2002 NATSISS, 2004-05 NATSIHS (unpublished); table 3A.5.8.

Consistent with the trend in overall unemployment over the period from 1994 to 2004-05, there was a large fall in the long term unemployment rate in the Indigenous labour force aged 18 to 64 years.

- The long term unemployment rate of the Indigenous labour force in 2004-05 (5.1 per cent) was less than half of that in 1994 (14.2 per cent) (figure 3.5.10).
- The number of long term unemployed Indigenous people as a proportion of all unemployed Indigenous people in 2004-05 was not significantly different to that in 1994 (figure 3.5.10).

Employment undertaken by Indigenous people is discussed in more detail in chapter 11, including employment by fulltime and part time status, by sector, industry and skill level (section 11.1), and self employment and Indigenous business (section 11.2).

3.6 Household and individual income

Box 3.6.1 **Key messages**

- For the period 2002 to 2004-05, after adjusting for inflation, median (mid point) gross weekly equivalised household income for Indigenous people rose by 10 per cent (from $308 to $340). This compares to $618 for non-Indigenous households in 2004-05 (figure 3.6.2).
- In 2004-05, over half of Indigenous people (51.6 per cent) received most of their individual income from government pensions and allowances, followed by salaries and wages (33.9 per cent) and CDEP (10.1 per cent) (figure 3.6.6).

The economic wellbeing of people is largely determined by their income and wealth. Capacity to own a home or accumulate other assets will depend upon whether people have sufficient disposable income. In the absence of data on wealth, the extent to which income for Indigenous people is lower than for non-Indigenous people is a major indicator of material disadvantage. The main sources of income are employment, assets and welfare payments.

Income is an important determinant of socioeconomic status. People with low incomes are often disadvantaged in terms of factors such as health, life expectancy, education, substance abuse, social participation, crime and violence.

Adverse health outcomes and higher mortality rates are important examples of the effect that low income can have on people. People who have low incomes, or are socially disadvantaged in other ways, tend to live shorter lives and suffer more illness than those who are well off. In Australia, men and women with lower socioeconomic status, including many Indigenous people, bear a higher burden of disease (AIHW 2004). It is widely acknowledged that health status is affected by the availability of material resources and the income to buy them. Higher incomes can enable the purchase of health-related goods and services such as better food, housing, recreation and health care, and may provide psychological benefits such as a greater sense of security and control. Increasingly, it is also being suggested that less favourable social and economic circumstances can cause anxiety, low self-esteem and social isolation, which in turn can influence health-related behaviours and health itself (AIHW 2004).

The link between income and health occurs through the income level of the country, the income of individuals, and the distribution of income within a society (AIHW 2004). Low income can be both a cause and a result of these disadvantages, for example, health problems caused by low income can in turn limit a person's ability to earn income.

Chapter 12 of this Report discusses in more detail the association between low incomes and poor education outcomes, labour force participation and employment, and health risk behaviour (including smoking, risky to high risk alcohol consumption and illicit drug use).

This indicator examines both household and individual income. While income is usually received by individuals, people living in families or group households generally contribute to the purchase of goods and services shared by other household members, particularly children. Therefore, household income measures the economic resources available to every person in a household, including dependent adults and children. It reflects directly the economic resources available for each household member to maintain his/her standard of living. Levels of income are closely related to paid work (through salaries and wages), though for many people government income support is their main source of income. In 2004-05 over half of Indigenous adults (51.6 per cent) received most of their individual income from government pensions and allowances (table 3A.6.8). Individual income directly reflects the earning capacity of adults in the work force, which in turn impacts on household income.

Data for the household and individual income indicator in this Report are from several ABS surveys, including the 2004-05 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey (NATSIHS) and the 2004-05 National Health Survey (NHS), the 2002 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey (NATSISS), and the 1994 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey (NATSIS).

While for most income analysis, disposable (after tax) income is the preferred basis of income measurement, no attempt is made to adjust for income taxes in these ABS surveys. Nor is any adjustment made for the cost of living. This is particularly relevant for people living in remote areas, where costs for some goods and services are high, and the costs for others are low. For example, the cost of fresh food can be high in remote areas, which has an impact on health outcomes. In contrast, rent in remote areas is, on average, less than half the rent levels experienced in major cities.

The household income estimates in these ABS surveys are adjusted by equivalence factors (see box 3.6.2) to take into account household size and composition, and the economies of scale that arise from the sharing of a dwelling. It is important to note that while equivalised household income refers to household income, it is not a measure of total income for each household. Rather, it is a measure of income for each member in a household which has been adjusted for the size and composition of that household.

Box 3.6.2 **Derivation of income measures**

Equivalised household income

Equivalised income is the income of households adjusted for the different income needs of households of different size and composition. The costs of maintaining households and families, are believed to vary with household size and composition, and sometimes the number of employed people in the household and other household characteristics. Notwithstanding the economies of scale, larger households normally require a greater level of income to maintain the same material standard of living as smaller households, and the needs of adults are normally greater than the needs of children.

The conventional technique of adjusting for the income needs of households with different characteristics is to apply an equivalence scale to the raw household income. The equivalence scale used to obtain equivalised incomes in the ABS surveys was developed for the OECD and is referred to as the 'modified OECD scale'. The scale gives a weight of 1 to the first adult in the household, for each additional adult (persons aged 15 years and over) a weight of 0.5, and for each child a weight of 0.3. Equivalised household income is derived by dividing the total household income by the sum of the weights for the members of that household. The resulting measure of income is gross weekly equivalised household (GWEH) income, and is the measure used for household income in this Report. For example, if a household received a combined income of $2100 per week and comprised two adults and two children (combined household equivalence points of 2.1) the GWEH income for each household member would be $1000 per week.

It is important to note that while GWEH income refers to household income, it is not a measure of total income for each household. Rather, it is a measure of income for each member in a household which has been adjusted for the size and composition of that household.

Mean versus median income

In the 2003 and 2005 Reports, the mean values of equivalised household income and individual income were used to measure the income levels of Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. In this Report, median income values are also used to measure levels of both equivalised household income and individual income.

A mean income value is the average value of a set of income data. It is calculated by adding up all the values in a set of data and then dividing that sum by the number of values in the dataset. Median value is the mid point of a set of income data. If the values in a set of income data are arranged 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).

(Continued next page)

Box 3.6.2 (continued)

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). This is particularly significant when comparing incomes of Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, where more Indigenous people have low incomes and more non-Indigenous people have higher incomes (see Glossary for examples of how mean and median values are derived and the extent to which the two income measures differ).

Income quintiles

The distribution of household income is also an important indicator of a population's economic wellbeing. The percentage of households or individuals with incomes in particular ranges is a measure of relative advantage or disadvantage. Income quintiles are presented in this Report for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people as measures of both household and individual income distribution.

The income quintiles are groupings that result from ranking all people in the population in ascending order (from lowest to highest) according to their incomes and then dividing the population into five equal groups, each comprising 20 per cent of the population.

The income quintile boundaries in this Report are based on income distributions for the total Australian population at the time of the 2004-05 NHS. After all households or individuals were ranked from lowest to highest according to their income, the boundaries of income quintiles were:

- lowest quintile — (the lowest 20 per cent) — less than $295 per week
- second quintile (the second lowest 20 per cent) — $295–$478 per week
- third quintile (the third 20 per cent) — $479–$688 per week
- fourth quintile (the fourth 20 per cent) — $689–$996 per week
- highest quintile (the fifth 20 per cent) — $997 or more per week.

These have been applied to both the Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations.

Source: ABS (2003); ABS (2004); ABS 2004-05 NHS (unpublished).

Box 3.6.2 provides more information about the derivation of the income measures used in this Report.

The incomes of Indigenous people are generally below those of non-Indigenous people, and there tends to be a relatively higher proportion of Indigenous people with lower incomes, and a lower proportion with higher incomes. Lower rates of mainstream (non-CDEP) employment among Indigenous people (see section 3.5), and a greater likelihood of working part time and/or in lower skilled occupations

(see sections 11.1 and 11.2) are the main factors that contribute to the income disparity between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people.

Gross weekly equivalised household income

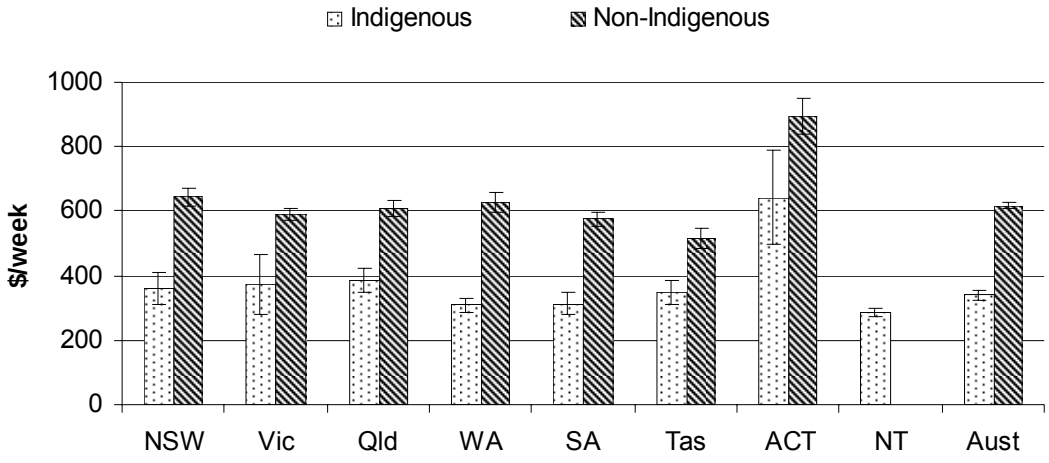
The measure used in this Report for household income is gross weekly equivalised household (GWEH) income (box 3.6.2). GWEH income calculated for Indigenous people, while adjusting for household size and composition to some extent, may not reflect adequately the household circumstances of Indigenous people, and the data need to be considered with this in mind. For example, Daly and Smith (1995), Gray (1990), and Hunter, Kennedy and Smith (2003) have found that there are substantial differences in family size and composition (structure) between Indigenous households and non-Indigenous households. Compared to non-Indigenous households:

- Indigenous people are more likely to live in larger households with large numbers of dependants and smaller incomes.
- Indigenous households are more likely to extend over generations.
- High Indigenous adult mortality can impact upon household living arrangements.
- Indigenous people are substantially more likely to live in single parent households.
- Indigenous people, especially those living outside the cities, may live in households with resource commitments to their extended families living elsewhere.
- Indigenous households tend to have a large number of visitors, who may not be accounted for in a data collection that takes a snapshot on a particular day.

Section 10.3 (Overcrowding in housing) provides more information on the housing and living arrangements of Indigenous people and differences between Indigenous and non-Indigenous households.

While equivalised household income is the generally preferred measure for the analysis of people's income, the different concepts and structures of households where Indigenous people live compared with those where no Indigenous people live can result in income measurement that is not fully reflective of the circumstances for Indigenous household incomes (Hunter, Kennedy and Smith, 2003).

Figure 3.6.1 **Median gross weekly equivalised household income, people aged 18 years and over, 2004-05[a, b]**



a The sample size in the NT was considered too small to produce reliable non-Indigenous estimates for the NT in the ABS 2004-05 NHS, but NT records in the survey have been attributed appropriately to national estimates. **b** Error bars represent 95 per cent confidence intervals around each estimate (see chapter 2 for more information).

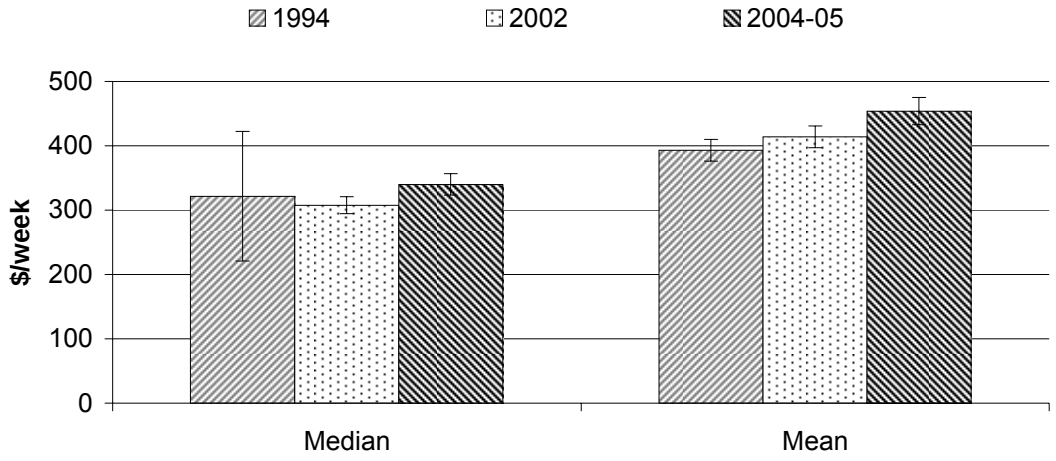
Source: ABS 2004-05 NATSIHS and NHS (unpublished); table 3A.6.1.

The median value is the mid point of a set of income data. The difference in median income between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people is an indicator of the income gap between two populations.

In 2004-05:

- Nationally, the median (mid point) gross weekly equivalised household income for Indigenous adults was $340 compared with $618 for non-Indigenous adults (figure 3.6.1).
- The equivalised household income for Indigenous adults was higher than that for non-Indigenous adults in all states and territories (except the NT, for which non-Indigenous data are not available) (figure 3.6.1).

Figure 3.6.2 **Median and mean real gross weekly equivalised household income, Indigenous people aged 18 years and over (2004-05 dollars)[a, b]**



a Adjusted for inflation using the Consumer Price Index for the June quarter 1994 and the December quarter 2002 and 2004-05. **b** Error bars represent 95 per cent confidence intervals around each estimate (see chapter 2 for more information).

Source: ABS 1994 NATSIS, 2002 NATSISS and 2004-05 NATSIHS; table 3A.6.2.

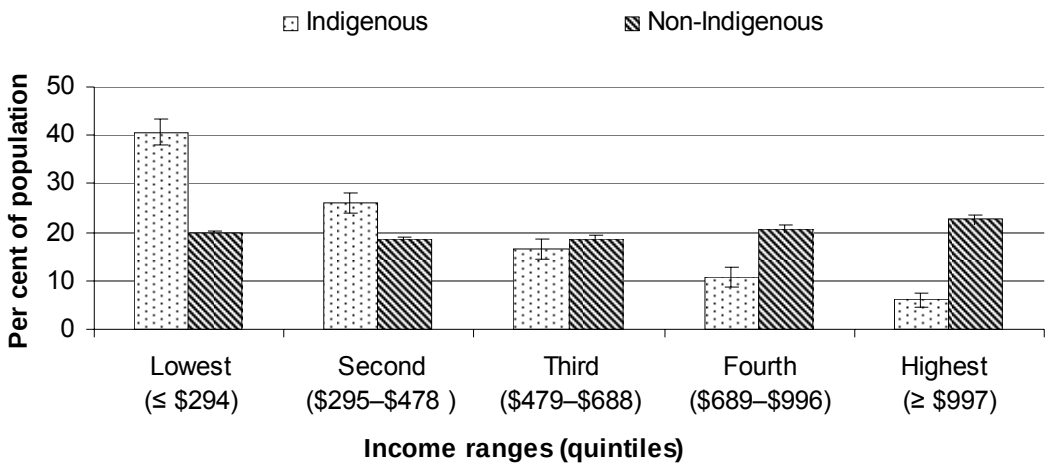
- Between 1994 and 2004-05 there were significant increases in both median and mean Indigenous household incomes (increases between reference years were only significant between 2002 and 2004-05 and not between 1994 and 2002) (figure 3.6.2).
- Between 1994–95 and 2003–04, the average (mean) real income of all Australian households increased by 21 per cent. There was a comparable increase for each of the different income groups; 22 per cent for low income households, and 22 and 19 per cent for middle income and high income groups respectively (ABS 2006). [7]

The distribution of household income is also an important indicator of a population's economic wellbeing. The percentage of households which have incomes that lie in particular ranges is a measure of relative advantage or disadvantage. The income quintiles as measures of income distribution are groupings that result from ranking all people in the population in ascending order according to their gross weekly equivalised household incomes and then dividing

7 Income values are in 2003–04 dollars and are measured by equivalised disposable household income. After all households are ranked from lowest to highest by their household income, low income households are those whose incomes are between the lowest 10 and 30 per cent, middle income households are those between 50 and 60 per cent, and high income household are those between 90 and 100 per cent.

the population into five equal groups, each comprising 20 per cent of the population. Box 3.6.2 provides detailed definitions of income quintiles.

Figure 3.6.3 **Distribution of gross weekly equivalised household incomes, people aged 18 years and over, 2004-05[a, b]**



a The income quintiles are groupings that result from ranking all people in the population in ascending order (from the lowest to the highest) according to their incomes and then dividing the population into five equal groups, each comprising 20 per cent of the population. Box 3.6.2 provides details of income quintile boundaries used in this Report. **b** Error bars represent 95 per cent confidence intervals around each estimate (see chapter 2 for more information).

Source: ABS 2004-05 NATSIHS and NHS (unpublished); table 3A.6.3.

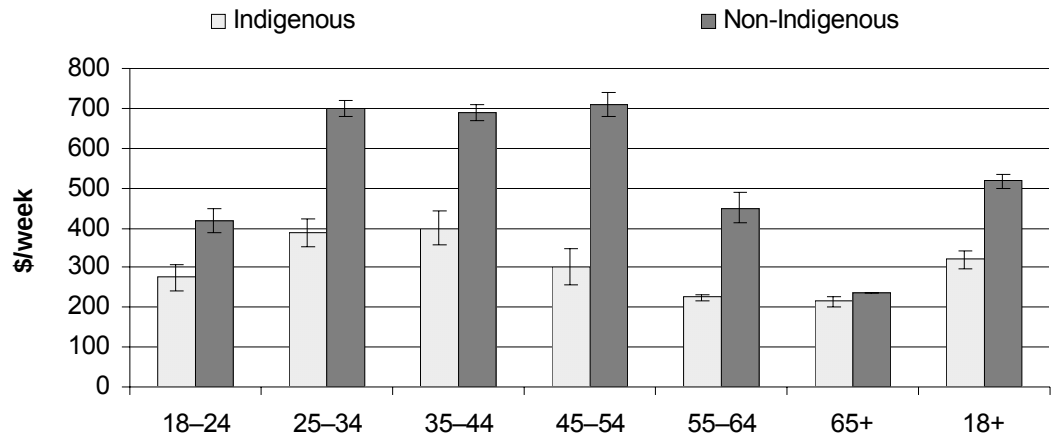
In 2004-05:

- Indigenous people (40.7 per cent) were twice as likely as non-Indigenous people (19.7 per cent) to have equivalised household incomes in the lowest range (quintile) (less than $295 per week) (figure 3.6.3).
- The proportion of people with an equivalised household income in the second lowest range ($295–$478) was also higher for Indigenous people than for non-Indigenous people (26.0 compared to 18.4 per cent).
- Indigenous people (6.0 per cent) were less than one third as likely as non-Indigenous people (22.6 per cent) to have an equivalised household income in the highest range ($997 or more per week).
- The proportion of people with an equivalised household income in the fourth range ($689–$996 per week) was also lower for Indigenous people than for non - Indigenous people (10.8 compared to 20.7 per cent).

More information on distributions of gross weekly equivalised household income by State and Territory are in table 3A.6.3 and by remoteness are in table 3A.6.4.

Individual income

Figure 3.6.4 **Median gross weekly individual income, by age, 2004-05[a]**



a Error bars represent 95 per cent confidence intervals around each estimate (see chapter 2 for more information).

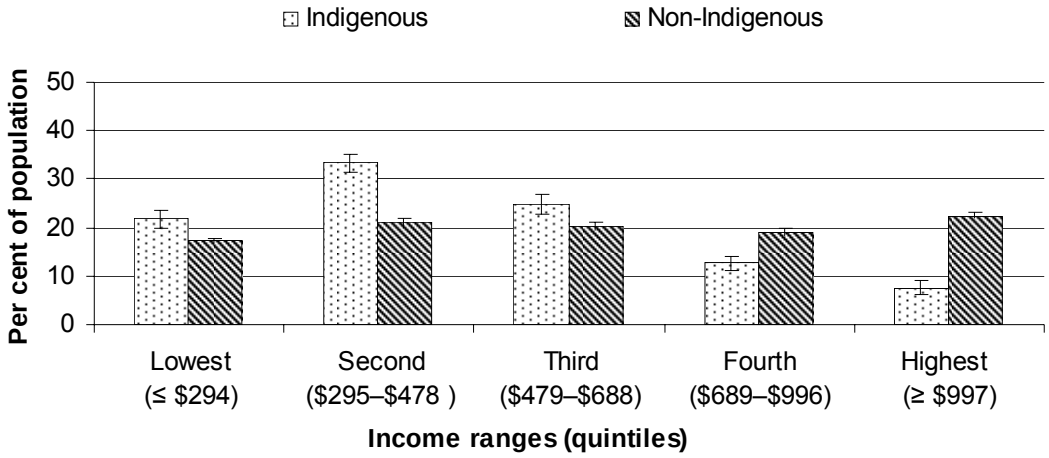
Source: ABS 2004-05 NATSIHS and NHS (unpublished); table 3A.6.5.

For median gross weekly individual income for 2004-05:

- Income for Indigenous adults was significantly lower than for non-Indigenous adults across all age groups.
  - Although the gap in income was smallest for Indigenous adults over 65 years of age, the difference was still statistically significant ($215 compared to $235).
  - The largest difference in income between Indigenous and non-Indigenous adults was for those 45 to 54 years of age, with non-Indigenous incomes 2.4 times as high as Indigenous incomes (figure 3.6.4).
- There was a significant difference in income reported for Indigenous male and Indigenous female adults compared to income for non-Indigenous male and female adults. While Indigenous adults of both genders reported lower incomes than non-Indigenous adults of the same sex, the ratio of female Indigenous to female non-Indigenous income (80 per cent of non-Indigenous income) was considerably higher than for males (50 per cent of non-Indigenous income) (table 3A.6.5).

The proportions of individuals who have incomes that lie in particular ranges is a measure of relative advantage/disadvantage. As with the GWEH income quintiles, individual income in this Report is presented in income quintiles (see box 3.6.2 for detailed definitions of income quintiles).

Figure 3.6.5 **Distribution of gross weekly individual income (quintiles), people aged 18 years and over, 2004-05[a, b]**



a The income quintiles are groupings that result from ranking all people in the population in ascending order (from the lowest to the highest) according to their incomes and then dividing the population into five equal groups, each comprising 20 per cent of the population. Box 3.6.2 provides details of income quintile boundaries used in this Report. **b** Error bars represent 95 per cent confidence intervals around each estimate (see chapter 2 for more information).

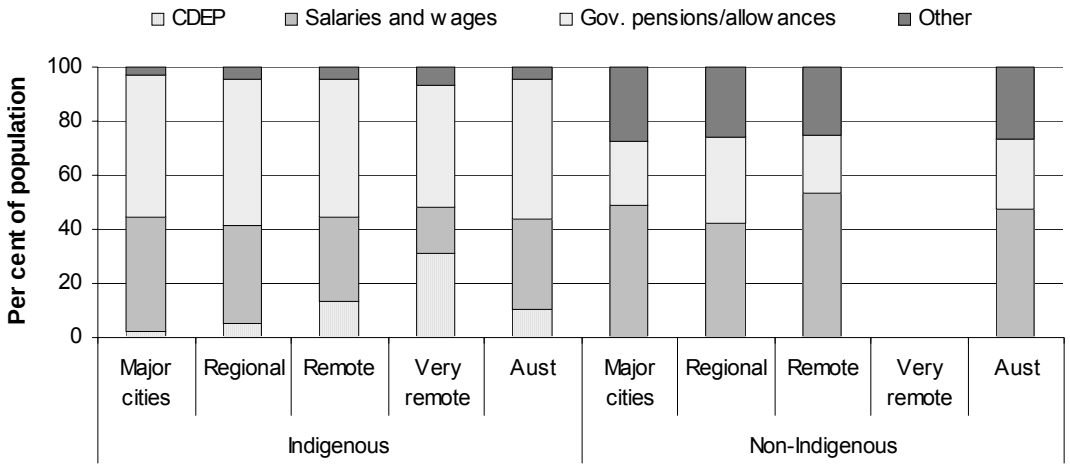
Source: ABS 2004-05 NATSIHS and NHS (unpublished); table 3A.6.6.

In 2004-05:

- Higher proportions of Indigenous people (55.0 per cent) than non-Indigenous people (38.1 per cent) had a gross weekly individual income in the lower ranges (less than $479 per week) (figure 3.6.5).
- A lower proportion of Indigenous people (44.9 per cent) than non-Indigenous people (61.8 per cent) had an individual income in the higher ranges ($479 or more per week).
- In particular, the proportion of Indigenous people with an individual income in the highest range ($997 or more per week) was one third of that for non-Indigenous people (7.5 per cent compared to 22.5 per cent).

Distributions of gross weekly individual income by State and Territory can be found in table 3A.6.7.

Figure 3.6.6 **Main sources of individual gross weekly income, people aged 18 years and over, 2004-05[a, b]**



[a] Other' category includes 'other cash incomes' and source of income 'not stated/not know. 'Regional' includes inner and outer regional areas. [b] Non-Indigenous data are not available for very remote areas as they were not collected in the 2004-05 NHS. The records for the very remote areas have been attributed appropriately to national estimates.

Source: ABS 2004-05 NATSIHS and NHS (unpublished); table 3A.6.8.

In 2004-05:

- Over half of Indigenous people (51.6 per cent) received most of their individual income from government pensions and allowances, followed by salaries and wages (33.9 per cent) and CDEP (10.1 per cent) (figure 3.6.6).
- The proportion of Indigenous people with salaries and wages as the main source of individual income decreased with remoteness, while the proportion with CDEP as the main source of individual income increased with remoteness.
- In contrast, 47.1 per cent of non-Indigenous people reported salaries and wages as their main source of individual income, followed by government pensions and allowances (26.2 per cent) and other cash income (20.3 per cent) (figure 3.6.6).
- Non-Indigenous people in regional areas were more likely to report government pensions and allowances as their main source of individual income (31.8 per cent) and less likely to report salaries and wages (42.5 per cent), compared to those in major cities (23.8 and 49.0 per cent, respectively) and remote areas (21.3 and 53.2 per cent, respectively) (figure 3.6.6).

Section 12.1 of chapter 12 in this Report examines in detail how levels of income for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people varied according to age, sex and remoteness. The key findings are:

- Age-related patterns in income tend to follow patterns in labour force participation (and employment) (figure 12.1.1).
- Indigenous people were more likely to have low equivalised household incomes than non-Indigenous people regardless of age.
- For both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, those aged 15 to 24 years were most likely to have individual incomes in the lowest ranges, while those aged 55 years and over were most likely to have equivalised household incomes in the lowest range.
- Indigenous people aged 25 to 34 years were more than four times as likely as their non-Indigenous counterparts to have equivalised household incomes in the lowest ranges.
- Indigenous people aged 45 to 54 years were nearly twice as likely as their non-Indigenous counterparts to have individual incomes in the lowest range (figure 12.1.1).
- Unlike non-Indigenous people, there were no statistically significant differences between Indigenous women and men in low income. For non-Indigenous people, women were more likely than men to have lower incomes (figure 12.1.2).
- Indigenous people living in outer regional areas were more likely than those living in inner regional areas to have low individual incomes (figure 12.1.3).

3.7 Home ownership

Box 3.7.1 **Key messages**

- The proportion of Indigenous adults living in homes owned or being purchased by a member of the household increased from 21.5 per cent in 1994 to 25.4 per cent in 2004-05 (figure 3.7.1).
- In 2004-05, the proportion of Indigenous adults living in homes owned or being purchased by a member of the household in remote (17.6 per cent) and very remote (2.7 per cent) areas was much lower than in major cities (29.0 per cent) and inner and outer regional areas (38.9 and 31.5 per cent, respectively) (figure 3.7.2).
- In 2002, the most recent year for which both Indigenous and non-Indigenous data are available, a much lower proportion of Indigenous adults (27.4 per cent) than non-Indigenous adults (73.7 per cent) lived in homes owned or being purchased by a member of the household (table 3A.7.2).

Home ownership is an important indicator of wealth and saving, and is likely to be positively related to employment and income indicators. Home ownership provides

a secure asset base that can contribute to financial stability and against which people can borrow. Home ownership also provides security of tenure, which is not always available with rental housing. A home can be passed from one generation to another. Home ownership also allows households to build or modify a dwelling to suit their particular needs.

Improvements in the strategic areas for action, particularly those relating to education and economic participation and development are the main drivers of home ownership and could increase the level of Indigenous home ownership in the future.

During consultations for this Report, many Indigenous people said that home ownership was an important part of improving Indigenous wellbeing and an essential indicator in the framework. Some Indigenous people said that home ownership was important to them as a connection to the land, particularly in closely settled regions where there are limited opportunities for land grants and determinations that native title exists. Others suggested that not all Indigenous people want to own their own homes. It was argued that those in more remote areas and living more traditional lifestyles may prefer a more communal form of ownership, and that those Indigenous people who move frequently for family and cultural reasons may prefer to rent accommodation. Information on communally owned Indigenous land is included in section 11.3.

Home ownership is included in the Report primarily as an economic indicator of wealth and saving. Examples of successful home ownership programs are in box 3.7.2. The availability of appropriate, affordable and secure housing, which is a more immediate concern for many Indigenous people, is covered in section 10.3, Overcrowding in housing.

Box 3.7.2 **'Things that work' — home ownership**

IBA Homes

A home ownership program, now marketed as IBA Homes, was established in 1975 under the Aboriginal Loans Commission and was administered by successive statutory authorities before being transferred to Indigenous Business Australia on 24 March 2005.

Since the program's establishment, it has helped 12 413 Indigenous families to buy their own homes. IBA Homes provides access to affordable home finance including a range of products such as low interest rate loans to Indigenous people who are buying a home or land, building a new home, carrying out home improvements or home maintenance and repairs.

Recently, IBA Homes introduced a gap deposit loan product to assist Indigenous Australians to enter into mortgages in response to rising house prices and rising deposits required to enter into home ownership.

While the program is predominantly self funding ($80 million in revenue estimated for 2006-07), the Australian Government provided two capital injections, in 2004-05 and 2006-07, each totalling $20 million.

Lending by IBA Homes is based on commercial home-lending practices with concessional interest rates that commence at 4.5 per cent per annum and increase annually up to a maximum of 1 per cent below the standard rate of the Commonwealth Bank of Australia. As occurs in the broader home loan market, IBA Homes assesses loan applications on the client's ability to service the loan and an independent property valuation. Loans are secured by registered mortgage.

The number of loans has increased from 469 loans in 2003-04 to 580 loans in 2005-06. The average loan size grew by 14.3 per cent from $210 000 in 2005-06 to $230 000 in 2006-07. At 31 January 2007, IBA Homes had 3 438 active loans across Australia on its books:

NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT
1 065	362	1 021	327	153	86	53	371

(Indigenous Business Australia, unpublished).

(Continued next page)

Box 3.7.2 (continued)

HomeStart Nunga Home Loan (SA)

In response to the low ownership rates amongst Indigenous South Australians, HomeStart Finance began a trial of a new product designed specifically for this market, called the Nunga Home Loan, in March 2004. Between March 2004 and March 2007 293 applicants successfully purchased their own home with a HomeStart Nunga Loan.

To gain a greater understanding of the needs of Nunga applicants, HomeStart conducted research into why Nunga customers had previously been unsuccessful in gaining approval for existing HomeStart home loan products. The results demonstrated that lack of funds for a deposit, an adverse credit history and a high level of consumer debt were the main barriers preventing successful home loan approval. In light of this research, HomeStart designed the Nunga Loan with the following features:

- a maximum Lending Value Ratio (LVR) of 105 per cent
- acceptance of a limited number and amount of credit defaults
- the ability to refinance smaller consumer loans within the 105 per cent LVR to assist the customer in their overall monthly repayment commitments (SA Government, unpublished).

Stamp duties assistance for first home buyers (Tasmania)

The Tasmanian Government provides funding to the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre Inc. to assist Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander first home buyers with the payment of stamp duties. First home buyers are able to combine this with the first home owners grant and loan funding from Indigenous Business Australia to make the purchase of their first home much more affordable (Tasmanian Government unpublished).

Measuring Indigenous home ownership can be complex. The surveys used as a source of data for this Report do not ask for details about who the actual owners of a home are, so the Indigenous status of the owner(s) cannot be determined precisely.

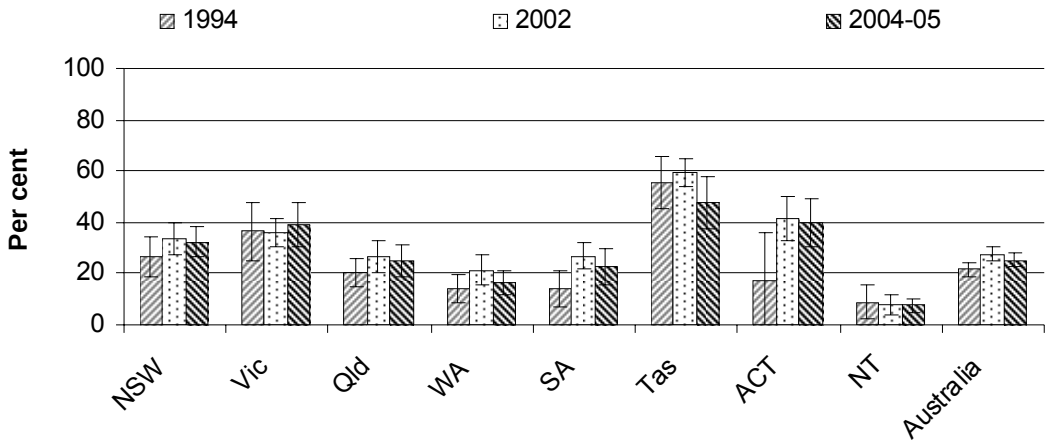
Another approach would be to count Indigenous households owning or purchasing their own home, however, there are problems in defining an Indigenous household (that is, what proportion of household members need to be Indigenous for the household to be classified as Indigenous?)

Therefore, home ownership is explored in this Report by looking at the proportion of Indigenous people living in a home owned or being purchased by a member of their household. These households are referred to as home owner/purchaser households. Not all people living in a household owned by someone in the household (for example, boarders) will share in the long-term economic benefits of home ownership. Some Indigenous people counted this way may be in households where the owner is non-Indigenous. Overall, however, the approach used is

reasonably simple to derive and provides a good approximation of levels of home ownership in the Indigenous population.

Data on home ownership in this Report are survey data from the ABS 2004-05 NATSIHS, 2002 NATSISS, 2002 GSS, and 1994 NATSIS. Data for 2004-05 are more limited than those available for previous Reports — non-Indigenous comparisons and data on rental of community housing are not available.

Figure 3.7.1 **Proportion of Indigenous people aged 18 years and over living in home owner/purchaser households, by State/Territory[a, b]**



a Includes homes being purchased under a rent/buy scheme. **b** Error bars represent 95 per cent confidence intervals around each estimate (see chapter 2 for more information). Estimates with an RSE of 25 per cent to 50 per cent should be interpreted with caution. Estimates with an RSE greater than 50 per cent are considered too unreliable for general use.

Source: ABS 1994 NATSIS, 2002 NATSISS and 2004-05 NATSIHS (unpublished); tables 3A.7.1 and 3A.7.2.

- In 2004-05, 25.4 per cent of Indigenous people aged 18 years and over lived in home owner/purchaser households (figure 3.7.1).
- The proportion of Indigenous people aged 18 years and over living in home owner/purchaser households increased from 21.5 per cent in 1994 to 25.4 per cent in 2004-05.
- The proportion of Indigenous people aged 18 years and over living in home owner/purchaser households varied between states and territories.
- In 2002, the most recent year for which both Indigenous and non-Indigenous data are available, a much lower proportion of Indigenous people aged 18 years and over (27.4 per cent) than non-Indigenous people (73.7 per cent) lived in home owner/purchaser households (table 3A.7.2).

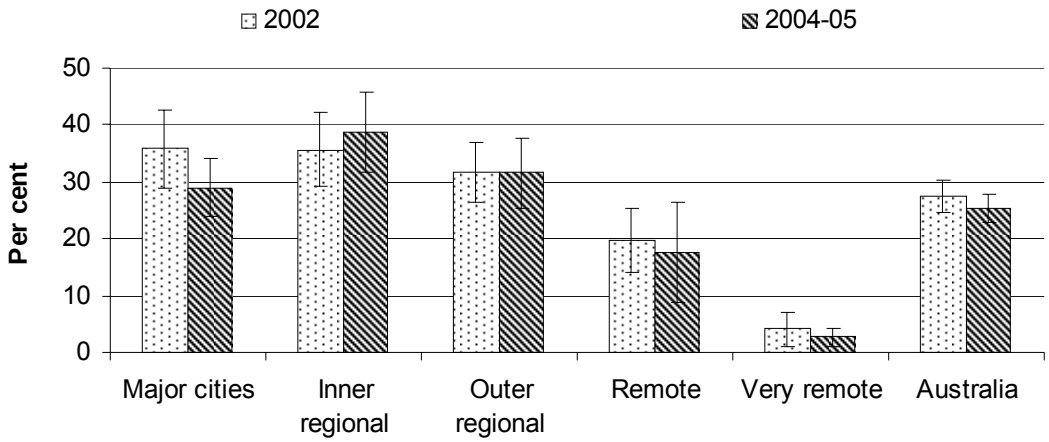
The significant number of Indigenous people living on Indigenous communally owned or controlled land influences the rates of Indigenous home ownership. Although some land in regional areas is communally owned, most communally owned land is located in remote and very remote areas. Usually, such land cannot be sold and the land itself cannot be mortgaged. This ensures its continuing ownership by Indigenous people, but means that developments on the land, including home ownership and private sector financing, need to be pursued through sub-leasing arrangements. Unlike the United States and Canada, where similar situations arise on Indigenous communally owned land, in Australia the legislative provisions which provide for sub-leasing and private sector financing have yet to be fully utilised. Information on Indigenous owned or controlled land is included in section 11.3.

In September 2006, the Australian Government passed the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Amendment Act 2006*. The Act was intended to encourage individual property rights in town areas on Indigenous communally owned land in the NT. The Act enables 99 year head leases to government entities, which can subsequently make sub-leases, which can be used for private home ownership, business or other purposes. Data used in this Report are from 2004-05, before the Act was changed. The amendments to the Act only affect the NT. Land ownership in other states and territories is determined by separate legislation in each jurisdiction. Long term leases for home ownership on Indigenous communal land are possible under land tenure arrangements in some states and territories but are not common. More information on Indigenous land tenure is included in section 11.3.

Most housing on Indigenous communally owned land is owned by Indigenous community or cooperative housing organisations, which rent houses to families and individuals. Community rental housing is different to home ownership by individual households and families. It is, however, a communal form of Indigenous ownership and control of housing.

Data on community rental housing are not available from the ABS 2004-05 NATSIHS. AIHW (2005) published administrative data on Indigenous community housing, as well as data on Indigenous housing from other sources such as the ABS Census and the ABS 2001 Community Housing and Infrastructure Needs Survey (CHINS). Data on Indigenous community rental housing were included in the 2005 Report (SCRGSP 2005). Some of these data are also included in the Report on Government Services (SCRGSP 2007).

Figure 3.7.2 **Proportion of Indigenous people aged 18 years and over living in home owner/purchaser households, by remoteness areas[a, b]**

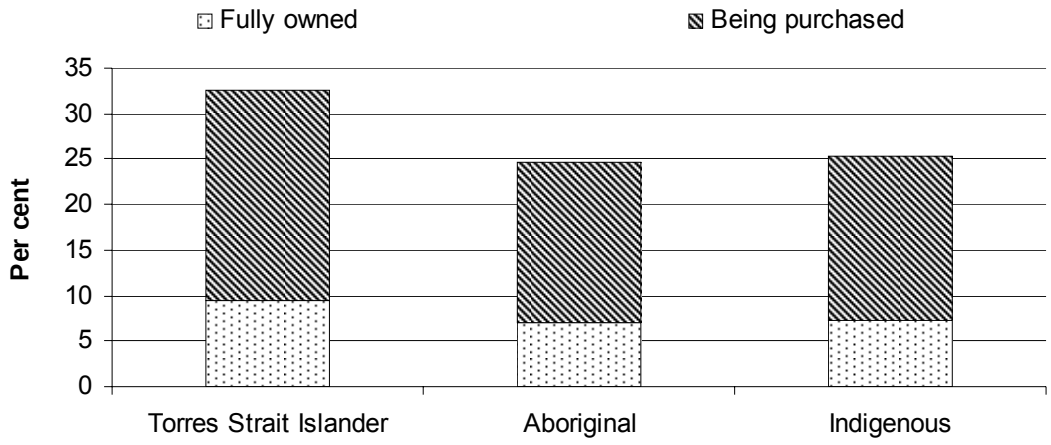


a Includes homes being purchased under a rent/buy scheme. **b** Error bars represent 95 per cent confidence intervals around each estimate (see chapter 2 for more information). Estimates with an RSE of 25 per cent to 50 per cent should be interpreted with caution. Estimates with an RSE greater than 50 per cent are considered too unreliable for general use.

Source: ABS 2002 NATSISS and 2004-04 NATSIHS (unpublished); tables 3A.7.3 and 3A.7.4.

- In 2004-05, the proportion of Indigenous people aged 18 years and over living in home owner/purchaser households was much lower in remote (17.6 per cent) and very remote (2.7 per cent) areas than in major cities (29.0 per cent) and inner and outer regional areas (38.9 and 31.5 per cent, respectively). The differences between data for major cities and inner and outer regional areas were not statistically significant (figure 3.7.2).
- Between 2002 and 2004-05, there were no statistically significant changes over time in the proportions of Indigenous people aged 18 years and over living in home owner/purchaser households, nationally or by remoteness areas (tables 3A.7.3 and 3A.7.4).

Figure 3.7.3 **Proportion of people aged 18 years and over living in home owner/purchaser households, 2004-05[a, b]**



a Includes homes being purchased under a rent/buy scheme. **b** Torres Strait Islander includes those identified as either of Torres Strait Islander origin, or of both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander origin.

Source: ABS 2004-05 NATSIHS (unpublished); table 3A.7.5.

- In 2004-05, 7.3 per cent of Indigenous people aged 18 years and over lived in homes fully owned by someone living in their household and 18.1 per cent lived in homes being purchased by someone living in their household (figure 3.7.3).
- In 2004-05, there was no statistically significant difference in the proportions of Torres Strait Islander and Aboriginal people living in home owner/purchaser households.
- Data on the proportions of Torres Strait Islander and Aboriginal people living in home owner/purchaser households in 1994 and 2002 are included in table 3A.7.6.

Attachment tables 3A.7.1 to 3A.7.9 include data on those living in rental housing as well as more detail on people living in homes owned by someone in the household. Many Indigenous people live in public housing provided by State and Territory Government housing authorities. Information on public housing provided to Indigenous people is included in the annual Report on Government Services (SCRGSP 2007). The charts and commentary in this section are for Indigenous people aged 18 years and over to ensure consistency and comparability with data available for earlier periods. However, some data on home ownership and housing tenure for Indigenous people aged 15 years and over are available in tables 3A.7.7 to 3A.7.9.

3.8 Suicide and self-harm

Box 3.8.1 **Key messages**

- Suicide death rates were higher for Indigenous people (between 18.8 and 45.0 per 100 000 population) than non-Indigenous people (between 10.8 and 15.5 per 100 000 population) in Queensland, WA, SA and the NT for 2001 to 2005 (figure 3.8.1).
- In 2004-05, after adjusting for age differences, 3 in every 1000 Indigenous people were hospitalised for non-fatal intentional self-harm, compared with 2 per 1000 non-Indigenous people (table 3.8.1). There were no significant trends in hospitalisation rates for intentional self-harm between 2001-02 and 2004-05 (figure 3.8.4).

Suicide and self-harm cause great grief in both Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities. Studies investigating suicide in Indigenous communities have been undertaken in NSW and the ACT (Tatz 1999), North Queensland (Hunter et al. 2001; Hunter and Harvey 2002) and the NT (Measey et al. 2006; Parker and Ben-Tovim 2001).

Many studies (Elliott-Farrelly 2004; Hunter et al. 2001; Hunter and Harvey 2002; Parker and Ben-Tovim 2001; Tatz 1999) have suggested that there are significant differences in suicidal behaviour not only between Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations, but also between different Indigenous communities. This indicates that Indigenous suicide is influenced by a complex set of factors relating to history of dispossession, removal from family, discrimination, resilience, social capital and socio-economic status.

Studies have found that Indigenous suicides appear to occur in clusters, and that the victims may share common age groups, genders and methods (Elliott-Farrelly 2004). Suicide frequently occurs in communities that have experienced similar losses in the past, and where 'lifestyles of risk' are common. Suicide is often impulsive, and may be preceded by interpersonal conflicts (Hunter et al. 2001; Tatz 1999).

Evidence indicates that Indigenous suicide is most common among young men, while suicide attempts seem to be more prevalent for women (Elliott-Farrelly 2004).

A study by Hunter on self-harming behaviour among young Indigenous people (1993) found that those who had attempted suicide reported a high level of anxiety and depression. Mental and behavioural disorders are often associated with an increased risk of self-harm, as is alcohol and substance abuse (Swan and Raphael

1995; Vicary and Westerman 2004). Other researchers have disputed the purported relationship between mental illness and Aboriginal suicide (Tatz 1999; Reser 1991, cited in Elliott-Farrelly 2004).

Environmental, sociocultural and economic risk factors have also been associated with a higher rate of suicide. Relevant family factors may include having parents who are substance dependent, have been imprisoned, or have violent tendencies, particularly if this translates into family violence.

Unemployment and poor long-term job prospects are considered risk factors for suicide, particularly in the regional and remote areas where a substantial proportion (70 per cent) of Indigenous people live (appendix 3, table A.6). Section 3.5 presents data showing the higher unemployment rates and lower labour force participation rates of Indigenous compared to non-Indigenous people.

Box 3.8.2 **'Things that work' — Yarrabah Family Life Promotion program**

Following three suicide clusters between the mid 1980s and mid 1990s, the Yarrabah community in Queensland developed a set of strategies for suicide prevention, intervention, aftercare and life promotion. The Yarrabah Family Life Promotion program, established in 1995, has been facilitated by the locally-controlled Community Council and Primary Health Care service, and external resources engaged by the community.

Life promotion strategies, which primarily sought to mitigate community risk factors, included:

- training community members in crisis intervention and counselling
- a crisis centre and crisis line
- one-on-one grief and loss counselling, and family and men's support groups
- information for suicide survivors, families of suicide victims, and people who self-harm
- workshops on parenting and relationships
- promotion of sport, recreation and cultural activities
- development of networks across family and clan groups.

Other measures complementing the Family Life Promotion program included initiatives addressing alcohol misuse, especially as a cause of self-harm.

Between 2000 and 2004, there were three suicide deaths in Yarrabah, compared to 12 from 1992 to 1996 and none from 1997 to 1999 (Queensland Health, unpublished). Incidents of self-harm have also reportedly fallen, as have hospital presentations for accidental trauma and police interventions for alcohol-related problems.

(Continued next page)

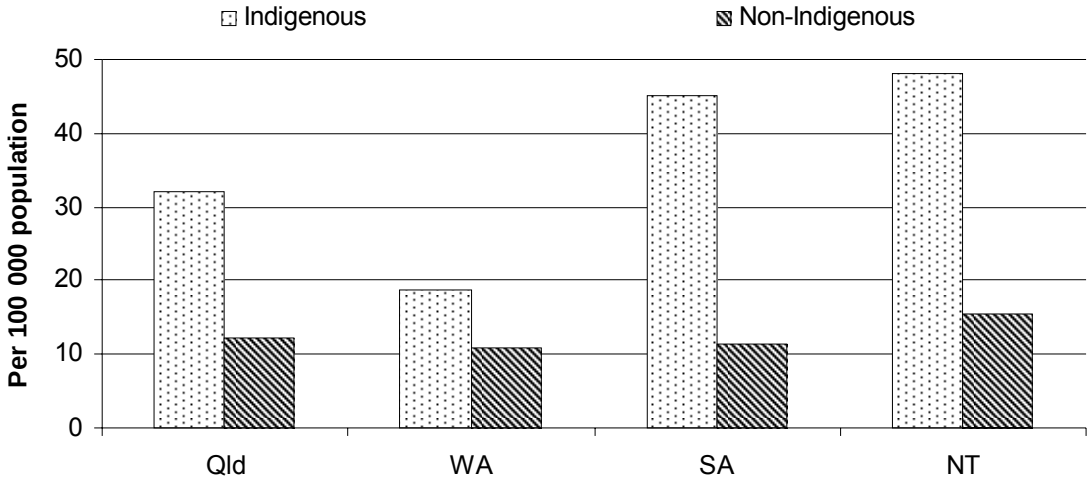
Box 3.8.2 (continued)

A study found that community ownership of the problem and the solution was fundamental in the success of the Yarrabah program. This was considered particularly critical as historical factors had led to feelings of chronic helplessness and hopelessness, which contributed to an increased risk of suicide. This finding was supported in an Action Research study in which the community 'identified the reclamation of 'spirit' or responding to the experience of hopelessness, as fundamental to the achievement of health improvement' (Baird, Mick-Ramsamy and Percy 1998, quoted in Mitchell 2000, p. 22).

The study noted that while the apparent lack of structure of the program had sometimes been a barrier when applying for funding, formal structure may work to inhibit community engagement where community ownership has not already been established.

Source: Baird, Mick-Ramsamy and Percy (1998); Clapham (2004, pp. 68–72, 126–7); Hunter et al. (2001); Mitchell (2000, p.22); Mitchell (2005, pp. 16–18).

Figure 3.8.1 **Intentional self-harm (suicide) deaths per 100 000 population, age standardised, 2001–2005[a, b, c, d, e]**



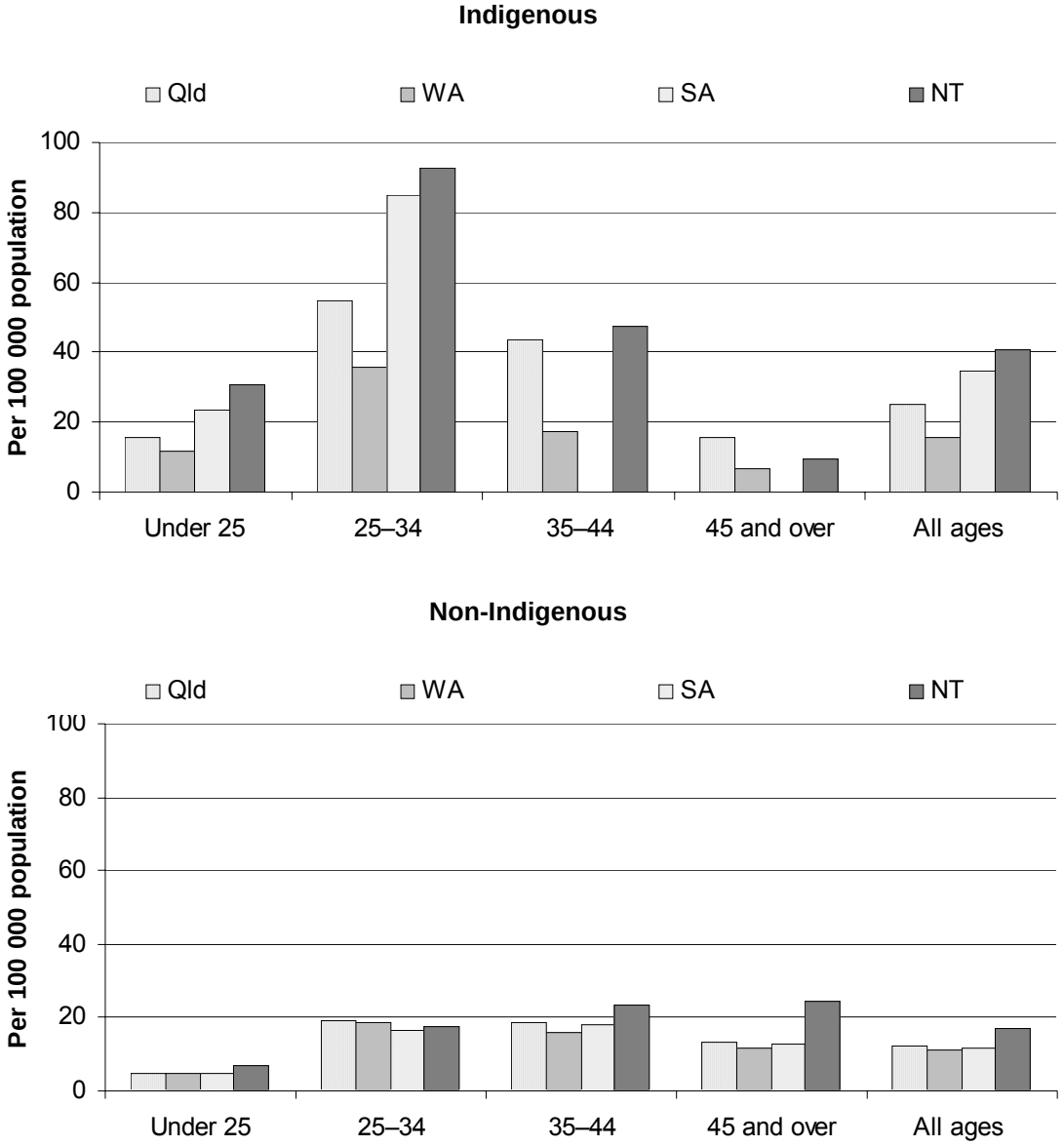
a Data on deaths of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians are affected by differing levels of coverage of deaths identified as Indigenous across states and territories. Care should be exercised in analysing these data, particularly in making comparisons across states and territories and between Indigenous and non-Indigenous data. **b** Data on Indigenous causes of death are not available separately from the ABS for NSW, Victoria, Tasmania and the ACT due to a combination of comparatively small numbers and relatively low coverage of Indigenous deaths. **c** Deaths from intentional self-harm are defined as causes of death with ICD codes X60–X84. **d** Data are subject to a degree of uncertainty and apparent differences in mortality estimates between jurisdictions may not be statistically significant. **e** Calculations of rates for the Indigenous population are based on ABS Experimental Projections, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians (low series, 2001 base). There are no comparable population data for the non-Indigenous population. Calculations of rates for the non-Indigenous population are based on data derived by subtracting Indigenous population projections from total population estimates and should be used with care.

Source: ABS *Causes of Deaths 2005*, Cat. no. 3303.0 (unpublished); table 3A.8.1.

- Suicide death rates were higher for Indigenous people (between 18.8 and 48.2 per 100 000 population) than non-Indigenous people (between 10.8 and 15.5 per 100 000 population) in Queensland, WA and SA and the NT between 2001 and 2005 (figure 3.8.1). Non-age-standardised data are included in table 3A.8.3.

Figure 3.8.2 shows that suicide rates in both the Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations vary between different age groups.

Figure 3.8.2 **Intentional self-harm (suicide) death rate by age, 2001–2005** [a, b, c, d, e, f]

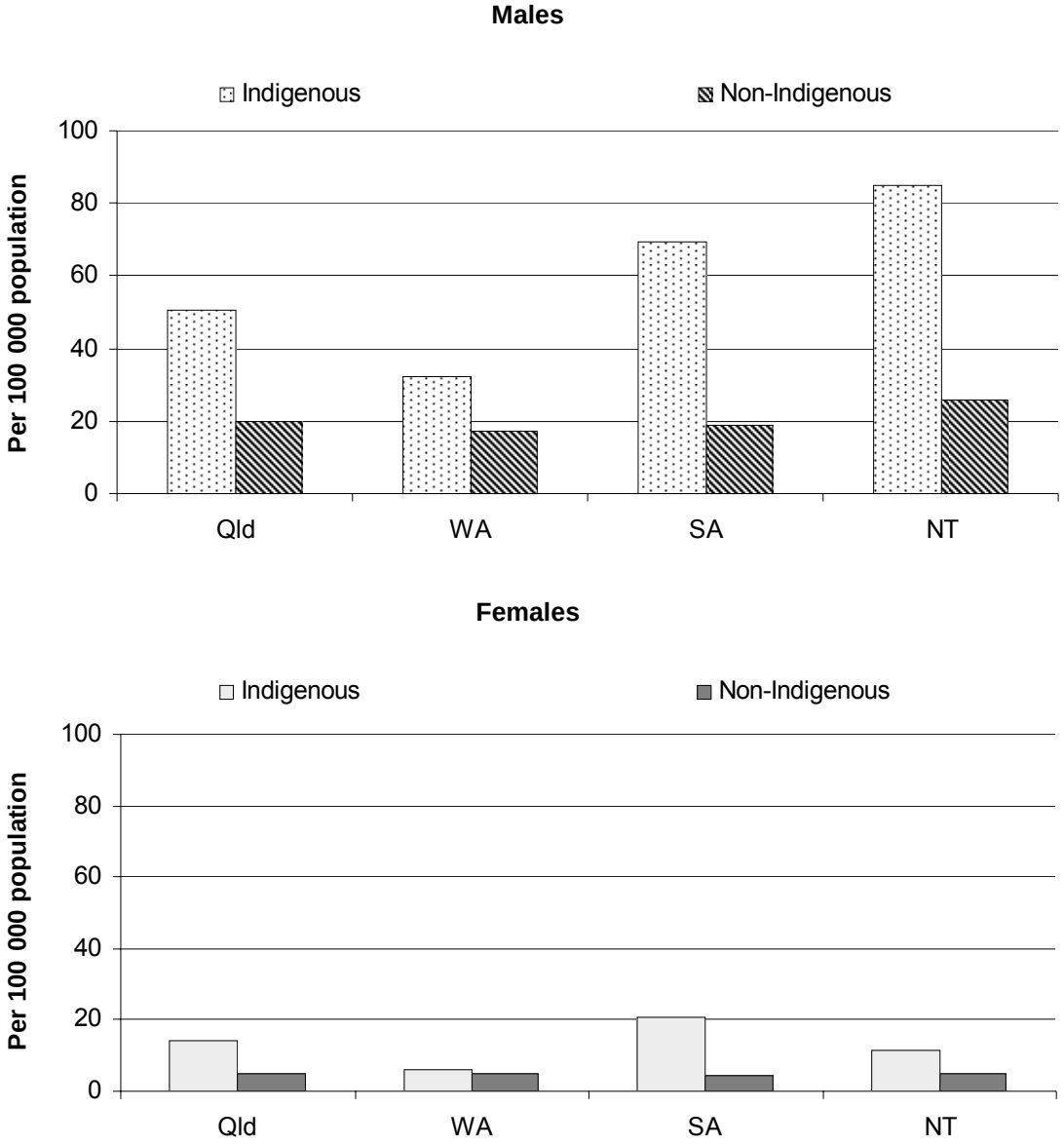


[a] Data on deaths of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians are affected by differing levels of coverage of deaths identified as Indigenous across states and territories. Care should be exercised in analysing these data, particularly in making comparisons across states and territories and between Indigenous and non-Indigenous data. [b] Data on Indigenous causes of death are not available separately from the ABS for NSW, Victoria, Tasmania and the ACT due to a combination of comparatively small numbers and relatively low coverage of Indigenous deaths. [c] Deaths from intentional self-harm are defined as causes of death with ICD codes X60–X84. [d] Data are subject to a degree of uncertainty and apparent differences in mortality estimates between jurisdictions may not be statistically significant. [e] Calculations of rates for the Indigenous population are based on ABS Experimental Projections, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians (low series, 2001 base). There are no comparable population data for the non-Indigenous population. Calculations of rates for the non-Indigenous population are based on data derived by subtracting Indigenous population projections from total population estimates and should be used with care. [f] SA data for Indigenous people in the age groups 35–44 and 45 and over were not available for this Report.

Source: ABS *Causes of Deaths 2005*, Cat. no. 3303.0 (unpublished); table 3A.8.2.

- Suicide death rates varied by age group in 2001–2005, with Indigenous people aged 25–34 having particularly high suicide rates (between 35.6 and 92.6 per 100 000 people) (figure 3.8.2).
- Suicide rates for people aged 45 and over were higher for non-Indigenous people than Indigenous people, in all states and territories except Queensland, where rates were similar (figure 3.8.2).

Figure 3.8.3 **Average annual suicide death rates by sex, age standardised, 2001–2005**[a, b, c, d, e]



a Data on deaths of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians are affected by differing levels of coverage of deaths identified as Indigenous across states and territories. Care should be exercised in analysing these data, particularly in making comparisons across states and territories and between Indigenous and non-Indigenous data. **b** Data on Indigenous causes of death are not available separately from the ABS for NSW, Victoria, Tasmania and the ACT due to a combination of comparatively small numbers and relatively low coverage of Indigenous deaths. **c** Deaths from intentional self-harm are defined as causes of death with ICD codes X60–X84. **d** Data are subject to a degree of uncertainty and apparent differences in mortality estimates between jurisdictions may not be statistically significant. **e** Calculations of rates for the Indigenous population are based on ABS Experimental Projections, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians (low series, 2001 base). There are no comparable population data for the non-Indigenous population. Calculations of rates for the non-Indigenous population are based on data derived by subtracting Indigenous population projections from total population estimates and should be used with care.

Source: ABS *Causes of Deaths 2005*, Cat. no. 3303.0 (unpublished); tables 3A.8.1.

In the period 2001 to 2005, after taking into account the different age structures of the two populations, in the four states and territories for which data are available:

- Suicide rates for Indigenous males were significantly higher (between 32.3 and 84.9 per 100 000) than those for non-Indigenous males (between 17.0 and 25.8 per 100 000) (figure 3.8.3).
- Suicide death rates were also higher for Indigenous females (between 6.2 and 21.0 per 100 000) than non-Indigenous females (between 4.3 and 5.1 per 100 000) (figure 3.8.3).
- Suicide death rates were higher for males than females for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people (figure 3.8.3).
- Suicides as a proportion of all deaths were higher for Indigenous people than for non-Indigenous people (2.6 to 6.9 per cent compared to 1.4 to 2.0 per cent) (table 3A.8.4).

A 2006 study of NT suicides between 1981 and 2002 (Measey et al. 2006), using data from ABS death registrations and the NT's Coroner's office, found that:

- the age-adjusted rate of suicide in NT had been higher than the national rate since 1996, and was rising.
- Between 1981 and 2002:
  - The incidence of Indigenous suicide has increased since low levels in the early 1980s and has become an increasing problem.
  - Averaged over the whole period, Indigenous and non-Indigenous rates were similar but Indigenous suicide rates rose rapidly and are now significantly higher than non-Indigenous rates.
  - The suicide rate for Indigenous males rose by 800 per cent while the rate for non-Indigenous males rose by 30 per cent.
  - The overall rate of suicide by Indigenous males increased by an annual average of 17.4 per cent, while the Indigenous female rate increased by an annual average of 25.8 per cent.
  - 87 per cent of all NT suicides were by males.
  - 75 per cent of NT suicides were by non-Indigenous people, who make up 72 per cent of the population.
  - Amongst Indigenous people, males aged 25–44 years had the highest suicide rate, and males aged 10–24 had the second highest rate.
  - Amongst non-Indigenous people, males over the age of 65 were most at risk.

- Analysis of data from the Top End[8] between 2000 and 2002 found:
  - a history of diagnosed mental illness (including depression) in 49 per cent of all suicides.
  - use of alcohol around the time of death in 56 per cent of all cases, and drug use in a further 16 per cent of all cases.
  - 41 per cent of all suicides were by unemployed people, who constitute 4 per cent of the Top End population.

Table 3.8.1 **Standardised non-fatal hospitalisations for intentional self-harm, Qld, SA, WA, and public hospitals in the NT, 2004-05**[a, b, c]

	Number of hospitalisations				*Age standardised hospitalisation rate (per 1000 people)*[d]	
	Indigenous	*Non-Indigenous*	*Not stated*	*Total*	*Indigenous*	*Non-Indigenous*[e]
Males	382	4 287	125	4 794	2.7	1.2
Females	448	7 096	148	7 692	3.0	2.0
All people	830	11 383	273	12 486	2.9	1.6

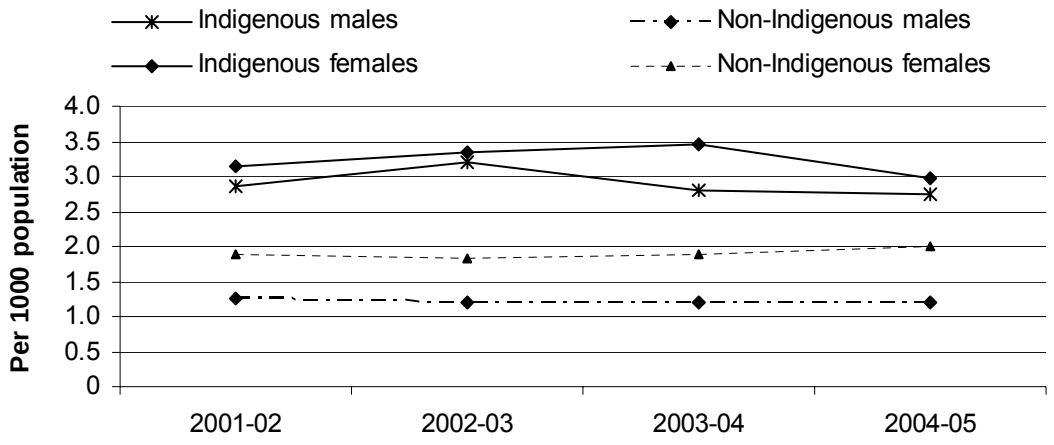
[a] Non-fatal refers to records where the hospitalisation was not equal to 'died'. Intentional self-harm refers to hospitalisations with at least one external cause in X60–X84, based on the ICD-10-AM classification. [b] Data based on State of usual residence. [c] Indigenous data are reported for Queensland, WA, SA and the NT only. These four jurisdictions are considered to have the highest level of accuracy of Indigenous identification, although the level of accuracy varies by jurisdiction and hospital. Data for these four jurisdictions over-represent Indigenous populations in less urbanised and more remote locations. Hospitalisation data for four jurisdictions should not be assumed to represent the hospitalisation experience in the other jurisdictions. [d] The rates per 1000 population were directly age standardised using the ABS estimated resident population data as at 30 June 2001. [e] The non-Indigenous rate includes 'not stated' hospitalisations.

Source: AIHW National Hospital Morbidity Database (unpublished); table 3A.8.5.

- In 2004-05, the age standardised non-fatal hospitalisation rate for intentional self-harm was higher for Indigenous people — 2.9 per 1000 Indigenous people compared with 1.6 per 1000 non-Indigenous people (table 3.8.1).
- Indigenous females (3.0 per 1000 Indigenous females) had a higher age standardised hospitalisation rate for self-harm than Indigenous males (2.7 per 1000 Indigenous males.). The same was true for non-Indigenous females and males (2.0 per 1000 and 1.2 per 1000 respectively).

8 The Top End refers to the northern part of the NT.

Figure 3.8.4 **Standardised non-fatal hospitalisations for intentional self-harm, Qld, SA, WA, and public hospitals in the NT[a, b, c, d, e]**



[a] Non-fatal refers to records where the hospitalisation was not equal to 'died'. Intentional self-harm refers to hospitalisations with at least one external cause in X60–X84, based on the ICD-10-AM classification. [b] Data based on State of usual residence. [c] Indigenous data are reported for Queensland, WA, SA and the NT only. These four jurisdictions are considered to have the highest level of accuracy of Indigenous identification, although the level of accuracy varies by jurisdiction and hospital. Data for these four jurisdictions over-represent Indigenous populations in less urbanised and more remote locations. Hospitalisation data for four jurisdictions should not be assumed to represent the hospitalisation experience in the other jurisdictions. [d] The rates per 1000 population were directly age standardised using the ABS estimated resident population data as at 30 June 2001. [e] The non-Indigenous rate includes 'not stated' hospitalisations.

Source: AIHW National Hospital Morbidity Database (unpublished); table 3A.8.5.

- Between 2001-02 and 2004-05, the age standardised hospitalisation rates for intentional self-harm fluctuated for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous males and females, however, it is not possible to discern any trends (figure 3.8.4).

3.9 Substantiated child abuse and neglect

Box 3.9.1 **Key messages**

- From 1999-2000 to 2005-06, for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous children, the rate of substantiated notifications for child abuse or neglect increased (figure 3.9.1).
- In 2005-06, Indigenous children were nearly four times as likely as other children to be the subject of a substantiation of abuse or neglect (table 3A.9.1).

This headline indicator was chosen because child abuse and neglect contribute to the severe social strain under which many Indigenous people live (Keel 2004; Stanley, Tomison and Pocock 2003). Ensuring that Indigenous children are safe,

healthy and supported by their families will contribute to building functional and resilient communities.

There are no reliable data on actual levels of child abuse and neglect. Substantiated child protection notifications are the primary source data for this indicator. Substantiated notifications record children who come into contact with community services for protective reasons. Information on sexually transmitted infection (STI) diagnoses in Indigenous children and police administrative data on child sexual assault victims have been provided to supplement the primary data source.

Factors underlying child abuse and neglect are well documented (Atkinson 1996; Clapham, Stevenson and Lo 2006; Gordon, Hallahan and Henry 2002; Robertson 2000; UN 2006; UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre 2004). Researchers agree that no single risk factor causes child abuse and neglect (Stanley 2005; Memmott et al. 2001; Gordon, Hallahan and Henry 2002). Factors acting in combination, include:

- behaviour (for example, domestic violence and alcohol and substance abuse)
- environment (for example, overcrowded home environment and poor living conditions)
- psychological factors (for example, high stress levels, lack of family and community resilience and mental health)
- socioeconomic factors (for example, economic deprivation, poverty, unemployment, poor education, limited access to social services and discrimination/racism).

For Indigenous people these factors sit within a broader context of social and historic issues, such as loss of lifestyle, loss of culture, deterioration of traditional social controls and marginalisation from society (Matthews 1997; Stanley 2005). Acknowledging the shared causal pathways that contribute to child abuse and neglect increases the potential to devise preventative strategies (Stanley 2005; Libesman 2004).

Substantiated child protection notifications

Care should be taken in interpreting the substantiation data. No credible data exist on actual levels of child abuse or neglect. The number and rate of substantiations are collected by community service departments and may under-estimate the true extent of abuse or neglect occurring within the community, because not all cases are reported. Furthermore, each State and Territory has its own legislation, policies and

practices in relation to child protection, so there are differences between jurisdictions in the data provided.

Children who come into contact with community services for protective reasons include those:

- who have been or are being abused, neglected or otherwise harmed
- whose parents cannot provide adequate care or protection (AIHW 2006a).

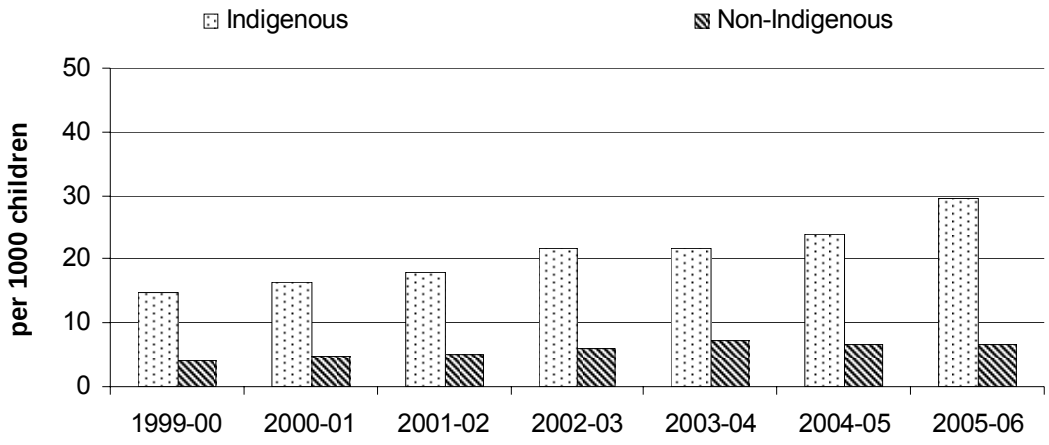
Before a matter is considered 'substantiated' by authorities, the matter must first be notified and investigated. A notification will be substantiated where it is concluded after investigation that the child has been, is being, or is likely to be abused, neglected or otherwise harmed. The criteria for substantiation vary across jurisdictions. Some jurisdictions substantiate situations where child abuse and neglect have occurred or are likely to occur, while others substantiate situations where the child has been harmed or is at risk of harm, and the parents have failed to act to protect the child (AIHW 2006a).

In some instances, increases in notifications (and subsequent substantiations) may be a result of reduced tolerance in Indigenous families and the broader Indigenous community of abuse or neglect of children. An increased rate in these instances will signify increased awareness and identification of the problem — which is more desirable than abuse and neglect occurring but not being reported.

An increased rate may also be due to improvements in the identification of Indigenous status. The practices used to identify and record the Indigenous status of children in the child protection system vary across states and territories. Over the last few years, a number of jurisdictions have introduced measures to improve the identification of Indigenous clients. In some jurisdictions, however, there is a significant proportion of children whose Indigenous status is unknown and this impacts on the quality of data for Indigenous children (AIHW 2006a).

Finally, an increased rate may be due to an increase in resources in the protection and support area, allowing more notifications to be investigated more thoroughly.

Figure 3.9.1 **Rate per 1000 children aged 0–16 years who were the subject of substantiations[a, b]**



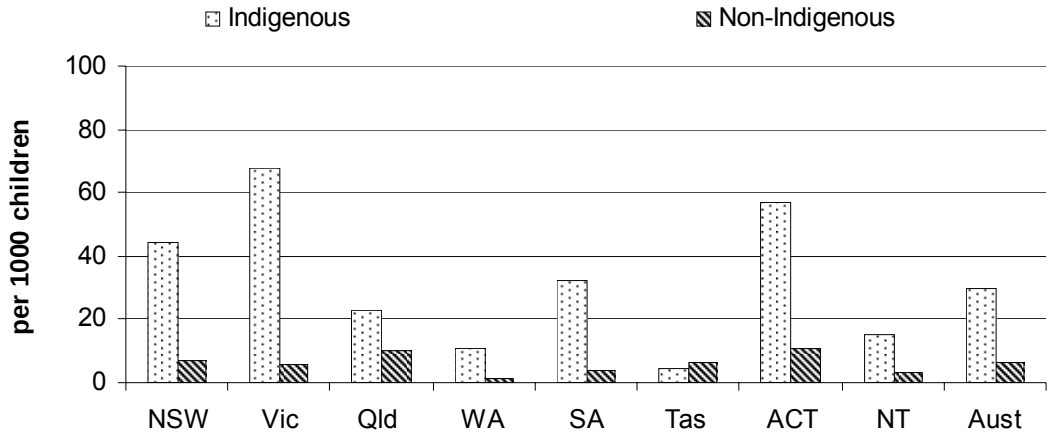
a Non-Indigenous includes Indigenous status not stated. **b** Rates of children in substantiations were calculated as the number of children aged 0–16 years in each category (including those whose age was not stated) divided by the estimated population of children aged 0–16 years at 31 December, multiplied by 1000. For Indigenous children, the June projections for two years were averaged to obtain a population figure for December of the relevant year.

Source: AIHW, *Child Protection Notifications, Investigations and Substantiations, Australia* data collection (unpublished); table 3A.9.1.

- From 1999-2000 to 2005-06 the substantiation rate for Indigenous children increased from 14.8 per 1000 children to 29.5 per 1000 children (figure 3.9.1).
- Over the same period, the rate for non-Indigenous children increased from 4.2 per 1000 children to 6.5 per 1000 children.

Attachment table 3A.9.1 includes the number of children and the rate per 1000 children aged 0–16 years in substantiations by State and Territory for the period 1999-2000 to 2005-06.

Figure 3.9.2 **Rate per 1000 children aged 0–16 years who were the subject of substantiations, 2005-06[a, b, c]**

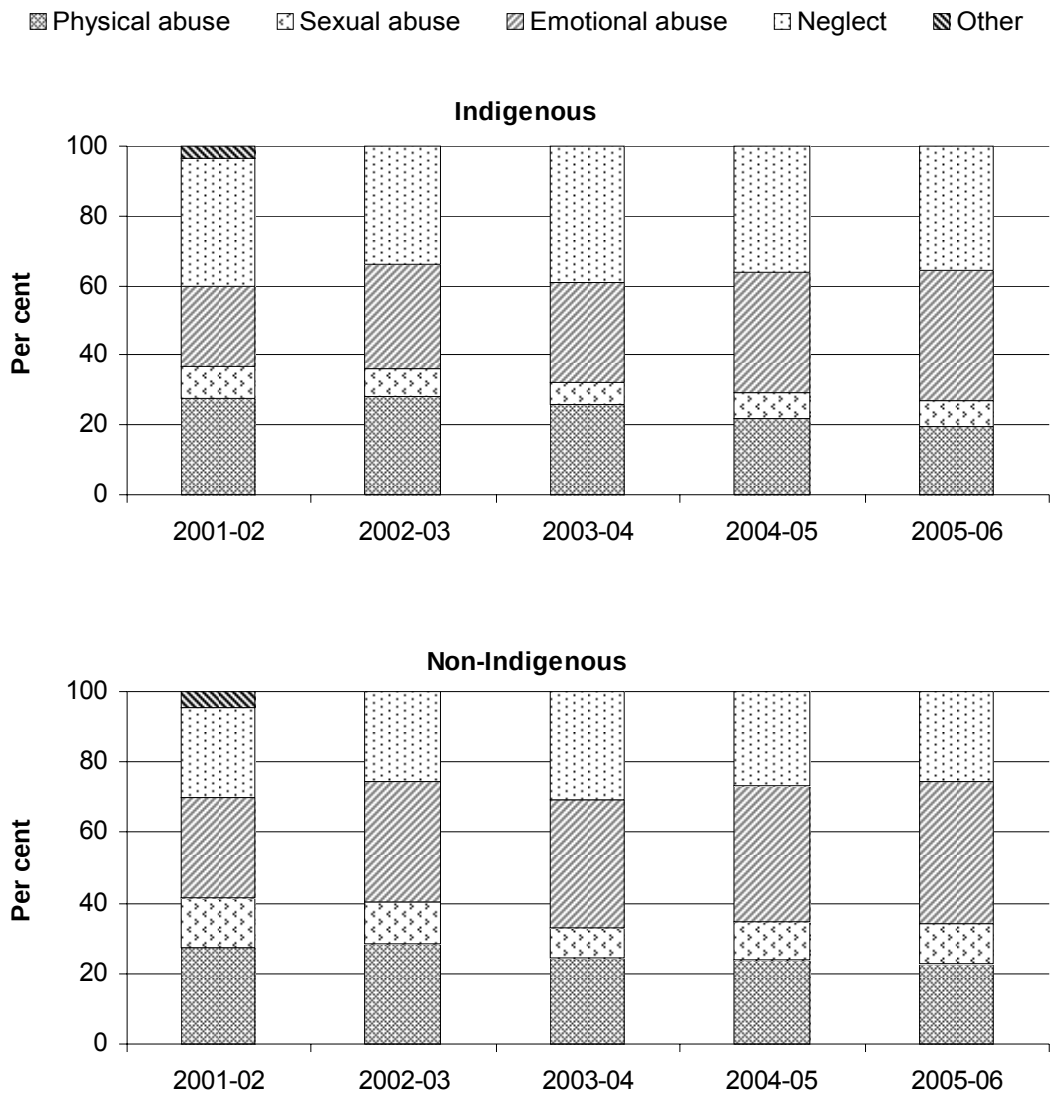


a Non-Indigenous includes Indigenous status not stated. **b** Rates of children in substantiations were calculated as the number of children aged 0–16 years in each category (including those whose age was not stated) divided by the estimated population of children aged 0–16 years at 31 December, multiplied by 1000. For Indigenous children, the June projections for two years were averaged to obtain a population figure for December of the relevant year. **c** Care should be taken in interpreting the rates for Indigenous children in Tasmania due to lower rates of recording Indigenous status at the time of the substantiation.

Source: AIHW, *Child Protection Notifications, Investigations and Substantiations, Australia* data collection (unpublished); table 3A.9.1.

- In 2005-06, the substantiation rate for Indigenous children was higher than the rate for non-Indigenous children in all jurisdictions except Tasmania (figure 3.9.2).

Figure 3.9.3 **Children aged 0–16 years who were the subject of a substantiation: type of abuse or neglect[a, b, c, d]**



a Non-Indigenous includes Indigenous status not stated. **b** If a child was the subject of a substantiation for more than one type of abuse or neglect, then type of abuse and/or neglect is classified as the type most likely to be the most severe in the short term or most likely to place the child at risk in the short term, or if such an assessment is not possible, to the most obvious form of abuse. **c** In 2001-02 and 2002-03, the category 'other' was used in NSW and comprised children identified as being at high risk but with no identifiable injury; Queensland data related to children aged 0–17 years; Tasmanian data are not included due to the very small Indigenous numbers. **d** NSW data are not included in 2003-04 because NSW was unable to provide data due to the implementation of a new data system.

Source: AIHW, *Child Protection Notifications, Investigations and Substantiations, Australia* data collection (unpublished); table 3A.9.2–6.

Variations in the distribution of types of abuse or neglect over time are likely to be the result of differences in the classification of substantiations by jurisdictions, as well as differences in the types of incidents that are substantiated (figure 3.9.3).

From 2001-02 to 2005-06, for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous children, the proportion of:

- physical abuse substantiations decreased (from 27.5 per cent to 19.8 per cent and 27.0 per cent to 22.6 per cent, respectively)
- substantiations for sexual abuse decreased (9.5 per cent to 7.2 per cent and 14.6 per cent to 11.2 per cent, respectively)
- emotional abuse substantiations increased (from 22.6 per cent to 37.3 per cent and 28.2 per cent to 40.7 per cent, respectively)
- neglect substantiations were unchanged (tables 3A.9.2 and 3A.9.6).

Attachment tables 3A.9.2–5 include the number of children and the rate per 1000 children aged 0–16 years who were the subject of a substantiation, by type of abuse or neglect by State and Territory for the period 2002-03 to 2005-06.

Sexually transmitted infection diagnoses in children and child sexual assault victims

There is growing awareness of the prevalence of child sexual abuse in some Indigenous communities (ACSAT 2006; Coorey 2001; Dunne et al. 2006; Keel 2004; Lawrence 2006; Memmott et al. 2001; NT 2006; Robertson 2000; SNAICC 2004, 2005; Stanley 2003; Stanley et al. 2002; Stanley, Tomison and Pocock 2003).

Data on the rate of STIs in children is not a reliable measure of the rate of child sexual abuse. A greater rate of STIs in Indigenous children may be a result of the higher prevalence of STIs in the Indigenous adult population rather than a greater rate of abuse. However, as Abbott (2006) commented '…it's hard to see how sexually transmitted diseases in very young patients can be the result of anything other than abuse'.

New diagnoses of genital chlamydia, gonorrhoea and syphilis are notifiable conditions in all states and territories of Australia. Data on the number of diagnoses of chlamydia, gonorrhoea and syphilis by Indigenous status are only available for Victoria, WA, SA and the NT. New South Wales, Tasmania and the ACT were unable to provide these data by Indigenous status.

Notifications are collated in the Australian National Notifiable Diseases Surveillance System (NNDSS), which records a unique record reference number, State or Territory identifier, disease code, date of onset, date of notification to the relevant health authority, sex, age, Indigenous status and postcode of residence.

Table 3.9.1 **Number of diagnoses of chlamydia, gonorrhoea and syphilis in children by age group, Victoria, WA, SA and the NT, 2001–2005[a]**

	Chlamydia		*Gonorrhoea*		*Syphilis*		*Total STIs*
	0–4	5–14	0–4	5–14	0–4	5–14	0–14
Indigenous	19	520	52	685	3	66	1345
Non-Indigenous[b]	41	325	11	121	4	8	510

[a] Data for children aged 0–4 may include children who acquired the infection through non-sexual contact (for example in-utero or at birth). [b] Includes diagnoses in people whose Indigenous status was not reported.

Source: NNDSS published in NCHECR 2006.

- Numbers of diagnoses of chlamydia, gonorrhoea and syphilis are higher for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous children aged five to 14 years than for children aged under four years (figure 3.9.1).
- The number of Indigenous children diagnosed with a STI is higher than the number of non-Indigenous children diagnosed, except for children aged under four years for diagnoses of chlamydia and syphilis. Given that Indigenous children comprise a small proportion of the total population, compared to non-Indigenous children, they are overrepresented in the numbers of children diagnosed with a STI.
- In Queensland, during 2003 and 2004, notifications of STIs for Indigenous children aged 10–14 years were higher than non-Indigenous children (6.1 per 1000 compared with 0.2 per 1000, respectively). STI notification rates for Indigenous children in remote and regional areas were significantly higher than those in major cities and inner regional areas (1.5 per 1000 compared with 10.8 per 1000) (Department of Communities 2006; Queensland Health Notifiable Disease Register 2005 (unpublished)).
- In 2003 and 2004, in Queensland, STI notification rates for Indigenous people aged 15–24 years old were 56.7 per 1000. For non-Indigenous people the rate was 9.0 per 1000. STI notification rates for Indigenous people aged 15–24 years old increased with remoteness, ranging from 18.0 per 1000 in major city areas to 115.5 in remote areas (Department of Communities 2006; Queensland Health Notifiable Disease Register 2005 (unpublished)).

Police administrative data on child sexual assault victims for NSW, Victoria, Queensland, WA and the NT can be found in attachment tables 3A.11.5 – 3A.11.49. These data are not comparable across jurisdictions. (See section 3.11 for more information on family and community violence.)

3.10 Deaths from homicide and hospitalisations for assault

Box 3.10.1 **Key messages**

- Homicide makes up a very small proportion of total deaths but can indicate broader levels of family and community violence. There were 37 Indigenous homicide victims in Australia in 2004-05 (table 3A.10.6).
- Of 245 homicides in Australia in 2004-05, Indigenous people accounted for 15.1 per cent of homicide victims and 16.3 per cent of homicide offenders (table 3A.10.6).
- After adjusting for age differences, the homicide rate in the Indigenous population was 5 to 15 times the rate in the non-Indigenous population in Queensland, WA, SA and the NT (figure 3.10.1).
- From 1999-2000 to 2004-05 the rate of Indigenous homicides in remote, outer regional and very remote areas (13.1–16.7 per 100 000 population) was around 3 times the rate in major cities and inner regional areas (4.6–4.9 per 100 000). Indigenous homicide rates were higher than non-Indigenous rates in all remoteness areas (1.4–2.4 per 100 000) (figure 3.10.5).
- In 2004-05, in the four jurisdictions for which data are available, Indigenous people were hospitalised for assault at 17.3 times the rate of non-Indigenous people. Indigenous females were 44.1 times more likely to be hospitalised for assault than non-Indigenous females (figure 3.10.1 and table 3A.10.12).

The indicator 'Deaths from homicide and hospitalisations for assault' compares information on violence for Indigenous and non-Indigenous people across Australia, including homicide victimisation and offending rates, factors associated with homicide and trends over time. This indicator also provides statistics on hospitalisations resulting from interpersonal violence.

Indigenous people are over-represented in all forms of violent crime in Australia (Memmott et al. 2001). Indigenous people are much more likely to be both victims and perpetrators of homicide than other Australians (AIC 1993; Mouzos 2001).

Violence in Indigenous communities is frequently associated with substance abuse, and often occurs within family networks (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner 2006; Bolger 1991; Gordon, Hallahan and Henry 2002; Memmott et al. 2001; Mouzos 2001).

Mouzos (2001) found that, compared to non-Indigenous homicides (see footnote to table 3.10.1 for definitions), Indigenous homicides are more likely to occur in non-urban areas. However, this may be expected because there are proportionally more

Indigenous than non-Indigenous people residing in non-urban areas. Research suggests that family violence is more prevalent in rural and remote areas of Australia, particularly in Indigenous communities (NHMRC 2002). Data on homicide by remoteness shows that Indigenous homicides are highest in remote, very remote and outer regional areas. Although Indigenous homicide rates are lower in major cities and inner regional areas, the rates are considerably higher than for non-Indigenous people (see figure 3.10.1).

Comparatively high rates of Indigenous homicide are paralleled by high levels of other forms of violence such as self-harm (see section 3.8) and assault. High rates of violence appear to coincide with other factors of disadvantage, such as poor health and lower income, employment and education levels (Memmott et al. 2001; Robertson 2000, cited in Gordon, Hallahan and Henry 2002). Family violence has been associated with medical and psychiatric disorders, homelessness, substance abuse and delinquency (National Research Council 1998, cited in Gordon, Hallahan and Henry 2002).

Several programs and activities attempting to reduce violence in Indigenous communities are included as case studies in section 3.11 (Family and community violence). Programs that reduce alcohol and substance misuse can help reduce violent behaviour in Indigenous communities — examples are included in chapter 8. Programs that reduce the involvement of Indigenous people in the criminal justice and corrections systems or that lower rates of reoffending can also contribute to reducing violent crime — for examples see sections 3.12, 7.4 and 9.2. Section 9.4 explores mental health, which can influence the extent of violent behaviour.

This section is organised into two parts. The first part uses data from the ABS and Australian Institute of Criminology (AIC) to report on deaths from homicide. The second part uses data from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) to report on hospitalisations for assault.

Deaths from homicide

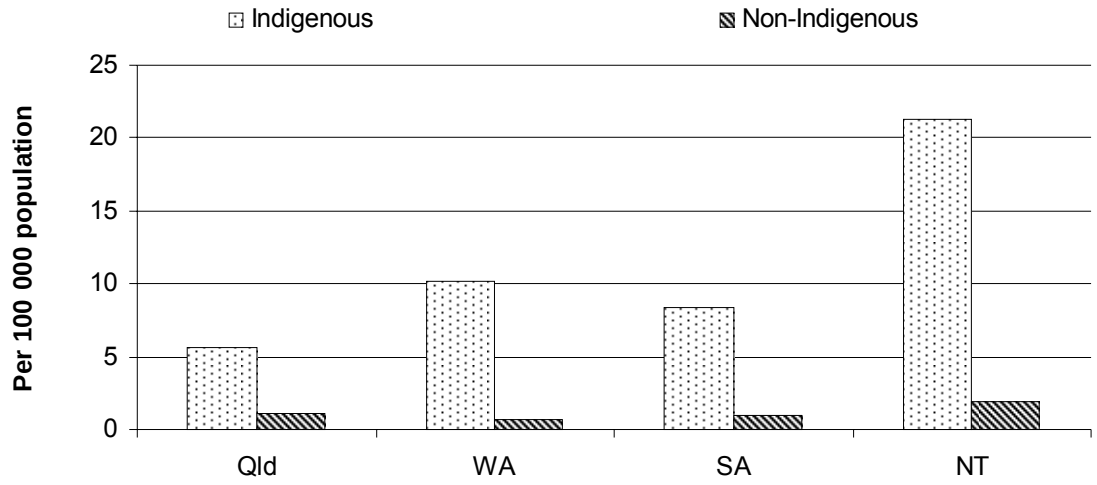
Indigenous homicides differ in several respects from non-Indigenous homicides. Most Indigenous homicides tend to involve family members, with domestic altercations being one of the main motives. Alcohol consumption at the time of the homicide incident by both the victim and offender is much more prevalent in Indigenous homicides than non-Indigenous homicides (see section 8.1). Furthermore, most Indigenous victims and offenders (eight out of ten cases in 2004-05 compared to four out of ten for non-Indigenous homicides) tend to be unemployed at the time of the homicide .

The analysis on homicides below is based on separate data from the AIC (collected as part of the National Homicide Monitoring Program) and the ABS. The method for collecting homicide data differs between the AIC and the ABS. The AIC data are collected from offence reports of homicide coming to the attention of the Australian police and from coronial records across Australia, while the ABS data are based on information supplied to the Registrars of Births, Deaths and Marriages (who are responsible for registering all deaths in their jurisdiction).

One limitation of the AIC data is that the method used for determining Indigenous status of both the victim and offender varies across states and territories. Indigenous status may be identified by police solely on the external appearance of the victim and offender in some areas, while for others it is by self identification (see sections 3.11 and 3.12). In ABS data Indigenous identification is supplied by the next of kin when registering the death. Also, details of the cause(s) of death are provided by the certifying medical practitioner or coroner.

Despite the above limitations, the AIC and ABS data allow for some detailed examination of the circumstances and characteristics of homicide occurring in the Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations.

Figure 3.10.1 **Homicide death rates, age standardised, by jurisdiction, 2001–2005**[a, b, c, d]

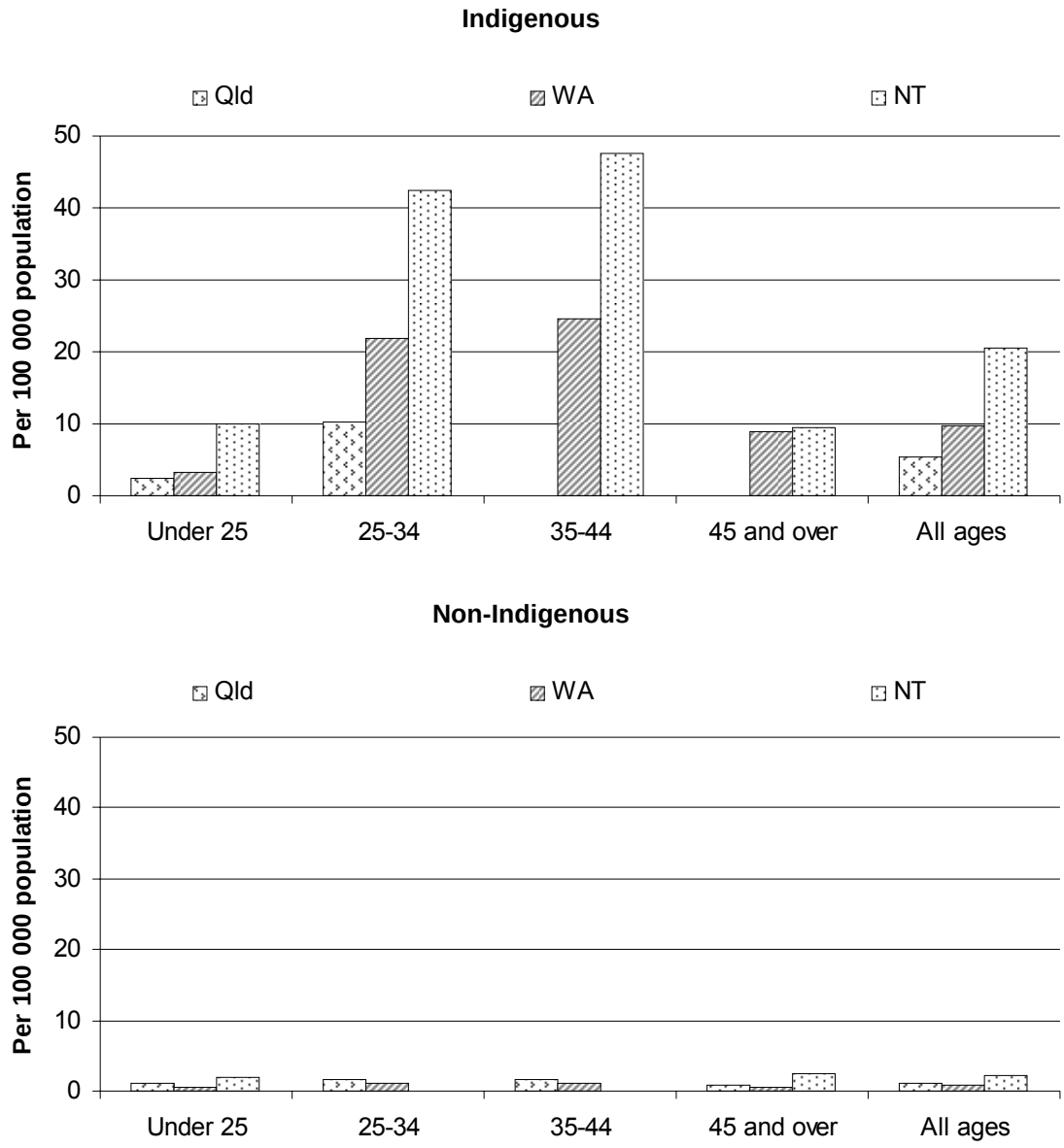


[a] Data on deaths of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians are affected by differing levels of Indigenous identification across states and territories. Care should be exercised in analysing these data, particularly in making comparisons across states and territories and between Indigenous and non-Indigenous data. [b] Data on Indigenous causes of death are not available separately from the ABS for NSW, Victoria, Tasmania and the ACT due to a combination of comparatively small numbers and relatively low coverage of Indigenous deaths [c] Deaths from homicide are defined as causes of death with ICD codes X85–Y09. [d] Calculations of rates for the Indigenous population are based on ABS Experimental Projections, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians (low series, 2001 base). There are no comparable population data for the non-Indigenous population. Calculations of rates for the non-Indigenous population are based on data derived by subtracting Indigenous population projections from total population estimates and should be used with care.

Source: ABS Causes of Death 2005, Cat. no. 3303.0 (unpublished); table 3A10.1.

- Taking into consideration the different age structures in the populations, there was a much higher rate of homicide in the Indigenous population (between 5.7 and 21.3 per 100 000 population) than the non-Indigenous population (between 0.7 and 2.0 per 100 000) between 2001–2005, in Queensland, WA, SA and the NT (figure 3.10.1).
- Homicide is a very small proportion of total deaths but can be indicative of broader levels of family and community violence. There were 37 Indigenous homicide victims in Australia in 2004-05 (table 3A.10.6).

Figure 3.10.2 **Homicide death rates by age, 2001–2005**[a, b, c, d, e]

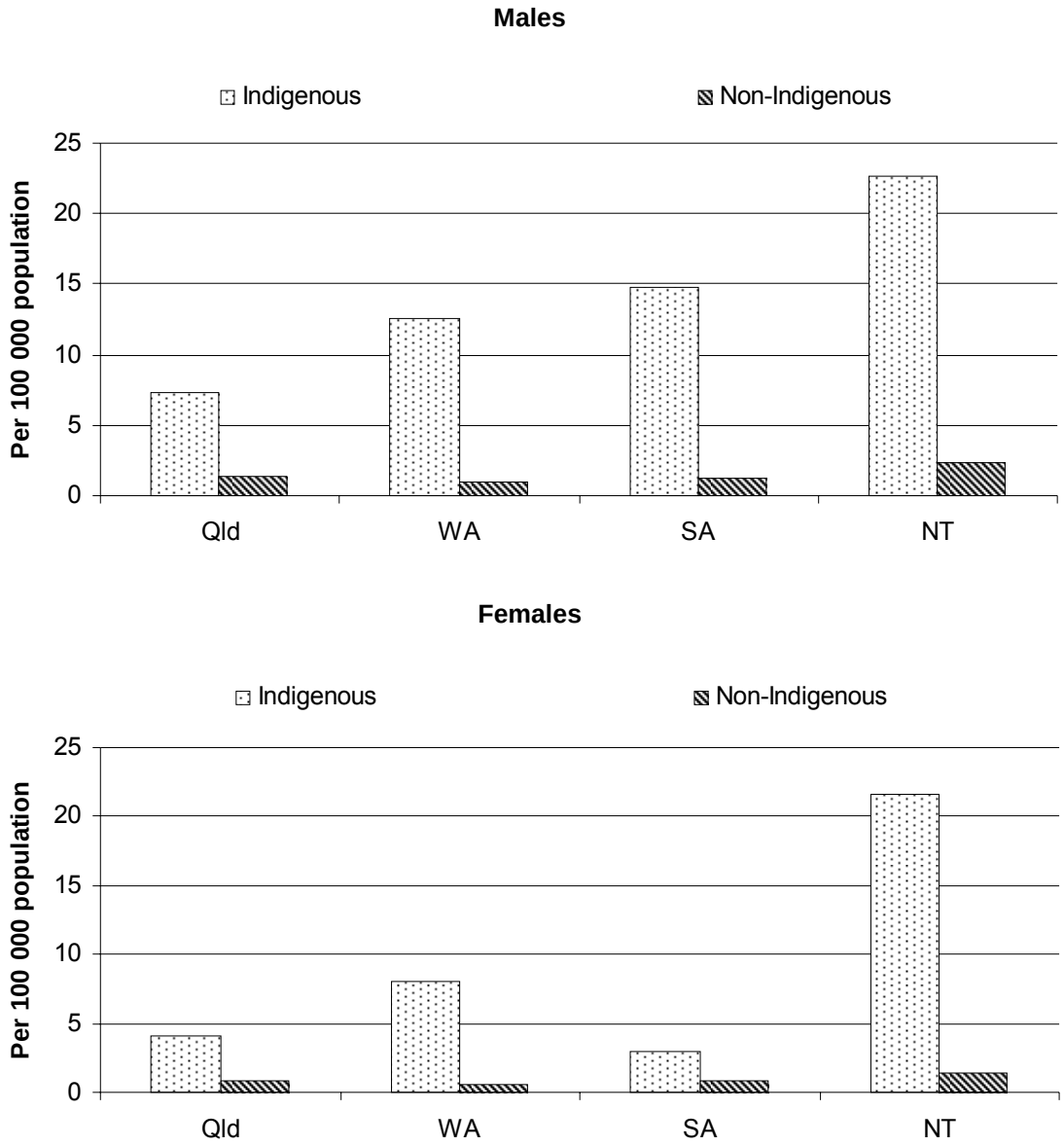


[a] Data on deaths of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians are affected by differing levels of Indigenous identification across states and territories. Care should be exercised in analysing these data, particularly in making comparisons across states and territories and between Indigenous and non-Indigenous data. [b] Data on Indigenous causes of death are not available separately from the ABS for NSW, Victoria, SA, Tasmania and the ACT due to a combination of comparatively small numbers and relatively low coverage of Indigenous deaths. [c] Homicide death rates were not published for Qld for 'under 25' and '45 and over'. [d] Deaths from homicide are defined as causes of death with ICD codes X85–Y09. [e] Calculations of rates for the Indigenous population are based on ABS Experimental Projections, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians (low series, 2001 base). There are no comparable population data for the non-Indigenous population. Calculations of rates for the non-Indigenous population are based on data derived by subtracting Indigenous population projections from total population estimates and should be used with care.

Source: ABS Causes of Death 2005, Cat. no. 3303.0 (unpublished); table 3A.10.2.

- Homicide death rates for Indigenous people were particularly high for people in the age groups 25–34 and 35–44 (figure 3.10.2).

Figure 3.10.3 **Average annual homicide death rates, age standardised, by sex, 2001–2005**[a, b, c, d]



a Data on deaths of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians are affected by differing levels of Indigenous identification across states and territories. Care should be exercised in analysing these data, particularly in making comparisons across states and territories and between Indigenous and non-Indigenous data. **b** Data on Indigenous causes of death are not available separately from the ABS for NSW, Victoria, Tasmania and the ACT due to a combination of comparatively small numbers and relatively low coverage of Indigenous deaths **c** Deaths from homicide are defined as causes of death with ICD codes X85–Y09. **d** Calculations of rates for the Indigenous population are based on ABS Experimental Projections, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians (low series, 2001 base). There are no comparable population data for the non-Indigenous population. Calculations of rates for the non-Indigenous population are based on data derived by subtracting Indigenous population projections from total population estimates and should be used with care.

Source: ABS Causes of Death 2005, Cat. no. 3303.0 (unpublished); table 3A.10.1.

In the period 2001 to 2005, after taking into account the different age structures of the two populations, in the four states and territories for which data are available:

- Homicide death rates for Indigenous males were significantly higher than those for non-Indigenous males (ranging from 7.3 to 22.6 per 100 000 compared with 0.9 to 2.4 per 100 000) (figure 3.10.3).
- Homicide death rates were higher for Indigenous females (ranging from 3.0 to 21.6 per 100 000) than non-Indigenous females (from 0.5 to 1.4 per 100 000) (figure 3.10.3).
- Non-age standardised homicide death rates for males and females are included in table 3A.10.3.

Table 3.10.1 **Comparative statistics on Indigenous and non-Indigenous homicides, Australia, 2004-05[a]**

	Indigenous homicides [b]		*Non-Indigenous homicides*		*Inter-racial homicides* [c]		*Total homicides*	
	no.	*%*	*no.*	*%*	*no.*	*%*	*no.*	*%*
Gender								
Male offender on male victim	14	40.0	114	56.4	6	85.7	134	54.9
Male offender on female victim	12	34.3	51	25.2	1	14.3	64	26.2
Female offender on male victim	7	20.0	25	12.4	–	..	32	13.1
Female offender on female victim	2	5.7	12	5.9	–	..	14	5.7
Employment status								
Victim and offender working	1	5.0	25	20.7	1	16.7	27	18.4
Neither working	16	80.0	52	43.0	4	66.7	72	49.0
Victim working and offender not working	2	10.0	24	19.8	1	16.7	27	18.4
Victim not working and offender working	1	5.0	20	16.5	–	..	21	14.3
Motive of the killing								
Domestic altercation	15	42.9	40	19.7	–	..	55	22.4
Alcohol-related argument	7	20.0	12	5.9	1	14.3	20	8.2
Other argument	6	17.1	86	42.4	3	42.9	95	38.8
No apparent motive/unknown	7	20.0	65	32.0	3	42.9	75	30.6
Victim-offender relationship								
Intimate partners and other family	27	77.1	81	39.9	–	..	108	44.0
Friends and acquaintances	7	20.0	60	29.6	3	42.9	70	28.6
Strangers	1	2.9	32	15.8	4	57.1	37	15.1
Other relationship	–	..	22	10.8	–	..	22	9.0
Unknown	–	..	8	3.9	–	..	8	3.3
Total	**35**	**100**	**203**	**100**	**7**	**100**	**245**	**100**

a Where an offender has been identified. **b** Both victims and offenders of homicide are either Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islanders. **c** Inter-racial homicides are where either the victim or the offender is Indigenous (including homicides involving an Indigenous offender and a non-Indigenous victim, and a non-Indigenous offender and an Indigenous victim). − Nil or rounded to zero. **.. np** not applicable.

Source: Australian Institute of Criminology, National Homicide Monitoring Program, 2004-2005 [computer file]; table 3A.10.7

Based on AIC data, there were 245 homicide incidents throughout Australia in 2004-05, of which 35 incidents (14.3 per cent) were Indigenous homicides[9], 203 incidents (82.9 per cent) involved non-Indigenous people only, and the remaining 7 incidents (2.9 per cent) were inter-racial homicides (table 3.10.1).

- Out of 245 homicides in 2004-05, Indigenous people accounted for 15.1 per cent of homicide victims and 16.3 per cent of homicide offenders throughout Australia (table 3A.10.6).
- Indigenous females have a higher representation as both victims (40.0 per cent) and offenders (25.7 per cent) of the total Indigenous homicides than non-Indigenous females of total non-Indigenous homicides. In non-Indigenous homicides, females were 31.1 per cent of victims and 18.3 of per cent of offenders of the total non-Indigenous homicides in 2004-05 (table 3.10.1).
- The overwhelming majority of Indigenous homicides involved persons who were unemployed at the time of the incident. In 2004-05, 80.0 per cent of both victims and offenders were unemployed at the time of the incident compared with 43.0 per cent of both victims and offenders for non-Indigenous homicides (table 3.10.1). However, this is not unexpected given the higher unemployment rate for Indigenous people (see section 3.5).
- For 2004-05, domestic altercation was the main homicide motive identified in a significantly higher proportion of Indigenous homicides (42.9 per cent) than non-Indigenous homicides (19.7 per cent). The main motive in non-Indigenous homicides was other arguments[10] (42.4 per cent) (table 3.10.1).
- Alcohol-related argument was the second most common motive for Indigenous homicides (20.0 per cent). The second most common motive for non-Indigenous homicides was domestic altercation (19.7 per cent).
- Overall, most Indigenous homicides took place within families. In 2004-05, 77.1 per cent of Indigenous homicides involved intimate partners and other family members while 39.9 per cent of non-Indigenous homicides took place amongst these groups (table 3.10.1).
- The use of a knife or other sharp instrument as a weapon accounted for 51.4 per cent of the Indigenous homicides in 2004-05, while in non-Indigenous homicides they accounted for 29.6 per cent (table 3A.10.7).

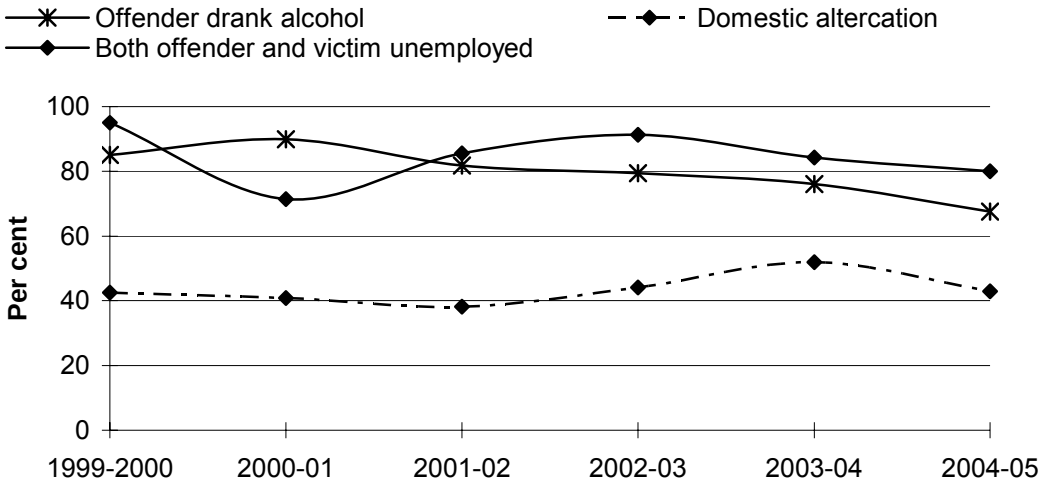
9 Indigenous homicides refers to homicides where both victims and offenders of homicide are either Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islanders; non-Indigenous homicides refers to homicides where both victims and offenders are not Indigenous but are Caucasian, Asian and Maori/Pacific islanders; and inter-racial homicides where either the victim or the offender, but not both, is Indigenous (AIC unpublished 2003).

10 Other arguments refers to argument over money/drugs, revenge, and racial/sexual vilification (hate crimes), sexual gratification, envy, and other motives.

Patterns and trends

Patterns and trends in the characteristics of both victims and offenders are included in this section to enable comparison of the key characteristics of both the victim and the offender and the circumstances associated with homicide. The trend analysis here is based on six years data from 1999-2000 to 2004-05 obtained from the AIC.

Figure 3.10.4 **Trends in key factors associated with Indigenous homicide, 1999-2000 to 2004-05**



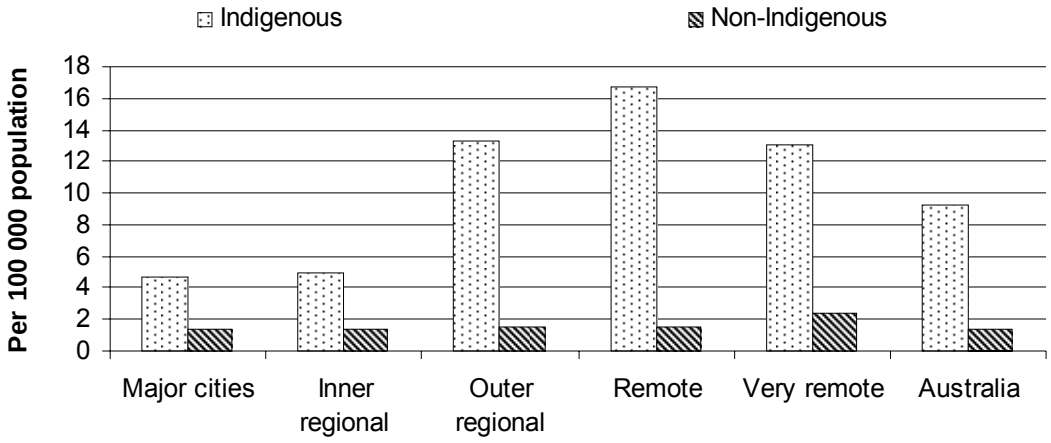
Source: AIC National Homicide Monitoring Program, 1999-2000 to 2004-05; table 3A.10.8.

- From 1999-2000 to 2004-05, domestic altercation was the major motive for most Indigenous homicides (figure 3.10.4).
- Most Indigenous homicides involved persons who were unemployed at the time of the homicide. In 2004-05, 80.0 per cent of both victims and offenders were unemployed (figure 3.10.4).
- There has been a decline in the proportion of Indigenous homicides where the offender was under the influence of alcohol from 85.0 per cent in 1999-2000 to 67.6 per cent in 2004-05 (figure 3.10.4).

Figure 3.10.5 contains data analysing homicide rates by remoteness. These data should be interpreted with caution. Six years data have been combined for this analysis to reduce the effect of fluctuations from year to year in the number of homicides. Homicides have been assigned to remoteness areas by the AIC using an ABS concordance of postcodes to remoteness areas, however, it is not always possible to assign homicides precisely to remoteness areas because postcode and remoteness area boundaries may not coincide and postcodes, particularly in regional and remote areas, may cover more than one remoteness area. Population

denominators derived for this analysis may also have a margin of error.[11] It is not known if there is variation between remoteness areas in the likelihood of Indigenous people being identified as Indigenous in the AIC homicide monitoring data. In some other data collections, the likelihood of Indigenous people being identified as Indigenous increases with remoteness.

Figure 3.10.5 **Homicide rate, by remoteness, 1999-2000 to 2004-05**



a Indigenous homicides are where both victims and offenders of homicide are either Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islanders. Non-Indigenous homicides are where neither the victim nor the offender is Indigenous.

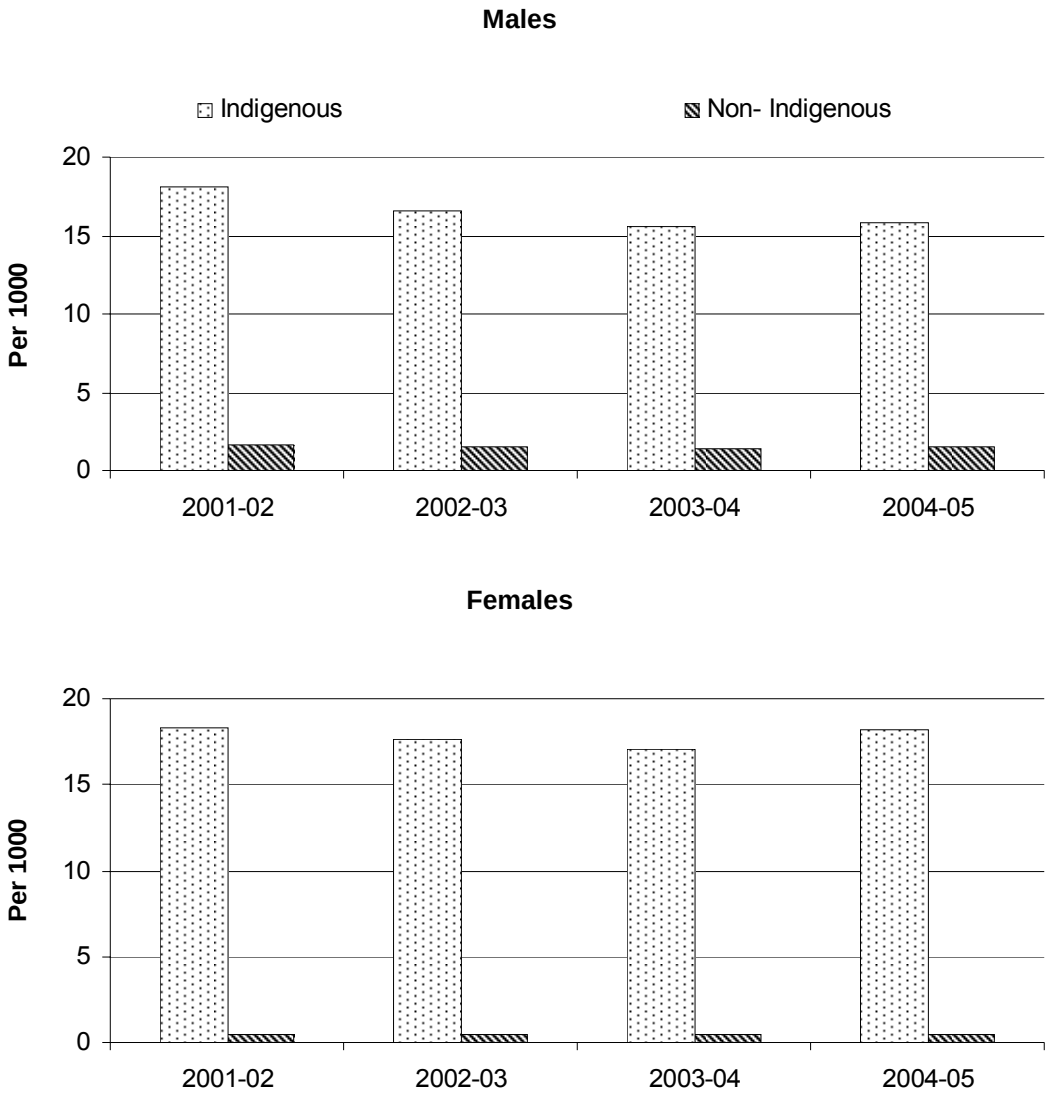
Source: ABS (2004) *Experimental Estimates and Projections, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, 1991 to 2009*; AIC (unpublished); table 3A.10.5.

- From 1999-2000 to 2004-05 a higher rate of Indigenous homicides occurred in remote, outer regional and very remote areas (13.1–16.7 per 100 000) compared with major cities and inner regional areas (4.6–4.9 per 100 000) (figure 3.10.5).
- Indigenous homicide rates were higher than non-Indigenous rates in all remoteness areas between 1999-2000 and 2004-05 (1.4–2.4 per 100 000) (figure 3.10.5).
- In remote areas Indigenous homicides occurred at ten times the rate (per 100 000 people) of non-Indigenous homicides (figure 3.10.5).

[11] Population denominators for remoteness areas have been derived by applying the proportions of Indigenous people living in each remoteness area in 2001 to experimental estimates and projections (low series) of the Indigenous population published by the ABS. Non-Indigenous denominators have been derived by applying proportions of non-Indigenous people in each remoteness area in 2001 to non-Indigenous population estimates derived by subtracting ABS Indigenous population projections from the ABS total Estimated Resident Population for each year.

Hospitalisations for assault

Figure 3.10.6 **Non-fatal hospitalisation rates for assault, by sex** [a, b, c, d, e, f]



[a] Non-fatal refers to records where the mode of separation was not equal to 'died'. [b] Rate per 1000 population was directly age standardised using the 2001 Australian population. [c] Non-Indigenous includes hospitalisations where Indigenous status was unknown. [d] Indigenous data are reported for Queensland, WA, SA and the NT only. These four jurisdictions are considered to have the highest level of accuracy of Indigenous identification, although the level of accuracy varies by jurisdiction and hospital. Data for these four jurisdictions over-represent Indigenous populations in less urbanised and more remote locations. Hospitalisation data for four jurisdictions should not be assumed to represent the hospitalisation experience in the other jurisdictions. [e] Hospitalisation is the discharge, transfer, death or change of episode of care of an admitted patient. [f] Hospitalisations for assault are defined using ICD codes X85–Y09.

Source: AIHW National Hospital Morbidity Database (unpublished); table 3A.10.9–12.

- In 2004-05, in the four jurisdictions for which data are available, Indigenous people were hospitalised for assault at 17.3 times the rate of non-Indigenous

people (17.1 per 1000 compared with less than 1.0 per 1000) (figure 3.10.6 and table 3A.10.12).

- In 2004-05, Indigenous females were 44.1 times more likely to be hospitalised for assault than non-Indigenous females. Indigenous males were 10.3 times more likely to be hospitalised for assault than non-Indigenous males (figure 3.10.6 and table 3A.10.12).
- Indigenous females (18.2 per 1000) were more likely to be hospitalised for assault than Indigenous males (15.9 per 1000), whereas non-Indigenous females (0.4 per 1000) were much less likely to be hospitalised for assault than non-Indigenous males (1.6 per 1000) (figure 3.10.6).
- Hospitalisation rates for assault decreased for Indigenous males between 2001-02 and 2004-05 from 18.1 per to 15.9 per 1000. Hospitalisation rates for assault for Indigenous females and non-Indigenous males and females remained unchanged over the same period (figure 3.10.6).

3.11 Family and community violence

Box 3.11.1 **Key messages**

- Comparable data on the extent of family and community violence are not currently available. From the available data, Indigenous people are more likely than non-Indigenous people to be victims of domestic violence related assault.
- The main reason both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people sought Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) assistance in 2005-06 was to escape domestic or family violence (31.4 per cent of Indigenous people and 21.3 per cent of non-Indigenous people) (figure 3.11.1).
- In 2005-06, over 4 000 Indigenous people and 15 000 non-Indigenous people who sought SAAP assistance to escape domestic or family violence had accompanying children (table 3A.11.3).

Following consultations on the 2003 and 2005 Reports, this indicator has been renamed to focus on the prevalence of family and community violence. Previously, this indicator reported victim rates for crime.

There is no nationally agreed definition of domestic violence or family violence. To many people, domestic violence implies violence by a partner, and may also be known as intimate partner violence, spousal violence, spousal abuse, wife abuse and personal violence or battering (AIHW 2006). Family violence is often regarded as a broader category, including violence by extended family or household members.

The lack of a common definition means that accurately reporting and comparing data on violence is difficult.

Definitions vary between jurisdictions, studies, organisations and cultures. Macdonald (2001) states that Aboriginal women prefer the term 'family violence' because it includes the broad range of marital and kin relationships in which violence may occur. Indigenous people may view family violence as occurring between members of their larger family network including aunts, uncles, grandparents, cousins and others in the wider community, whereas non-Indigenous people may view family violence as violence within the immediate family only.

Data on domestic and family violence in this chapter are drawn from jurisdictional police collections. The statistical definitions used to identify cases of domestic and family violence differ from the broad definitions above, and differ across jurisdictions.

A number of data sources provide some information on family and community violence among Indigenous people:

- survey data
- persons accessing the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) because of family violence
- police data on victims of assault and other violence (including data on the relationship between victim and perpetrator)
- deaths resulting from family and intimate partner violence and hospitalisations for assault (see section 3.10).

These sources under-estimate the true extent of family and community violence as they only capture reported violence. Not all victims report violence or seek assistance.

There is a growing body of literature highlighting the experience of violence in Indigenous communities, particularly family violence (Clapham, Stevenson and Lo 2006; Gordon, Hallahan and Henry 2002; HREOC 2006; Memmott et al. 2001; Mouzos 2001).

Family and community violence problems are complex. They are interrelated with other health issues, and socioeconomic and environmental conditions (Stanley 2005; Clapham, Stevenson and Lo 2006; Matthews 1997). Alcohol and substance use have also been identified as common contributing factors to violence in Indigenous communities (HREOC 2006; Gordon, Hallahan and Henry 2002; Memmott et al. 2001; Mouzos 2001; Weatherburn, Snowball and Hunter 2006). See

sections 3.10, 8.1 and 8.3 for more information on homicides as a result of domestic altercations and alcohol and substance use related arguments.

The presence of family violence is a strong predictor of child abuse (Goddard and Hiller 1992; Stanley and Goddard 2003; Taft, Hegarty and Feder 2006), and partner violence has a damaging effect on children's emotional, behavioural and cognitive development (Stanley and Goddard 2003; Taft, Hegarty and Feder 2006). Family violence is a reason for notification to State and Territory child protection authorities. In NSW and Tasmania, the child protection legislation requires mandatory reporting of children affected by domestic violence. In all other states and territories, family violence is captured under 'emotional abuse'. For more information on substantiated child abuse and neglect see section 3.9.

There is a lack of information about the extent of family and community violence across different geographical regions. A report on violence in rural and remote Australia acknowledged that from the limited literature available there are higher rates of family violence in rural and remote areas, particularly in Indigenous communities (NHMRC 2002).

Some initiatives that have been successful in reducing family and community violence are described in box 3.11.2.

Box 3.11.2 **'Things that work' — reducing violence in Indigenous communities**

Rekindling Indigenous Family Relationships, Riverland, SA

An early intervention project, 'Rekindling Indigenous Family Relationships (RIFR) in the Riverland Program' in SA is assisting the Aboriginal community to resolve family violence and child abuse issues. The project uses a holistic approach to focus on family and community development in order to identify and change the social circumstances for many Aboriginal people. The project explores historical grief and loss issues and violence and abuse issues, as well as responding effectively to crisis situations. A project team provides community education and awareness and links with appropriate Riverland services and programs. Transportation and childcare services are also provided to facilitate regular attendance.

(Continued next page)

Box 3.11.2 (continued)

A key component of the RIFR Project is the delivery of the Family Wellbeing (FWB) Program. The FWB program focuses on understanding conflict, emotions and effective resolution, changing family violence patterns, self-development and building healthy relationships. Eleven community members have completed the first module and while some progressed to the second module, other participants chose to repeat the first module in order to support other family and community members who are set to begin the program. More participants completed modules 1 and 2 in December 2006 (SA Government unpublished).

Pathways to Prevention, Queensland

The Pathways to Prevention project began in 2001 in a particularly disadvantaged area in Brisbane, which included Indigenous, Pacific Islander and Vietnamese community groups. The program targeted families with children aged four to six years old who were in transition to school, and focused on enhancing their communication and social skills, and empowering their families, schools and ethnic communities to provide supportive environments for positive development.

The multilayered interventions included a Family Independence Program (FIP). The main outcome achieved by families attending FIP programs was the strengthening of family relationships and improved communication between family members. In addition, the FIP improved relationships between families and schools and there was a reduction in social isolation (Homel et al. 2006). Data on the characteristics of participants shows that the FIP was used by some of the most vulnerable and difficult-to-reach families who were experiencing high levels of family adversity, dysfunction or stress (Homel et al. 2006).

The involvement of a child's parents in the FIP, in addition to the child's direct involvement in the Preschool Intervention Program (PIP), led to the most marked improvements in behaviour. Moreover, children who were not involved in the PIP but whose parents were involved in the FIP improved as much as children who participated in the PIP directly. This suggests that indirect effects via parents can be as powerful as the direct effects of programs specifically for children.

Results of the cost analysis of the Pathways program (costs of development, implementation and evaluation phases of both the community based and school based interventions) indicated that preventative intervention was cheaper than later remedial interventions for both behaviour management and literacy enhancement programs.

There is strong evidence that the Pathways programs (FIP and PIP) both made a difference to outcomes for children, especially for boys' behaviour. There were improvements in language skills, prosocial behaviour and school readiness.

The Pathways to Prevention project won the 2004 National Crime and Violence Prevention Award (sponsored by the heads of Australian governments and members of the Australasian Police Ministers' Council.)

Survey data

Data on the prevalence of violence from the ABS 2002 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey (NATSISS) were included in the 2005 Report. Some of the findings from the NATSISS include:

- 21.2 per cent of Indigenous people aged 15 years and over reported family violence as a problem in their neighbourhood or community (ABS 2004)
- 19.9 per cent perceived assault as a problem in their neighbourhood or community and 8.1 per cent reported sexual assault as a problem (ABS 2004)
- 18.3 per cent of Indigenous women experienced physical or threatened violence in the previous 12 months, compared with 7.0 per cent of non-Indigenous women (SCRGSP 2005)
- Of the 24.3 per cent of Indigenous people aged 15 years or over who had been a victim of violence in the past 12 months, around one third were living in households with Indigenous children under five years of age (ABS 2004)
- Indigenous people who had been removed from their natural families experienced a higher rate of victimisation than those who had not been removed (33.5 per cent compared to 18.1 per cent) (MCATSIA 2006).

After accounting for age differences between the Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations, Indigenous adults (aged 18 years and over) were:

- twice as likely as non-Indigenous adults to have been a victim of physical or threatened violence in the previous 12 months (ABS 2004)
- three times as likely as non-Indigenous adults to report abuse or violent crime as a problem for them or someone close to them (ABS 2002 NATSISS unpublished)
- five times as likely as non-Indigenous adults to report witnessing violence as a problem for them or someone close to them (ABS 2002 NATSISS unpublished).

The ABS 2004-05 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey (NATSIHS) asked participants whether they took a health-related action as a result of an attack. Consistent with the results from the ABS 2001 National Health Survey (Indigenous supplement):

- 1 per cent of Indigenous people reported having been attacked by another person in the previous four weeks.

Findings from the Australian component of the International Violence Against Women Survey (IVAWS) 2002-03 include:

- Indigenous women reported higher levels of physical, sexual and any violence during the 12 months preceding the IVAWS compared with non-Indigenous women (Mouzos and Makkai 2004)
- 20 per cent of Indigenous women reported experiencing physical violence, compared with 7 per cent of non-Indigenous women (Mouzos and Makkai 2004)
- Three times as many Indigenous women reported experiencing an incident of sexual violence, compared to non-Indigenous women (12 per cent compared with 4 per cent) (Mouzos and Makkai 2004).

The Australian Institute of Criminology conducted a survey of police about their perceptions of negative outcomes associated with illicit drug use in Indigenous communities. The survey included urban and country areas in Queensland, WA, SA and the NT. Some of the findings included:

- Police indicated that heavy cannabis use exacerbated many existing problems among local Indigenous residents, especially domestic/family violence (73 per cent urban; 76 per cent non-urban) and mental health problems (73 per cent urban; 74 per cent non-urban) (Putt and Delahunty 2006).
- Nearly every community involved in the field research for the survey voiced concerns about the impact substance use has on family violence, declining participation in community life, child neglect, and sexual exploitation of young people (Putt and Delahunty 2006).

SAAP National Data Collection

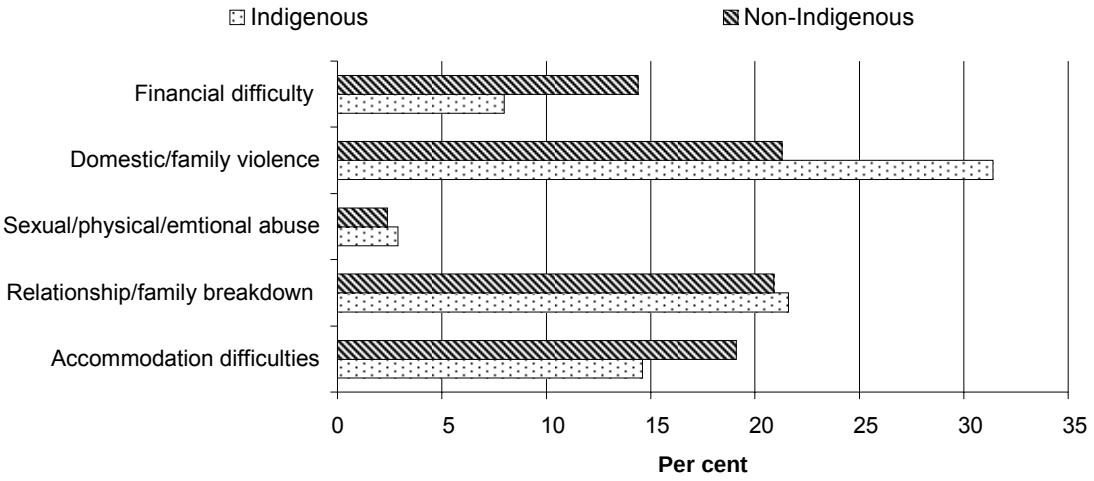
The SAAP National Data Collection provides information on the number of people seeking assistance from agencies funded under the SAAP, for reasons to do with family violence.

These data will under-estimate the true extent of family violence occurring within the community, because:

- not all victims of violence access these services
- victims may be turned away because the support required cannot be provided (AIHW 2006).

The number of people seeking SAAP assistance in 2005-06 for reasons to do with family violence as a proportion of the total number of people seeking assistance are shown in figure 3.11.1.

Figure 3.11.1 **SAAP support periods: main reason clients sought support, Australia, 2005-06[a, b, c, d]**

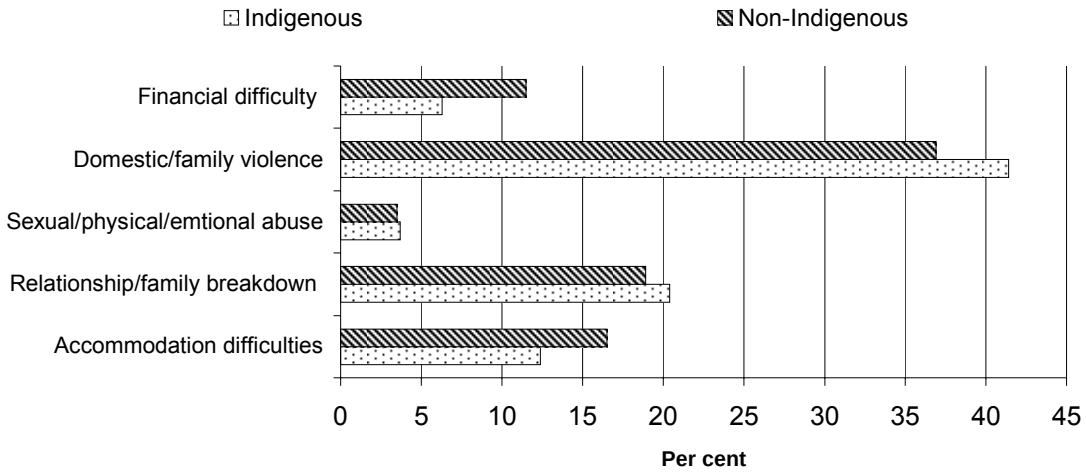


a Non-Indigenous includes Indigenous status not stated. **b** Accommodation difficulties includes overcrowding issues, eviction/asked to leave, emergency accommodation ended, and previous accommodation ended. **c** Relationship/family breakdown includes time out from family/other situation and interpersonal conflict. **d** Financial difficulty includes budgeting problems, rent too high and other financial difficulty.

Source: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW), Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) National Data Collection Agency (NDCA) (unpublished).

- Escaping domestic/family violence was the main reason Indigenous and non-Indigenous people sought SAAP assistance in 2005-06 (figure 3.11.1).
- In 2005-06, the number of Indigenous people who sought SAAP assistance to escape domestic/family violence as a proportion of the total number of Indigenous people who sought assistance was 31.4 per cent, compared with 21.3 per cent of non-Indigenous people (table 3A.11.1).
- For both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, domestic violence affects a large proportion of children in SAAP (AIHW 2005). In 2005-06, of the 34 800 Indigenous and non-Indigenous SAAP clients who sought assistance to escape domestic/family violence (table 3A.11.1), 19 700 had accompanying children (table 3A.11.3).
- In 2005-06, 55.7 per cent of Indigenous people who sought SAAP assistance to escape domestic/family violence had accompanying children. For non-Indigenous people 56.5 per cent had accompanying children (tables 3A.11.1 and 3A.11.3).
- In 2003-04, 15 per cent of Indigenous women escaping domestic/family violence had four or more accompanying children (AIHW 2006).

Figure 3.11.2 **SAAP support periods: main reason female clients sought support, Australia, 2005-06**[a, b, c, d]



a Non-Indigenous includes Indigenous status not stated. **b** Accommodation difficulties includes overcrowding issues, eviction/asked to leave, emergency accommodation ended, and previous accommodation ended. **c** Relationship/family breakdown includes time out from family/other situation and interpersonal conflict. **d** Financial difficulty includes budgeting problems, rent too high and other financial difficulty.

Source: AIHW, SAAP NDCA (unpublished); table 3A.11.2.

- Escaping domestic/family violence was the main reason both Indigenous and non-Indigenous women approached a SAAP agency (figure 3.11.2).
- Of the 33 700 female SAAP clients escaping domestic/family violence, 7 700 were Indigenous and 26 000 were non-Indigenous (table 3A.11.2).
- A higher proportion of Indigenous women (41.4 per cent) sought SAAP assistance to escape domestic/family violence compared with non-Indigenous women (36.9 per cent) (table 3A.11.2).
- In 2003-04, the rate of Indigenous women seeking SAAP assistance to escape domestic/family violence was highest in remote areas (78.7 per 1000) compared with major cities (25.9 per 1000) (AIHW 2006). Patterns of usage around SAAP services and the availability of SAAP and other services in different areas may affect this rate.

More information on the reasons people sought SAAP support by Indigenous status and across states and territories can be found in table 3A.11.4.

State and Territory Police records

There is no national data collection on Indigenous crime victimisation reported to police. Data on crime victimisation for selected offences and victim-offender

relationships are presented in this section for NSW, Victoria, Queensland and the NT. For Victoria, Queensland and the NT the offence category 'assault' includes 'domestic violence related assault' (that is, domestic violence related assault is a subset of assault).

Victim-offender relationship data by selected offences against the person (murder, assault, domestic violence related assault, sexual assault, sexual assault (victims aged 0–15) and robbery) are presented to provide some information on police recorded community violence. There are no standard definitions for the four broad categories of victim-offender relationships (family, stranger, other and unstated). These definitions vary between states and territories and may be based on a subjective assessment by a police officer.

Data from other jurisdictions are not published in this Report, either because there is no process to identify Indigenous status or, where data are collected, they are not of sufficient coverage or quality to publish.

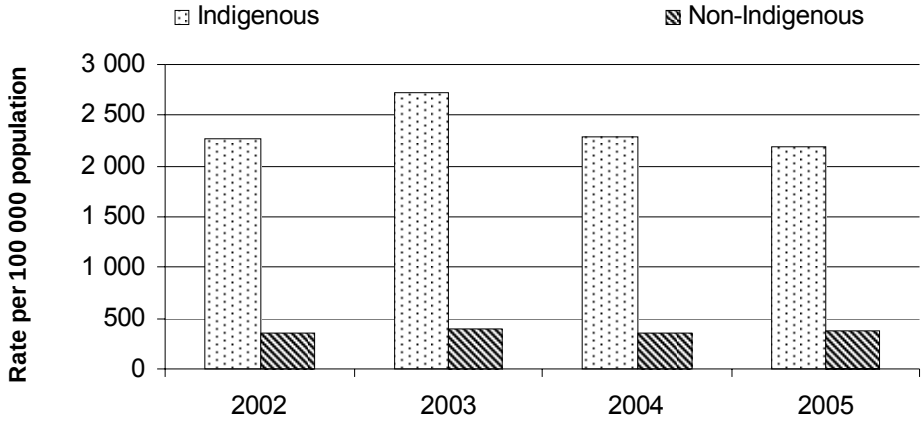
Police data provide some insight into the level of Indigenous victimisation within these states. These data are not comparable between jurisdictions and are subject to the caveats included in the figures and tables.

Using police records to measure family and community violence raises some issues, including:

- The data do not represent all victims of crime, just those that come to the attention of, and whose details are recorded by, police.
- The data presented generally reflect victims of violent criminal incidents where the violent incident was reported to, or otherwise detected by, police.
- The tendency to report criminal victimisation to police may differ between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people (and there is no way of estimating the level of under-reporting).

New South Wales

Figure 3.11.3 **Victims recorded by NSW Police for domestic violence related assault**[a, b, c, d, e]



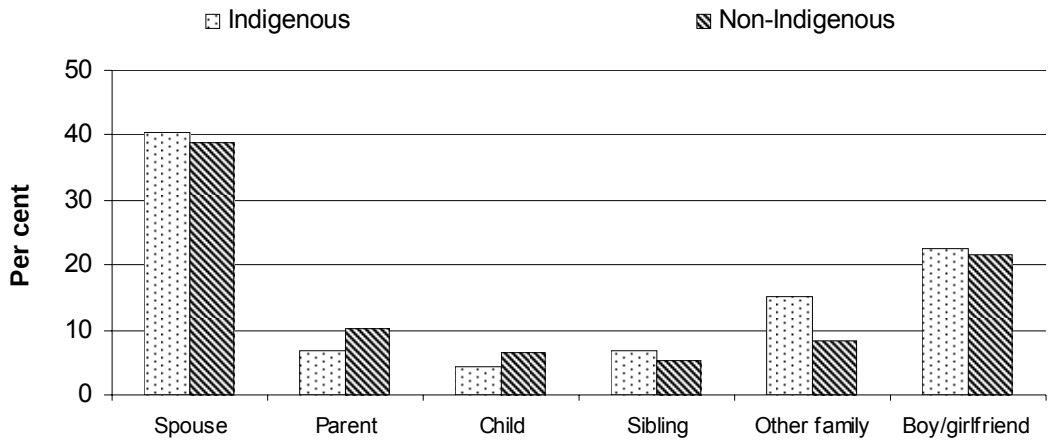
[a] Indigenous status is based on self-identification. [b] These data do not represent all victims of crime, just those who come to the attention of and whose details are recorded by NSW Police. [c] The tendency to report criminal victimisation to police may differ between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. [d] The category 'domestic violence related assault' is a subset of 'assault'. [e] Calculations of rates for the Indigenous population are based on ABS Experimental Projections, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians (low series, 2001 base). There are no comparable population data for the non-Indigenous population. Calculations of rates for the non-Indigenous population are based on data derived by subtracting Indigenous population projections from total population estimates and should be used with care.

Source: NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research (unpublished); ABS (2006); ABS Experimental Indigenous Projections by State, Age and Sex: Low Series (unpublished); tables 3A.11.5–8.

- From 2002 to 2005 the rate of Indigenous victims of domestic violence decreased (with fluctuations in between) from 2 276.7 per 100 000 people to 2 197.8 per 100 000 people. Over the same period, the rate for non-Indigenous victims increased from 356.1 per 100 000 people to 368.2 per 100 000 people (tables 3A.11.5 to 3A.11.8).
- Over the period, the rate of domestic violence for Indigenous people was approximately six to seven times that of the non-Indigenous population (tables 3A.11.5–8).
- Indigenous people in NSW in 2005 were more than twice as likely to be a victim of assault than non-Indigenous people (table 3A.11.5).
- In 2005, Indigenous women in NSW were nearly seven times as likely to be a victim of domestic violence than non-Indigenous women (table 3A.11.9).

More information on victims recorded by NSW Police for murder, assault, sexual assault and sexual assault against victims aged 0–15 can be found in tables 3A.11.5–8. More information on female victims is in tables 3A.11.9–12.

Figure 3.11.4 **Relationship of offender to victim recorded by NSW Police for victims of domestic violence related assault, 2005**[a, b, c, d, e, f, g]



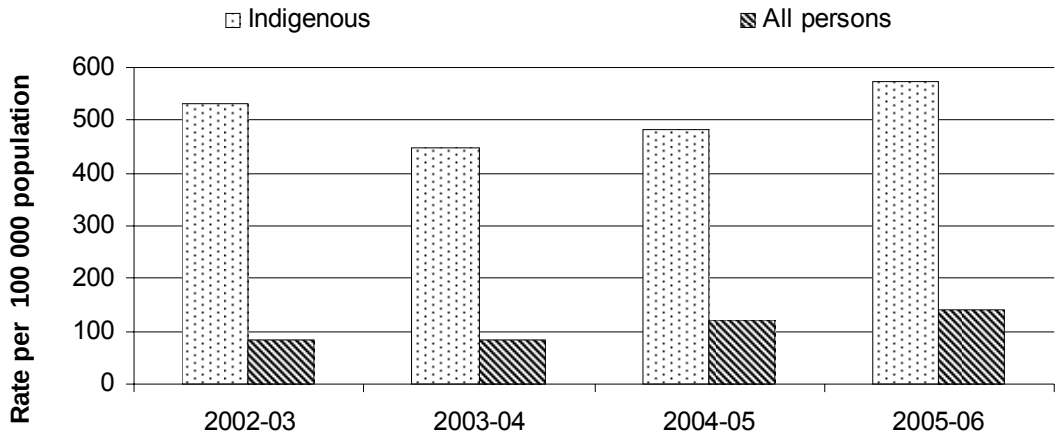
[a] Indigenous status is based on self-identification. [b] These data do not represent all victims of crime, just those who come to the attention of and whose details are recorded by NSW Police. [c] The tendency to report criminal victimisation to police may differ between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. [d] The category 'domestic violence related assault' is a subset of 'assault'. [e] Spouse includes partner, ex-spouse and ex-partner. [f] Parent includes guardian. [g] Boy/girlfriend includes ex-boy/girlfriend.

Source: NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research (unpublished); table 3A.11.13.

- For Indigenous people, the spouse was the offender in 40.3 per cent of domestic violence related assault offences (compared with 38.8 per cent for non-Indigenous).
- For both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, offences against the person are most likely to occur in residential dwellings (58.0 per cent of offences against Indigenous people occurred in residential dwellings compared with 44.8 per cent for non-Indigenous people) (table 3A.11.14).

Victoria

Figure 3.11.5 **Victims recorded by Victoria Police for domestic violence related assault[a, b, c, d]**



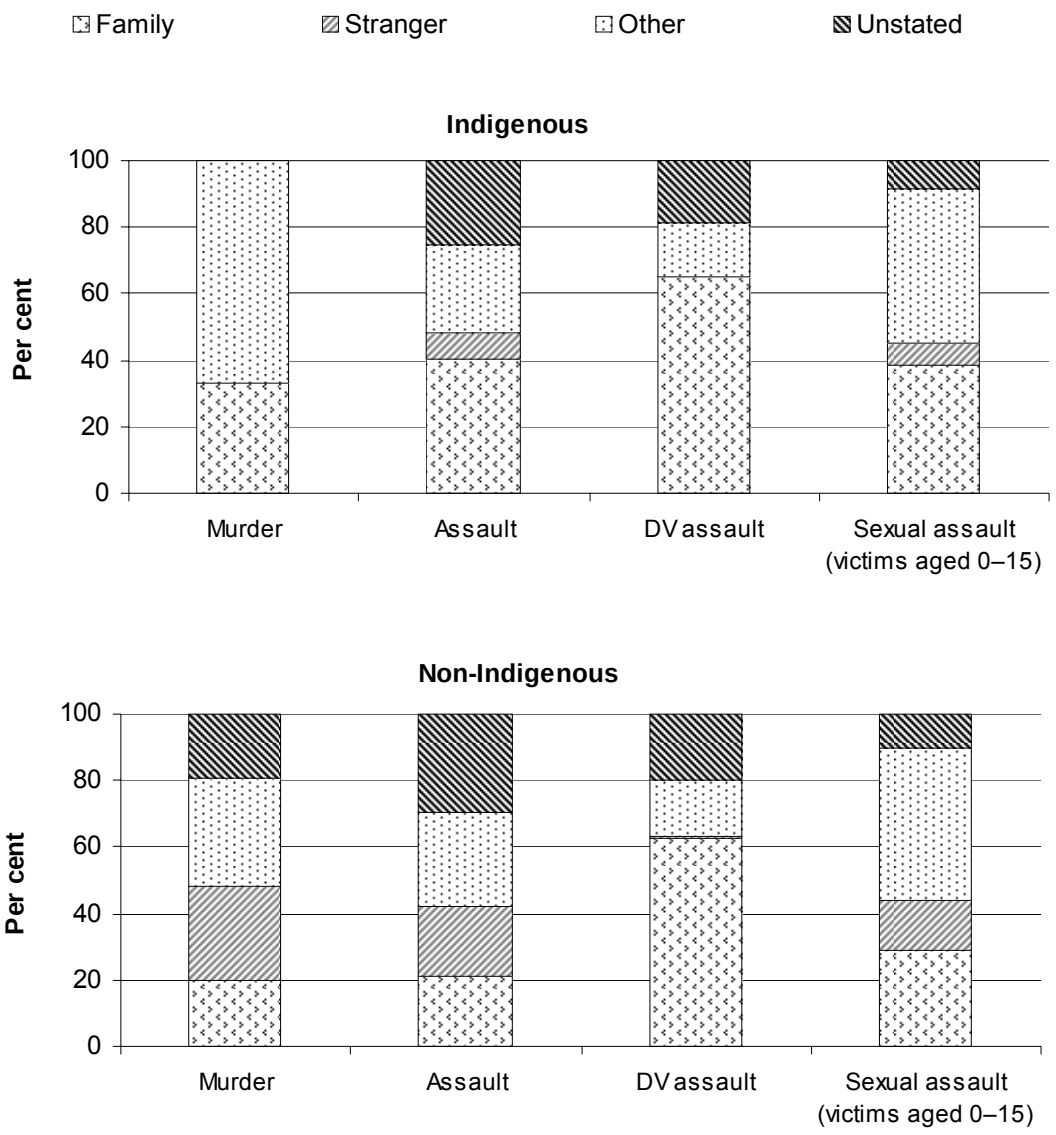
[a] Any police members receiving a report of an incident must make sufficient initial inquiries to satisfy themselves that a crime has been committed. [b] Indigenous status is derived from the racial appearance of the victim which is a subjective assessment by the police officer. [c] Domestic violence related assault is defined as a family violence report and an assault occurring in the same incident. [d] Calculations of rates for the Indigenous population are based on ABS Experimental Projections, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians (low series, 2001 base). There are no comparable population data for the non-Indigenous population. Calculations of rates for the non-Indigenous population are based on data derived by subtracting Indigenous population projections from total population estimates and should be used with care.

Source: Victoria Police (unpublished); table 3A.11.15–18.

- In Victoria, from 2002-03 to 2005-06, the rate of Indigenous victims of domestic violence increased from 533.1 per 100 000 people to 574.1 per 100 000 people. Over the same period, the rate for all persons increased from 84.6 per 100 000 people to 141.0 per 100 000 people (tables 3A.11.15 to 3A.11.18).
- In 2005-06, Indigenous people were more than four times as likely to be a victim of domestic violence related assault than all persons (table 3A.11.15).
- For Indigenous females in Victoria in 2005-06, the rate of domestic violence related assault was nearly five times as high as the rate of the total female population (table 3A.11.19).

More information on victims, female victims and juvenile victims recorded by Victoria Police for murder, assault, sexual assault and sexual assault against victims aged 0–15 can be found in tables 3A.11.15–26.

Figure 3.11.6 **Victim-offender relationships recorded by Victoria Police for selected offences against the person, 2005-06**[a, b, c, d, e, f, g]



[a] Any police members receiving a report of an incident must make sufficient initial inquiries to satisfy themselves that a crime has been committed. [b] Indigenous status is derived from the racial appearance of the victim which is a subjective assessment of the police officer. [c] The category 'domestic violence related assault' is a subset of 'assault'. Similarly, the category 'sexual assault against victims 0–15' is a subset of 'sexual assault'. Domestic violence related assault is defined as a family violence report and an assault occurring in the same incident. [d] For sexual assault (victims aged 0–15) the age of the victims represents the age of the victim at the time of reporting the offence. [d] Family includes parent, child, step parent/child, spouse, defacto, former spouse or defacto, sibling and other lineal relationship. [f] Other includes boyfriend/girlfriend, employer/employee, co-resident, acquaintance, police on duty, police off duty, other law enforcement, other known, neighbour, former boyfriend/girlfriend, gay domestic partner and lesbian domestic partner. [g] Unstated includes cannot be determined and unspecified.

Source: Victoria Police (unpublished); table 3A.11.27.

- As illustrated in figure 3.11.6, the offender was a family member in more than half of the domestic violence related assault cases for both Indigenous and

non-Indigenous people (65.3 per cent for Indigenous and 62.4 per cent for non-Indigenous) (table 3A.11.27).

- In 2005-06, the offender was a family member in 40.1 per cent of assaults on Indigenous people, whereas for non-Indigenous assault victims the offender was a family member in 20.8 per cent of cases (table 3A.11.27).
- For both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people most offences against the person occurred in a dwelling (58.9 per cent for Indigenous people and 44.1 per cent for non-Indigenous people) (table 3A.11.29).

Further information on victims of offences against the person in Victoria is included in tables 3A.11.27–30.

Queensland

Table 3.11.1 **Victims recorded by Queensland Police, per 100 000 people, 2005-06**[a, b]

	Indigenous[c]	*Non-Indigenous*	*Ratio: Indigenous to non-Indigenous*
Total victims, per 100 000 population[d]			
Murder	4.3	1.1	3.8
Assault	1 948.7	437.1	4.5
Domestic violence related assault[e]	757.9	52.7	14.4
Sexual assault	421.3	115.9	3.6
Sexual assault (victims aged 0–15)[f]	671.5	299.9	2.2
Female victims, per 100 000 female population[d]			
Murder	2.8	1.0	2.8
Assault	2 550.4	296.6	8.6
Domestic violence related assault[e]	1 277.3	72.2	17.7
Sexual assault	709.8	192.0	3.7
Sexual assault (victims aged 0–15)[f]	1 168.3	487.7	2.4

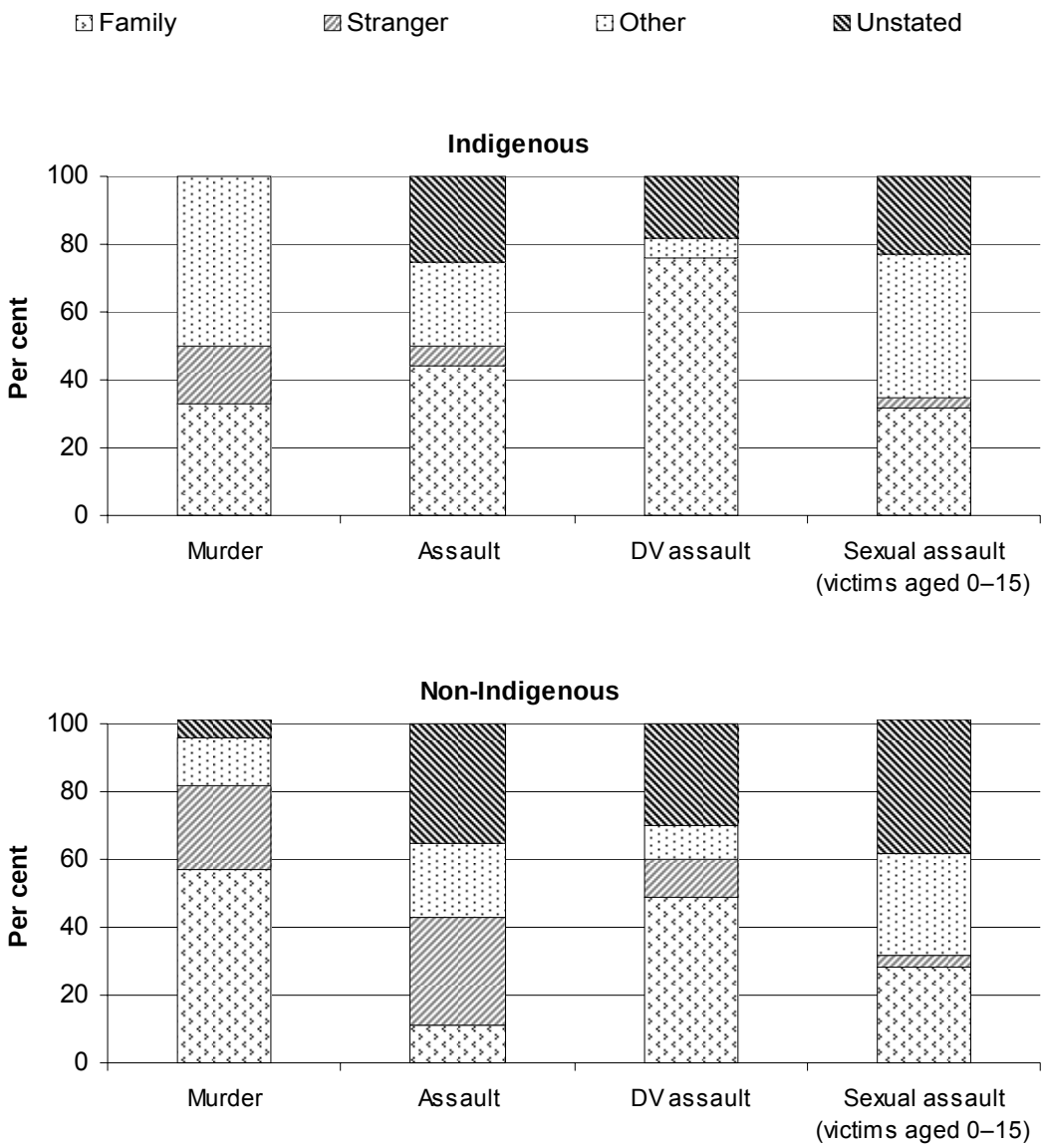
[a] These data do not represent all victims of crime, just those that come to the attention of and whose details are recorded by Queensland Police. [b] Data are not a unique victim count as one person may be counted several times if they were the victim of more than one offence. [c] Indigenous status is based on self identification. [d] Calculations of rates for the Indigenous population are based on ABS Experimental Projections, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians (low series, 2001 base). There are no comparable population data for the non-Indigenous population. Calculations of rates for the non-Indigenous population are based on data derived by subtracting Indigenous population projections from total population estimates and should be used with care. [e] The category 'domestic violence related assault' is a subset of 'assault'. Similarly, the category 'sexual assault against victims 0–15' is a subset of 'sexual assault'. [f] The age of the victims represents the age of the victim at the time of reporting the offence.

Source: Queensland Police (unpublished); tables 3A.11.31 and 3A.11.33.

- Table 3.11.1 shows that in Queensland in 2005-06, Indigenous people were 14.4 times as likely as non-Indigenous people to be a victim of domestic violence related assault.
- The rate of domestic violence for Indigenous females was nearly 18 times as high as the rate for non-Indigenous females (table 3.11.1).
- Indigenous people in Queensland, were 4.5 times as likely to be victims of assault than non-Indigenous people, while Indigenous females were 8.6 times as likely as non-Indigenous females to be victims of assault (table 3.11.1).

Tables 3A.11.32 and 3A.11.34 contain data on victims of selected crimes in Queensland for 2004-05.

Figure 3.11.7 **Victim-offender relationships recorded by Queensland Police for selected offences against the person, 2005-06**[a, b, c, d, e, f, g]



[a] These data do not represent all victims of crime, just those that come to the attention of and whose details are recorded by Queensland Police. [b] Data are not a unique victim count as one person may be counted several times if they were the victim of more than one offence. [c] Indigenous status is based on self-identification. [d] The category 'DV assault' means domestic violence related assault and is a subset of 'assault'. Similarly, the category 'sexual assault against victims 0–15' is a subset of 'sexual assault'. [e] For sexual assault (victims aged 0–15) the age of the victims represents the age of the victim at the time of reporting the offence. [f] The relationship of 'unstated' represents the victims where an offender has not yet been apprehended for the offence. [g] Percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole number. Therefore, although the percentages are correct they may not add to 100 per cent.

Source: Queensland Police (unpublished); table 3A.11.35.

- Figure 3.11.7 provides details on the types of relationships between offenders and victims for selected offences against the person. In 76.0 per cent of

Indigenous domestic violence related assaults, the offender was a family member. For non-Indigenous people, 49.0 per cent of domestic violence related assaults were committed by a family member (table 3A.11.35).

- In 2005-06, the offender was a family member in 44.0 per cent of assaults on Indigenous people, whereas for non-Indigenous victims, the offender was a family member in 11.0 per cent of cases (table 3A.11.35).
- In 2005-06, for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, offences against the person most commonly occurred in a dwelling (59.0 per cent for Indigenous people and 39.0 per cent for non-Indigenous people) (table 3A.11.37).

Tables 3A.11.36 and 3A.11.38 contain data on Indigenous victim-offender relationships for victims of offences against the person in 2004-05.

Western Australia

The 2003 and 2005 Reports included data on victimisation rates for WA (tables 3A.11.39–43). Western Australian Police record the age, Indigenous status and sex of victims of offences against the person. Unfortunately, the Indigenous status of the victim was not recorded for a large proportion of offences against the person. Owing to the large proportion of unrecorded Indigenous status, WA is unable to estimate the relative risks of victimisation for Indigenous persons. Victim-offender relationship data is also unavailable because in most cases of offences against the person the relationship was not stated.

Table 3.11.2 **Victims recorded by the NT Police, 2005**[a, b, c, d]

	Indigenous[e]	*Non-Indigenous*	*Ratio: Indigenous to non-Indigenous*
Total victims, per 100 000 population[f]			
Murder	18.2	0.7	26.1
Assault	3 783.1	913.8	4.1
Domestic violence related assault[g]	2 875.5	202.1	14.2
Sexual assault	162.3	74.1	2.2
Sexual assault (victims aged 0–15)[g]	158.5	98.3	1.6
Female victims, per 100 000 female population [f]			
Murder	19.9	–	..
Assault	6 211.3	780.2	8.0
Domestic violence related assault[g]	5 210.9	312.1	16.7
Sexual assault	304.8	150.0	2.0
Sexual assault (victims aged 0–15)[g]	300.1	176.5	1.7

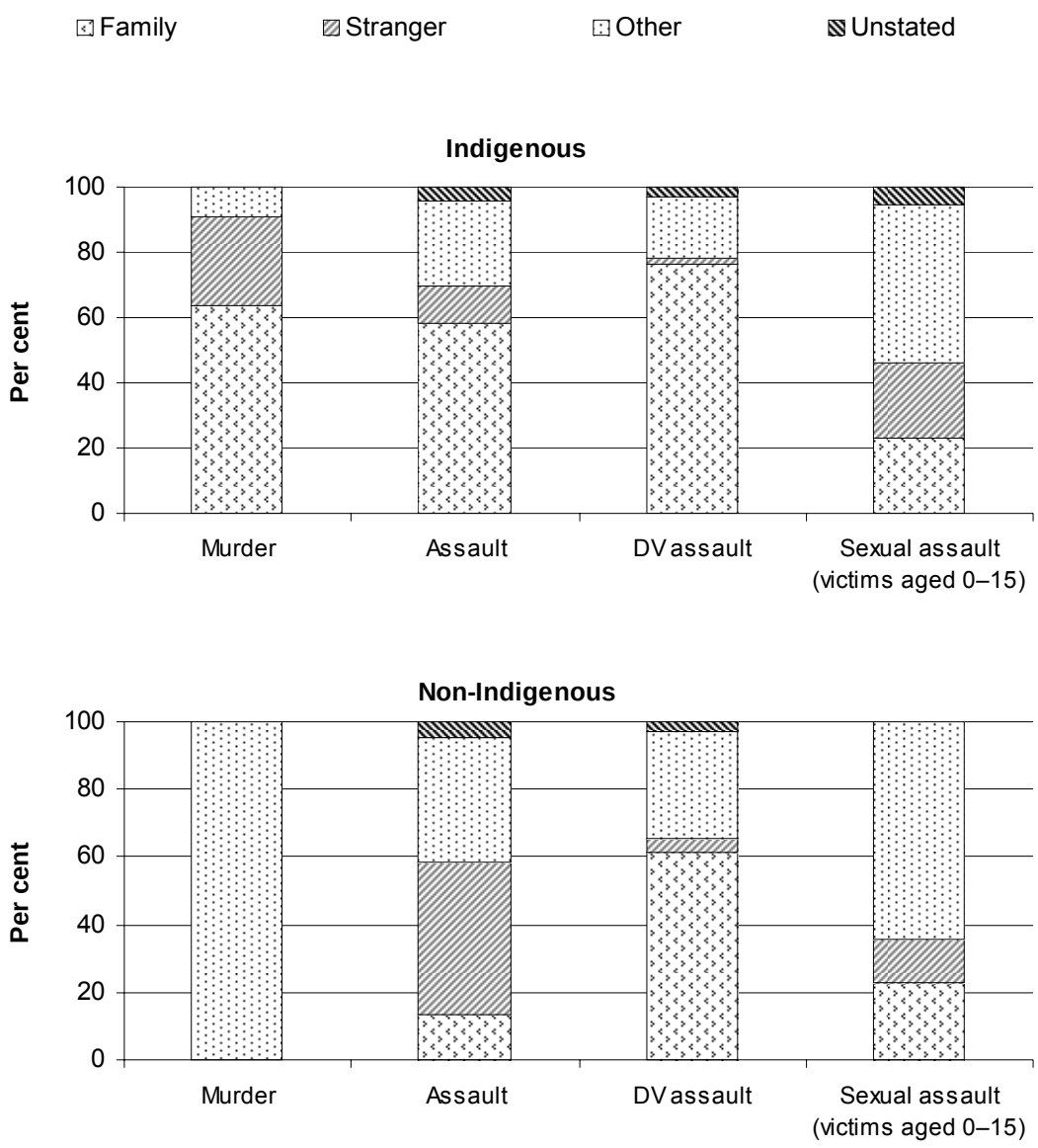
[a] These data do not represent all victims of crime, just those that come to the attention of and whose details are recorded by NT Police. [b] An increase in 2005 is partly due to the introduction of a domestic violence initiative. [c] Data are compiled on the basis of the date an offence is reported to police and recorded within a reference period. [d] Police statistical databases are 'live' systems with records being updated or entered on a daily basis as a result of continuing investigations. Therefore, crime statistics produced for a given period may change with the passage of time. [e] Indigenous status is based on appearance. [f] Calculations of rates for the Indigenous population are based on ABS Experimental Projections, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians (low series, 2001 base). There are no comparable population data for the non-Indigenous population. Calculations of rates for the non-Indigenous population are based on data derived by subtracting Indigenous population projections from total population estimates and should be used with care. [g] The category 'domestic violence related assault' is a subset of 'assault'. Similarly, the category 'sexual assault against victims 0–15' is a subset of 'sexual assault'. – Nil or rounded to zero. **..** Not applicable.

Source: NT Police (unpublished); table 3A.11.44 and 3A.11.46.

- In the NT in 2005, Indigenous people were 26.1 times as likely as non-Indigenous people to be a victim of murder, and 14.2 times as likely to be a victim of domestic violence related assault (table 3.11.2).
- Table 3.11.2 shows that in the NT in 2005, Indigenous females were 8.0 times as likely as non-Indigenous females to be a victim of assault.
- The rate of domestic violence for Indigenous females was nearly 17 times as high as the rate for non-Indigenous females (table 3.11.2).

Data on victims of crime in the NT for 2004 are included in tables 3A.11.45 and 3A.11.47.

Figure 3.11.8 **Victim-offender relationships recorded by the NT Police for selected offences against the person, 2005-06**[a, b, c, d, e]



a These data do not represent all victims of crime, just those that come to the attention of and whose details are recorded by NT Police. **b** Indigenous status is based on appearance. **c** The category 'DV assault' is domestic violence related assault and is a subset of 'assault'. Similarly, the category 'sexual assault against victims 0–15' is a subset of 'sexual assault'. **d** Family includes partner, spouse, siblings, parents and immediate family members. Other includes relatives, friends and acquaintances. Stranger includes where victim/offender are relatively unknown to each other. **e** Non-Indigenous murder data represent one murder.

Source: NT Police (unpublished); table 3A.11.48.

- Figure 3.11.8 shows the types of relationships between offenders and victims for selected offences against the person. In 2005, the offender was a family member in 63.6 per cent of Indigenous murders, whereas for the one non-Indigenous

murder the offender was 'other' (relative, friend or acquaintance) (table 3A.11.48).

- In 76.3 per cent of Indigenous domestic violence related assaults, the offender was a family member. For non-Indigenous victims, 61.2 per cent of domestic violence related assaults were committed by a family member (table 3A.11.48).
- In 2005, the offender was a family member in 58.0 per cent of assaults on Indigenous people, whereas for non-Indigenous victims the offender was a family member in 13.5 per cent of cases (table 3A.11.48).

3.12 Imprisonment and juvenile detention rates

Box 3.12.1 **Key messages**

- Indigenous imprisonment rates increased by 31.9 per cent between 2000 and 2006 (figure 3.12.1).
- Between 2002 and 2006, the imprisonment rate increased by 34.0 per cent for Indigenous women and by 21.6 per cent for Indigenous men (table 3A.12.7).
- In 2006, after adjusting for age differences, Indigenous people were 12.9 times more likely than non-Indigenous Australians to be imprisoned (table 3.12.1).
- At 30 June 2005, Indigenous juveniles were 23 times more likely to be detained than non-Indigenous juveniles. The difference between the Indigenous and non-Indigenous juvenile detention rates has increased since 2001 (figure 3.12.4).

The headline indicator 'Imprisonment and juvenile detention rates' provides an insight into the level of involvement of Indigenous people in the criminal justice system as offenders.

Australia's Indigenous people are highly over-represented in the criminal justice system (Woodward 2003). Adverse socioeconomic conditions in Indigenous communities (such as, poverty, unemployment, low levels of educational attainment, and lack of access to social services) are associated with high crime rates. The 1991 Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody (RCIADIC) identified links between the formal education system, child welfare practices, juvenile justice, health, and employment opportunities as contributors to the disproportionate representation of Aboriginal people in police and custodial facilities (RCIADIC 1991). Putt, Payne and Milner (2005) found that for many Indigenous male offenders, substance abuse, particularly alcohol intoxication, was associated with criminal behaviour.

A recent study by the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research found that a higher rate of Indigenous offenders were sent to prison than non-Indigenous offenders because of a higher rate of conviction for violent crime and higher rate of re-offending (Snowball and Weatherburn 2006).

One of the major factors highlighted by the WA Department of Justice (2002a) was that the early involvement of Aboriginal juveniles in the criminal justice system was likely to place them at significantly greater risk of imprisonment as adults. Lynch, Buckman and Krenske (2003) reported that Indigenous juvenile offenders were more likely than non-Indigenous juvenile offenders to progress to the adult criminal justice system and end up in prison. The study found that 86 per cent of Indigenous juvenile offenders entered the adult correction system, with 65 per cent of them serving at least one prison term. For non-Indigenous juvenile offenders, 75 per cent entered the adult correction system with 41 per cent of them serving at least one prison term.

The 1991 Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody stated that changes to the operation of the criminal justice system alone will not have a significant impact on the number of Indigenous people entering custody (RCIADIC 1991). Nevertheless, there has been some success in reducing the reoffending rates of Indigenous people by implementing culturally appropriate justice practices. Boxes 3.12.2, 3.12.3 and 3.12.4 describe the success of the Koori Courts in Victoria, Nunga Courts in SA and Murri Courts in Queensland, respectively.

Box 3.12.2 **'Things that work' — Culturally appropriate justice practices for Indigenous people in Victoria**

In 2005, The Australian Institute of Criminology awarded the Shepparton Koori Court the Australian Crime and Violence Prevention Award for their successful operation of a special sentencing court for Indigenous offenders. This specialised court within the Magistrates Court created an informal atmosphere which allowed greater participation of the Koori Community (that is, the Koori Elder, the Aboriginal Justice Worker and members of the offender's family) in the sentencing process and support programs.

Shepparton was chosen as one of the two sites for the two-year pilot program because it has the largest Koori population outside of metropolitan Melbourne. The success of the pilots at Shepparton and Broadmeadows paved the way for Koori Courts to become a permanent part of the Victorian justice system. Koori Courts have now also been established in Warrnambool, Mildura, the La Trobe Valley and Bairnsdale, with another planned for Swan Hill. There is also a Koori Children's Court in Melbourne and another is scheduled to open in Mildura.

(Continued next page)

Box 3.12.2 (continued)

Victoria's Koori Courts are a blend of Aboriginal custom and culture with the Anglo-Australian legal system. They reduce the perceptions of cultural alienation and tailor sentences to the cultural needs of the Koori offenders. The Koori Court, particularly the traditional elders and the offender's family members, identify the causal issues facing the offender and encourage the offender to take responsibility for his or her actions.

A review of the Shepparton and Broadmeadows Koori Courts over the two-year pilot period found that recidivism rates in those areas dropped by 12.5 per cent and 15.5 per cent, respectively. The number of offenders who breached community corrections orders fell and fewer Koori defendants failed to show for their court appearances. Further, the role of Koori Elders in court has reinforced the status and authority of these leaders and strengthened the fabric of the Koori community as a whole (Office of the Attorney-General 2005).

Box 3.12.3 **'Things that work' — Nunga Courts in SA**

In SA, Nunga Courts are specialist magistrates courts which aim to make the justice system more culturally appropriate to Indigenous people. Nunga courts were established in 1999 and currently operate at Port Adelaide, Murray Bridge, Coober Pedy, Port Augusta and Ceduna (Office of Crime Statistics and Research 2004). There has been positive feedback from the Indigenous community on Nunga courts as they are seen to provide a more culturally relevant environment that gives Indigenous people more input into the judicial process, particularly in relation to sentencing.

Attendance rates for Indigenous people to Nunga courts are frequently around 80 per cent compared with less than 50 per cent for general magistrates courts. The Nunga court has had success in reducing arrests for non-appearance by defendants on bail and in breaking the cycle of Indigenous imprisonment for unpaid fines by applying alternative penalties such as community service and allowing the gradual payment of fines (Office of Crime Statistics and Research 2004).

Box 3.12.4 **'Things that work' — Murri Courts in Queensland**

The Murri Court is a Queensland Magistrates Court, or Children's Court constituted by a magistrate, which sentences Indigenous offenders who plead guilty to an offence. The Murri Court currently operates in Brisbane, Rockhampton, Townsville, Mt. Isa, Caboolture (Youth Murri Court only), and has recently commenced operation in Ipswich and Cherbourg.

The Murri Court was established by the magistracy in 2002 in response to Indigenous over-representation in the justice system. The Murri Court delivers more personal and culturally appropriate justice by allowing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander elders and respected persons the opportunity to have input. The elders and respected persons provide insight into how the offending is affecting the local community and have input into the sentencing options considered by the Court. The legal processes of the Murri Court are more informal and less intimidating and, where possible, sentences have a rehabilitative focus.

A review has recently been conducted on the Murri Court and a Report on the Murri Court Review was released in December 2006 (Parker and Pathé 2006). The Report made 18 recommendations focusing on practical improvements to the Murri Court. The Review confirmed the involvement of elders and respected persons assists the offenders in developing trust in the court (Parker and Pathé 2006).

A further independent evaluation of the Murri Court will be undertaken to assess the role of the Murri Court in reducing imprisonment, decreasing the rate of re-offending and cutting the number of Indigenous offenders failing to appear in court.

The information presented in this chapter on imprisonment and juvenile detention takes account of only one aspect of Indigenous contact with the criminal justice system. By their nature, the offences which result in imprisonment or juvenile detention tend to be of a more serious nature. As a result, the data do not address:

- arrests that do not proceed to court (for example, as a result of diversion or restitution) (see section 7.4 'Juvenile diversions')
- convictions that lead to outcomes that are not administered by custodial facilities (for example, community service orders and fines)
- police custody (for example, for public drunkenness).

The data on adult Indigenous imprisonment are sourced from the National Prisoner Census, the results of which are published by the ABS in *Prisoners in Australia* (ABS 2006). The census is a count of all prisoners who are held in gazetted adult prisons in Australia, as at midnight on 30 June of each year. The Prisoner Census provides a snapshot of the number of people in prison, and is not representative of the flow of prisoners. People held in juvenile institutions, psychiatric facilities or immigration custody are not included.

People under 18 years are treated as juveniles in most Australian courts and are not held in custody in adult prisons, other than in exceptional circumstances. In Queensland, however, 'adult' refers to people aged 17 years and over.

For juvenile detention, the data are sourced from the Australian Institute of Criminology (AIC) publication *Statistics on Juvenile Detention in Australia: 1981-2005* (Taylor 2006). These data contain information on the number of young people in the custody of each jurisdiction's juvenile justice agency on the last day of each quarter. Only those juveniles detained on each census night are counted, and as such, the count is not necessarily representative of the actual daily average of juvenile detainees in each State and Territory.

While detailed national data are currently available on the number of young people held in juvenile detention centres at the end of each quarter, these detention data only illustrate one aspect of the juvenile justice system. The vast majority of juveniles in the care of juvenile justice agencies are not placed into detention; rather, they are placed on community service orders or other types of order (Charlton and McCall 2004). In February 2006, the AIHW, in collaboration with the Australasian Juvenile Justice Administrators, released their first report on juvenile justice in Australia (AIHW 2006). This report published nationally consistent data on juvenile justice supervision from 2000-01 to 2003-04.

Imprisonment

Age standardised imprisonment rates for Indigenous and non-Indigenous people are presented in table 3.12.1. Age standardisation adjusts for the younger age profile of the Indigenous population compared to the non-Indigenous population (ABS 2001) — for both populations, younger adults are much more likely to be in prison than older people.

Table 3.12.1 **Age standardised imprisonment rates per 100 000 adult population, 30 June 2006[a, b]**

	Indigenous	*Non-Indigenous*	*Ratio of Indigenous to non-Indigenous*[c]
NSW[d]	1 892.7	153.5	12.3
Victoria	940.4	96.5	9.7
Queensland	1 463.5	137.8	10.6
WA	2 668.5	144.8	18.4
SA	1 451.9	116.1	12.5
Tasmania	410.6	143.3	2.9
ACT[e]	812.1	72.6	11.2
NT	1 416.3	115.1	12.3
Australia	1 668.2	129.8	12.9

a Indigenous imprisonment rates are calculated using the low series population projections for 30 June 2006 (ABS Cat. no. 3238.0). **b** Prisoners with unknown Indigenous status are excluded from the calculation of age standardised imprisonment rates. **c** The ratio of Indigenous to non-Indigenous imprisonment is calculated by dividing the Indigenous age standardised imprisonment rate by the non-Indigenous age standardised imprisonment rate. **d** Data for NSW exclude ACT prisoners held in NSW prisons. **e** Data for the ACT include ACT prisoners held in the ACT as well as ACT prisoners held in NSW.

Source: ABS (2006); table 3A.12.3.

- Nationally in 2006, Indigenous people were 12.9 times more likely than non-Indigenous people to be imprisoned, with an age standardised imprisonment rate of 1668.2 prisoners per 100 000 adult Indigenous population compared with 129.8 per 100 000 for non-Indigenous prisoners (table 3.12.1).
- There were 6 091 Indigenous prisoners in Australia at 30 June 2006, increasing each year from 4 494 Indigenous prisoners counted at 30 June 2002 (table 3A.12.1). Of the 25 790 prisoners in Australia at 30 June 2006 (table 3A.12.1), Indigenous prisoners accounted for 23.6 per cent of the prisoner population (table 3A.12.5). This proportion has increased from 20.0 per cent in 2002 (table 3A.12.5).

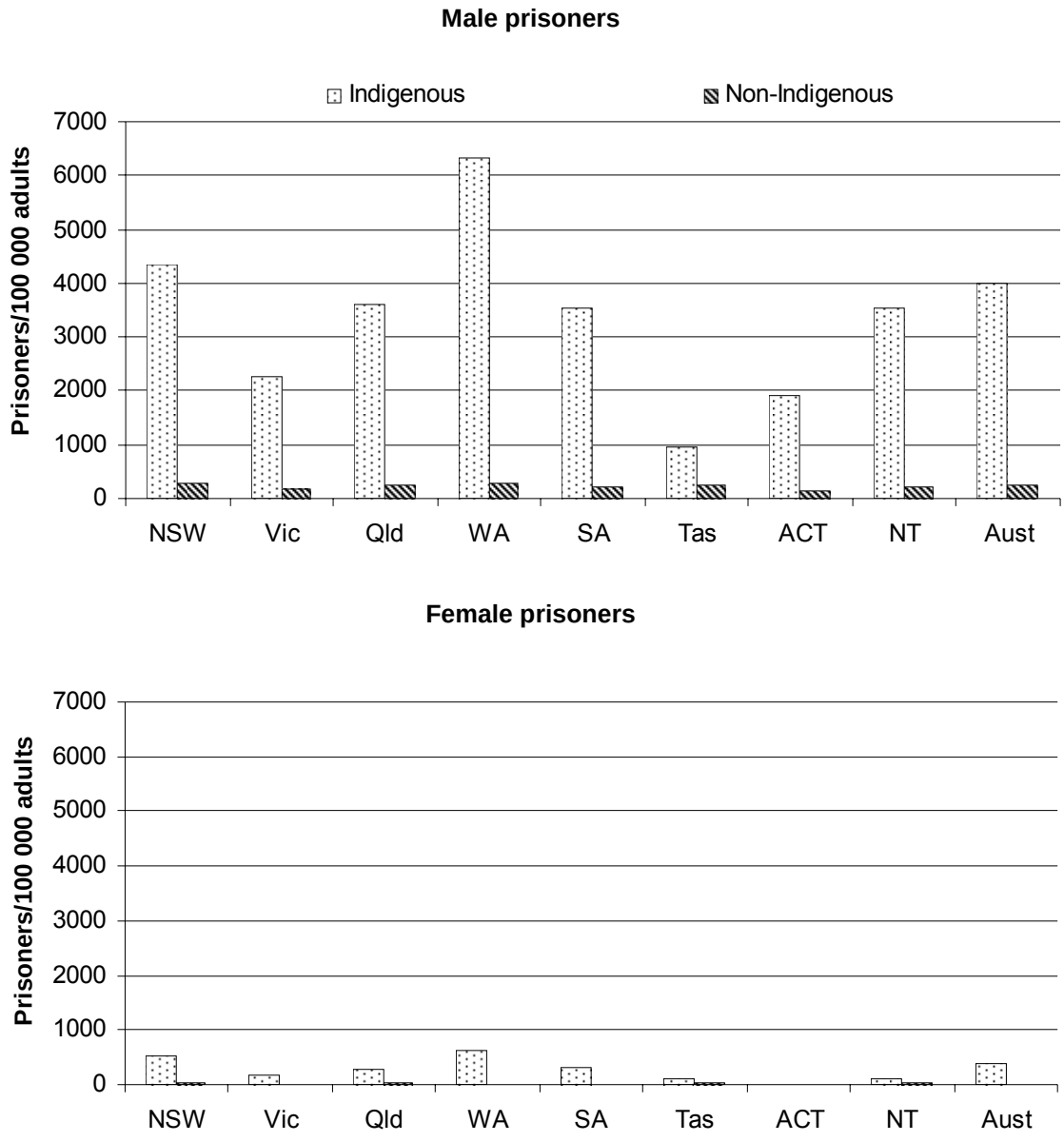
Figure 3.12.1 **Age standardised imprisonment rates per 100 000 adult population, by year, Australia[a, b]**

a Indigenous imprisonment rates are calculated using low series population projections (ABS Cat. no. 3238.0).
b Rates are based on prisoner census and population data at 30 June each year.

Source: ABS (2006); table 3A.12.4.

- Figure 3.12.1 shows an increase in the rate of Indigenous imprisonment from 1 264.5 in 2000 to 1668.2 in 2006 (figure 3.12.1). The non-Indigenous rate only changed slightly, from 128.0 in 2000 to 129.8 in 2006.

Figure 3.12.2 **Crude imprisonment rates, by gender, 30 June 2006**[a, b, c]



a Indigenous imprisonment rates are calculated using the low series population projections for June 30 2006 (ABS Cat no. 3238.0) and are not age standardised. **b** Data for NSW excludes ACT prisoners held in NSW prisons. **c** Data for the ACT includes ACT prisoners held in the ACT as well as ACT prisoners held in NSW.

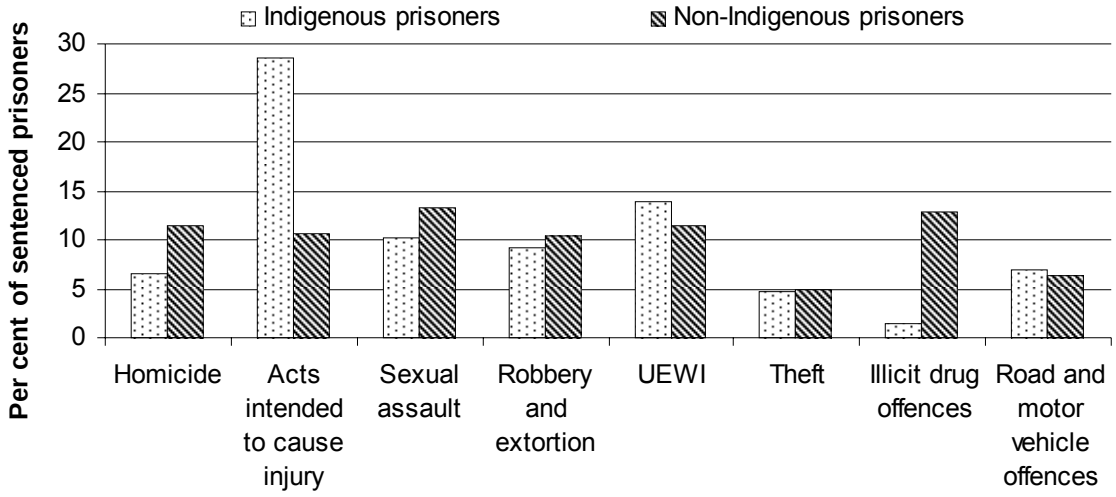
Source: ABS (unpublished); table 3A.12.7.

- Figure 3.12.2 shows that imprisonment rates for Indigenous and non-Indigenous males are considerably greater than imprisonment rates for Indigenous and non-Indigenous females across all states and territories.
- Nationally, on 30 June 2006, Indigenous males were 16.8 times more likely than non-Indigenous males to be in prison, and Indigenous females were 23.1 times more likely than non-Indigenous females to be in prison (figure 3.12.2). Over the

past five years, the rates of imprisonment for Indigenous males and females have increased annually (table 3A.12.7).

- Female prisoners comprise a small but growing proportion of the Australian prison population (table 3A.12.6) and have some specific needs not shared by most male prisoners, such as those associated with being a carer for young children. Because there are fewer prisons for women, Indigenous females are often detained in centres far from their children and communities (ABS 2004) and may also face communication difficulties. In a recent study of women prisoners in WA, the WA Department of Justice (2002b) found that 14 per cent of Indigenous women spoke an Aboriginal dialect as their first language.
- The imprisonment rate for Indigenous females increased by 34.0 per cent between 2002 and 2006. The imprisonment rate for Indigenous males increased by 21.6 per cent over the same period (table 3A.12.7).

Figure 3.12.3 **Sentenced prisoners by most serious offence, 30 June 2006**



UEWI = 'Unlawful entry with intent'.

Source: ABS (2006); table 3A.12.9.

- Data on sentenced prisoners by most serious offence in figure 3.12.3 provide a picture of people in prison at 30 June 2006. Prisoners serving long-term sentences for serious offences are over-represented in annual prisoner census data. An examination of the flow of offenders in and out of prison during the year would consist primarily of people serving short sentences for lesser offences.
- Of the 4 801 Indigenous sentenced prisoners used to calculate the percentages presented in figure 3.12.3, 28.5 per cent had been sentenced with 'acts intended

to cause injury' as their most serious offence, 2.7 times the proportion of non-Indigenous prisoners sentenced with the same offence (figure 3.12.3).

- In contrast, only 1.4 per cent of Indigenous prisoners had been sentenced for 'illicit drug offences' as their most serious offence, a considerably smaller proportion than in the non-Indigenous prisoner population (12.9 per cent) (figure 3.12.3).
- For Indigenous and non-Indigenous prisoners, only 0.7 per cent and 0.9 per cent had been sentenced for public order offences, respectively (table 3A.12.9).

Attachment tables 3A.12.8 and 3A.12.9 show the number and proportion of sentenced prisoners by most serious offence and expected time to serve (mean and median months) at 30 June 2005 and 30 June 2006, respectively. Nationally, Indigenous prisoners were expected to serve shorter sentences than the overall prisoner population in most of the selected offence categories presented in figure 3.12.3, but were serving longer sentences for sexual assault and theft. According to the ABS (2006), unsentenced Indigenous prisoners spent less time in remand for most of the offence categories listed in tables 3A.12.8 and 3A.12.9 than non-Indigenous prisoners in 2006 (in mean number of months), but were spending more time in remand for sexual assault, public order and miscellaneous offences.

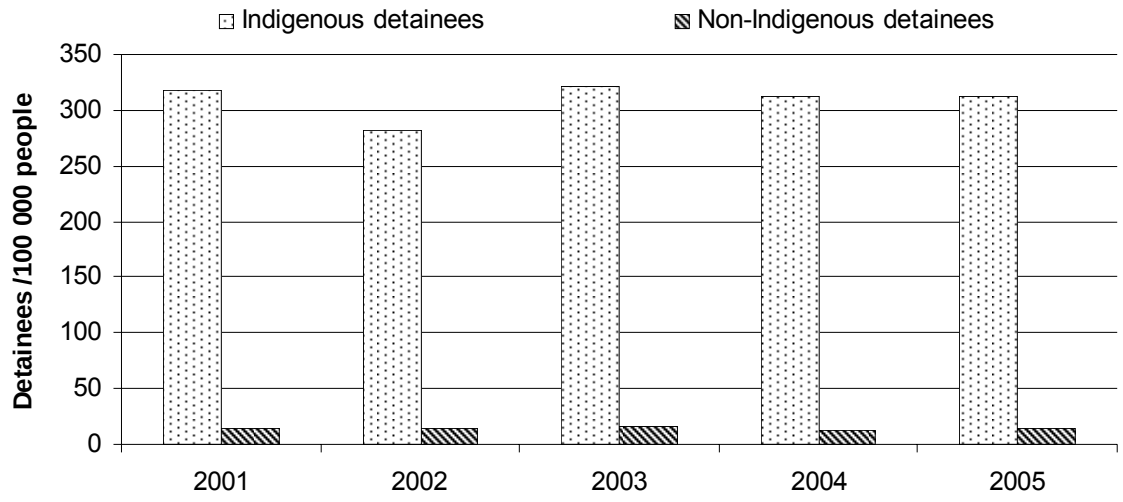
The number of prisoners and rate of imprisonment, by age group, are shown in tables 3A.12.10 (at 30 June 2005) and 3A.12.11 (at 30 June 2006). The mean and median age of prisoners at 30 June 2005 and 30 June 2006 are shown in tables 3A.12.12 and 3A.12.13, respectively. In 2006, the mean (average) age of Indigenous prisoners was 31.6 years, some 4.2 years younger than the average age of non-Indigenous prisoners (35.8 years) (table 3A.12.13).

Data by jurisdiction on the proportion of prisoners on remand[12] are contained in table 3A.12.14 (at 30 June 2005) and 3A.12.15 (at 30 June 2006). Nationally in 2006, the proportion of unsentenced Indigenous prisoners (21.0 per cent) was similar to the proportion of unsentenced non-Indigenous prisoners (21.3 per cent) (table 3A.12.15). From 2005 to 2006, the proportions of unsentenced Indigenous and non-Indigenous prisoners have increased slightly on a national basis (tables 3A.12.14 and 3A.12.15).

12 According to the ABS (2006), remand prisoners are those persons who have been placed in custody while awaiting the outcome of their court hearing. They may be unconvicted (remanded in custody for trial), convicted but awaiting sentence or awaiting deportation.

Juvenile detention

Figure 3.12.4 **Juvenile detention rates, aged 10–17 years, by year, Australia[a, b]**



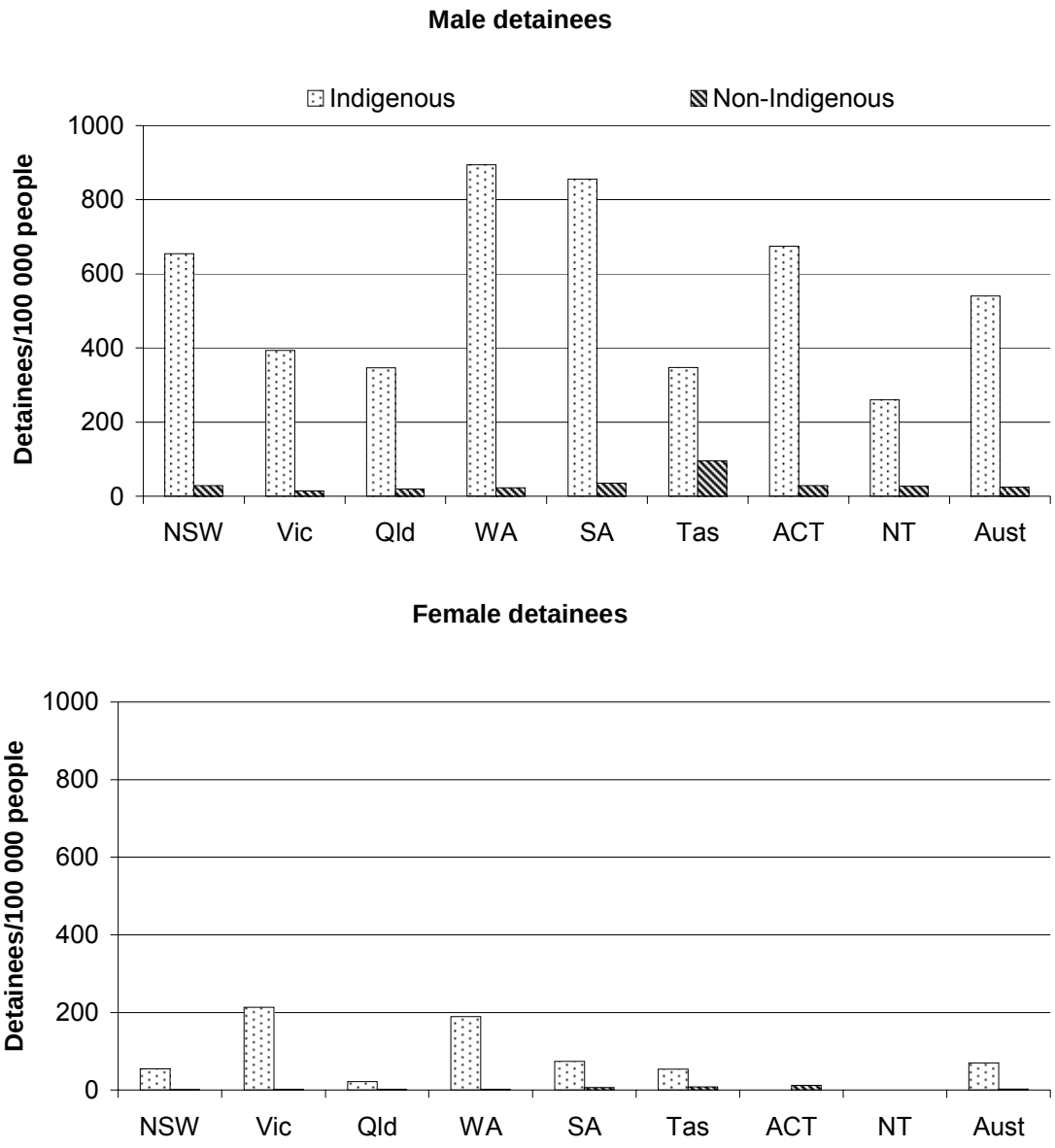
a All data are taken from the census count at 30 June of the relevant year. **b** Indigenous rates were calculated using high series population data (ABS Cat. no. 3238.0). Any variation in derived rates may be due to the assumptions and limitations of the base population data.

Source: Taylor (2006); table 3A.12.17.

- Figure 3.12.4 shows that from 2001 to 2005 Indigenous juveniles were much more likely than non-Indigenous juveniles to be in detention. In 2005, Indigenous juveniles were 23 times as likely to be in detention.
- Although detention rates for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous juveniles fluctuated between 2001 and 2005, the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous detention rates remained large.
- There were 317 Indigenous juveniles in detention and 288 non-Indigenous juveniles in detention at 30 June 2005 (table 3A.12.16). The number of Indigenous juveniles in detention increased from 261 in 2001 while the number of non-Indigenous juveniles in detention decreased from 306 on 30 June 2001.

Juvenile detention rates can be highly variable in states and territories with: small populations of Indigenous people; small numbers of young people in juvenile detention; and/or small numbers of Indigenous people in juvenile detention. This particularly applies in Victoria, Tasmania, the ACT and the NT. Attachment tables 3A.12.16 and 3A.12.17 present the numbers and rates of Indigenous and non-Indigenous juveniles (aged 10–17 years) in detention from 2001 to 2005 by State and Territory.

Figure 3.12.5 **Juvenile detention rates, aged 10–17 years, by gender, 30 June 2005[a]**



a Indigenous rates were calculated using high series population data provided by the ABS (Cat. no. 3238.0). Any variation in derived rates may be due to the assumptions and limitations of the base population data.

Source: Taylor (2006); table 3A.12.19.

- For both Indigenous and non-Indigenous juveniles, males were much more likely to be in detention than females (figure 3.12.5).
- As shown in figure 3.12.5, the rates of Indigenous male and female juvenile detainees per 100 000 people were considerably higher than the detention rates for non-Indigenous males and females in all jurisdictions. Nationally, there were 283 Indigenous males and 34 Indigenous females in juvenile detention on 30 June 2005 (table 3A.12.18).

- Nationally on 30 June 2005, the rate of Indigenous females in juvenile detention was 34.6 times higher than the rate of non-Indigenous females in juvenile detention. Indigenous males were 22.2 times as likely to be in juvenile detention as non-Indigenous males (figure 3.12.5). The ACT and NT had no Indigenous females in detention on 30 June 2005 (table 3A.12.18).

To accompany figure 3.12.5, tables 3A.12.18 and 3A.12.19 present the numbers and rates of Indigenous and non-Indigenous juveniles (aged 10–17 years) in detention from 2001 to 2005 by State and Territory and sex.

The numbers and rates of juveniles in detention, by age category, are shown in tables 3A.12.20 and 3A.12.21, respectively. Data on the proportion of juveniles who were in detention and under sentence (as opposed to being on remand) on 30 June 2005 are available in table 3A.12.22, while data on the number of people in juvenile detention (all ages) are available from table 3A.12.23.

3.13 Future directions in data

3.1 Life expectancy at birth

The ABS is working with registrars in each State and Territory to progressively improve the quality of mortality data for Indigenous people by improving the quality of Indigenous identification in death registrations. Indigenous mortality data provide the basis for calculating Indigenous life expectancy estimates. A further enhancement of Indigenous life expectancy estimates would be the development of health adjusted life expectancy, where healthy life expectancy is estimated (by subtracting later years of life affected by disability and the burden of disease).

3.2 Disability and chronic disease

The ABS included a disability related 'core activity need for assistance' question in the 2006 Census, which will provide a useful source of both national and small area data on Indigenous and non-Indigenous people with a need for assistance in core activities.

A new Indigenous disability network has been proposed, to promote better understanding of disability among Indigenous peoples, consultation among those responsible for service design and delivery, and cross-border coordination in some areas of Australia. The new network should provide advice to the AIHW and the ABS on Indigenous disability data collection.

3.3 Years 10 and 12 retention and attainment

Improving reporting of year 10 and 12 completion rates is important for obtaining nationally comparable data for future reports.

3.5 and 3.6 Labour force participation, unemployment and income

In addition to the five-yearly Census, the ABS program of ongoing Indigenous specific surveys provides labour (including CDEP) and income data on a three-yearly cycle, including the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey (NATSIHS) and the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey (NATSISS). Additional annual estimates of Indigenous labour force data over the period 2002 to 2005 are also available, which were compiled from the monthly Labour Force Survey (see ABS 2005). Data from the 2006 Census will provide much detailed, high quantity labour force and income data for the next Report.

Future Reports will need to reflect the recent changes to CDEP arrangements noted in this section.

3.9 Substantiated child abuse and neglect

Substantiated child protection notifications data have been used to give an insight into the prevalence of child abuse and neglect, and more specifically, the extent of sexual abuse. Even as a proxy indicator of abuse and neglect, it is acknowledged that the substantiated child protection data do not adequately address the issue. More work is required on developing data to report on the prevalence of child abuse and neglect, particularly sexual abuse.

Often children at risk of child abuse or neglect are in an environment where family violence is prevalent. Data on family and community violence provides information on the extent of children at risk of child abuse or neglect. The National Information Development Plan for Crime and Justice Statistics (ABS Cat. no. 4520.0) has prioritised the development of statistics on family and domestic violence for all people, including Indigenous people. The ABS/AIHW Family and Domestic Violence Statistics Working Group (FDVWG) was established to recommend strategies to improve the range, availability and quality of family violence statistical information in the health and welfare and crime and justice fields. Progress by the working group includes a report examining key national data sources (AIHW 2006b). A project has commenced to develop a conceptual framework for domestic and family violence statistics.

3.11 Family and community violence

The National Information Development Plan for Crime and Justice Statistics (ABS Cat. no. 4520.0) has prioritised the development of statistics on family and domestic violence for all people, including Indigenous people. The ABS/AIHW Family and Domestic Violence Statistics Working Group was established to recommend strategies to improve the range, availability and quality of family violence statistical information in the health and welfare and crime and justice fields. Progress by the working group includes a report examining key national data sources (AIHW 2006). A project has commenced to develop a conceptual framework for domestic and family violence statistics.

The ABS National Centre for Crime & Justice Statistics is working with the National Criminal Courts Statistics Unit Advisory Group to collect and publish nationally comparable crime victimisation data and data on the relationship between victims and perpetrators, by Indigenous status. This should help generate more comparable information in future years.

3.14 Attachment tables

Attachment tables are identified in references throughout this chapter by an 'A' suffix (for example, table 3A.3.2 is table 2 in the attachment tables for section 3.3). The files containing the attachment tables can also be found on the Review web page (www.pc.gov.au/gsp). Users without access to the Internet can contact the Secretariat to obtain the attachment tables (see contact details on the inside front cover of the Report).

3.1 Life expectancy at birth

Table 3A.1.1	Estimated life expectancies at birth (years)
Table 3A.1.2	Median age at death, NSW, Queensland, WA, SA, NT, 2000–2005
Table 3A.1.3	Causes of death by Indigenous status, Qld, WA, SA and the NT, 2001–2005

3.2 Disability and chronic disease

Table 3A.2.1	Age standardised rates of people with selected long term conditions, by type of condition and Indigenous status, Australia, 2001 and 2004-05
Table 3A.2.2	Rates of people with selected long term conditions, by age and Indigenous status, Australia, 2004-05

3.6 Household and individual income

3.7 Home ownership

3.8 Suicide and self-harm

3.11 Family and community violence

Table 3A.12.19 Juvenile detention rate per 100 000 people aged 10–17 years, by gender

Table 3A.12.20 Number of people in juvenile detention, by age

Table 3A.12.21 Juvenile detention rate per 100 000, by age

Table 3A.12.22 Sentenced people aged 10–17 years as a percentage of total detainees

Table 3A.12.23 Number of people in juvenile detention (all ages)

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