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## 2 The compendium of Indigenous data

The primary aim of the compendium is to provide an easily accessible collation of Indigenous data from the *Report on Government Services 2007* (2007 Report). Currently, information and data on Indigenous people are contained within the discussion of each specific service delivery area of the Report.

The report on *Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage: Key Indicators 2005* (SCRGSP 2005) is a separate report from the Report on Government Services. The data contained in this compendium (obtained from the 2007 Report) — focusing on the efficiency and effectiveness of specific areas of service delivery — can provide information that complements the material in the Indigenous Disadvantage Report.

### Improvements in reporting of Indigenous data

Improvements to the Indigenous data within the 2007 Report were made in the health, community services and housing chapters. These included:

- *Health*: ‘Primary and community health’ (chapter 10) has been improved by including data on ‘hospitalisations for vaccine preventable conditions’, ‘potentially preventable acute conditions’ and ‘potentially preventable chronic conditions’ indicators.
- *Community Services*: ‘Services for people with a disability’ (chapter 13) has been improved by including data on disability prevalence rates and ‘service use by special needs groups — Indigenous people’ indicators for community support and respite services.
- *Housing*: Chapter 16 (‘Housing’) has been improved by including data on customer satisfaction with State owned and managed Indigenous housing at the jurisdictional level.

### Indigenous data in the 2007 Report

Table 2.1 provides an overview of data on Indigenous Australians in the 2007 Report. It indicates which services have reported on at least one performance indicator, or have descriptive data, by Indigenous status for all jurisdictions. However, the table does not signify the quality of the data.

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### *Data collection issues concerning Indigenous Australians*

The task of collecting data on Indigenous Australians is complicated by the fact that many administrative data collections do not distinguish between Indigenous and non-Indigenous clients. The method and level of identification of Indigenous people appear to vary across jurisdictions. Further, surveys do not necessarily include an Indigenous identifier and, when they do, they may not undertake sufficient sampling of Indigenous people to provide reliable results. Therefore, readers should exercise caution in interpreting data on services to Indigenous people within this compendium and the 2007 Report.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) and Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) play an important role in this area. Work being undertaken by the ABS and AIHW includes:

- an ongoing program to develop and improve Indigenous data flowing from Australian, State and Territory administrative systems
- work with other agencies to ensure Indigenous people are identified in relevant systems and that statistics are of adequate quality. Priority is initially being given to the improvement of births and deaths statistics in all states and territories. Other priorities include hospital, community services, education, housing, and crime and justice statistics
- work with other agencies to develop and support national Indigenous information plans, Indigenous performance indicators and Indigenous taskforces on a number of topics
- an expansion of the ABS Household Survey Program to collect more regular Indigenous statistics, including regular Indigenous general social surveys, Indigenous sample supplementation in regular health surveys, and annual Indigenous labour force estimates.

The Ministerial Council on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs (MCATSIA) established a working party to develop an Indigenous Demographics paper to identify methodological issues in Indigenous data collections, outline how these are being addressed and identify any remaining gaps. The findings are presented in a paper titled *Population and Diversity: Policy Implications of Emerging Indigenous Demographic Trends*, released in mid-2006 by the Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research (Taylor 2006).

**Table 2.1 Reporting of at least one data item on Indigenous Australians, 2007 Report**

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

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

Source: 2007 Report, table 2.4, p. 2.19.

In 2006, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) established an Indigenous Generational Reform working group, whose terms of reference includes agreeing on short- and long-term actions to address gaps in national and administrative data

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collection to support measurement of long term outcomes for Indigenous Australians consistent with the Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage framework.

The Review will draw on these initiatives in future reports.

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## References

- SCRGSP (Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision) 2005, *Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage: Key Indicators 2005*, Productivity Commission, Canberra.
- Taylor J 2006, *Population and Diversity: Policy Implications of Emerging Indigenous Demographic Trends*, Discussion paper no. 283/2006, Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research, Australian National University, Canberra.