# 8 Corrective services

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| Attachment tables |
| Attachment tables are identified in references throughout this Indigenous Compendium by an ‘A’ prefix (for example, in this chapter, table 8A.1). As the data are directly sourced from the 2015 Report, the Compendium also notes where the original table, figure or text in the 2015 Report can be found. For example, where the Compendium refers to ‘2015 Report, p. 8.1’ this is page 1 of chapter 8 of the 2015 Report, and ‘2015 Report, table 8A.1’ is attachment table 1 of attachment 8A of the 2015 Report. A list of attachment tables referred to in the Compendium is provided at the end of this chapter, and the full attachment tables are available from the Review website at www.pc.gov.au/research/recurring/report-on-government-services. |
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The Corrective services chapter (chapter 8) in the *Report on Government Services 2015* (2015 Report) reports on the performance of corrective services in Australia. Data are reported for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians for a subset of the performance indicators reported in that chapter — those data are compiled and presented here.

Corrective services aim to provide a safe, secure and humane custodial environment and an effective community corrections environment in which prisoners and offenders are effectively managed, commensurate with their needs and the risks they pose to the community. Additionally, corrective services aim to reduce the risk of re-offending by providing services and program interventions that address the causes of offending, maximise the chances of successful reintegration into the community and encourage offenders to adopt a law-abiding way of life.

In this chapter, corrective services include prison custody, periodic detention and a range of community corrections orders and programs for adult offenders (for example, parole and community work orders). Both public and privately operated correctional facilities are included; however, the scope of this chapter generally does not extend to:

1. youth justice[[1]](#footnote-1) (reported on in chapter 16, Youth justice services)
2. prisoners or alleged offenders held in forensic mental health facilities to receive psychiatric care (who are usually the responsibility of health departments)
3. prisoners held in police custody (reported on in chapter 6, Police services)

* people held in facilities such as immigration or military detention centres.

Jurisdictional data reported in this chapter provided by State and Territory governments are based on the definitions and counting rules from the National Corrections Advisory Group (unpublished) *Corrective Services Data Collection Manual 2013-14.*

Some key terms relating to corrective services are listed in box 8.1.

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| Box 8.1 Terms relating to corrective services |
| *Prisoners* in this chapter refers to people held in full time custody under the jurisdiction of an adult corrective services agency. This includes sentenced prisoners serving a term of imprisonment and unsentenced prisoners held on remand.  *Detainees* refers to people subject to a periodic detention order, under which they are held for two consecutive days within a one-week period in a proclaimed prison or detention centre under the responsibility of corrective services.  *Offenders* refers to people serving community corrections orders, which includes bail orders if these orders are subject to supervision by community corrections officers. |
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### Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander data in the Corrective services chapter

The Corrective services chapter in the 2015 Report contains the following data on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians:

1. imprisonment rates
2. community corrections rates, 2013-14
3. prisoner death rates from apparent unnatural causes, 2013-14.

The corrective services attachment contains additional data relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians including periodic detention rates, 2013-14.

### Prison custody

On average, 32 683 people per day (excluding periodic detainees) were held in Australian prisons during 2013-14 — an increase of 8.6 per cent over the average daily number in 2012-13 (table 8A.1). In addition, on average, 61 people per day were serving periodic detention orders in NSW and the ACT in 2013-14.

The daily average number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander prisoners was 9027 — 27.6 per cent of prisoners nationally (table 8A.1).

The rate of imprisonment represents the number of prisoners (excluding periodic detainees) per 100 000 people in the corresponding adult population. The adult population refers to people at or over the minimum age at which offenders are generally sentenced as adults in each jurisdiction (17 years in Queensland and 18 years in all other jurisdictions for the reporting period).

The national (crude) imprisonment rate per 100 000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults in 2013-14 was 2254.2 compared with a corresponding rate of 136.5 for non‑Indigenous prisoners (figure 8.1).

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| Figure 8.1 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous crude imprisonment rates, 2013‑14**a, b** |
| |  | | --- | | Figure 8.3 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous crude imprisonment rates, 2013-14  More details can be found within the text surrounding this image. | |
| a Non-age standardised rates based on the daily average prisoner population numbers supplied by State and Territory governments, calculated against adult Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non‑Indigenous population estimates. b Excludes prisoners whose Indigenous status was reported as unknown. |
| *Source*: ABS (unpublished) *Australian Demographic Statistics*, Cat. no. 3101.0; ABS (unpublished) *Experimental Estimates and Projections, Indigenous Australians* (series B), Cat. no. 3238.0; State and Territory governments (unpublished); table 8A.4; 2015 Report, figure 8.3, p. 8.6. |
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The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population has a younger age profile compared with the non‑Indigenous population, which contributes to higher crude imprisonment rates. Age standardisation is a statistical method that takes into account differences in the age structures of populations, allowing a more valid comparison to be made between populations.

The national age standardised imprisonment rate per 100 000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults in 2013-14 was 1774.9 compared with a corresponding rate of 142.7 for non‑Indigenous prisoners (figure 8.2). This represents a ratio of 12.4, compared with 16.5 for the crude imprisonment rate — that is, when taking into account the effect of differences in the age profiles between the two populations, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander imprisonment rates are 12.4 times greater than those for non-Indigenous adults, while rates that do not take age profile differences into account are 16.5 times greater.

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| Figure 8.2 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous age standardised imprisonment rates, 2013-14**a** |
| |  | | --- | | Figure 8.4 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous age standardised imprisonment rates, 2013-14  More details can be found within the text surrounding this image. | |
| a Rates are based on the indirect standardisation method, applying age-group imprisonment rates derived from Prison Census data. |
| *Source*: ABS (unpublished) *Australian Demographic Statistics*, Cat. no. 3101.0; ABS (unpublished) *Experimental Estimates and Projections, Indigenous Australians* (series B), Cat. no. 3238.0; ABS (unpublished) *Prisoners in Australia,* Cat. no 4517.0; State and Territory governments (unpublished);  table 8A.4; 2015 Report, figure 8.4, p. 8.7. |
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While imprisonment rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, whether calculated on a crude or age standardised basis, are far higher than those for non‑Indigenous people, the majority of prisoners are non-Indigenous. Nationally,  
71.2 per cent of all prisoners were non-Indigenous in 2013-14 (table 8A.1).

Statistical information on the profile of prisoners additional to that provided in this Report is available through ABS publications. For example, *Prisoners in Australia* provides data on the offence types and length of sentences served by prisoners in each jurisdiction and nationally (ABS 2014).

### Community corrections

Community corrections is responsible for a range of non-custodial sanctions and also manages prisoners who are released into the community and continue to be subject to corrective services supervision. In some jurisdictions, community corrections responsibility includes managing offenders on supervised bail orders.

All jurisdictions have reparation and supervision orders. Restricted movement orders were available in all jurisdictions except Victoria, Queensland, Tasmania and the ACT  
in 2013‑14. Table 8A.24 in the 2015 Report, shows the range of sanctions involving corrective services that operated across jurisdictions during the reporting period.

These services vary in the extent and nature of supervision, the conditions of the order (such as a community work component or a requirement to attend an offender program) and the level of restriction placed on the offender’s freedom of movement in the community (for example, home detention). No single objective or set of characteristics is common to all jurisdictions’ community corrections services, other than that they generally provide a non-custodial sentencing alternative or a post‑custodial mechanism for reintegrating prisoners into the community under continued supervision.

Nationally, an average of 56 315 offenders per day were serving community corrections orders in 2013-14 — an increase of 3.1 per cent from the previous year (table 8A.3). This daily average comprised 46 000 males (81.7 per cent), 10 281 females (18.3 per cent)  
and 34 offenders whose gender was not reported. The daily average  
comprised 11 535 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander offenders (20.5 per cent of the total community corrections population), 43 851 non‑Indigenous offenders (77.9 per cent)  
and 929 people whose Indigenous status was unknown (table 8A.3).

The community corrections rate represents the number of offenders serving community corrections orders per 100 000 people in the corresponding adult population. The adult population refers to people at or over the minimum age at which offenders are generally sentenced as adults in each jurisdiction (17 years in Queensland and 18 years in all other jurisdictions for the reporting period).

The national rate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander offenders in 2013-14 was 2880.5 per 100 000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults compared with 257.2 for non‑Indigenous offenders (figure 8.3).

Comparisons should be made with care, especially for those jurisdictions with relatively small Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations, because small changes in offender numbers can cause variations in rates that do not accurately represent either real trends over time or consistent differences from other jurisdictions. Further, community corrections rates presented in figure 8.3 are not age standardised (that is, they are not adjusted to account for the different age structures of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non‑Indigenous populations). Data are not available for calculating age standardised community correction offender rates.

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| Figure 8.3 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous crude community corrections rates, 2013‑14**a, b** |
| |  | | --- | | Figure 8.6 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous crude community corrections rates, 2013-14  More details can be found within the text surrounding this image. | |
| a Non-age standardised rates based on the daily average offender population numbers supplied by State and Territory governments, calculated against adult Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non‑Indigenous population estimates. b Excludes offenders whose Indigenous status was reported as unknown. |
| *Source*: ABS (unpublished) *Australian Demographic Statistics*, Cat. no. 3101.0; ABS (unpublished) *Experimental Estimates and Projections, Indigenous Australians* (series B), Cat. no. 3238.0; State and Territory governments (unpublished); table 8A.4; 2015 Report, figure 8.6, p. 8.10. |
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### Framework of performance indicators

The Corrective services performance indicator framework outlined in figure 8.4 identifies the principal corrective services activity areas considered in the 2015 Report. Data for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians are reported for a subset of the performance indicators and are presented here. It is important to interpret these data in the context of the broader performance indicator framework. The framework shows which data are comparable. For data that are not considered directly comparable, the text includes relevant caveats and supporting commentary.

Indicator boxes presented throughout the chapter provide information about the reported indicators. As these are sourced directly from the 2015 Report, they may include references to data not reported for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians and therefore not included in this Compendium.

The Report’s statistical context chapter contains data that may assist in interpreting the performance indicators presented in this chapter. These data cover a range of demographic and geographic characteristics, including age profile, geographic distribution of the population, income levels, education levels, tenure of dwellings and cultural heritage (including Indigenous- and ethnic-status) (Chapter 2).

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| Figure 8.4 Corrective services performance indicator framework |
| |  | | --- | | Figure 8.7 Corrective services performance indicator framework  More details can be found within the text surrounding this image. | |
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*Source*: 2015 Report, figure 8.7, p. 8.12.

### Apparent unnatural deaths

‘Apparent unnatural deaths’ is an indicator of governments’ objective of providing a safe, secure and humane custodial environment, including providing a custodial environment in which there is a low risk of death from unnatural causes (box 8.2).

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| Box 8.2 Apparent unnatural deaths |
| ‘Apparent unnatural deaths’ is defined as the number of deaths, divided by the annual average prisoner or detainee population, multiplied by 100 (to give the rate per 100 prisoners or 100 detainees), where the likely cause of death is suicide, drug overdose, accidental injury or homicide, and is reported separately for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non‑Indigenous prisoners or detainees.  Zero, low or decreasing rates of apparent unnatural deaths are desirable. The rates for this indicator should be interpreted with caution. A single incident in a jurisdiction with a relatively small prisoner or detainee population can significantly increase the rate in that jurisdiction, but would have only a minor impact in jurisdictions with larger populations. A relatively high rate in a jurisdiction with a small prisoner or detainee population can represent only a very small number of deaths.  Data reported for this measure are:   * comparable (subject to caveats) across jurisdictions and over time * complete for the current reporting period (subject to caveats). All required 2013-14 data are available for all jurisdictions.   Data quality information for this indicator is at www.pc.gov.au/research/recurring/report-on-government-services. |
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Nationally, the rate of deaths from apparent unnatural causes for all prisoners  
was 0.04 per 100 prisoners in 2013-14 (table 8A.15). Table 8.1 presents data on numbers and rates of death from apparent unnatural causes in 2013-14 for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous prisoners.

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| Table 8.1 Rate and number of prisoner deaths from apparent unnatural causes, by Indigenous status, 2013‑14 |
| |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | |  | |  | NSW | Vic | Qld | WA | SA | Tas | ACT | NT | Aust | | Deaths/100 prisoners | | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | |  | Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander | | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | |  | Non-indigenous | | 0.05 | – | 0.04 | 0.10 | 0.11 | – | 0.38 | 0.49 | 0.06 | | Number of deaths | | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | |  | Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander | | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | |  | Non-indigenous | | 4 | – | 2 | 3 | 2 | – | 1 | 1 | 13 | |
| – Nil or rounded to zero. |
| *Source*: State and Territory governments (unpublished); tables 8A.15, 8A.26, 8A.34, 8A.40, 8A.46, 8A.52, 8A.58, 8A.64, and 8A.72; 2015 Report, table 8.1, p. 8.15. |
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At zero per 100 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander prisoners, the national rate of deaths from apparent unnatural causes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander prisoners in 2013‑14 has declined from the previous reporting period. The non-Indigenous rate of 0.06 is also lower than in 2012-13 (table 8A.16).

There were no deaths from apparent unnatural causes for periodic detainees in 2013-14 (table 8A.15).

### Future directions in performance reporting

The disaggregation of various indicators by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non‑Indigenous status is being trialled for possible incorporation in future reports as the basis for equity‑access indicator rates.

A prisoner health indicator and data collection is a prospective focus area in future.

Data relating to prisoner health are not readily available, though the AIHW has conducted three surveys’ relating to prisoner health. The surveys were conducted over a 2 week period in 2009, 2010 and 2012 respectively. The first two surveys’ provided information on the health status of prisoners on entry only. The third survey also collected data on discharge, with the intention these data might enable monitoring of prisoner health at both entry and discharge. It was found that rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander prisoners for selected health issues were higher than rates for non‑Indigenous prisoners (AIHW 2014).

### Definitions of key terms

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| **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status** | Persons identifying themselves as either an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person if they are accepted as such by an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander community. |
| **Assault** | An act of physical violence committed by a prisoner or periodic detainee that resulted in physical injuries. An assault is recorded where either:   * a charge is proved either by a jurisdictional correctional authority, a Governor’s hearing or a court of law, or * there is evidence that an assault took place because at least one of the following circumstances apply: * there is at least one apparently reliable witness to the assault, or the victim claims assault and there is no obvious reason to doubt this claim, or * a visible injury has occurred and there is sufficient circumstantial or other evidence to make an assault the most likely cause of the injury on the basis of the balance of probabilities.   The rate is expressed per 100 prisoners, calculated by dividing the total number of assaults by the daily average prisoner population, multiplied by 100. It is based on a count of victims of assaults not incidents, that is, an assault by two prisoners on one other prisoner is counted as one assault, whereas a single incident in which one prisoner assaults two other prisoners is counted as two assaults. |
| **Apparent unnatural death** | The death of a person:  who is in corrective services custody (which includes deaths that occur within prisons and periodic detention centres, during transfer to or from prison, within a medical facility following transfer from prison, or in the custody of corrective services outside a custodial facility)  whose death is caused or contributed to by traumatic injuries sustained, or by lack of proper care, while in such custody  who dies or is fatally injured in the process of prison officers attempting to detain that person  who dies or is fatally injured in the process of that person escaping or attempting to escape from prison custody  there is sufficient evidence to suggest, subject to a Coroner’s finding, that the most likely cause of death is homicide, suicide, an accidental cause or a drug overdose.  The rate is expressed per 100 prisoners, calculated by dividing the number of deaths by the daily average prisoner population, multiplied by 100. |
| **Community corrections** | Community-based management of court-ordered sanctions, post-prison orders and administrative arrangements and fine conversions for offenders, which principally involve one or more of the following requirements: supervision; program participation; or community work. |
| **Community corrections rate** | The annual average number of offenders per 100 000 population aged 17 years or over in those jurisdictions where persons are remanded or sentenced to adult custody at 17 years of age, or 18 years or over in those jurisdictions where the age for adult custody is 18 years old. |
| **Community work (offenders)** | Unpaid community work (hours) by offenders serving community corrections orders during the counting period. |
| **Detainee** | A person subject to a periodic detention order. |
| **Employment** | The number of prisoners or periodic detainees employed as a percentage of those eligible to participate in employment. Prisoners excluded as ineligible for employment includes those undertaking full time education and/or training and prisoners whose situation may exclude their participation in work programs, for example:   * remandees who choose not to work * hospital patients or aged prisoners who are unable to work * prisoners whose protection status prohibits access to work * fine defaulters (who are only incarcerated for a few days at a time). |
| **Home detention** | A corrective services program requiring offenders to be subject to supervision and monitoring by an authorised corrective services officer while confined to their place of residence or a place other than a prison. |
| **Imprisonment rate** | The annual average number of prisoners per 100 000 population aged 17 years or over in those jurisdictions where persons are remanded or sentenced to adult custody at 17 years of age, or 18 years or over in those jurisdictions where the age for adult custody is 18 years old. |
| **Offender** | An adult person subject to a current community-based corrections order (including bail supervision by corrective services). |
| **Periodic detention** | An order of confinement, imposed by a court of law, requiring that a person be held in a legally proclaimed prison or periodic detention facility for two consecutive days within a one-week period. |
| **Periodic detention rate** | The annual average number of periodic detainees per 100 000 population aged 17 years or over in those jurisdictions where persons are remanded or sentenced to adult custody at 17 years of age, or  18 years or over in those jurisdictions where the age for adult custody is 18 years old. |
| **Prison** | A legally proclaimed prison or remand centre, which holds adult prisoners, excluding police prisons or juvenile detention facilities. |
| **Prisoner** | A person held in full time custody under the jurisdiction of an adult corrective services agency. |
| **Remand** | A legal status where a person is held in custody pending outcome of a court hearing, including circumstances where the person has been convicted but has not yet been sentenced. |
| **Restricted movement order** | A subcategory of community-based corrections that refers to an order that limits the person’s liberty to their place of residence unless authorised by corrective services to be absent for a specific purpose, for example, Home Detention Orders. |
| **Supervision order** | A subcategory of community-based corrections that refers to an order that includes a range of conditions other than those categorised as restricted movement or reparation. |

### List of attachment tables

Attachment 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’ prefix (for example, table 8A.1 is table 1). Attachment tables are provided on the Review website (www.pc.gov.au/research/recurring/report-on-government-services).

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| **Table 8A.1** | Average daily prisoner population |
| **Table 8A.3** | Average daily community corrections offender population |
| **Table 8A.4** | Imprisonment, periodic detention and community corrections rates, by sex and Indigenous status (per 100 000 adults) |
| **Table 8A.15** | Deaths from apparent unnatural causes, by Indigenous status, 2013-14 (per 100 prisoners/detainees) |
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| **Table 8A.26** | Effectiveness, prisons |
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| **Table 8A.28** | Effectiveness, periodic detention |
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| **Table 8A.34** | Effectiveness, prisons |
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| **Single jurisdiction data \_ SA** | |
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| **Single jurisdiction data \_ Tas** | |
| **Table 8A.57** | Descriptors, prisons |
| **Table 8A.58** | Effectiveness, prisons |
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| **Single jurisdiction data \_ ACT** | |
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| **Table 8A.64** | Effectiveness, prisons |
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| **Table 8A.71** | Descriptors, prisons |
| **Table 8A.72** | Effectiveness, prisons |
| **Table 8A.74** | Descriptors, community corrections |

### References

ABS (Australian Bureau of Statistics)2014, *Prisoners in Australia,* Cat. no. 4517.0, Canberra.

AIHW 2014, *The health of Australia’s prisoners* *2012,* Cat. no. PHE 170, Canberra.

1. From 2004-05, NSW Corrective Services has managed one 40 bed facility that houses males aged 16 to 18 years. These young offenders are included in the daily average number of prisoners and are included in the calculation of indicators. As they represent only a very small proportion of NSW prisoners (less than half of one per cent) they will have a negligible effect on these indicators and are not footnoted to each table and figure. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)