



2008 Summary Booklet

National Aboriginal and
Torres Strait Islander

Social Survey

Australia



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Introduction



The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey (NATSISS) was conducted from August 2008 to April 2009 and aims to provide a broad social picture of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. This booklet has been prepared so that you can conveniently and quickly access key findings from the survey.

The NATSISS was first conducted in 1994, then again in 2002, collecting information from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, aged 15 years or older. The 2008 NATSISS also collected information about children aged 14 years or under.

Where possible, this booklet shows how things have changed for the Indigenous population since the 2002 NATSISS.

THE ABS SAYS THANKS

The success of the 2008 NATSISS was dependent on the very high level of cooperation received from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their communities. Without this cooperation, the range of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander statistics published by the ABS would not be possible.

Information received by the ABS is treated in strict confidence as required by the Census and Statistics Act 1905.



Population

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people make up about 2.5% of the total Australian population.

In 2008, there were around 520,300 Indigenous people across Australia. Of all Indigenous Australians:

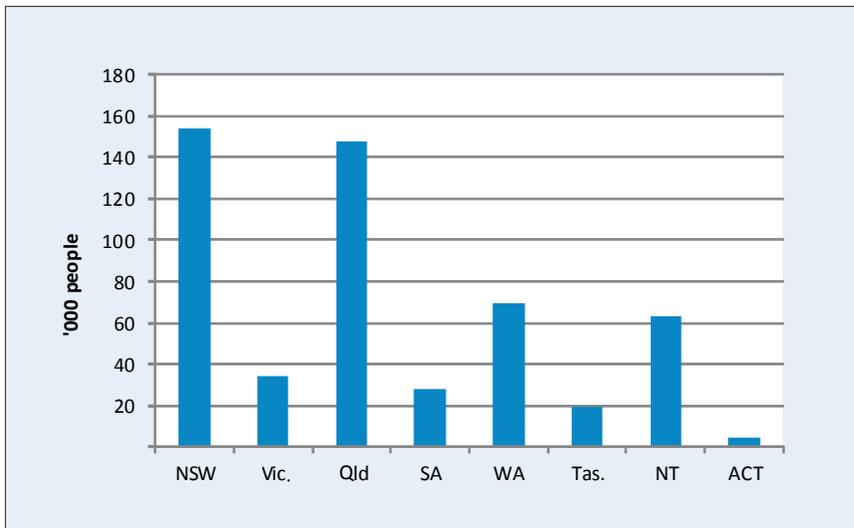
- 90% identified as Aboriginal only.
- 5% identified as Torres Strait Islander only.
- 5% identified as being of both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander origin.

WHERE PEOPLE LIVE

In 2008:

- Over half of the Indigenous population lived in either New South Wales (30% or 154,300 people) or Queensland (28% or 147,400 people).
- 24% of people lived in remote areas of Australia and 76% lived in non-remote areas.

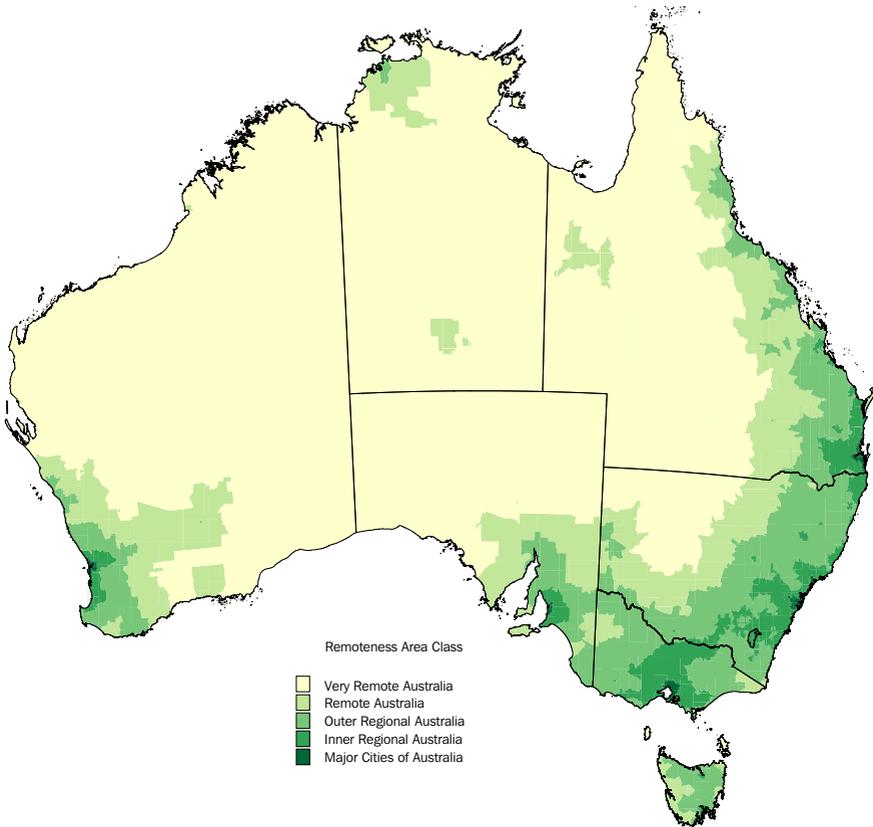
Indigenous population by state, 2008



Population



AUSTRALIA BY REMOTENESS



Population

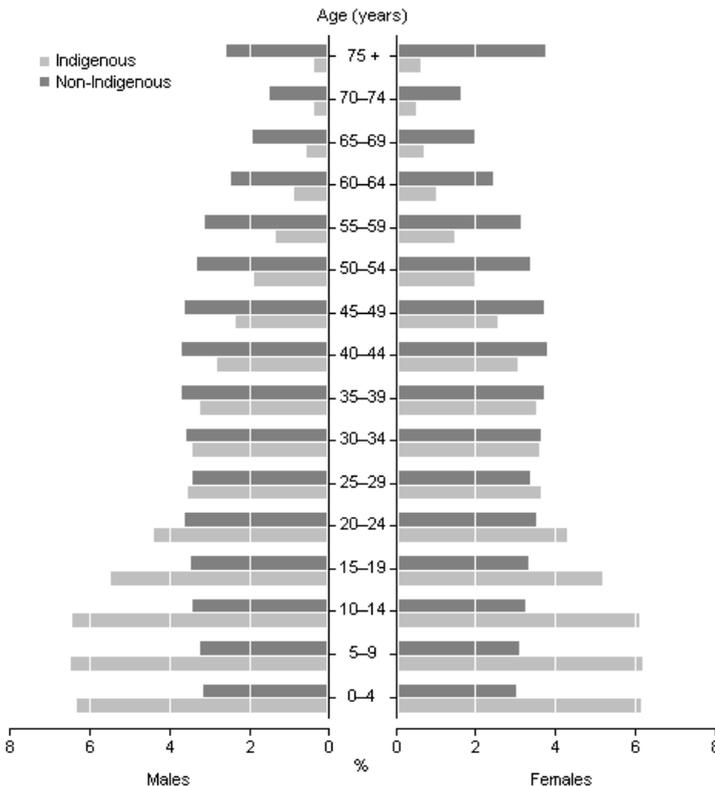
AGE

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population is much younger than the rest of the population.

In 2006:

- Over half (57%) of the Indigenous population were aged 24 years or younger, compared with 33% of the non-Indigenous population.
- One in five (19%) people were aged 15 to 24 years (young adults).
- Just under four in ten (38%) people were aged 14 years or under (children).

Indigenous and non-Indigenous population by age and sex (2006)



Language and Culture



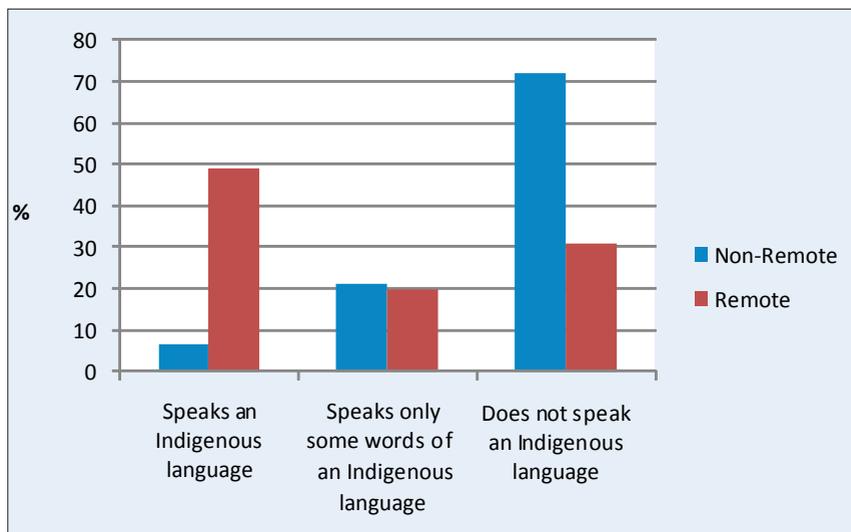
SPEAKING AN INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE

17% of Indigenous people said they could speak an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander language.

Another 21% of people said they could only speak some words of an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander language.

A lot more people in remote areas could speak an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander language (49%) than those in non-remote areas (7%).

Speaks an Indigenous language by remoteness, 2008



Note: The graph and text refer to Indigenous people aged three years or older.



Language and Culture

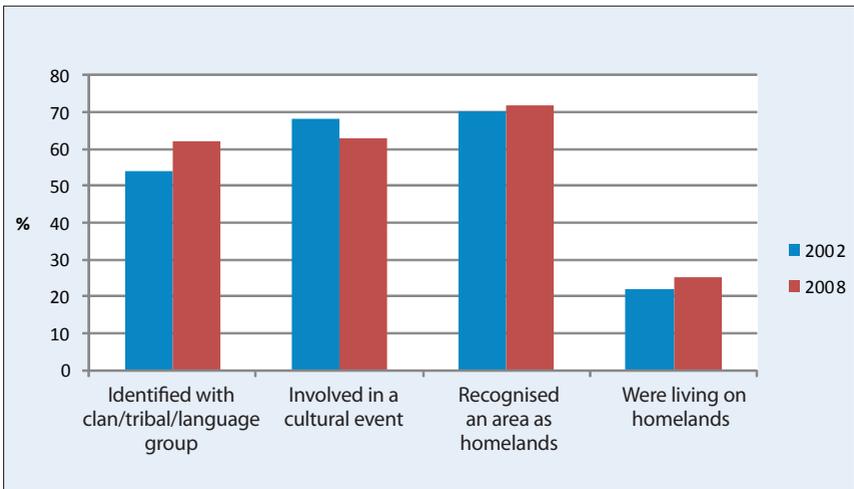
IDENTIFYING WITH INDIGENOUS CULTURE

More Indigenous adults identified with an Indigenous cultural group, such as a clan, tribal or language group in 2008 (62%) than in 2002 (54%).

One in four adults (25%) were living on their homelands in 2008, an increase from 22% in 2002.

63% of adults were involved in a cultural event, ceremony or organisation in the year before the 2008 survey.

Cultural identification, 2002 and 2008



Note: 'Adults' refers to people aged 15 years or older.



Health



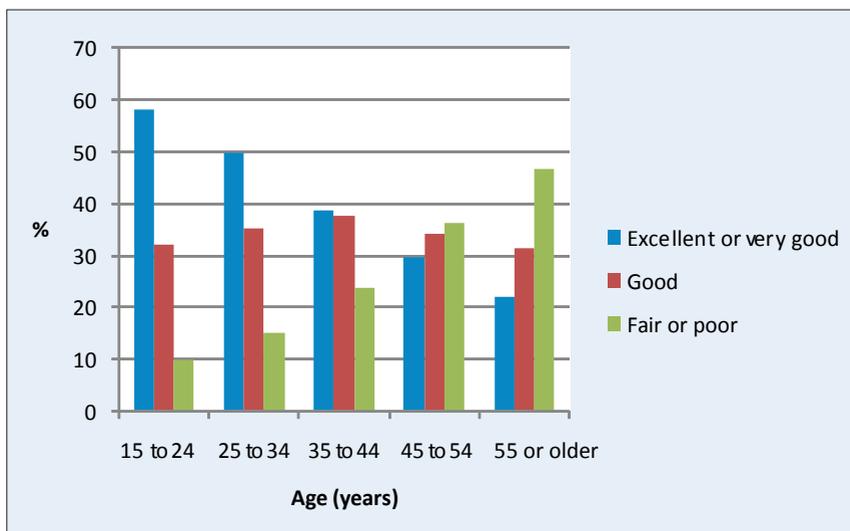
FEELING HEALTHY

Of all Indigenous adults in 2008:

- 44% rated their health as being excellent or very good.
- 34% rated their health as good.
- 22% rated their health as fair or poor.

Younger people were more likely to rate their health as excellent or very good compared with people in older age groups.

Self assessed health, by age groups, 2008



Note: 'Adults' refers to people aged 15 years or older.



Health

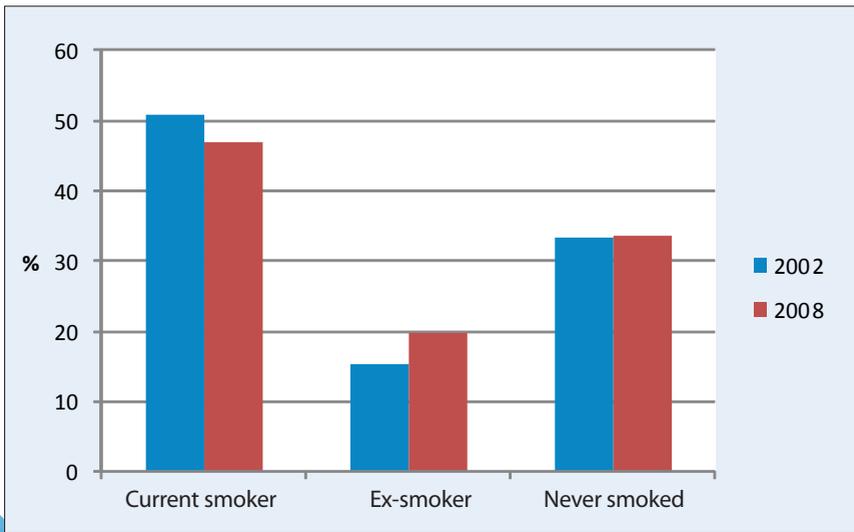
SMOKING

More Indigenous adults said they had quit smoking in 2008 than in 2002.

Of all Indigenous adults in 2008:

- Almost half (47%) identified themselves as current smokers.
- 20% said they were ex-smokers (compared with 15% in 2002).
- Just over one-third (34%) had never smoked.

Smoking, 2002 and 2008



Note: 'Adults' refers to people aged 15 years or older.



Education



FINISHING SCHOOL

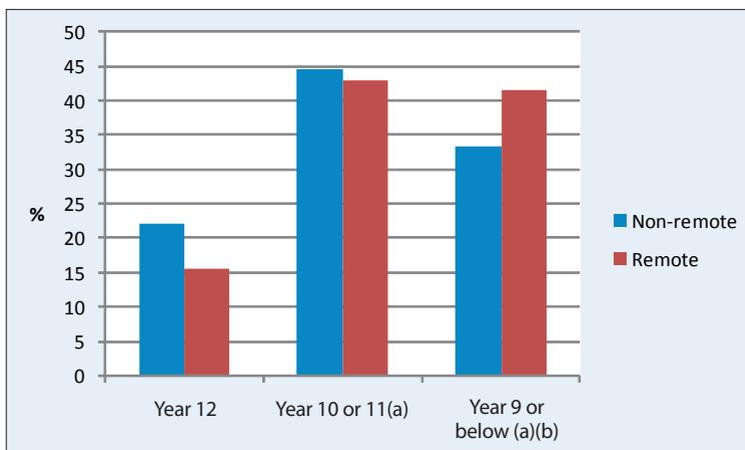
More Indigenous adults had finished Year 12 in 2008 than in 2002.

Of Indigenous adults in 2008:

- 20% had completed Year 12, an increase from 17% in 2002.
- 44% had completed Year 10 or 11.
- 35% had completed Year 9 or below, a decrease from 42% in 2002.

Adults in non-remote areas were more likely to complete Year 12 than those in remote areas.

Highest year of school completed, by remoteness, 2008



(a) Includes people who were currently studying and therefore may go on to obtain Year 12.

(b) Includes people who never attended school.

Note: 'Adults' refers to people aged 15 years or older.



Education

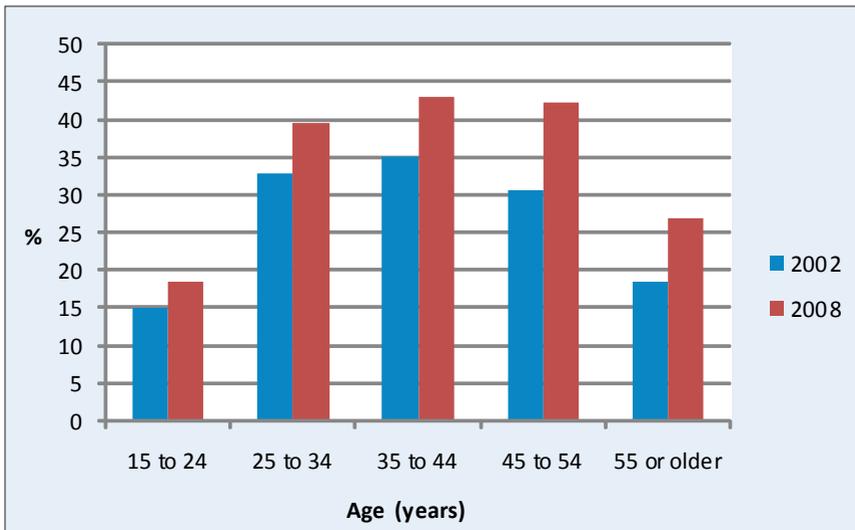
HAVING A QUALIFICATION

More Indigenous adults had a non-school qualification in 2008 (32%) than in 2002 (26%).

Of all Indigenous adults with a qualification in 2008:

- 77% had a Certificate or Diploma.
- 14% had a Bachelor degree or higher level.

People with non-school qualification(a), 2002 and 2008



(a) Non-school qualifications are awarded for finishing courses outside of those taken at Primary or High School (e.g. qualifications awarded through University studies, and TAFE training courses).

Note: 'Adults' refers to people aged 15 years or older.



Labour force

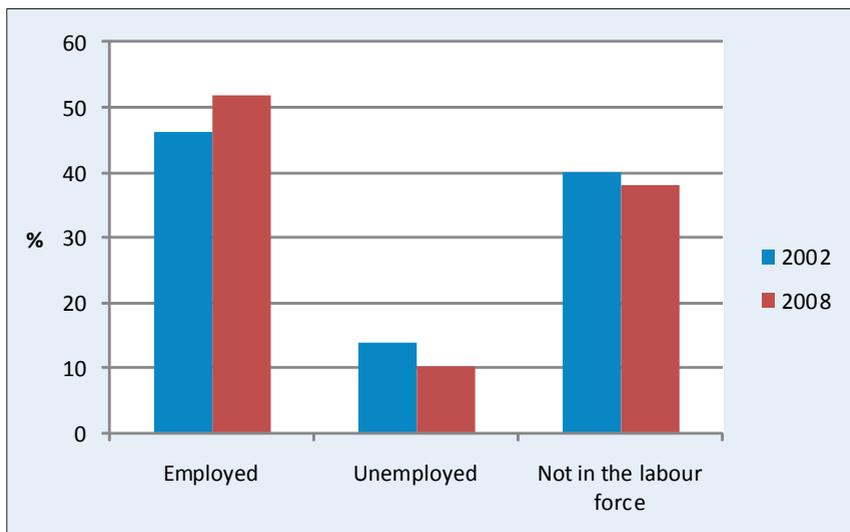


BEING IN THE LABOUR FORCE

Adults in the 'labour force' are those who are currently working (employed) or who are looking for work (unemployed). Adults who are not currently working and are not looking for work are classified as 'not in the labour force'.

In 2008, almost two-thirds (62%) of the total Indigenous adult population were in the labour force.

Labour force status, 2002 and 2008



Note: 'Adults' refers to people aged 15 years or older.



Labour force

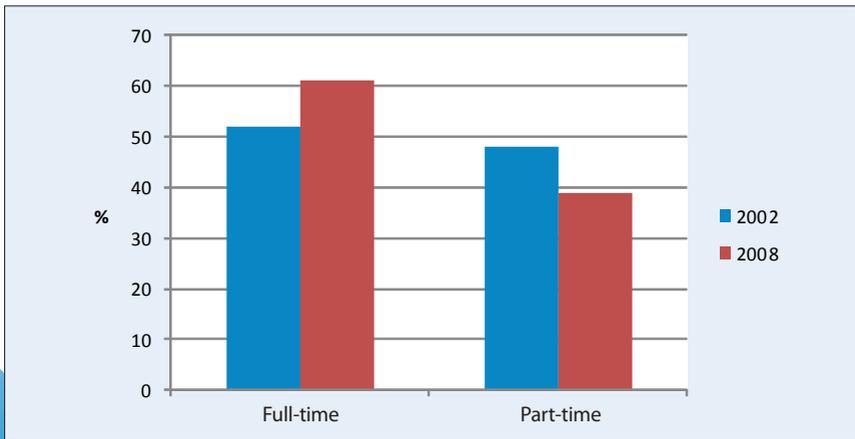
WORKING

More Indigenous adults were employed and working full-time in 2008 than in 2002.

Of Indigenous adults in the labour force:

- 84% were employed in 2008, an increase from 77% in 2002.
- 61% of those employed were working full-time in 2008, an increase from 52% in 2002.
- 39% of those employed were working part-time in 2008, a decrease from 48% in 2002.
- 16% were unemployed, a decrease from 23% in 2002.

Employment, full-time and part-time, 2002 and 2008



Housing



RENTING OR OWNING

More Indigenous adults were living in homes that were rented than homes that were owned.

Of all Indigenous adults in 2008:

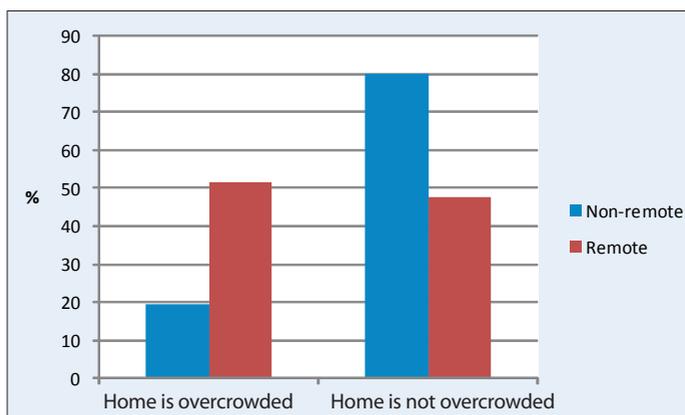
- About seven in ten (69%) lived in homes that were being rented.
- Almost three in ten (29%) lived in homes that were either owned or being purchased.

OVERCROWDING

In 2008, 27% of Indigenous people were living in a home that was overcrowded.

More people in remote areas were living in a home that was overcrowded (52%) than those in non-remote areas (19%).

Overcrowding by remoteness, 2008



Note: 'Adults' refers to people aged 15 years or older.

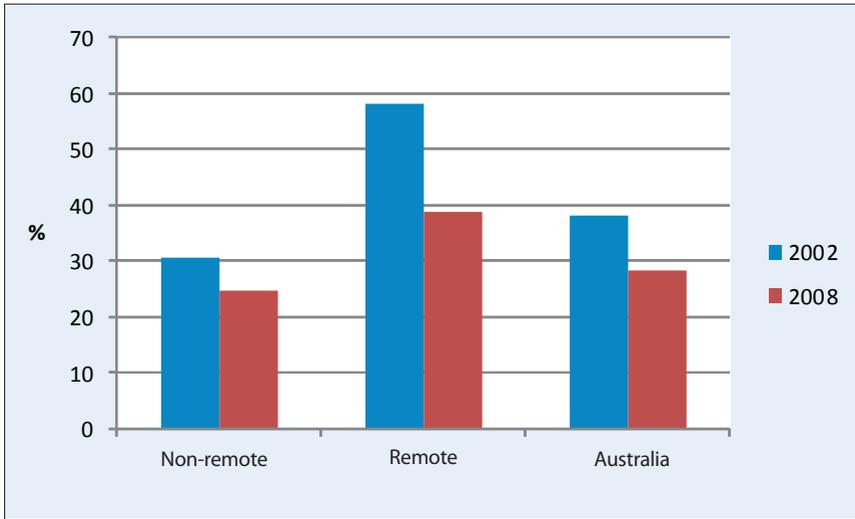


Housing

STANDARD OF HOUSING

In 2008, less Indigenous adults were living in homes that had major structural problems (28%) compared with 2002 (38%).

Living in a home with major structural problems (a), 2002 and 2008



(a) Major structural problems refer to problems such as large cracks in the walls or floor or serious problems with plumbing.

Note: 'Adults' refers to people aged 15 years or older.



Family & Support Networks



Many Indigenous adults have good family and support networks.
For example:

- 94% of adults reported having contact, at least once a week, with family and friends who did not live with them.
- Nearly nine in ten adults (89%) said they would be able to get help, such as emotional support, money or food, from someone who did not live with them.
- Three in four adults (75%) reported they had at least one friend in whom they could confide or to whom they could tell a secret.

REMOVAL

The NATSISS asked Indigenous adults whether they or any of their relatives had been removed from their natural families for welfare reasons or because of government policy, or if they had been taken to a mission.

In 2008:

- 8% of adults reported that they had been removed from their natural family.
- 38% reported that they had relatives who were removed from their natural family.
- 84% of adults who had been removed from their family reported that they had seen their family since being removed.

Note: 'Adults' refers to people aged 15 years or older.



Children

CHILD CARE

Over half (56%) of all children aged 12 years or younger had been in some form of childcare in the week before they were interviewed.

Three quarters (75%) of children who went to childcare were in informal childcare settings, for example, where a grandparent, relative, or friend looked after the child.

CULTURE

49% of children aged 4 to 14 years identified with an Indigenous cultural group, such as a clan, tribal or language group.

Of children aged 4 to 14 years who usually attended school, almost two in three (65%) were being taught about Indigenous culture.

TIME WITH ELDERS

Over three in ten (31%) children aged 3 to 14 years spent one or more days a week with an Indigenous elder or leader.

Almost half (49%) of the children living in remote areas spent at least one day a week with an elder compared with 25% in non-remote areas.



Children



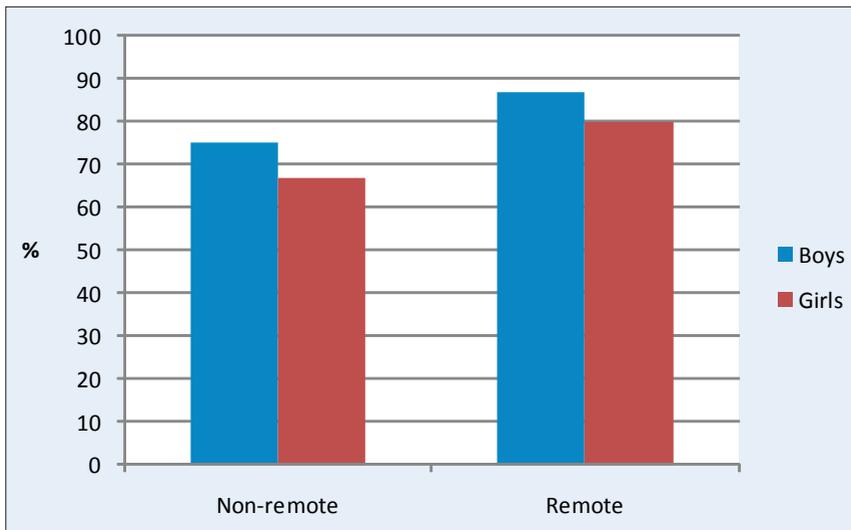
EXERCISE

In 2008, almost three out of every four (74%) Indigenous children exercised for at least 60 minutes every day.

More boys than girls said they exercised (78% of boys and 70% of girls).

Children in remote areas were more likely to exercise than those in non-remote areas (84% in remote areas and 71% in non-remote areas).

Daily exercise of children, 2008



Note: The graph and text refer to Indigenous children aged 4 to 14 years.



Young Adults

Almost seven in ten (69%) young adults (people aged 15 to 24 years) were studying or working, or both studying and working. Of those:

- 40% were working only (either full-time or part-time).
- 34% were studying only (either full-time or part-time).
- 25% were both working and studying.

Just under 17% of young adults reported feeling like they could have a say within their community all or most of the time on issues that were important to them, compared with 29% for people aged 25 years or older.

Just over half (51%) of all young adults identified with a cultural group such as a clan, tribal or language group, compared with 67% of people aged 25 years or older.



Explanatory Notes and Glossary



Adults

In this publication 'adults' refer to Indigenous people aged 15 years or older.

Children

In this publication 'children' refer to Indigenous people aged 0 to 14 years.

Labour force

The 'labour force' includes people aged 15 years or older, who are either currently working or who are looking for work (employed or unemployed).

Adults who are not currently working and are not looking for work are classified as not being in the labour force.

An employed person is someone who:

- is 15 years or older,
- is currently working in a job or business, or working for Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP), or who undertakes work without pay in a family business, and
- who worked at least one hour in the week prior to interview.

People can work in either full-time or part-time employment. Full-time workers usually work 35 hours or more in a week and part-time workers usually work less than 35 hours per week.

Overcrowding

To measure overcrowding the ABS uses the Canadian National Occupancy Standard for Housing Appropriateness. The following criteria are used to assess overcrowding:

- there should be no more than two persons per bedroom,
- a household of one unattached individual may reasonably occupy a bed-sit (i.e. have no bedroom),
- couples and parents should have a separate bedroom,
- children aged 5 years or over, of different sexes, should not share a bedroom,
- children aged less than 18 years and of the same sex may reasonably share a bedroom, and
- single household members aged 18 years or over should have a separate bedroom.

Homes that require at least one additional bedroom are considered to be overcrowded.



Explanatory Notes and Glossary

Remoteness

To categorise how remote particular locations in Australia are, the ABS uses the Australian Standard Geographical Classification (ASGC) Remoteness Structure. The structure uses five levels of remoteness: 'Major cities of Australia', 'Inner regional Australia', 'Outer regional Australia', 'Remote Australia' and 'Very Remote Australia'. These levels are shown on the map on page 3.

This publication combines the five categories into 'Remote' and 'Non-remote'. 'Non-remote' areas are made up of 'Major cities of Australia', 'Inner regional Australia' and 'Outer regional Australia', while 'Remote' areas are made up of 'Remote Australia' and 'Very Remote Australia'.

Removal from natural family

Removal from natural family in this survey includes the removal of the person or their relatives, as a child, from their family as part of government policy. It does not include those who were removed from their family for a period of less than six months and those who had been separated from their family for other reasons such as family break-up or traditional adoption.

Unemployment

Unemployment in this booklet refers to Indigenous adults who were:

- not currently working,
- had been looking for work in the four weeks before the survey was conducted, and
- were available to start work during the week before the survey.

People were not counted as unemployed if they were not currently working because they were retired, they were unable to work on a permanent basis, or if they intended never to work.

Young adults

In this publication young adults refer to Indigenous people aged 15 to 24 years.



ABS Data Sources



NATSISS, 2008

NATSISS (National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey) was conducted from August 2008 to April 2009 (cat. no. 4714.0).

NATSISS, 2002

NATSISS (National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey) was conducted from August 2002 to April 2003 (cat. no. 4714.0).

Estimated Resident Population

Experimental Estimates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, June 2006 (cat. no. 3238.0.55.001). Note that 2006 is the only year where estimates are available for non-Indigenous persons. The population pyramid on page 4 uses Indigenous and non-Indigenous estimates derived from the Census of Population and Housing 2006.





More Information

Most information about Indigenous people in this summary booklet is from the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey, 2008 (cat. no. 4714.0).

More detailed information is available free of charge through the ABS website: www.abs.gov.au. Also available through the website are electronic State/Territory versions of the publication tables.



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Catalogue Number 4714.0.55.003

