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## 5 Police services

This chapter reports on the performance of police services. These services comprise the operations of the police agencies of each State and Territory government and the ACT community policing function performed by the Australian Federal Police (AFP) under the *Arrangement between the Minister for Justice and Customs of the Commonwealth and the Australian Capital Territory for the provision of police services to the Australian Capital Territory*. The national policing function of the AFP and other national non-police law enforcement bodies (such as the Australian Crime Commission) are not included in the Report.

Police services are the principal means through which State and Territory governments pursue the achievement of a safe and secure environment for the community, through response to incidents, the investigation of offences, the provision of services to the judicial process and the provision of road safety and traffic management. Police are involved in a diverse range of activities aimed at reducing the incidence and effects of criminal activity. They also respond to more general needs in the community — for example, assisting emergency services, mediating family and neighbourhood disputes, delivering messages regarding death or serious illness, and advising on general policing and crime issues (CJC 1996).

### Indigenous data in the police services chapter

The police services chapter in the *Report on Government Services 2007* (2007 Report) contains the following data items on Indigenous people:

- proportion of police staff from Indigenous backgrounds relative to the proportion of the general population who are from Indigenous backgrounds, 2005-06
- deaths in police custody and custody-related operations, 2001–2005.

### Supporting tables

Supporting tables for data within the police services chapter of this compendium are contained in attachment 5A of the compendium. These tables are identified in references throughout this chapter by an ‘A’ suffix (for example, table 5A.3 is

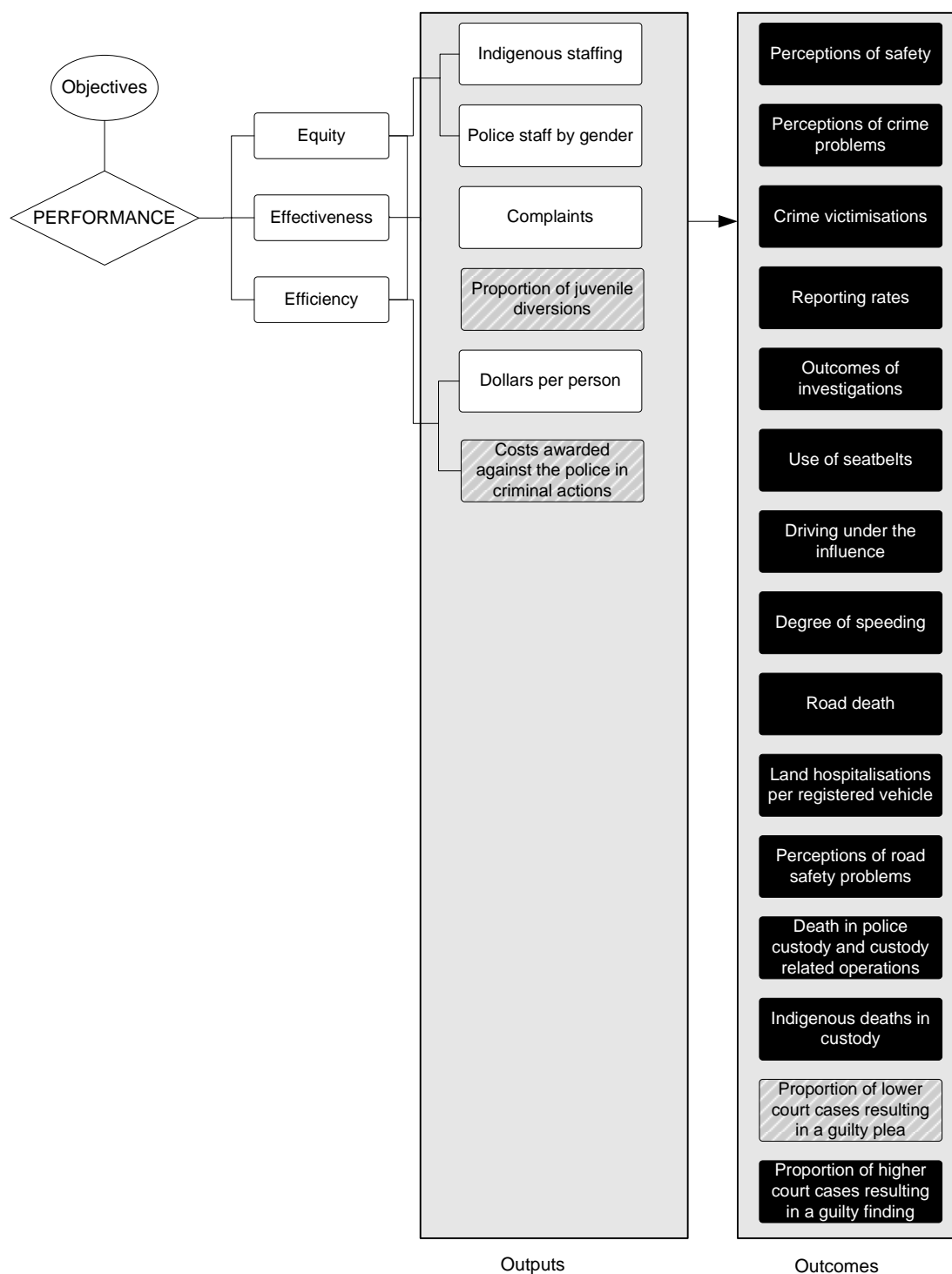
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table 3 in the police services attachment). As the data are directly sourced from the 2007 Report, the compendium also notes where the original table, figure or text in the 2007 Report can be found. For example, where the compendium refers to ‘2007 Report, p. 5.15’ this is page 15 of chapter 5 of the 2007 Report, and ‘2007 Report, table 5A.2’ is attachment table 2 of attachment 5 of the 2007 Report.

## **Framework of performance indicators**

Data for Indigenous people are reported for a subset of the performance indicators for police services in the 2007 Report. It is important to interpret these data in the context of the broader performance indicator framework outlined in figure 5.1. The performance indicator framework shows which data are comparable in the 2007 Report. For data that are not considered directly comparable, the text includes relevant caveats and supporting commentary.

Figure 5.1 General performance framework for the police services sector



**Key to indicators**

**Text** Provided on a comparable basis for this Report subject to caveats in each chart or table

**Text** Information not complete or not directly comparable

Source: 2007 Report, figure 5.3, p. 5.6.

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## Indigenous staffing

This section focuses on the performance of mainstream police services in relation to Indigenous Australians. One indicator of access and equity is ‘Indigenous staffing’ — that is, the proportion of police staff from Indigenous backgrounds relative to the proportion of the general population who are from Indigenous backgrounds (box 5.1).

### Box 5.1 Indigenous staffing

‘Indigenous staffing’ is an output indicator of governments’ objective to provide police services in an equitable manner. Indigenous people may feel more comfortable in ‘accessing’ police services when they are able to deal with Indigenous police staff.

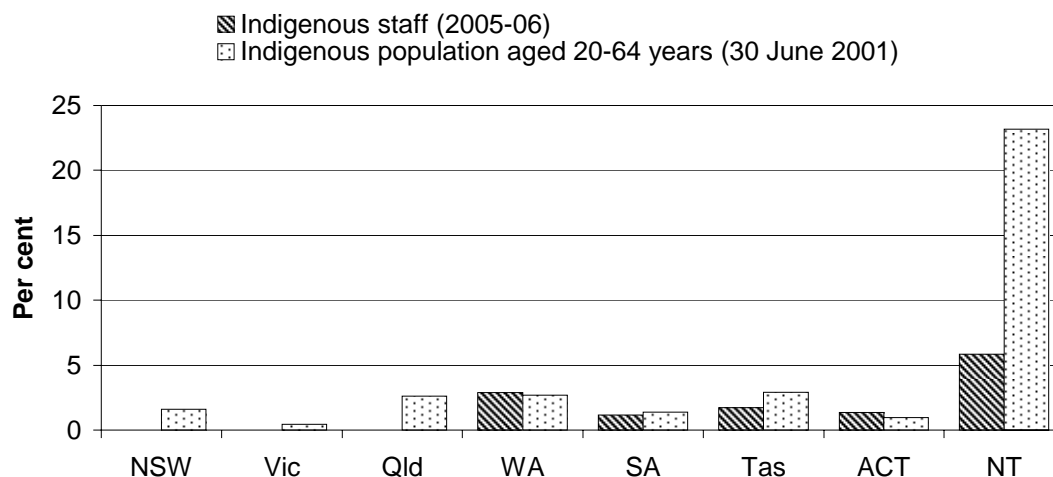
The indicator is defined as the proportion of police staff from Indigenous backgrounds compared to the proportion of the general population aged 20–64 years who are from Indigenous backgrounds. These data are used because a significantly larger proportion of the Indigenous population falls within the younger non-working age groupings compared with the non-Indigenous population. Readily available ABS population estimates for people aged 20–64 years at 30 June 2001 provide a proxy for the estimated working population.

A proportion of police staff from Indigenous backgrounds closer to the proportion of the general population aged 20–64 years who are from Indigenous backgrounds represents a more desirable equity outcome.

In some jurisdictions, the process of identifying Indigenous staff members relies on self-identification. Where Indigenous people are required to identify themselves, the accuracy of the data will partly depend on how they perceive the advantages (or disadvantages) of identification and whether these perceptions change over time. More generally, many factors will influence the willingness of the Indigenous population to access police services, including familiarity with procedures for dealing with police, and confidence in the effectiveness of police services. For the purposes of this chapter, an Indigenous person is one who self-identifies as being Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.

In most but not all jurisdictions, the proportion of Indigenous police staff was broadly in line with the representation of Indigenous people in the population aged 20–64 years (figure 5.2).

**Figure 5.2 Proportion of Indigenous staff in 2005-06 and Indigenous population aged 20–64 years<sup>a, b, c</sup>**



<sup>a</sup> Indigenous staff numbers relate to those staff who self-identify as being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent. <sup>b</sup> Information on Indigenous status is collected only at the time of recruitment. <sup>c</sup> Queensland and Victoria were unable to separate Indigenous and non-Indigenous staff. Indigenous staff are reported as the sum of both the operational and non-operational categories. Where data for the non-operational category are not available, such as in NSW, the sum of both categories is also shown as not available.

Source: ABS, Population by Age and Sex, Cat. no. 3201.0, (unpublished); State and Territory governments (unpublished); table 5A.9; 2007 Report, figure 5.11, p. 5.17.

## Deaths in police custody and custody-related operations

‘Deaths in custody and custody-related operations’, and ‘Indigenous deaths in custody’ are outcome indicators of governments’ objective to provide safe custody for alleged offenders, and ensure fair and equitable treatment for both victims and alleged offenders (box 5.2).

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**Box 5.2 Deaths in custody and custody-related operations, and Indigenous deaths in custody**

‘Deaths in custody and custody-related operations’, and ‘Indigenous deaths in custody’, are outcome indicators of governments’ objective to provide safe custody for alleged offenders, and ensure fair and equitable treatment for both victims and alleged offenders.

The indicators are defined as the number of non-Indigenous and Indigenous deaths in police custody and custody-related operations, reported both as numbers and as a rate per 100 000 of the relevant population.

For both indicators, a lower number of deaths in custody and custody-related operations is a better outcome.

Nationally, there were 20 deaths in police custody and custody-related operations in 2005 (down from 30 in 2004). This total comprised 12 non-Indigenous deaths and 8 Indigenous deaths. Across jurisdictions, there is a wide variation in the number of deaths, and caution needs to be taken when comparing jurisdictions’ rates due to small absolute numbers. Nationally, the death rate per 100 000 people over the period 2001–2005 was 0.77 (table 5.1).

Table 5.1 Deaths in police custody and custody-related operations<sup>a</sup>

	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Vic</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>WA</i>	<i>SA</i>	<i>Tas</i>	<i>ACT</i>	<i>NT</i>	<i>Aust</i> <sup>b</sup>
Non-Indigenous deaths									
2001	15	8	4	1	3	—	—	—	31
2002	12	7	4	2	—	1	—	—	26
2003	11	4	7	3	2	—	1	—	28
2004	8	4	5	2	2	—	1	—	22
2005	2	5	4	—	1	—	—	—	12
Indigenous deaths									
2001	—	—	—	2	2	—	—	—	4
2002	4	—	—	1	1	—	—	5	11
2003	1	—	2	4	—	—	—	1	8
2004	2	1	2	1	—	—	—	2	8
2005	1	—	1	6	—	—	—	—	8
Total deaths									
2001	15	8	4	3	5	—	—	—	35
2002	16	7	4	3	1	1	—	5	37
2003	12	4	9	7	2	—	1	1	36
2004	10	5	7	3	2	—	1	2	30
2005	3	5	5	6	1	—	—	—	20
<b>Total 2001–2005</b>	56	29	29	22	11	1	2	8	158
Rate per 100 000 people (2001–2005) <sup>b</sup>	0.82	0.57	0.72	1.09	0.71	0.20	0.61	3.94	0.77

<sup>a</sup> Deaths in police custody include: deaths in institutional settings (for example, police stations/lockups and police vehicles, or during transfer to or from such an institution, or in hospitals following transfer from an institution); and other deaths in police operations where officers were in close contact with the deceased (for example, most raids and shootings by police). Deaths in custody-related operations cover situations where officers did not have such close contact with the person as to be able to significantly influence or control the person's behaviour (for example, most sieges and most cases where officers are attempting to detain a person, such as pursuits). <sup>b</sup> Rate calculated by using the average population during 2001–2005.

— Nil or rounded to zero.

Source: AIC (various years), *Deaths in Custody, Australia*; table 5A.10; 2007 Report, table 5.3, p. 5.57.

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## Supporting tables

Supporting tables for data within this chapter are contained in the attachment to the compendium. These tables are identified in references throughout this chapter by an 'A' suffix (for example, table 5A.3 is table 3 in the police attachment). The tables included in the attachment are listed below.

<b>Table 5A.1</b>	Police service expenditure, staff and asset descriptors, NSW
<b>Table 5A.2</b>	Police service expenditure, staff and asset descriptors, Victoria
<b>Table 5A.3</b>	Police service expenditure, staff and asset descriptors, Queensland
<b>Table 5A.4</b>	Police service expenditure, staff and asset descriptors, WA
<b>Table 5A.5</b>	Police service expenditure, staff and asset descriptors, SA
<b>Table 5A.6</b>	Police service expenditure, staff and asset descriptors, Tasmania
<b>Table 5A.7</b>	Police service expenditure, staff and asset descriptors, ACT
<b>Table 5A.8</b>	Police service expenditure, staff and asset descriptors, NT
<b>Table 5A.9</b>	Indigenous, sworn and unsworn police staff
<b>Table 5A.10</b>	Number of deaths in police custody and custody-related operations, 2001 to 2005

## References

- AIC (Australian Institute of Criminology) 2002, *Deaths in Custody, Australia* (and various years), Canberra.
- CJC (Criminal Justice Commission) 1996, *The Nature of General Police Work*, Research Paper Series, vol. 3, no. 2, Brisbane.