Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research

Australian Bureau of Statistics

1994 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey

Employment Outcomes for Indigenous Australians

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NATIONAL ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER SURVEY 1994: EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES FOR INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIANS

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INQUIRIES

- *for further information about statistics in this publication and the availability of related statistics,* contact Tony Barnes in Darwin on (08) 8943 2190 or any ABS State office.
- *for information about the ABS statistics and services,* please refer to the back page of this publication.

PREFACE

The disadvantaged position of Indigenous peoples within the labour market and the economy generally was a theme frequently touched upon in the final report of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody in 1991 and was identified as a major underlying cause of high rates of incarceration.

To date, one of the difficulties inherent in any attempt to monitor progress in the economic status of Indigenous peoples has been a reliance on the five-yearly Census for standard social indicators and the inevitable delay that this entails. Furthermore, the range of information available from the Census is of necessity limited in scope and does not always adequately represent the realities of social and economic life for Indigenous peoples.

It was precisely the paucity of statistical information about the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population which led to recommendation 49 of the Royal Commission:

> That proposals for a special national survey covering a range of social, demographic, health and economic characteristics of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population with full Aboriginal participation at all levels be supported.

In response to this recommendation a National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey was conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) in 1994. Some results from that survey were published in 1995 (4190.0, 4191.0 and 4192.0). Publications of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) regional statistics (4196.0. 00.001–036) and a thematic publication on Indigenous Youth (4197.0) based on this survey have been released this year. Other thematics will also follow.

In 1995, the Royal Commission Government Response Monitoring Unit within ATSIC approached the ABS to investigate the factors contributing to better employment outcomes for Indigenous peoples using data from the National Survey. To enhance the policy relevance of this exercise, the ABS commissioned the Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research at the Australian National University to collaborate in the analysis of data and in authoring the report.

We are now pleased to present the results of this collaboration as, *Employment Outcomes for Indigenous Australians*. This is the second of a thematic series of publications which will be produced from the National Survey. It provides a timely assessment of progress towards the goals of important recommendations of the Royal Commission (and the Aboriginal Employment Development Policy) as well as a comprehensive investigation of the many interrelated factors controlling the labour force status of Indigenous peoples. Except for some appendices, the information is presented in a non-technical style and is both informative and insightful. In our view, this publication will be of value to Indigenous people and policy makers in their pursuit of better employment outcomes and will assist the community at large to understand these important economic and social issues.

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May 1996

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National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey 1994: Employment Outcomes for Indigenous Australians was prepared for the Royal Commission Monitoring Unit of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission as a collaborative exercise between the National Centre for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Statistics of the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) and the Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research (CAEPR) of the Australian National University. All project team members undertook multiple roles but also had primary contributions to the team effort. The manuscript was initially prepared by John Taylor (CAEPR) and completed in conjunction with Kate Ross (ABS). Computing and technical knowledge was provided throughout by Cathie Thorp (ABS) and statistical analysis and reporting was undertaken by Joan Cunningham (ABS) and Boyd Hunter (CAEPR). The project was coordinated by Tony Barnes (ABS).

SUMMARY

The achievement of better employment outcomes for Indigenous people, as recommended by the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody, requires detailed understanding of the factors underlying labour force status. Analysis of these factors serves to better inform a range of government programs and policies. In addition, progress towards policy goals, such as those of the Aboriginal Employment Development Policy (AEDP), needs to be constantly monitored. In the past, this process has relied on data from the five-yearly Census of Population and Housing. Following the release of results from the 1994 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey (NATSIS), it is now possible to use this more comprehensive dataset about Indigenous people to examine factors underlying labour force status as well as progress towards better outcomes.

SURVEY FINDINGS

Despite efforts to raise Indigenous labour force status closer to the levels found in the general workforce, the analysis of survey data indicated that no movement towards this goal occurred between 1991 and 1994. While the number of Indigenous people in work continued to rise, this expansion barely kept up with the growth in working age population resulting in little or no improvement in the employment/population ratio. Furthermore, such new jobs as were created have been overwhelmingly as a consequence of the continued expansion of the CDEP scheme. Most CDEP scheme employment is part-time which has meant that Indigenous workers as a whole have been increasingly more reliant than the rest of the workforce on part-time employment.

While conclusions about recent trends in the unemployment rate for Indigenous people are more difficult to establish, it does appear that the decline in the rate observed in the late 1980s had levelled off by 1994. Thus, as far as policy is concerned, the key message is that the relatively poor labour market position of Indigenous people plateaued in the early 1990s and that employment equity is still far from being achieved. Furthermore, those in the prime working age group, who have been the main recipients of government efforts to redress labour market imbalances over the past two decades, remained substantially disadvantaged in the labour market.

The analysis of survey data supports the Royal Commission finding that structural factors play a crucial role in determining employment outcomes and a primary task of the report is to summarise these relationships.

Location

It is clear from the analysis of survey data that Indigenous people operate within distinctly regionalised labour markets and that this produces quite different employment outcomes geographically. This has implications for efforts to raise the labour force status of Indigenous people. For example, one of the Royal Commission recommendations referred to a need to encourage more private sector employment. It is evident from the survey findings that such aims have greater chance of success in some parts of the country rather than others. For example, in rural areas, and particularly in remote regions of north Australia, the private sector share of employment was minimal. As a consequence there is heavy reliance for work on the CDEP scheme and other community sector activities. By contrast, in capital cities and regions of eastern and southern Australia, the situation was found to be the reverse.

Contrary to expectation, this has meant that jobs have been easier to create in remote rural areas than in areas where more mainstream employment opportunities exist, a process which has particularly favoured males. The

point to note, however, is that job creation via the CDEP scheme is driven solely by institutional processes and is not subject to the same rigours of market competition in the mainstream labour force.

One consequence of this rural focus in CDEP scheme expansion has been that urban centres in country areas away from capital cities now have by far the worst labour force status with lower employment/population ratios and higher unemployment rates. This is because there are fewer mainstream employment opportunities in other urban areas than in capital cities and relatively less access to employment options via the CDEP scheme.

The importance of location as a factor in determining outcomes is further underlined by the fact that a lack of locally available jobs was clearly identified as the prime reason why people in rural areas and country towns found it difficult to get work or were otherwise discouraged from seeking work.

Age

The survey analysis found that employment levels followed the conventional pattern of low rates in youth age groups, rising to a peak in the prime working age group, followed by a rapid decline in old age. However, the employment/population ratio was substantially lower for Indigenous people at all ages than for the general population.

One issue affecting young Indigenous people, which the Royal Commission clearly identified, was the effect of high arrest rates on disadvantage in education and subsequent transition to the workforce. These higher rates of arrest were found by the analysis of survey data to contribute substantially to lower employment/population ratios, particularly for male teenagers.

Set against this was the observation that Indigenous youth have followed the general trend towards increased retention in secondary schooling and participation in post-secondary education and training programs, though still at lower than average rates. In terms of educational attainment, one of the largest differences to emerge between the various age groups was the proportion of Indigenous people with no education. Less than 1% of the youngest age group had no education compared to 17% of those aged over 45 years. This difference was found to account for the older Indigenous population having around 8% lower employment rates than their younger counterparts.

While poor health was found to be common among Indigenous youth, with around one-quarter of individuals reporting a long-term health condition, this level increased with age. Levels reported by older people over 45 years were up to two and three times higher than for youth. This higher rate of reported long-term health conditions at later ages helped explain some of the decline in employment/population ratios among older people. However the association of poor health status with employment outcomes was weaker than expected, possibly due to the self-reported nature of the health variable used.

Gender

While the increased movement into the workforce of Indigenous females in recent times has been consistent with that experienced by all females, there is a sense in which Indigenous females have experienced double disadvantage in the labour market — once for being female and again for being Indigenous. Given this predicament, it is disconcerting to note that the employment ratio for Indigenous females appears to have fallen between 1991 and 1994 while that for males remained steady. It is important to point out that this occurred after a period from 1986 to 1991 when the rate of female employment growth outstripped that of their male counterparts. Part of the explanation for this relatively poor performance

was found to be the lower rate of female employment in CDEP schemes, as employment in these schemes accounted for the major share of new jobs created. In 1994, the survey found that less than one-third of CDEP scheme employees were female.

When questioned about their main reasons for not looking for work, Indigenous females cited childcare and other family responsibilities most frequently. Likewise, when asked about their reasons for not seeking further study, lack of childcare provision emerged as the main difficulty. In line with these perceptions, a major finding of the survey was that the presence of children in a family had a negative influence on employment for females. This negative influence increased as the number of children increased. This was no doubt because women bear the major responsibility for child-rearing.

Education and training

On a positive note, the survey analysis found that Indigenous youth have followed the trend generally towards staying on at school and entering training courses, although still at much lower rates than for the general population. However, as with other young people, this trend partly reflects diminishing options in the youth labour market with increased competition for a shrinking pool of full-time jobs. At the same time there has been growth in part-time work and subsidies for education and training (Gregory 1995).

The crucial role of education and training in successfully competing for work was made clear by the analysis which found that this was the single most important factor in improving employment outcomes. In terms of the Royal Commission recommendations regarding better employment outcomes, this finding acquires added significance as the factors with greatest employment impact are clearly amenable to policy intervention.

Most striking of all was the negative impact of having no education at all which displayed by far the strongest relationship with employment outcomes. By contrast, continuing education to Year 12 was clearly associated with an increased probability of employment, particularly for females. Of greater importance than Year 12 attainment, however, was the acquisition of post-secondary qualifications. For males, holding a vocational or tertiary qualification was found to almost double the chances of being employed. For females, the presence of a vocational qualification was equally important, although the award of a tertiary qualification had an even greater impact on employment chances. In this regard, the lower enrolment and retention rates of Indigenous youth must remain of concern. This is not an isolated issue, however, as part of the explanation derives from structural circumstances such as the fact that Indigenous youth in many remote areas do not have direct access to secondary schooling.

Arrest rates

The link between employment status and custody levels identified by the Royal Commission was extended by the survey analysis which established a strong negative relationship between arrest rates and subsequent employment outcomes. While it has been clear for some time that unemployment increases the chances of encountering the criminal justice system, the extent to which prior involvement with the criminal justice system affects subsequent employment chances has been far less well understood (Broadhurst 1992; Broadhurst, Maller & Duffey 1988). The analysis found that, all other things being equal, the fact of having been arrested within the five years prior to the survey reduced the chances of employment by around half. Clearly, this is simply part of the same nexus between economic status and custody that the Royal Commission uncovered. On a more positive note, it also suggests the likelihood that any reduction in arrest rates would also be beneficial to employment prospects.

The CDEP scheme

A key finding of the analysis was the need to explain Indigenous employment outcomes with reference to the institutional processes of the CDEP scheme. Any failure to distinguish CDEP scheme employment from jobs in the mainstream labour market leads to an overestimation of the impact of certain variables on employment in the scheme and an underestimation of their impact on other employment. For example, lack of formal education, difficulty with English, and having been arrested were all more important with respect to the mainstream labour market than for CDEP scheme employment.

It is also clear that employment in the CDEP scheme has filled a void in areas where mainstream job opportunities are scarce or non-existent. One estimate derived from the survey data suggests that without the CDEP scheme the employment/population ratio for Indigenous people would have been halved in 1994 while the unemployment rate would have been twice as high. Given the spatial concentration of such employment, this impact would have been most keenly felt in rural areas. The other feature of the scheme to emerge from the analysis is that it clearly offers some form of employment to many individuals who, for want of sufficient skills and other disadvantages, would have found it impossible to compete successfully for work in the mainstream labour market.

NATSIS AND BEYOND

For the first time, results from the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey have provided the basis for an intercensal review of the labour force status of Indigenous Australians. Apart from enabling a timely assessment of trends in selected social indicators, data from the survey have proven far richer than those available from the Census as well as more attuned to an Indigenous perspective. More importantly, the NATSIS provides a wide-ranging data source which has enabled an investigation of interrelationships between labour market outcomes and a host of other influencing factors such as location, age, education and training, health status and encounters with the criminal justice system. Also available for the first time have been measures of training experience and duration of unemployment. Adding depth to this exercise, some of the reasons that individuals perceived to have been the underlying factors controlling their position in the labour market have also been explored.

Another first for the NATSIS was the establishment of national estimates of important labour force indicators that have hitherto not been available for Indigenous people, at least not as direct estimates or in a form that could be cross-tabulated with other data. Most important here were estimates of employment in the CDEP scheme as well as in the community and private sectors of the labour market.

The regression analysis of employment outcomes has raised a number of important issues concerning the determinants of Indigenous labour force status. Of most significance in a policy context was the fact that education and training emerged as the largest single factors contributing to successful employment outcomes. However, it is clear that other factors, such as the impact of very high arrest rates among Indigenous youth, cannot be ignored. The combined impact of these effects underscores the fact that there are no quick fixes or simple solutions to improving employment outcomes; the task is inherently multi-faceted and across policy portfolios.

In policy terms, the value of the survey information is enhanced by the fact that comparable data on labour force status would not otherwise have been available until the release of results from the 1996 Census in July 1997. More practically, in terms of their broad scope, corresponding data will not be available again unless a similar exercise is undertaken in the future or

some other steps are taken to ensure close auditing of the position of Indigenous people in the labour market.

INTRODUCTION

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE ROYAL COMMISSION INTO ABORIGINAL DEATHS IN CUSTODY

Of the 339 recommendations made by the Royal Commission, only 24 of these (Commonwealth of Australia 1991c, nos 51, 189, 192, 203 and 300–20) related directly or indirectly to the question of employment, training and other aspects of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in the labour market. Although relatively few in number, the importance of these recommendations cannot be sufficiently stressed as the relatively poor labour force status of Indigenous people lay at the core of the Royal Commission's findings regarding the underlying causes of excessively high custody levels.

Employment was found to be an intermittent, rather than a constant, factor in the lives of Indigenous Australians who died in custody (Commonwealth of Australia 1991a, p. 378). Also of concern to the Royal Commission was the large number of young Indigenous people who were unable to find work. The Royal Commission reported a link between unemployment and the likelihood of contact with the juvenile and criminal justice systems (see also Gale, Bailey-Harris & Wundersitz 1990, p. 56). Not surprisingly, the Royal Commission findings laid heavy stress on the relationship between chronic unemployment, low economic status and imprisonment.

Among the underlying factors contributing to poor labour force status, the Royal Commission highlighted structural effects such as those due to age, low educational status, few skills, poor health, and low proficiency in English (Commonwealth of Australia 1991a, pp. 404–5). Also noted were variations in economic circumstances between Indigenous people living in discrete communities in remote areas, those in country towns and those in large cities (Commonwealth of Australia 1991b, pp. 442–5).

The general thrust of Royal Commission recommendations regarding the poor labour force status of Indigenous people was to advocate a strengthening of existing employment strategies under the umbrella of the Aboriginal Employment Development Policy (Commonwealth of Australia 1991b). Since 1987, this policy has sought to increase opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the mainstream labour market, to generate employment through community development and to expand the economic base of Indigenous communities. The Commonwealth response to these recommendations is detailed in the Annual Report of the Royal Commission Government Response Monitoring Unit of ATSIC (Commonwealth of Australia 1995a). Briefly, this pledged the allocation of substantial new resources towards furthering the aims of labour market programs in the public and private sectors and expanding the CDEP scheme.

PREVIOUS RESEARCH ON INDIGENOUS LABOUR FORCE STATUS

Employment outcomes for Indigenous people have been characterised by lower rates of employment, higher unemployment and lower income than the general Australian population. Studies of this situation and initiatives to remedy it have been increasingly evident in the last two decades. A landmark contribution was the 1985 *Report of the Committee of Review of Aboriginal Employment and Training Programs* (Commonwealth of Australia 1985). This found that despite attempts made to achieve real and lasting improvements in the economic situation of Indigenous peoples, many of the problems alluded to a decade earlier by the Henderson Inquiry into Poverty in Australia remained at least as serious, if not more so. Subsequent to the 1985 report a number of new employment initiatives were established under the banner of the Aboriginal Employment Development Policy (AEDP) in 1987. Several years later, before the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey results presented here were available, the 1994 Review of the AEDP found that despite some

improvement, the overall employment and economic situation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples remained much worse than that of non-Indigenous Australians:

- they were still almost three times more likely to be unemployed;
- their experience of long-term unemployment was disproportionate;
- the employment situation of men in urban areas had actually worsened;
- average incomes had declined relative to the national average; and
- there was no evidence to indicate a decline in welfare dependency (ATSIC 1994, pp. xiii–xiv).

There is now a rich literature that details the relatively low economic status of Indigenous Australians and examines underlying causes for the period between 1971 to 1991 (Altman & Nieuwenhuysen 1979; Fisk 1985; Commonwealth of Australia 1985; Altman 1991; Taylor 1993a, 1993b; ATSIC 1994; Daly 1995). Viewed collectively, and in sequence, these analyses reveal the worsening economic plight of Indigenous peoples with a basic problem being the failure of job growth to keep up with growth in the population of working age.

Also revealed are labour market trends that run counter, at times, to the economic cycle. This is due, in part, to the emergence and substantial growth of the CDEP scheme which operates both as an income support and as an employment program. It also reflects the consolidation of a distinct Indigenous segment in the labour market. Briefly, this segmentation is characterised by high levels of statistical segregation between the industry and occupational distributions of Indigenous and non-Indigenous workers with the former over-represented in activities aimed at servicing the Indigenous population (Taylor & Jin 1995). Another common thread in the literature relates to the underlying determinants of poor employment outcomes (Altman & Nieuwenhuysen 1979; Fisk 1985; Commonwealth of Australia 1985; Altman 1991; Taylor 1993a, 1993b; ATSIC 1994; Daly 1995). These have remained focussed around the themes of locational disadvantage, youthful demography, poor skill levels and the fact that not all Indigenous people 'face the general Australian economy with their time fully available for employment or divided simply between "work" and "leisure". Rather they come with their time significantly allocated to distinctly Aboriginal purposes and activities' (Coombs et al. 1989, p. 86).

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The NATSIS provides scope for the investigation of interrelationships between labour market outcomes and a host of other influencing factors such as location, age, educational attainment, training experience, health status and previous encounters with the criminal justice system. A range of perceptual data, including reasons for not working and difficulties in finding a job or in attempting further study or training, were also collected. In addition to this, the survey data provide national estimates of important labour force indicators that have hitherto not been available, at least not as direct estimates nor in a form that could be cross-tabulated with other data. Prominent among these are figures on employment in CDEP schemes and in the community and private sectors of the labour market. Also available for the first time are measures of training experience and duration of unemployment.

STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

The report is structured in such a way as to lead from a general overview of labour force status to a detailed analysis according to broad age groups and then to a statistical modelling exercise which seeks to establish the relationships between key variables and the outcome of being employed.

Chapter 1 is primarily concerned with scene setting. It provides an overview of the labour force status of all Indigenous adults aged 15 years and over in

1994 and places this in the context of trends evident for the general population between 1971 and 1991.

Chapter 2 focuses on various labour market descriptors. For employed persons these are full or part-time employment, status in employment (i.e. whether self-employed or employee) and industry sector. For the unemployed, duration of unemployment is examined. Data is presented by sex and part of State (capital city, other urban area and rural area) and for some variables time series information is laid out.

Chapter 3 focuses on the spatial aspects of employment. Part of State geography is used to analyse the relationship between location and employment. The geography of the CDEP scheme is also discussed. A series of maps for labour force characteristics is presented by ATSIC Region.

Chapter 4 presents a discussion of various characteristics of the Indigenous population in relation to their labour force status. Age, education, training, health and the experience of arrest are examined.

Chapter 5 discusses the prevalence of voluntary work and its spread across geographic areas, including ATSIC regions.

Chapter 6 examines the labour market position of Indigenous youth (15–24 years). The analysis incorporates two broad age categories of youth: those aged 15–19 years which, for most people, encompasses the completion of secondary schooling and the transition to higher education or into the labour market; and those aged 20–24 years which generally covers the beginning of adult employment careers.

Chapter 7 focuses attention on the population of prime working age (25–44 years). In a statistical sense the labour force status of this group is seen as representing the outcomes from market forces (to the extent that Indigenous people engage in the mainstream labour market) as well as the full panoply of government attempts to improve Indigenous employment status since the 1970s. As such it provides an important contemporary indicator of the factors likely to impinge on future employment outcomes.

Chapter 8 examines the position in the labour market of older people (45–64 years). This is to explore the effects of unique factors that may influence labour force participation and outcomes over the long haul. For example, declining health status has been suggested as a partial explanation for lower employment/population ratios in later years (Daly 1995, p. 7) and the survey data provide for a more holistic view of labour force status by including a measure of health status.

Chapter 9 presents the results of a statistical analysis designed to establish the relative importance of different factors contributing to an individual being employed or not, as well as being in CDEP scheme employment or more mainstream forms of employment.

CHAPTER 1 TRENDS IN LABOUR FORCE STATUS

CENSUS TIME SERIES DATA

There are three main labour force indicators which are regularly used in studies of the labour market. These are:

- employment/population ratio. The number of employed persons in a group as a percentage of the population aged 15 years and over in the same group.
- unemployment rate. The number of unemployed persons in a group expressed as a percentage of the labour force (the employed plus the unemployed) in the same group.
- participation rate. The number of people in the labour force (employed plus unemployed) as a percentage of the population aged 15 years and over.

Indigenous people were first included in the official population figures of the five-yearly Census in 1971. Over time, a marked increase in the willingness of Indigenous people to be recorded as having Indigenous origin in census counts has been noted (Gaminiratne & Tesfaghiorghis 1992). This would suggest that Indigenous population figures for censuses prior to the 1980s were lower than could be expected. Enumeration procedures in the census have also improved over time. In 1976, in the Northern Territory, the first specialised procedures for enumerating Indigenous people in remote areas were implemented. Since then these procedures have been refined, improved and expanded to cover Western Australia, South Australia and Queensland. The improvement in enumeration procedures over time means that Indigenous population counts and characteristics produced from earlier censuses may be less reliable than they now are.

Rates for males

There was an apparent decline in the employment/population ratio for both all Australian males and Indigenous males over the period 1971 to 1991 (figure 1.1). The ratio for Indigenous males has consistently been lower than that for all Australian males over that period. The change in the quality of enumeration of Indigenous people in the Census over time would suggest that the apparent decline in the employment/population ratio for Indigenous males may not have been as steep as is suggested by the data. At the same time, the labour market for Indigenous males has been rapidly changing since the 1960s due to industry restructuring, particularly in agriculture; the granting of equal pay to Indigenous workers in the pastoral industry, for example, was one measure that had a significant impact (see Altman and Daly 1992 for discussion of employment change by industry).

The decline in the employment/population ratio for all Australian males shown in figure 1.1 occurred for quite different reasons with most analysts pointing to the effects of earlier retirement and the increasing value of pensions, as well as a growing lack of job opportunities for males, especially in full-time work (Kenyon & Wooden 1996, p. 21–22).

The trend in unemployment rates for Indigenous males and all Australian males between 1971 and 1991 was one of increase (see figure 1.3). However there was a small decrease between 1986 and 1991 for Indigenous males. Whilst absolute rates of unemployment were consistently far higher for Indigenous males than for all males, in 1991 the gap in unemployment rates between Indigenous and all Australian males narrowed: in 1971 the unemployment rate for Indigenous males was six times higher than for all males, by 1991 the rate was less than three times as high.

The participation rate for Indigenous males has remained reasonably stable over the period (figure 1.5) whilst the participation rate for all Australian males declined slightly.

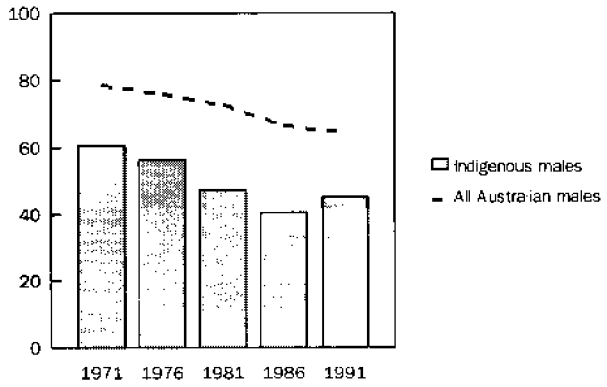
Rates for females

Trends in labour force status between 1971 and 1991 were very different for females, although the same qualifications as were mentioned above in relation to earlier census data also apply (see figures 1.2, 1.4 and 1.6). Both employment/population ratios and participation rates recorded for Indigenous females were considerably lower than those observed for their male counterparts. The emergence of females into the labour market was clearly represented by rising employment/population ratios for both Indigenous and all Australian females. Nonetheless, in 1991 the employment/population ratio for females was still around one and a half times lower than for males. This was true for both Indigenous and all Australian females.

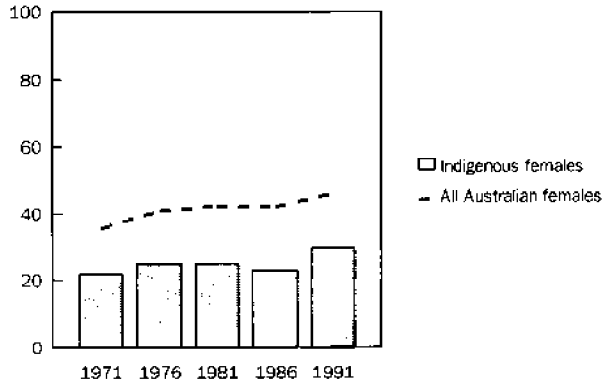
As for men, female unemployment rates rose during the period 1971 to 1991. It is interesting to note that there was some variation in unemployment rates between Indigenous women and Indigenous men as well as between all women and all men. The decline in unemployment for Indigenous females was steeper than that for Indigenous males. Among all Australian females the rate stabilised between 1986 and 1991 whereas for all males it continued to rise. Unemployment rates for Indigenous females over time were consistently around three times as high as for all females. This contrasted with the unemployment rate for Indigenous males which fell from six times higher than all males in 1971 to three times higher in 1991.

The participation rates of Indigenous women and all women showed a steady increase over time, although rates were still much lower than for their male counterparts. This is a direct reflection of the growing numbers of women entering the labour market. This rise in participation has been accompanied by an increase in both employment and unemployment rates.

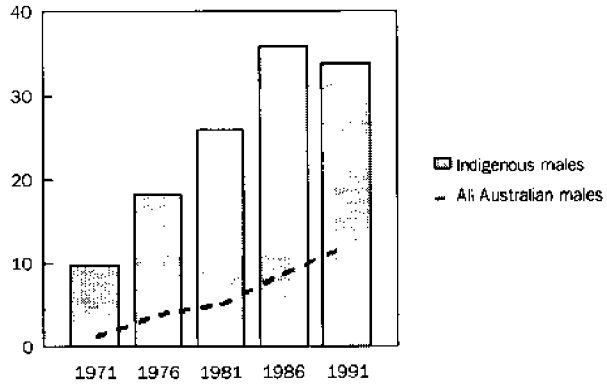
1.1 MALES EMPLOYMENT/ POPULATION RATIO, 1971–91



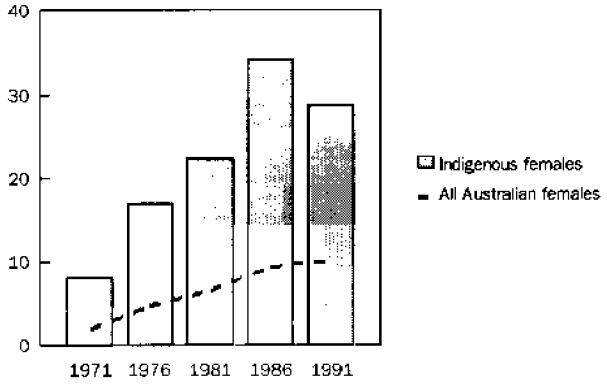
1.2 FEMALES EMPLOYMENT/ POPULATION RATIO, 1971–91



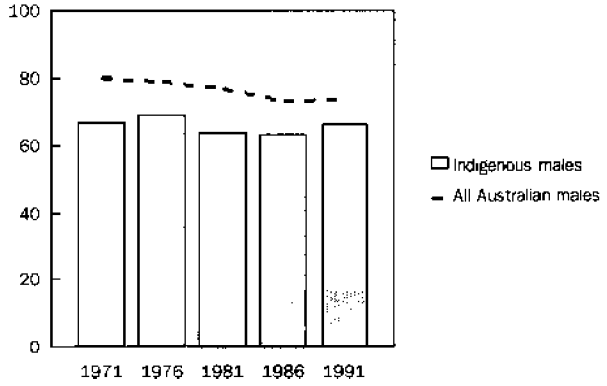
1.3 MALES UNEMPLOYMENT RATE, 1971–91



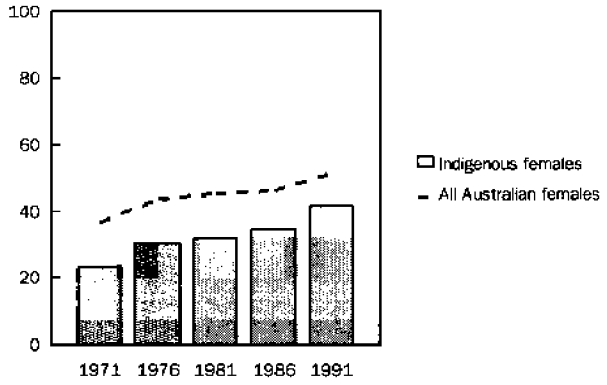
1.4 FEMALES UNEMPLOYMENT RATE, 1971–91



1.5 MALES PARTICIPATION RATE, 1971–91



1.6 FEMALES PARTICIPATION RATE, 1971–91



Sources for figures 1.1–1.6: 1991 – 2722.0; 1986 – 2503.0, 1986 Census 7 page summary; 1981 – Small area data, Table 63; 1976 – LGA summary data, Table 53; 1971 – Bulletins 1 and 9

According to the NATSIS, an estimated 39,900 Indigenous males and 25,200 Indigenous females were in employment in 1994. This comprised 45% of males and 27% of females aged 15 years and over. Unemployment rates were similar for males and females but the participation of Indigenous females in the labour force was significantly less than that of males.

1.1 LABOUR FORCE STATUS INDIGENOUS PERSONS AGED 15 YEARS OR MORE, 1994

	Males	*Females*	*Total*
Labour force rates	%	%	%
Employment/population ratio	45.1	27.1	35.9
Unemployment rate	37.7	39.0	38.2
Participation rate	72.3	44.4	58.0
Total ('000)	**88.5**	**92.9**	**181.5**

Source: National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey 1994: Detailed Findings (4190.0).

It is not possible to directly compare unemployment and not in the labour force results from the Census with those from the NATSIS. The questions asked in the survey regarding labour force status did not exactly match those used in the Census, nor was the manner of their asking the same. The NATSIS was a sample survey and is therefore subject to errors that a complete enumeration exercise like the Census is not. On the other hand, the NATSIS used Indigenous interviewers whereas the Census form is largely completed by people answering questions by themselves, without an interviewer.

The main difference between the Census and the NATSIS, however, is the treatment of registration with the Commonwealth Employment Service (CES). If a person does not have a job and is looking for work then that person is considered to be unemployed. If the person is not looking for work then the person is not in the labour force. Both questionnaires ask if the person has been actively looking for work. The Census asks no more questions to establish labour force status. The NATSIS asked a further specific question about registration with the CES and considered CES registration as job seeking activity irrespective of whether respondents stated that they were looking for work. Thus, if a NATSIS respondent did not have a job and stated that he/she was not looking for work but was registered with the CES, his/her labour force status would usually be unemployed. Whilst the explanatory notes included with the Census question on looking for work mention registration with the CES, it is probable that many respondents do not consider these notes when answering the question. The different methodology used in the NATSIS to establish unemployment, including a specific question on CES registration, was based on advice of the planners of the survey who considered registration with the CES to be a good indicator of whether a person's intention was to obtain employment. For further discussion of the effects of CES registration on unemployment figures see Appendix 1.

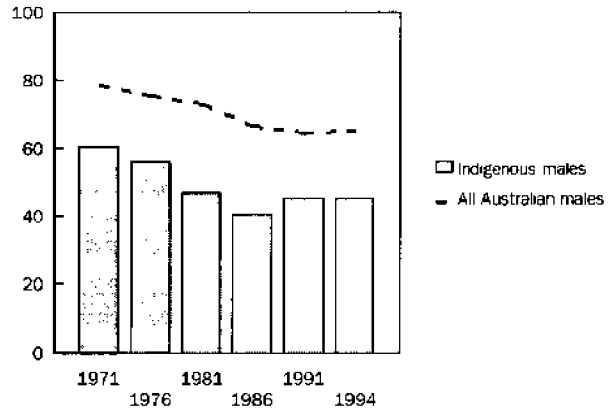
A further element of the labour force status *unemployed* is the requirement of availability to start work. The 1991 Census did not ask if persons without a job were available to start work, instead assuming that they were available. The NATSIS did ask a question on availability to start work.

As would be expected, the unemployment and participation rates derived from the NATSIS were higher than from the Census. Around a quarter of all persons recorded as unemployed in the NATSIS were allocated to unemployed solely on the basis of their answer to the CES registration question (see *Labour Force Characteristics of Indigenous Australians* (6287.0)). Since this effect does not alter the classification of employed people, employment figures are less subject to definitional issues and therefore less likely to vary between Census and NATSIS than unemployment and participation rates. The focus in the remainder of this publication is on the employment/population ratio as the NATSIS indicator of employment outcomes which is most closely comparable to measures available from the Census.

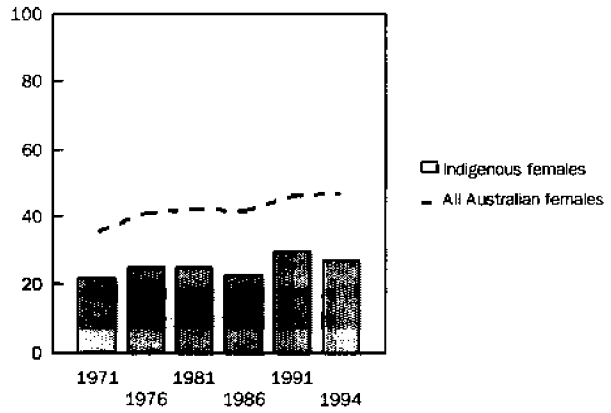
EMPLOYMENT GROWTH 1991–94

The employment/population ratio was similar in 1991 and 1994 for males and declined slightly for females (figures 1.7 and 1.8). This suggests that a plateau may have been reached in the level of employment/population ratios. Whether this becomes a trend will be clearer following the release of data from the 1996 Census.

1.7 MALES EMPLOYMENT/ POPULATION RATIO, 1971–94



1.8 FEMALES EMPLOYMENT/ POPULATION RATIO, 1971–94



Sources for figures 1.7 and 1.8: 1994 – 4190.0, 6203.0; 1991 – 2722.0; 1986 – 2503.0, 1986 Census 7 page summary; 1981 – Small area data, Table 63; 1976 – LGA summary data, Table 53; 1971 – Bulletins 1 and 9

Survey estimates of the numbers of employed Indigenous people in 1994 and estimates based on adjusted 1991 Census data are shown in table 1.2. These figures indicate that an estimated 3,300 additional jobs were created for Indigenous people between 1991 and 1994. Most of this increase occurred among males and consequently their employment growth was more or less in line with growth in the male working age population (7%). However growth in employment (3%) for females did not keep pace with the growth in the population of working age (7%). At the same time, if it were not for an expansion of jobs via the CDEP scheme, there would have been a gap between employment growth and population growth for males as well.

1.2 CHANGE IN INDIGENOUS EMPLOYMENT, 1991–94

	1991	*1994*	*Net change*	*Relative change*
	'000	'000	'000	%
Males				
Employed	37.3	39.9	2.6	7.0
Population aged 15 years or more	85.9	91.6	5.7	6.6
Females				
Employed	24.5	25.2	0.7	2.9
Population aged 15 years or more	86.6	93.1	6.4	7.4

Note: 1991 Census population and labour force status counts in this table have been adjusted proportionally to take account of the difference between the Census count and the Estimated Resident Population (ERP) (see 3230.0). The population aged 15 years or more in this table includes those persons with a labour force status of *not stated*, unlike other data presented in this publication.
Source: 1991 Census Aboriginal Community Profile (2722.0), *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey 1994: Detailed Findings* (4190.0), *Experimental Estimates of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Population: June 1986 to June 1991* (3230.0).

In 1986, the CDEP scheme operated in only 38 communities Australia-wide with a total of around 4,000 participants. In 1991, 170 communities were engaged in the scheme with the number of participants totalling 18,250. Since then, the scheme expanded further with a total of 25,167 participants in 235 communities recorded at the beginning of 1995 (ATSIC CDEP section). 1994 NATSIS data, however, gave an estimate of 16,800 people employed in CDEP schemes. There are many possible reasons for the discrepancy between ATSIC and NATSIS figures. Most crucial is the difference in definition between ATSIC's *CDEP participants* and the NATSIS *persons employed in CDEP schemes*. The CDEP scheme is designed to create employment for Indigenous people at the community level as one means of achieving broader community development aims and income support for participants. In some communities, the CDEP scheme operates by identifying a pool of potential employees. These are called *participants*. However, the nature of CDEP scheme work can be sporadic. Thus, at any given time, not all participants will actually be working at jobs in the CDEP scheme. If a participant in the scheme is not working in the reference week, they may not be paid and are likely to answer the NATSIS employment questions as though they did not have a job in the reference week. CDEP scheme participants, therefore, are only potential workers, not actual workers, in any given week. The NATSIS on the other hand did not ask if a person was usually employed but 'Did you have a job last week?'. Thus the NATSIS would not have recorded as *employed* any CDEP scheme participant who said that he or she was not working in the reference week. The Census also asks only if the person had a job *last week*. There is no generally

applicable formula for estimating the number of participants who are in employment in a given week, although Deloitte Touche and Tohmatsu (1993) and Taylor (1993b) have suggested figures.

Direct comparison between ATSIC CDEP scheme participation figures and NATSIS CDEP scheme employment estimates is therefore difficult. What may be said, however, is that there has been a steady rise in the number of CDEP scheme participants since 1986 (table 1.3). It is likely therefore that this would be reflected in a similar rise over time in the actual number of workers in a given week. Given the level of CDEP scheme employment growth since 1991 that these figures imply, it would appear that recent employment growth outside of the CDEP scheme has been negligible.

1.3 CDEP SCHEME PARTICIPATION, 1986–94

	1986	1991	1994
	'000	'000	'000
Participants CDEP (ATSIC)	4.0	18.2	22.2
Employed (ABS)	46.9	61.8	65.1

Note: 1986 and 1991 Census population and labour force status counts in this table have been adjusted proportionally to take account of the difference between the Census count and the Estimated Resident Population (ERP) (see 3230.0).
Source: ATSIC CDEP Section, Participant schedule, *1991 Census Aboriginal Community Profile* (2722.0), *Census 86: Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People* (2503.0), *Experimental Estimates of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Population: June 1986 to June 1991* (3230.0), *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey 1994: Detailed Findings* (4190.0).

NATSIS estimates show that nationally 26% of employment was in CDEP schemes in 1994. Given the rapid growth in CDEP scheme participation in recent years it is likely that the CDEP scheme share of total employment also grew. Further light on this issue will be shed on this by the 1996 Census which, for the first time, will also collect information on employment in CDEP schemes.

KEY FINDINGS

The main features of this chapter were:

- The employment/population ratio for both Indigenous males and females increased between 1986 and 1991. The ratio remained constant for males between 1991 and 1994 but declined for females in the same period.
- Overall, Indigenous employment growth for females between 1991 and 1994 failed to keep up with growth in the female working age population resulting in a slight decline in the employment/population ratio.
- The primary source of employment growth for Indigenous people between 1991 and 1994 has been the CDEP scheme. If it had not been for an expansion of participation in the scheme, the gap between employment growth and population growth would have been much wider.

FULL-TIME/PART-TIME EMPLOYMENT

For all employed persons there was a small decline in the percentage of both all Australian males and females in full-time employment between 1986 and 1994 and a corresponding increase in part-time employment (table 2.1).

Figures for Indigenous women show a very clear decline in full-time employment and increase in part-time employment between 1986 and 1994. Indigenous men also experienced a rise in part-time employment over the same period as well as a decline in full-time employment.

In 1994, 60% of Indigenous people in employment were in full-time work (more than 35 hours per week) and the vast majority of these (70%) were males. For all Australian workers, the equivalent proportion in full-time employment was 75%, at March 1994, whilst a similar proportion (70%) were also male. Thus, a majority of Indigenous and non-Indigenous male workers were in full-time employment, compared to half of all Indigenous and non-Indigenous female workers.

Part-time employment was much more common for Indigenous people than for the total population. Overall 40% of the Indigenous population was employed part time; only 24% of the total population was employed part time. Whilst part-time employment rates have risen for all groups over time, the proportion of Indigenous people in part-time employment was much higher than for the total population, in particular for males.

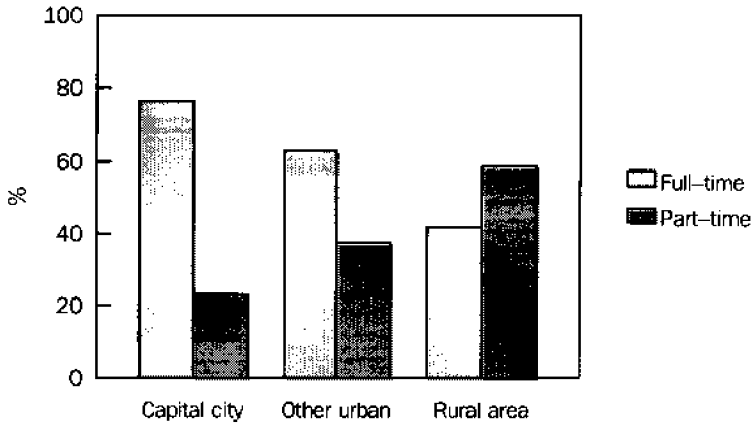
2.1 FULL-TIME/PART-TIME EMPLOYMENT, 1986–1994

	Indigenous employed			*Total employed*		
	1986 Census	*1991 Census*	*1994 NATSIS*	*1986 MLFS*	*1991 MLFS*	*1994 MLFS*
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Males						
Full-time	76.0	65.7	67.2	93.3	90.8	89.2
Part-time	18.0	26.8	30.6	6.7	9.2	10.8
Total employed ('000)	*30.3*	*37.3*	39.9	*4 233.2*	*4 443.7*	*4 488.9*
Females						
Full-time	58.1	49.6	44.8	61.5	59.1	57.8
Part-time	35.8	41.9	53.6	38.5	40.8	42.2
Total employed ('000)	*17.0*	*24.5*	*25.2*	*2 739.5*	*3 225.5*	*3 349.3*

Note: Census and NATSIS totals include not stated so the percentages do not add to 100. 1986 and 1991 Census employed counts in this table have been adjusted proportionally to take account of the difference between the Census count and the Estimated Resident Population (ERP) (see 3230.0).
Source: *The Labour Force Australia: June 1986, August 1991 and March 1994* (6203.0), *1991 Census Aboriginal Community Profile* (2722.0), *Census 86: Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People* (2503.0), 1994 NATSIS unpublished data.

It is important to note that this relatively high reliance on part-time employment among Indigenous workers was not universal as the distribution of full-time and part-time work varied substantially by part of State (figure 2.1). In capital cities, the vast majority of Indigenous workers (77%) were engaged in full-time jobs. This proportion declined in other urban areas where 63% of jobs were full-time and fell even further in rural areas where the share of the workforce in full-time employment was less than half (41%). This may be associated with high rates of CDEP scheme employment in rural areas as such employment tends to be part-time. It may also reflect different work priorities of remote Indigenous people. The prospect of part-time work may be in keeping with the priorities of some Indigenous people, who may attach as much importance to traditional economic and cultural pursuits as to formal engagement with the labour market (Smith 1995). Unfortunately, the survey shed no clear light on this issue as half of all part-time workers in rural areas did not indicate whether they wanted to work more hours.

2.1 FULL-TIME/PART-TIME EMPLOYMENT BY PART OF STATE, EMPLOYED INDIGENOUS PERSONS, 1994



Source: 1994 NATSIS unpublished data.

STATUS IN EMPLOYMENT

Self-employment (including employers and small business operators) is regarded as an important component of private sector employment and a range of government programs have been established to promote the participation of Indigenous people in such activity. Self-employment, whether employing other people or not, is an area where the participation of Indigenous people has been consistently low. In 1991 almost 6% of the Indigenous workforce, some 3,250 individuals, were classified as self-employed. Estimates from the 1994 survey suggest that this proportion had declined slightly (table 2.2). Indigenous people are three times less likely to be self-employed than the general population.

2.2 STATUS IN EMPLOYMENT, 1986–94

	Indigenous employed			*Total employed*		
	1986 Census	*1991 Census*	*1994 NATSIS*	*1986 MLFS*	*1991 MLFS*	*1994 MLFS*
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Males						
Employee	95.3	93.3	92.5	83.2	82.1	82.7
Self-employed	4.7	6.7	6.3	16.8	17.9	17.3
Total employed ('000)	30.3	37.3	39.9	4 257.9	4 443.7	4 488.9
Females						
Employee	96.3	94.2	95.8	88.1	87.5	88.2
Self-employed	3.7	5.8	3.8	11.9	12.5	11.8
Total employed ('000)	17.0	24.5	25.2	2 749.8	3 225.5	3 349.3

Note: NATSIS totals include not stated to status in employment, therefore percentages do not add to 100. Self-employed includes employer, own account worker and contributing family worker. 1986 and 1991 Census employed counts in this table have been adjusted proportionally to take account of the difference between the Census count and the Estimated Resident Population (ERP) (see 3230.0).
Source: The Labour Force Australia: August 1991 (6203.0), Labour Force Estimates microfiche GRP300 Table E1 June 1986, Labour Force Estimates microfiche GRPSTW Table E1 March 1994, *1991 Census Aboriginal Community Profile* (2722.0), 1986 Census unpublished data, 1994 NATSIS unpublished data.

Males

Males were far more likely to be self-employed, accounting for almost three-quarters of the total self-employed Indigenous population. Self-employed persons remained predominantly located in capital cities as previously indicated by Census data (Daly 1995, p. 88, table 2.3). Half of self-employed males were found in capital cities. The percentage of employed males who were self-employed was highest in capital cities (11.3%) and fell by more than half in other urban (4.8%) and rural areas (4.1%). The suggestion has been made that official figures may underestimate the level of entrepreneurship among Indigenous people, particularly in rural areas in the arts industry (Altman 1989). However, it is also true to say that hours spent in art and craft activities are often intermittent and as such may not be recorded by official ABS censuses and surveys (Altman 1989).

Females

Females were also more likely to be self-employed in capital cities (table 2.3). Around 60% of self-employed females were found in capital cities although self-employment rates for females were lower than the rates for males across all geographic areas. Very few females were self-employed in other urban or rural areas where they accounted for only 1.8% and 2.6% of the female employed population, respectively.

2.3 STATUS IN EMPLOYMENT BY PART OF STATE, INDIGENOUS PERSONS AGED 15 YEARS OR MORE, 1994

	Males				*Females*			
	Capital city	*Other urban*	*Rural areas*	*Total*	*Capital city*	*Other urban*	*Rural areas*	*Total*
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Employee	87.4	93.4	95.7	92.5	92.3	97.6	97.2	95.8
Self-employed	11.1	4.7	4.1	6.3	7.6	*1.8	*2.6	3.8
Total employed ('000)	**11.4**	**14.4**	**14.0**	**39.9**	**7.9**	**9.6**	**7.8**	**25.2**

Note: Self-employed includes employers, own account workers, unpaid family workers.
Source: 1994 NATSIS unpublished data.

INDUSTRY SECTOR

Employers are classified by industry sector which is divided into two broad groups — government and non-government. This is determined on the basis of ownership of employment establishment (ABS 1993, p. 46). The actual source of funds for a business enterprise is not considered. Thus, a private organisation, majority funded under a government program, is still considered to be in the private sector.

On this basis, data from the 1986 and 1991 Censuses on employment by industry sector indicated that there had been an apparent intercensal growth in Indigenous employment in the private sector at a rate far in excess of that for non-Indigenous Australians (Taylor 1993a, p. 64). This relative success in the most competitive sector of the labour market surprised some observers and there has been growing policy concern, most cogently expressed in the recent review of the AEDP (ATSIC 1994, p. 25), that a substantial share of this employment growth was in jobs generated by Indigenous community organisations which might be more accurately described as public sector given their dependence on government funding.

The NATSIS used the ABS standard classification of industry sector but also divided the private sector into two categories — community and other private — in an attempt to distinguish those employers who rely heavily on government monies. However some employment that may be viewed as falling within the community sector was classified as public sector, as indicated in table 2.4. For example, employment provided by Aboriginal community councils in Western Australia was coded as State government employment while employment provided by Northern Territory Community Government Councils, by Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Councils and by the Aurukun and Mornington Island Councils were all classified as local government employment.

With these caveats in mind, the largest overall concentration of employment was in the other private sector which accounted for nearly 40% of the Indigenous workforce. The community sector, that is those working for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations (declared by ATSIC) and Northern Territory Associations, accounted for almost one-fifth of the workforce. Two-thirds of this employment in the community sector was accounted for by the CDEP scheme.

2.4 CODING OF EMPLOYERS TO INDUSTRY SECTOR, NATSIS, 1994

Sector	*Organisation*
Commonwealth government	Northern Territory Land Councils
	Western Australia Land Councils
	Queensland Land Councils
	Tasmanian Aboriginal Land Council
State/Territory government	Western Australia Aboriginal Communities
	South Australia Land Councils
	New South Wales Land Councils
Local government	Northern Territory Community Government Councils
	Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Councils
	Aurukun Shire Council
	Mornington Island Shire Council
Community private	Aboriginal organisations (declared by ATSIC)
	Northern Territory Associations

Males and females

Substantial variation was evident between males and females in their distribution by industry sector (table 2.5). Males were more likely to be found in other private sector or local government employment while females were more likely to be in other private sector or State and Territory government jobs. While the proportion of each sex employed in the community sector was the same, this comprised a much larger number of males.

Part of the reason for this gender variation is hinted at by the distribution of industry sector employment by part of State. The predominance of community sector and local government employment in rural areas was related to employment in the CDEP scheme which, in turn, mostly employed males. By contrast, employment in these sectors was relatively absent from capital cities where two-thirds of jobs for males and half of all jobs for females were found in the other private sector. Also noticeable was the relative importance of Commonwealth government employment for both males and females in capital cities, while a substantial proportion of jobs for females were provided by State and Territory Governments regardless of location.

2.5 INDUSTRY SECTOR BY PART OF STATE, INDIGENOUS PERSONS AGED 15 YEARS OR MORE, 1994

	Males				Females			
	Capital city	Other urban	Rural areas	Total	Capital city	Other urban	Rural areas	Total
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Public sector								
Commonwealth	15.5	5.6	*2.3	7.2	14.8	10.5	*3.2	9.6
State/Territory	12.9	15.5	13.0	13.9	26.9	28.4	27.2	27.6
Local	*4.2	14.3	29.9	16.9	**0.5	10.0	16.6	9.0
Private sector								
Community	4.6	15.6	32.7	18.4	7.8	17.0	31.5	18.6
Other private	60.5	45.3	20.6	41.0	49.7	31.3	21.2	34.0
Total employed ('000)	**11.4**	**14.4**	**14.0**	**39.9**	**7.9**	**9.6**	**7.8**	**25.2**

Note: Percentages do not add to 100 as Totals include Not stated.
Source: 1994 NATSIS unpublished data.

DURATION OF UNEMPLOYMENT

A particular concern expressed by the Royal Commission was the degree to which Indigenous people endure chronic unemployment. The links between unemployment, low economic status and imprisonment were highlighted by the Royal Commission:

> The views of the very many Aboriginal people who gave evidence before this Commission strongly indicate the effects that long-term unemployment can have: a lack of self-confidence, a sense of permanent and inescapable marginalization, a feeling of powerlessness (Commonwealth of Australia 1991a, pp. 380–83).

The prevalence of long-term unemployment (greater than 12 months) reported in the survey was very high. In 1994, 40,000 Indigenous people of working age were estimated to be unemployed (table 2.6). Of these, half had been without work for more than 12 months. Although the majority of long-term unemployed Indigenous people were males, the percentage of unemployed who were long-term unemployed was the same for both sexes.

2.6 DURATION OF UNEMPLOYMENT BY PART OF STATE, INDIGENOUS PERSONS AGED 15 YEARS OR MORE, 1994

	Males				Females			
	Capital city	Other urban	Rural areas	Total	Capital city	Other urban	Rural areas	Total
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Less than 3 months	23.4	20.2	17.3	20.2	25.4	19.4	31.8	23.4
3–6 months	15.6	14.8	15.5	15.2	18.2	10.2	7.3	12.0
6–12 months	10.2	16.8	15.4	14.7	10.6	14.5	11.3	12.8
More than 12 months	50.8	48.1	50.7	49.5	41.1	54.4	47.8	49.3
Total unemployed ('000)	**6.3**	**11.8**	**6.1**	**24.2**	**4.7**	**8.5**	**2.9**	**16.1**

Note: Percentages do not add to 100 as the total includes not stated.
Source: 1994 NATSIS unpublished data.

The March 1994 Monthly Labour Force Survey (MLFS) included an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander identifier for the first time. Thus information for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people is available from the March 1994 MLFS. Rates of unemployment between the MLFS and NATSIS differ due to differences in methodology and concepts, most notably in the treatment of CES registration (see Appendices 1 and 2). However, using this March 1994 MLFS data, overall 46% of Indigenous unemployed were estimated to be long-term unemployed, compared to 37% for non-Indigenous unemployed. In other words, while approximately 1 out of every 40 adults in Australia were long-term unemployed, the equivalent ratio for Indigenous people was 1 out of every 14 adults. The difference between males and females was striking, with both Indigenous and non-Indigenous females having similar proportions of long-term unemployed (1 in 55 and 1 in 59), whereas 1 out of every 8 Indigenous males were long-term unemployed compared to only 1 out of 30 non-Indigenous males (see *Labour Force Characteristics of Indigenous Australians: Statistics, Methodology and Comparisons* (6287.0)).

Another feature of the distribution of long-term unemployment among Indigenous jobseekers was the lack of variation by part of State. The level of long-term unemployment was more or less consistent across capital cities, other urban areas and rural areas. The only minor exception to this was a slightly lower rate among females in capital cities. Given the location of much of the Indigenous rural population in remote regions, where mainstream labour markets are poorly developed, this surprising lack of variation is most likely due to the concentration of CDEP scheme employment in rural areas.

KEY FINDINGS

The main features of this chapter were:

- Indigenous workers have shared in the general trend observed in the labour market away from full-time to part-time employment.
- The proportion of Indigenous male workers in full-time employment has been consistently higher than for Indigenous females and the gap in proportions widened slightly between 1991 and 1994.
- For both males and females full-time employment was found predominantly in capital cities.
- NATSIS estimates of self-employment confirmed the low levels recorded by previous censuses. Only 5% of Indigenous workers were self-employed, most of these were males and most were located in capital cities.
- For the first time, the NATSIS provided estimates of two categories of private sector employment — community private and other private — in an attempt to distinguish between private employers who rely heavily on government monies.
- Around 18% of Indigenous workers were employed in the community private sector.
- Almost 40% of Indigenous workers were employed in the other private sector. This employment was heavily concentrated in capital cities.
- The survey confirmed the finding of the Royal Commission regarding high levels of long-term unemployment among Indigenous people. Of the 40,000 Indigenous people estimated to be unemployed, half had been without work for more than 12 months.

CHAPTER 3 LOCATION

LOCATION AND CDEP SCHEME EMPLOYMENT

Compared to the Australian population as a whole, Indigenous people are distributed more or less evenly in localities across the country. Until recently, one of the consistent findings from analyses of Indigenous labour force status was that labour market outcomes were progressively less favourable as location shifted from large cities to other urban centres and finally to rural areas. However, the 1994 survey data confirm observations first made using 1991 Census data (Daly 1995, p. 12) that this situation has now changed. Employment/population ratios in capital cities and rural areas were notably higher in 1994 than those in other urban areas (table 3.1). Likewise, unemployment rates were highest in other urban areas and lowest in rural areas. This apparent turnaround from a situation up to 1991 where employment outcomes generally declined with settlement size is almost entirely explained by rapidly increased participation in the CDEP scheme, which has occurred primarily in rural areas.

3.1 LABOUR FORCE STATUS BY PART OF STATE, INDIGENOUS PERSONS AGED 15 YEARS OR MORE, 1994

	Males				*Females*			
	Capital city	*Other urban*	*Rural areas*	*Total*	*Capital city*	*Other urban*	*Rural areas*	*Total*
Labour force rates	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Employment/population ratio	48.6	40.2	48.1	45.0	30.9	24.0	28.0	27.1
Unemployment rate	35.4	44.8	30.2	37.6	37.1	47.1	27.3	38.9
Participation rate	75.2	73.0	68.9	72.3	49.1	45.4	38.6	44.4
Total persons ('000)	**23.5**	**35.9**	**29.2**	**88.5**	**25.5**	**39.8**	**27.6**	**92.9**

Source: National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey 1994: Detailed Findings (4190.0).

There was a clear relationship between CDEP scheme employment and location (table 3.2). Less than 5% of CDEP scheme workers were located in capital cities compared to 68% in rural areas. In capital cities, virtually all employment was found outside of the CDEP scheme. In other urban areas, the scheme assumed greater importance and provided employment for up to 20% of males and 15% of females. In rural areas, the scheme was a very significant generator of employment providing up to half of all jobs. There was also an apparent sex differential in CDEP scheme participation. Across all geographic areas, men were more likely to be employed in a CDEP scheme than women.

This pattern of employment derived from the CDEP scheme reflects a combination of a shift from welfare dependence to some form of community-sanctioned work, and an administrative response to a perceived lack of mainstream labour market opportunities, mostly in rural areas.

The suggestion has been made that some forms of work engaged in by CDEP scheme participants probably fall outside the criteria used by the ABS to define employment (Smith 1995, p. 39). The definition used by the ABS in defining employment is that used by the International Labour Organization (Hussmanns et al. 1990). To be considered employed a person must have worked for profit in a job or business or on a farm or worked unpaid in a family business or on a farm. CDEP scheme workers fall within the ABS

definition of employed since they work for pay (see *Labour Force Characteristics of Indigenous Australians* (6287.0) for more detail).

3.2 CDEP/NON-CDEP SCHEME EMPLOYMENT BY PART OF STATE, INDIGENOUS PERSONS AGED 15 YEARS OR MORE, 1994

	Males				*Females*			
	Capital city	*Other urban*	*Rural areas*	*Total*	*Capital city*	*Other urban*	*Rural areas*	*Total*
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Employed								
Non-CDEP scheme	46.0	31.8	21.2	32.1	30.6	20.4	14.9	21.5
CDEP scheme	2.6	8.6	26.7	13.0	**0.4	3.8	13.0	5.6
Unemployed	26.8	32.6	20.9	27.2	18.0	21.4	10.5	17.3
Not in the labour force	24.7	27.0	31.2	27.8	51.0	54.5	61.2	55.7
Total persons ('000)	**23.5**	**35.9**	**29.2**	**88.5**	**25.5**	**39.8**	**27.6**	**92.9**

Source: National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey 1994 unpublished data.

REGIONAL PATTERNS OF LABOUR FORCE STATUS

The survey sample was designed in such a way as to provide data at the ATSIC Region level. Apart from generating information for potential use in the preparation of individual regional plans, an examination of ATSIC Region data collectively presents a national picture of spatial variations in key labour market indicators (see also Appendix 3). These patterns are presented in a series of maps by ATSIC region (figures 3.1–3.6). A reference map (figure 3.7) is also provided to enable the reader to determine the names of each ATSIC region.

The pattern of labour force status that emerged was one of striking local and regional contrasts. Also evident were surprising distributions with some regions, particularly in remote parts of the country, displaying better employment outcomes than might be expected. With regard to the employment/population ratio, for example, the highest rates were found in Cape York and the east Kimberley region, with relatively high rates found in the rest of the Kimberley, East Arnhem, Alice Springs and Ceduna (figure 3.1). At the same time, many adjacent regions had relatively low employment/population ratios. Other regions with relatively high employment/population ratios were found in the south-east, in western Victoria, Tasmania and Sydney. However, even in these areas that are closer to mainstream labour markets, many ATSIC regions recorded very low employment/population ratios. These included the central west and north coast regions of New South Wales, south west Queensland, Adelaide and the entire southern part of Western Australia, including Perth.

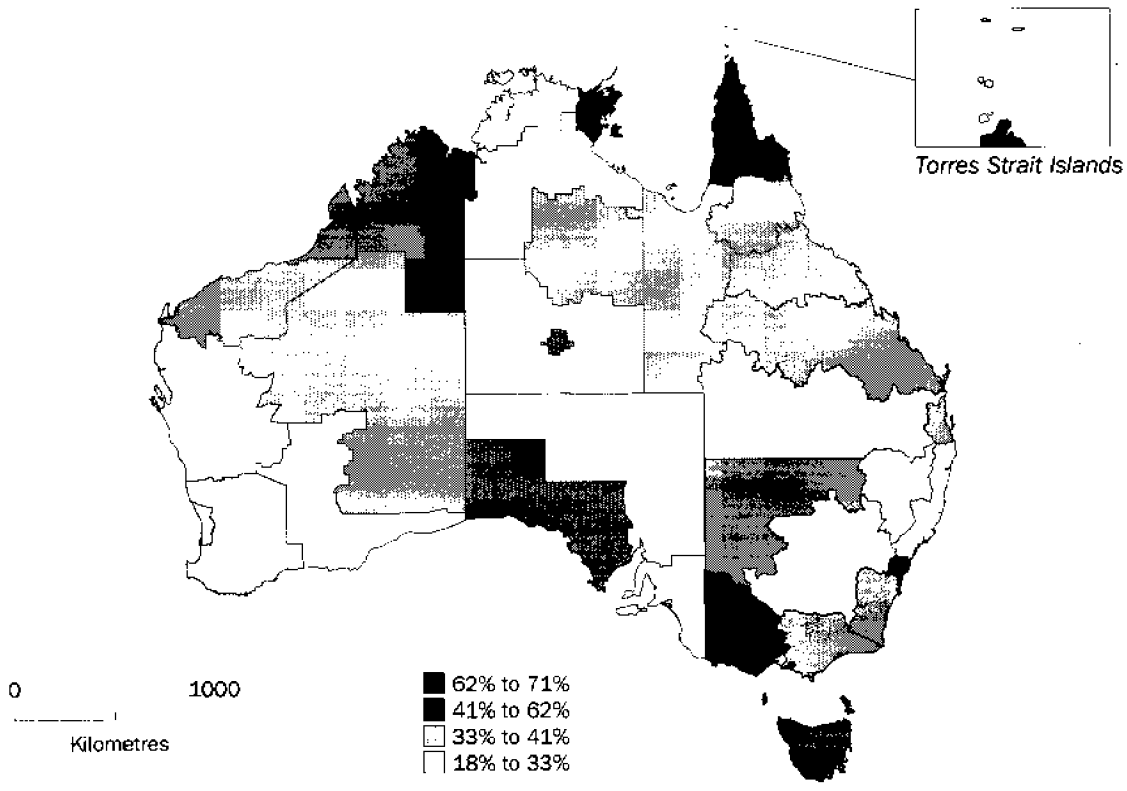
Accounting for these regional variations in employment outcomes is less straightforward than might be expected. For example, the explanation for high employment/population ratios in some of the remote regions identified above is no doubt to be found in the regional concentration of CDEP scheme employment (figure 3.2). However, above average rates of employment in the CDEP scheme do not necessarily produce high employment/population ratios. For example, the Aputula region of the Northern Territory had a below average employment/population ratio (figure 3.1) despite having an above average proportion of employment in

the CDEP scheme (figure 3.2). This was also associated with a relatively low participation rate (figure 3.3).

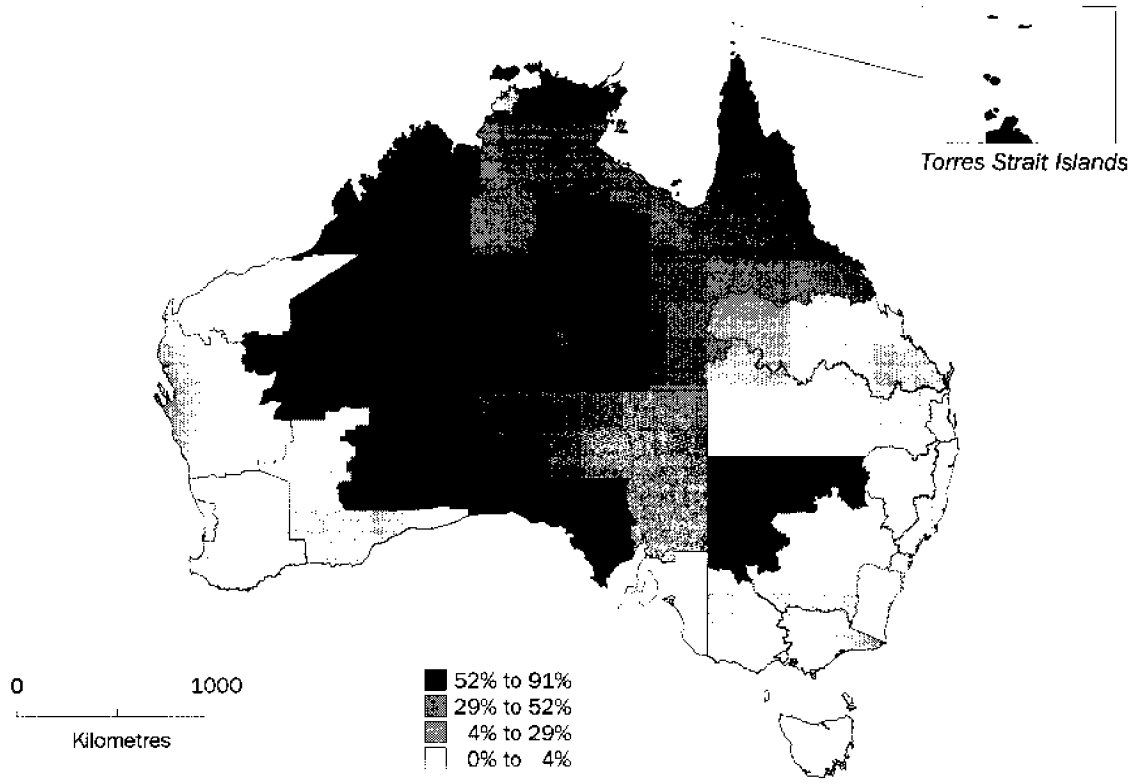
By viewing the maps together, regions with multiple indicators of employment disadvantage such as low employment/population ratios, low participation rates, high long-term unemployment, and high dependence on government sector or government funded (CDEP scheme) employment, can be identified. Regions of disadvantage included Wagga Wagga and Tamworth in central and northern New South Wales and Narrogin and Kalgoorlie in the south of Western Australia, Katherine in the Northern Territory and Adelaide. Cape York and the east Kimberley regions appeared to have the best outcomes, combining high employment/population ratios with high participation rates and low long-term unemployment rates. This however was achieved almost entirely by access to the CDEP scheme. No other region achieved this combination of consistently favourable outcomes with the exception, perhaps, of Tasmania.

The clear concentration of CDEP scheme employment in remote regions of the country contributed to further spatial division of the Indigenous labour market according to industry sector (figures 3.5 and 3.6). Jobs in the other private sector, that are the target of much government policy via labour market programs, were most prevalent in regions along the east coast, from Rockhampton region south to Victoria and Tasmania, as well as in the Pilbara region, the south west of Western Australia and Darwin. The highest concentrations occurred in Brisbane and Tasmania. By contrast, across the whole of northern Australia with the exception of Darwin, and in inland regions, at least 40%, and in some cases almost all, employment was provided by local government and community sector employment (a provider of many CDEP scheme employment places).

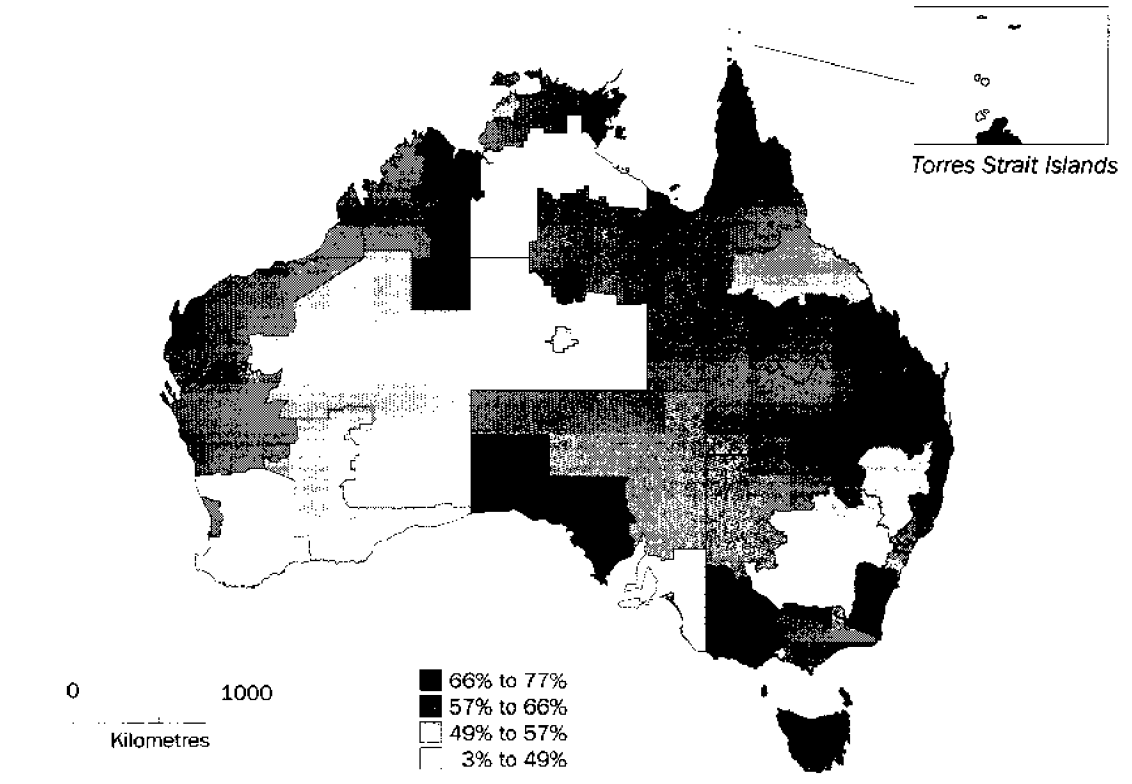
3.1 EMPLOYMENT/POPULATION RATIO BY ATSIC REGION, PERSONS AGED 15 YEARS OR MORE, 1994



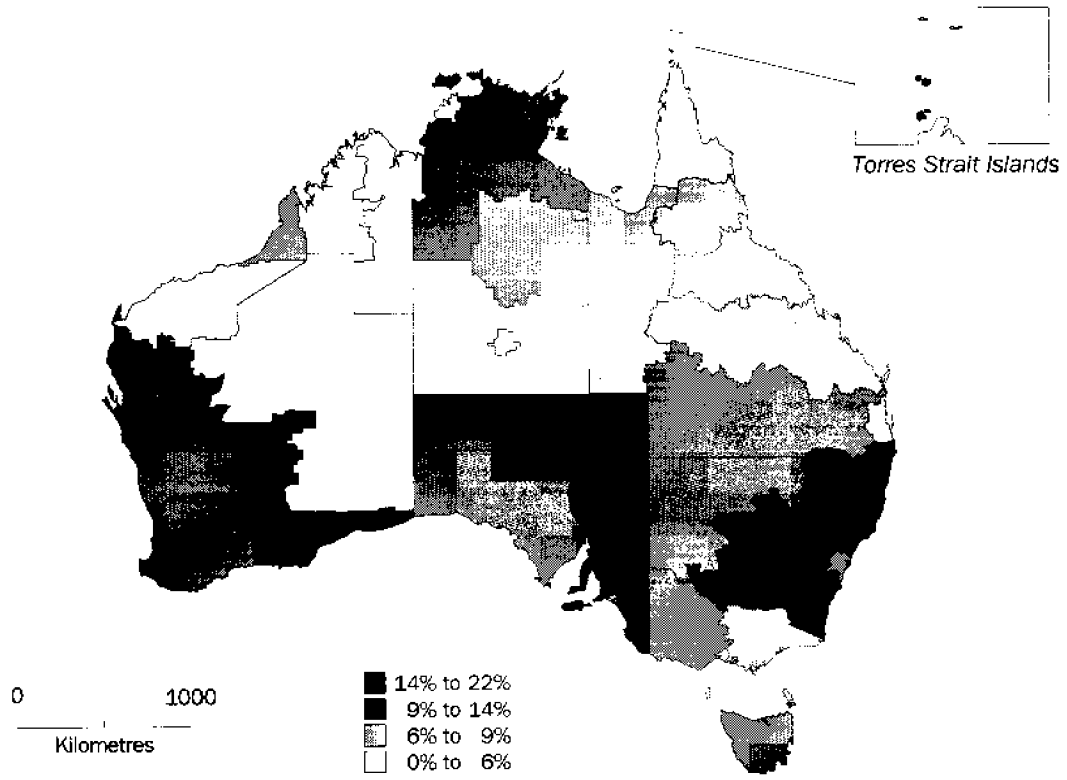
3.2 CDEP SCHEME EMPLOYMENT BY ATSIC REGION, EMPLOYED PERSONS AGED 15 YEARS OR MORE, 1994



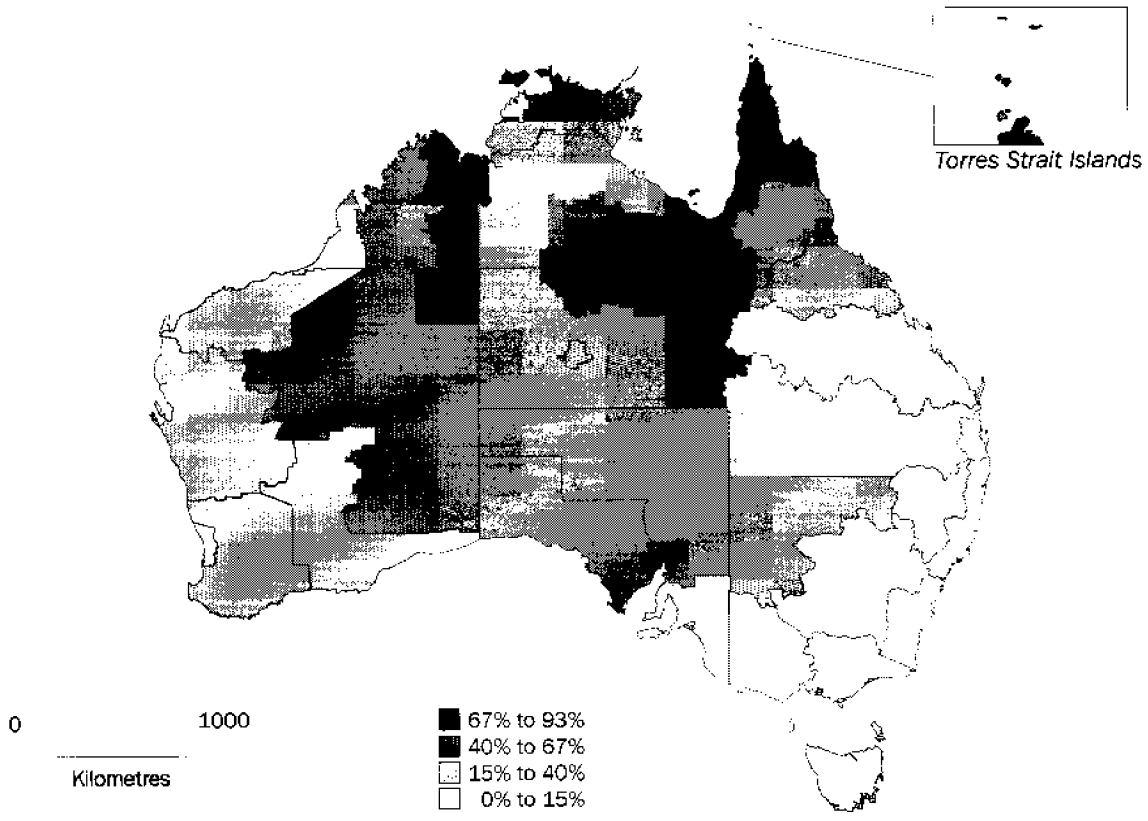
3.3 PARTICIPATION RATE BY ATSIC REGION, PERSONS AGED 15 YEARS OR MORE, 1994



3.4 LONG-TERM UNEMPLOYED BY ATSIC REGION, PERSONS AGED 15 YEARS OR MORE, 1994



3.5 LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNITY SECTOR EMPLOYMENT BY ATSIC REGION, EMPLOYED PERSONS AGED 15 YEARS OR MORE, 1994



KEY FINDINGS

The main features of this chapter were:

- The survey data confirm observations first made from 1991 Census analysis that employment/population ratios in capital cities and rural areas are notably higher than those in other urban areas.
- The turnaround from a situation where employment outcomes generally declined with settlement size is explained by rapidly increased participation in the CDEP scheme in rural areas.
- A clear relationship exists between CDEP scheme employment and location. Less than 5% of CDEP scheme workers were located in capital cities compared to 68% in rural areas.
- ATSIC regions with the low employment/population ratios, low participation rates and high long-term unemployment rates, included Wagga Wagga and Tamworth in central and northern New South Wales, Kalgoorlie and Narrogin in the south of Western Australia, Katherine in the Northern Territory and Adelaide.
- Employment in the other private sector was concentrated in regions along the east coast from southern Queensland down to Tasmania, Darwin, the Pilbara and Narrogin in the south west of Western Australia.
- Both CDEP scheme employment and local government and community sector employment were concentrated inland, in particular in the Northern and Central regions of Australia.

ATSIC Region	*Regional Council*
1 Queanbeyan	South Eastern NSW/ACT Indigenous
2 Bourke	Murdi Paaki
3 Coffs Harbour	North Eastern Indigenous
4 Sydney	Sydney
5 Tamworth	Kamilaroi
6 Wagga Wagga	Binaal Billa
7 Wangaratta	Binjirru
8 Ballarat	Tumbukka
9 Brisbane	South East Queensland Indigenous
10 Cairns	Cairns and District
11 Mt Isa	Mount Isa and Gulf
12 Cooktown	Peninsula
13 Rockhampton	Central Queensland
14 Roma	Goolburri
15 Torres Strait Area	Torres Strait Regional Authority
16 Townsville	Townsville
17 Adelaide	Patpa Warra Yunti
18 Ceduna	Wangka Wilurrara
19 Port Augusta	Nulla Wimila Kutju
20 Perth	Karlkarniny
21 Broome	Kullarri
22 Kununurra	Wunan
23 Warburton	Western Desert
24 Narrogin	Kaata-Wangkinyiny
25 South Hedland	Ngarda-Ngarli-Yarndu
26 Derby	Malarabah
27 Kalgoorlie	Wongatha
28 Geraldton	Yamatji
29 Hobart	Tasmanian Aboriginal
30 Alice Springs	Alice Springs
31 Jabiru	Jabiru
32 Katherine	Garrak Jarru
33 Aputula	Papunya
34 Nhulunbuy	Miwatj
35 Tennant Creek	Yapakurlangu
36 Darwin	Yilli Rreung

KEY FINDINGS

The main features of this chapter were:

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- Employment in the other private sector was concentrated in regions along the east coast from southern Queensland down to Tasmania, Darwin, the Pilbara and Narrogin in the south west of Western Australia.
- Both CDEP scheme employment and local government and community sector employment were concentrated inland, in particular in the Northern and Central regions of Australia.

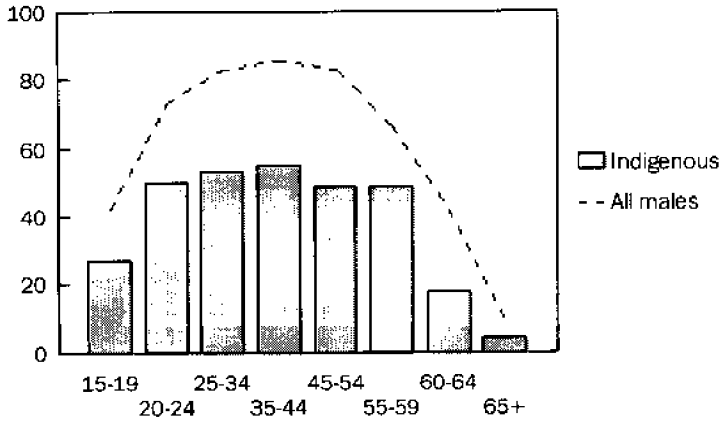
AGE

Employment levels in the Australian labour market vary substantially between age groups. This is because the degree to which individuals seek and acquire employment is strongly associated with life cycle events. For young people, for example, staying at school after Year 10 means that the necessity of seeking employment is delayed beyond the age of 15 years. Those leaving school are faced with the prospect of either entering the workforce for the first time or extending their training at the tertiary or vocational levels. There are also the demands of new family formation. At the other end of the life cycle, older workers may contemplate retirement and may be increasingly affected by health problems.

Males

According to the NATSIS, the employment/population ratio for Indigenous men rose from the youngest age group of 15–19 years through to an almost stable level from the ages of 30–34 to 55–59 years (figure 4.1). Beyond this, there was a rapid decline in the ratio.

4.1 EMPLOYMENT/POPULATION RATIO, MALES, 1994

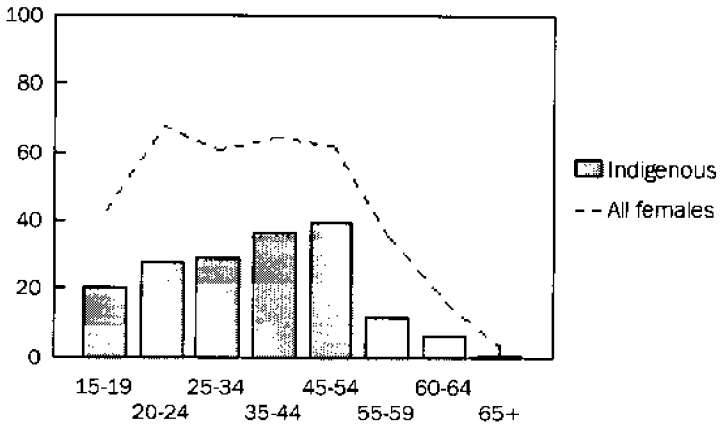


Source: The Labour Force Australia: March 1994 (6203.0), 1994 NATSIS unpublished data.

Females

The pattern among females was similar to that of males with some notable differences (figure 4.2). The variation in employment/population ratios between 15–19 and 20–24 year olds was not as great as it was for males and the rapid decline in employment began earlier — between the ages of 55–59 years not 60–64 years as it was for males. The other striking feature was that the level of female employment was substantially lower than that of males at all ages.

4.2 EMPLOYMENT/POPULATION RATIO, FEMALES, 1994



Source: The Labour Force Australia: March 1994 (6203.0), 1994 NATSIS unpublished data.

EDUCATION

The Aboriginal Employment Development Policy (AEDP) recognises that crucial links exist between employment levels and education levels (Commonwealth of Australia 1987). In October 1989, the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy (AEP) was launched. This set as one of its four goals the achievement of educational outcomes for Indigenous people equivalent to those found in the general population. In the context of access to mainstream labour markets, AEP success would be measured by increased acquisition of Year 12 and tertiary level certification.

Highest year of school completed

To date, analyses of the relationship between attainment at school and labour force status have relied on census data regarding the age at which individuals left school (Daly 1995). While this is a useful indicator of school attainment, the assumption that years of schooling necessarily equate with actual attainment is less precise than an actual measure of the highest year of schooling completed. This is provided for the first time by data from the survey and summary results are discussed below.

According to survey estimates approximately 15,400 Indigenous adults held a Year 12 certificate with the balance of these slightly in favour of females. This accounted for almost 10% of the population aged 15 years and over. A much greater number than this (63,300 or slightly more than one-third of the population) left school having completed Year 10 only. The largest single group, however, were those who left school before completing Year 10. This included some 82,300 individuals and accounted for nearly half of the adult Indigenous population. In addition to the large number of those with less than Year 10, around 8,500 individuals (5% of the population) had no schooling at all.

It is clear that the trend over time has been towards an increased proportion of each successive age group finishing Year 12 and a corresponding decline in the proportion of those leaving before finishing Year 10. Females below the age of 45 have tended to stay at school longer than their male counterparts. This was reflected in consistently higher rates of Year 12 attainment for females and lower rates of finishing school below Year 10.

While this signals increasingly positive outcomes for Indigenous people from education, they are still far behind the total Australian population. Of Indigenous 20–24 year olds in the 1991 Census, 26.1% had left school at age 17 or 18 compared to 46.1% of all Australian 20–24 year olds.

It is instructive to examine the distribution of highest year of school completed data by part of State (table 4.1). Options to attend school through to Year 12 were greater in urban areas than in rural areas. In many remote regions secondary schools do not exist, requiring relocation to urban centres if progression to secondary school is to occur. This may not be feasible or desired. For students who do relocate, accommodation is often problematic and attrition rates are high as students often feel alienated and homesick in places that are very different from their home environments (Commonwealth of Australia 1995b, pp. 58–9).

The highest proportions leaving school with Year 12 completed were found in capital cities and this declined in line with settlement size. At the other extreme of the attainment spectrum, those with no education were almost exclusively found in rural areas. A degree of difference between males and females in the distribution of attainment was also apparent. In capital cities, the proportion of females leaving school before Year 10 was higher than among males. Away from the capital cities, this pattern reversed.

4.1 HIGHEST YEAR OF SCHOOL COMPLETED BY PART OF STATE, INDIGENOUS PERSONS AGED 15 YEARS OR MORE, 1994

	Males				*Females*			
	Capital city	*Other urban*	*Rural areas*	*Total*	*Capital city*	*Other urban*	*Rural areas*	*Total*
Highest year completed	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Year 12	11.0	7.0	5.8	7.7	11.5	9.5	6.5	9.2
Year 10	43.2	32.5	28.4	34.0	35.1	36.3	32.6	34.9
Below Year 10	37.9	50.1	46.6	45.7	44.8	42.8	40.5	42.7
No education	*1.4	2.4	9.5	4.5	*0.9	2.5	12.1	4.9
Still attending	5.6	7.6	7.9	7.2	7.4	8.2	5.7	7.2
Total persons ('000)	**23.5**	**35.8**	**29.2**	**88.5**	**25.5**	**39.8**	**27.6**	**92.9**

Note: Percentages do not add to 100 since totals includes not stated.
Source: 1994 NATSIS unpublished data.

As indicated in table 4.2, the survey confirmed the strong positive relationship that has been previously reported using census data between levels of educational attainment and successful employment outcomes (Daly 1993a, 1993b, 1995; Daly & Jin 1995). Of those individuals who left school with a Year 12 certificate, a much higher proportion of both males and females (53% and 41%, respectively) were in non-CDEP scheme employment compared to those who left with a lower level of attainment. Despite this variation in mainstream employment levels, the rate of unemployment among both males and females of different educational attainment was fairly constant.

4.2 LABOUR FORCE STATUS BY HIGHEST YEAR OF SCHOOL COMPLETED, INDIGENOUS PERSONS AGED 15 YEARS OR MORE, 1994

Labour force status	*Year 12* %	*Year 10* %	*Below Year 10* %	*No education* %	*Still attending* %	*Total* %
Males						
Employed						
Non-CDEP	53.6	41.5	28.7	*5.9	*3.8	32.0
CDEP	9.7	14.9	13.9	*11.5	**0.2	13.0
Unemployed	26.1	29.6	30.9	*7.8	8.6	27.2
Not in the labour force	10.6	14.0	26.6	74.7	87.4	27.7
Total persons ('000)	*6.8*	*30.1*	*40.5*	*4.0*	*6.4*	*88.5*
Females						
Employed						
Non-CDEP	41.4	28.2	15.9	*3.6	10.8	21.5
CDEP	*5.6	5.6	6.3	*4.3	**0.0	5.6
Unemployed	19.7	22.0	17.0	*3.9	*4.8	17.3
Not in the labour force	33.2	44.1	60.8	88.2	84.4	55.6
Total persons ('000)	*8.5*	*32.4*	*39.7*	*4.6*	*6.7*	*92.9*

Note: Total column includes not stated to education.
Source: 1994 NATSIS unpublished data.

Level of highest qualification

The 1991 Census provides the only source of comparable information for Indigenous people and the total population regarding level of qualification. In 1991, 3,597 Indigenous people aged over 15 held a tertiary qualification (postgraduate, bachelor degree, diploma). This was 2.3% of the population aged over 15, and was considerably lower than the 12.8% of the total population aged over 15 who had a tertiary qualification. By the 1994 NATSIS, the situation had slightly improved for Indigenous people with 3.2% having tertiary certification.

Overall, 27.3% of all Australians aged 15 years or more had a post-school qualification in 1991 compared to only 8.3% of Indigenous people aged 15 or more. Survey data show a marked improvement in the accreditation of Indigenous people with 15.7% having a post-school qualification. There are some caveats to the comparison with census data, however. Census data is affected by high non-response rates; approximately 12% of the population over 15 years did not answer the level of qualification question. It is likely that the census questions were less effective in recording qualifications than the NATSIS, in particular vocational qualifications. The NATSIS questions are also likely to have allowed more peripheral forms of training, such as short courses, to have been included. This is reflected in the greatly increased proportion of people in the NATSIS who were coded as *inadequately described* to level of qualification; the census figure was 0.5%, the NATSIS 4.5%.

The proportion of the total population with post-school qualifications is also expected to continue to rise as is the level of skill deepening required for those already in work. In short, the workforce as a whole is projected to become more skilled over the next decade at the expense of those in jobs at the lower end of the occupational scale. This will place an increased premium in the labour market for individuals who are qualified and multi-skilled (Commonwealth of Australia 1995c, pp. 73–92).

4.3 LABOUR FORCE STATUS BY LEVEL OF QUALIFICATION, INDIGENOUS PERSONS AGED 15 YEARS OR MORE, 1994

	Tertiary	*Vocational*	*Other*	*No qualification*	*Total*
Labour force status	%	%	%	%	%
Males					
Employed					
Non-CDEP	63.7	61.1	51.0	26.6	32.0
CDEP	*8.2	6.2	*10.3	14.1	13.0
Unemployed	*20.5	25.1	22.7	27.9	27.2
Not in the labour force	*7.6	7.5	16.1	31.4	27.7
Total persons ('000)	2.0	8.8	4.3	73.4	88.5
Females					
Employed					
Non-CDEP	54.4	41.9	38.6	17.6	21.5
CDEP	*3.5	**1.7	*6.6	6.0	5.6
Unemployed	15.6	21.2	14.7	17.2	17.3
Not in the labour force	26.4	35.2	40.2	59.2	55.6
Total persons ('000)	3.9	5.7	3.7	79.7	92.9

Note: Tertiary includes Postgraduate, Bachelor degree, and Diploma. Vocational includes Skilled and Basic vocational qualifications. Other includes Inadequately described
Source: 1994 NATSIS unpublished data.

TRAINING

A basic proposition of labour economics is that skill enhancement due to training increases an individual's prospects of securing employment. This is recognised by DEET through its training programs and is highlighted in several of the recommendations of the Royal Commission (303, 304, 305, 308, 309 and 310). According to NATSIS estimates, some 14,700 people attended a training course in the 12 months prior to the survey. This figure represented 8% of the population aged 15 years and over and was evenly divided between males and females. These data, together with labour force data from the survey, showed that persons who attended a training course were more likely to be in the labour force than those who did not attend (table 4.4). People who attended a course were also more likely to be in non-CDEP scheme employment and to be unemployed than those who did not. This was the same for men and women. It should be noted that some people may have attended a training course because they were employed, not as a precursor to employment. Those who did not attend a course were more likely to be not in the labour force.

4.4 LABOUR FORCE STATUS BY WHETHER ATTENDED A TRAINING COURSE, INDIGENOUS PERSONS AGED 15 YEARS OR MORE, 1994

	Males			*Females*		
	Attended	*Did not attend*	*Total*	*Attended*	*Did not attend*	*Total*
Labour force status	%	%	%	%	%	%
Employed						
Non-CDEP	49.0	30.4	32.0	42.2	19.8	21.5
CDEP	8.6	13.4	13.0	*3.1	5.8	5.6
Unemployed	32.0	26.7	27.2	34.2	15.9	17.3
Not in the labour force	10.5	29.4	27.7	20.5	58.4	55.6
Total persons ('000)	**7.8**	**80.8**	**88.5**	**6.9**	**86.0**	**92.9**

Note: Did not attend includes persons currently attending school.
Source: 1994 NATSIS unpublished data.

HEALTH

Given the associations that have been observed elsewhere between unemployment and ill health (Bartley 1994), it would not be surprising if poor employment outcomes for Indigenous peoples were related to their high rates of morbidity and mortality (Bhatia & Anderson 1995). With average life expectancy for Indigenous Australians estimated to be 15 to 20 years lower than for non-Indigenous Australians, there are physical limitations on prolonged and full participation in the workforce.

From a labour market perspective, it is likely that the negative effects of poor health status commence long before individuals are eligible to join the workforce, as suggested by relationships observed between the poor health status of Indigenous people and below average school performance (Lewis 1976). There is also the likelihood of less direct impacts such as the prospect that many individuals do not seek work due to responsibilities in caring for sick relatives.

The NATSIS collected information on self-reported health status and one use of this data lies in the relationship that may be established between health and employment outcomes. The survey variable selected as the most appropriate measure of health status, for this purpose, was whether an individual reported having a specified long-term medical condition. Although not all long-term conditions are likely to affect a person's employment prospects, this variable was considered to be the best proxy for the kind of health problems that would prevent a person from fully entering and participating in the workforce.

There are some limitations with the survey health status data. First, it is likely that some persons did not know they had a health condition as they had not sought treatment. In addition the survey only included a select list of conditions, these being asthma, heart problems, chest problems, diabetes, skin problems, high blood pressure, ear or hearing problems, eye problems not correctable by glasses and kidney problems.

Survey estimates revealed that the lowest rates of long-term specified health conditions occurred among youth and young adults, although even among this group problems with health were reported by at least one-quarter of respondents. To the extent that the conditions specified impinge on the ability of individuals to participate in education and training, the long-term

effects of poor health status during the period of transition from education to work are likely to be critical. As expected, beyond the 20–24 year age group, health status steadily deteriorated with as much as half the population reporting a long-term medical condition by their mid-forties. Beyond this age, rates were consistently very high and rose to above 50% of the population. The fact that female rates exceeded those for males at almost all ages was consistent with the pattern observed in other studies based on self-reported health status and reflects the greater tendency of females to seek medical diagnosis (*National Health Survey: Summary of Results* (4364.0)).

The relationship established from the survey data between poor health and employment outcomes was ambiguous (table 4.5). Rates of employment in non-CDEP scheme jobs for males and females were similar whether or not a person had a long-term health condition. Unemployment rates were also similar. CDEP scheme employment for males showed some difference with persons who did not report a health condition almost twice as likely as those who did to be in CDEP scheme employment. This was not reflected in the estimates for females, although this may be a consequence of the lower participation of women in the CDEP scheme. The percentage of people who were not in the labour force was higher for persons who had a health condition than for those who did not, although the difference was greater for men than for women.

4.5 LABOUR FORCE STATUS BY WHETHER HAS LONG TERM CONDITION, INDIGENOUS PERSONS AGED 15 YEARS OR MORE, 1994

	Males			*Females*		
	Has condition	*Does not have condition*	*Total*	*Has condition*	*Does not have condition*	*Total*
Labour force status	%	%	%	%	%	%
Employed						
Non-CDEP	30.8	32.7	32.0	20.3	22.4	21.5
CDEP	8.3	15.7	13.0	4.6	6.4	5.6
Unemployed	24.6	28.7	27.2	15.4	18.7	17.3
Not in the labour force	36.4	22.9	27.7	59.6	52.5	55.6
Total persons ('000)	**31.9**	**56.6**	**88.5**	**39.5**	**53.3**	**92.9**

Note: Total column includes not stated.
Source: 1994 NATSIS unpublished data.

ARREST

As many as 37,000 individuals, or 20% of the population of working age, indicated that they had been arrested at least once during the five-year period prior to the survey. Of these, around 21,000, or 56%, had been arrested more than once. This high level of custodial intervention is well documented having formed the core concern of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody (Commonwealth of Australia 1995a; 1995c, pp. 13–42).

The Royal Commission reported an association between custody and labour force status. The suggestion was that encounters with the juvenile and criminal justice systems, and in particular long periods of detention, can interfere with schooling (and by implication subsequent job search) and lead to a state of institutionalisation that may inhibit self-reliance and

reliability which are important in employment (Commonwealth of Australia 1991a, pp. 380–81). From a labour market perspective, failure to establish adequate education and training in the formative years as well as an early and secure foothold in the job market clearly has long-lasting consequences in terms of reduced employability.

Almost 30% of young males aged 15–19 years at the time of the survey had been arrested at least once during the previous five years, that is when they were between the ages of 10 and 19 years. Among those aged 20–24 years in the survey, as many as half had been arrested at least once. Those in the 25–29 age group had reported arrest rates almost as high. In total, the survey estimated that around 40% of Indigenous males had been arrested at least once during their years of compulsory schooling and entry to the labour force. The equivalent figure for females was 12%. Although the incidence of arrest receded after early adulthood, it nonetheless remained substantial throughout the prime working ages.

A strong relationship emerged between having been arrested and the prospect of being employed or not (table 4.6). The likelihood of being in non-CDEP scheme employment among persons who had been arrested was half that of persons who had not been arrested; unemployment among those who had been arrested was double that of those who had not.

4.6 LABOUR FORCE STATUS BY WHETHER ARRESTED, INDIGENOUS PERSONS AGED 15 YEARS OR MORE, 1994

	Males			*Females*		
	Arrested	*Not arrested*	*Total*	*Arrested*	*Not arrested*	*Total*
Labour force status	%	%	%	%	%	%
Employed						
Non-CDEP	20.7	37.4	32.0	10.3	22.8	21.5
CDEP	15.4	11.9	13.0	6.9	5.5	5.6
Unemployed	41.9	20.5	27.2	33.4	15.6	17.3
Not in the labour force	22.0	30.2	27.7	49.3	56.1	55.6
Total persons ('000)	**27.8**	**60.3**	**88.5**	**9.2**	**83.5**	**92.9**

Note: Total column includes not stated.
Source: 1994 NATSIS unpublished data.

KEY FINDINGS

The main features of this chapter were:

- As with the population in general, employment levels for Indigenous people were relatively low among youth, rose to a peak in the prime working ages and fell away in older age.
- The level of educational attainment among Indigenous adults remained substantially below the national average although the trend over time has been towards an increasing proportion of successive age groups finishing Year 12.
- Levels of educational attainment were highest in capital cities and lowest in rural areas.
- The trend towards a very gradual improvement in the post-secondary accreditation of Indigenous people has continued with 12% of the adult population holding some form of post-school qualification in 1994.
- One-quarter of Indigenous youth reported having a long-term medical condition and this incidence increased steadily with age, accounting for more than half the population over 45 years of age. The links with labour force status however were ambiguous, although this may have been due to the nature of the survey question asked.
- One-fifth of the adult population indicated that they had been arrested at least once in the five years prior to the survey and a strong relationship emerged between having been arrested and the likelihood of being not employed.

CHAPTER 5 VOLUNTARY WORK

VOLUNTARY WORK

Official measures of employment do not consider any unpaid voluntary work in which individuals may also be engaged. Evidence from case studies of Indigenous communities suggests that such informal economic activity is common among Indigenous people. However, no national estimate of the extent of this has ever been available.

This issue remains important, however, because it is claimed that the involvement of Indigenous people in the formal labour market often involves a trade-off with more culturally based *work* obligations and that this explains the preference of some Indigenous people for only a casual attachment to the labour force (Coombs 1989, p. 86; Smith 1991, pp. 21–28; Altman & Allen 1992).

The NATSIS attempted to quantify this activity by asking how many hours a week people usually spent on unpaid work. Overall almost 50,000 individuals were estimated to engage in voluntary work. This represented more than one-quarter (27%) of the adult population and was evenly distributed between males and females.

For the most part, voluntary work was conducted on a part-time basis with more than two-thirds of those engaged occupied for ten hours or less per week. This pattern of casual engagement was common to all activities.

5.1 HOURS SPENT IN VOLUNTARY WORK BY PART OF STATE, INDIGENOUS PERSONS AGED 15 YEARS OR MORE, 1994

	Males				*Females*			
	Capital city	*Other urban*	*Rural areas*	*Total*	*Capital city*	*Other urban*	*Rural areas*	*Total*
Hours of voluntary work	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Does voluntary work[1]	24.1	26.1	33.0	27.9	23.8	25.9	30.6	26.7
10 hours or less	16.0	20.6	24.8	20.8	18.2	20.8	23.4	20.9
11–34 hours	4.3	4.1	6.6	5.0	2.9	2.9	5.0	3.5
35 hours or more	*2.0	*0.6	*0.9	1.1	*1.1	1.5	*1.3	1.3
Does not do voluntary work	75.6	72.5	65.6	71.0	75.9	72.9	68.1	72.3
Total persons ('000)	**23.5**	**35.9**	**29.2**	**88.5**	**25.5**	**39.8**	**27.6**	**92.9**

[1] Includes hours not stated.
Note: Total includes not stated as to whether does voluntary work.
Source: 1994 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey unpublished data.

The single largest group of activities reported, accounting for 58% of the total, involved some form of community-based work, either for a community or sporting organisation, school or youth group, or committee (table 2.7). This was followed by hunting, fishing or gathering bush food which accounted for 23% of activities. Around 10% of the activities reported involved caring for sick or aged people.

Overall, participation was evenly divided between males and females although some gender variation was evident between activity groups. For example, females were more likely than males to be caring for sick and aged

people (59% versus 41%) as well as working at a school or youth group (62% versus 38%). Males on the other hand predominated in hunting, fishing and gathering bush food (63% versus 27%), although case studies suggest that women probably do most of the gathering. On the whole, little variation was evident in the distribution of voluntary work activities by part of State. The main exception was hunting, fishing and gathering bush foods which was primarily reported in rural areas (58%) followed by other urban areas (30%).

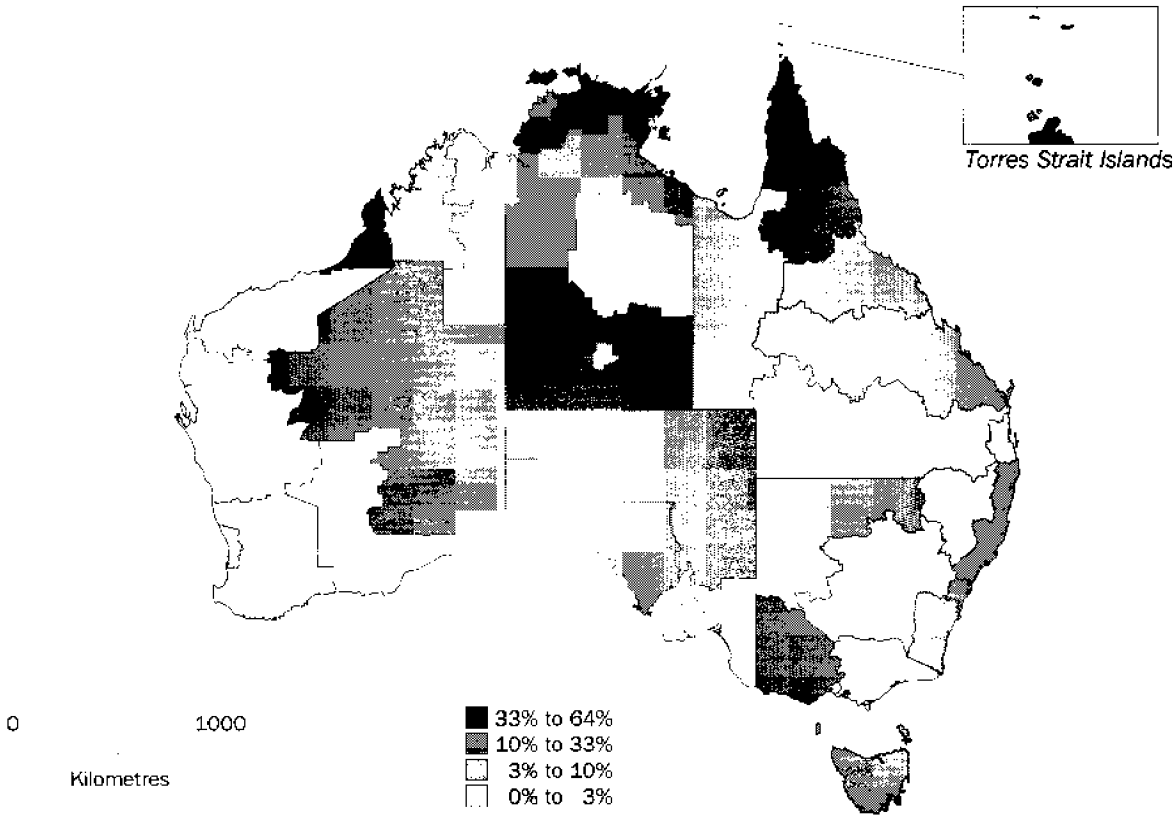
5.2 TYPE OF VOLUNTARY WORK BY PART OF STATE, INDIGENOUS PERSONS AGED 15 YEARS OR MORE, 1994

	Males				*Females*			
Type of voluntary work undertaken	*Capital city*	*Other urban*	*Rural areas*	*Total*	*Capital city*	*Other urban*	*Rural areas*	*Total*
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Caring for sick or aged people	13.6	16.4	7.5	12.3	18.7	19.6	13.7	17.4
Community or sports	47.1	36.8	27.0	35.4	39.1	32.5	21.0	30.2
School or youth group	23.4	20.0	8.3	16.2	31.5	27.3	20.5	26.0
Committee work	26.8	27.3	18.7	23.8	42.2	36.6	29.1	35.4
Hunting, fishing, gathering	33.8	36.7	69.8	49.0	*6.5	22.7	52.2	28.8
Other	11.3	7.5	*4.2	7.1	9.4	8.0	*2.5	6.5
Total persons ('000)	**5.7**	**9.4**	**9.6**	**24.7**	**6.1**	**10.3**	**8.4**	**24.8**

Note: Percentages may add to more than 100 as it was possible for a respondent to be engaged in more than one type of voluntary work.
Source: 1994 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey unpublished data.

The regional distribution of hunting, fishing and gathering bush foods is of particular interest as a national picture of such activity has hitherto been unavailable despite claims that in remote regions it forms a substantial component of the Indigenous economy (Altman & Allen 1992). Figure 5.1 reveals a highly regionalised pattern of subsistence-type activities with between one-third and two-thirds of adults engaged in hunting, and gathering in the central desert region of Aputula, the Top End of the Northern Territory, the Broome ATSIC region and the Cape York peninsula. Other concentrations were found in adjacent regions such as the Western desert, the Port Augusta and Ceduna regions of South Australia, the Katherine region of the Northern Territory and the Torres Strait Area and Cairns region in Queensland. For the most part, these are regions where large concentrations of Aboriginal land exist. Elsewhere in the country, with the exception of Western Victoria, the reported incidence of hunting, fishing and gathering bush foods was low.

5.1 HUNTING, GATHERING AND FISHING BY ATSIC REGION, PERSONS AGED 15 YEARS OR MORE, 1994



KEY FINDINGS

The main features of this chapter were:

- More than one-quarter of the Indigenous adult population was engaged in unpaid voluntary work. For the most part this was some form of community-based work, although a significant proportion were engaged in hunting, fishing and gathering bush food.
- Hunting, fishing and gathering activities were most prevalent in the central and western desert regions, the north of South Australia, the Top End and Cape York peninsula.

CHAPTER 6

FROM SCHOOL TO WORK: THE LABOUR MARKET POSITION OF INDIGENOUS YOUTH

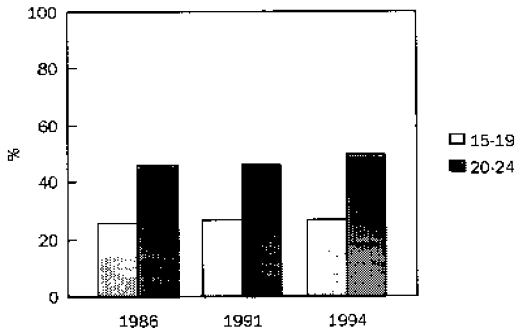
In line with the age pattern of employment outlined in Chapter 4, the subsequent analysis of labour force status in Chapters 6, 7 and 8 is based on three distinct labour market phases encompassing populations at different stages of the life cycle with different expectations and chances of employment. It also divides the working-age population into two broad groups — those over age 45, who acquired their human capital skills and entered the workforce in a policy era of partial exclusion from the mainstream; and those younger than 45 years who have been progressively subject to more inclusive contemporary employment education and training policies. In terms of assessing the prospects for employment outcomes due to current policy, it is the findings regarding the latter group that are most appropriate.

As with all young people, Indigenous youth face crucial decisions concerning their transition from school to work that may have long-lasting consequences for labour force status. Provisions for compulsory education in Australia operate between the years of 6 to approximately 15 with slight variation between the States and Territories. Consequently, beyond the age of 15 years, individuals face a decision whether to continue on at school to Year 12, whether to seek more vocational training at another institution, usually a TAFE college, whether to adopt either of these strategies as preparatory to university entrance or whether to seek employment. Increasingly, the trend in the general population is towards delay in joining the labour force as individuals both seek and require further education as a prerequisite for successful job search. One consequence of this increased premium on skills and experience in the workforce is high youth unemployment as those who fail to acquire the qualifications necessary to enter the workforce find their options for employment severely limited. Even when less-skilled youth do find work, this is increasingly in part-time employment, particularly through jobs in the services sector (Gregory 1995).

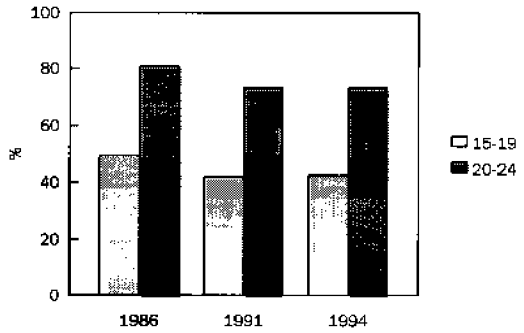
EMPLOYMENT 1986–94

Between 1986 and 1994 the employment/population ratio appears to have remained static for both Indigenous and all Australian males and females aged between 15 and 19 (figures 6.1–6.4). For 20–24 year old Indigenous males there was a slight increase in the employment/population ratio between 1991 and 1994. In contrast, over the same period, the employment/population ratio for Indigenous females aged 20–24 declined slightly. The ratio for all 20–24 year old Australian males and females was relatively stable.

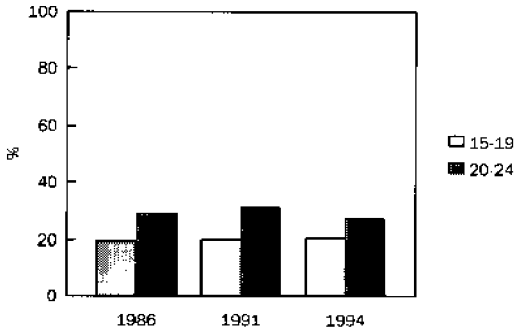
6.1 EMPLOYMENT/POPULATION RATIO, INDIGENOUS MALES AGED 15–24 YEARS, 1986–94



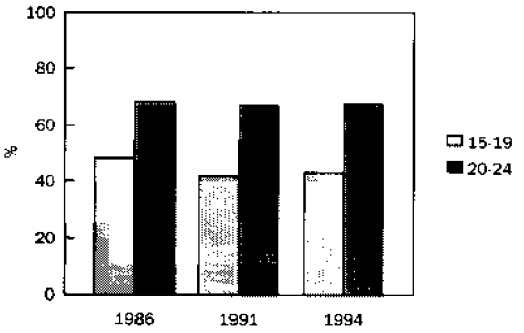
6.2 EMPLOYMENT/POPULATION RATIO, ALL MALES AGED 15–24 YEARS, 1986–94



6.3 EMPLOYMENT/POPULATION RATIO, INDIGENOUS FEMALES AGED 15–24 YEARS, 1986–94



6.4 EMPLOYMENT/POPULATION RATIO, ALL FEMALES AGED 15–24 YEARS, 1986–94



Sources for figures 6.1–6.4: Census 86: Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People (2503.0), *1991 Census Aboriginal Community Profile* (2722.0), *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey 1994: Detailed Findings* (4190.0), *The Labour Force Australia: June 1986, August 1991 and March 1994* (6203.0).

VARIATION BETWEEN 15–19 AND 20–24 YEAR OLDS IN 1994

There was considerable variation in youth labour force status by age and sex in 1994 (table 6.1). The relatively low participation rates for those in the transition years from school to work (15–19) were due to the effects of education and training delaying entry into the labour force. In the 20–24 year old age bracket, an increase in the employment/population ratio occurred as expected. This pattern was clearly evident for Indigenous male youth but not so much for females. The participation rate for 15–19 year old males was 52% while for 20–24 year old males it was 87%, the same as for all males in this age group. The employment/population ratio for Indigenous males almost doubled between the two age groups. Young females also experienced a rise in the participation rate and employment/population ratio between the two age groups but to a lesser degree than for their male counterparts. For females, the participation rate rose from 43% among 15–19 year olds to 55% for 20–24 year olds, suggesting that the impact of child rearing on the capacity of Indigenous women to participate in the labour market begins early. The degree to which this low participation rate for females reflected the influence of child rearing is explored further in Chapter 9.

Whilst the very low employment/population ratio reported for 15–19 year olds increased for older youth, this still only reached 50% for males and 27% for females. This compared with employment figures for the total Australian population of 73% for males in the 20–24 year old age group and 68% for females.

Youth unemployment was very high. At 48% for 15–19 year old Indigenous males and 43% for 20–24 year old males, youth unemployment for Indigenous males was around double that for the all Australian males in these age groups. Unemployment for Indigenous females was higher than for males across both age groups; it also declined with age but by a much smaller amount. In the 15–19 year old age group the unemployment rate for Indigenous females was double that of the total 15–19 female population; for 20–24 year old Indigenous females it was three and a half times higher than for all females.

6.1 LABOUR FORCE STATUS, PERSONS AGED 15–24 YEARS, 1994

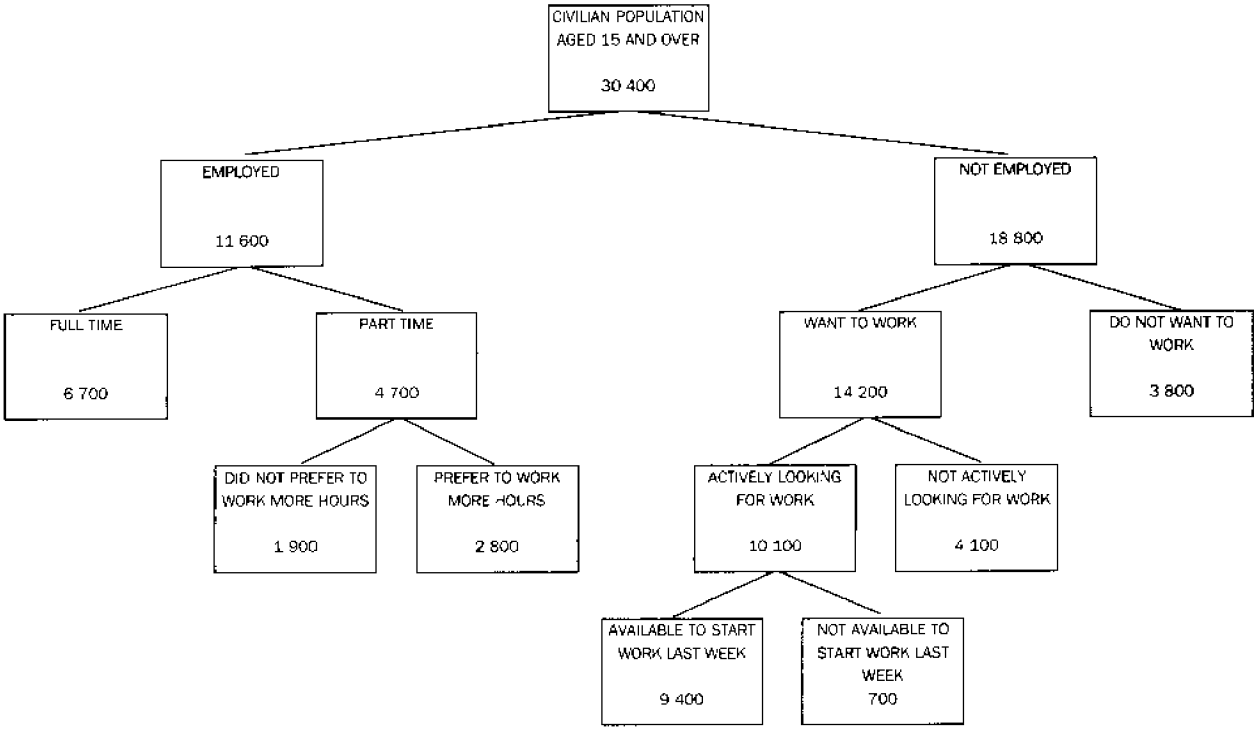
	Indigenous		*Total population*	
	15–19	*20–24*	*15–19*	*20–24*
Labour force rates	%	%	%	%
Males				
Employment/population ratio	27.1	49.7	42.5	73.3
Unemployment rate	48.0	42.7	25.9	16.4
Participation rate	51.7	87.2	57.4	87.7
Total ('000)	*15.5*	*14.9*	*655.3*	*723.4*
Females				
Employment/population ratio	20.5	27.3	42.9	67.6
Unemployment rate	52.7	50.0	26.0	14.4
Participation rate	42.9	54.9	58.0	79.0
Total ('000)	*15.1*	*15.4*	*624.1*	*709.7*

Source: National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey 1994: Detailed Findings (4190.0), *The Labour Force Australia: March 1994* (6203.0).

LABOUR FORCE CATEGORIES

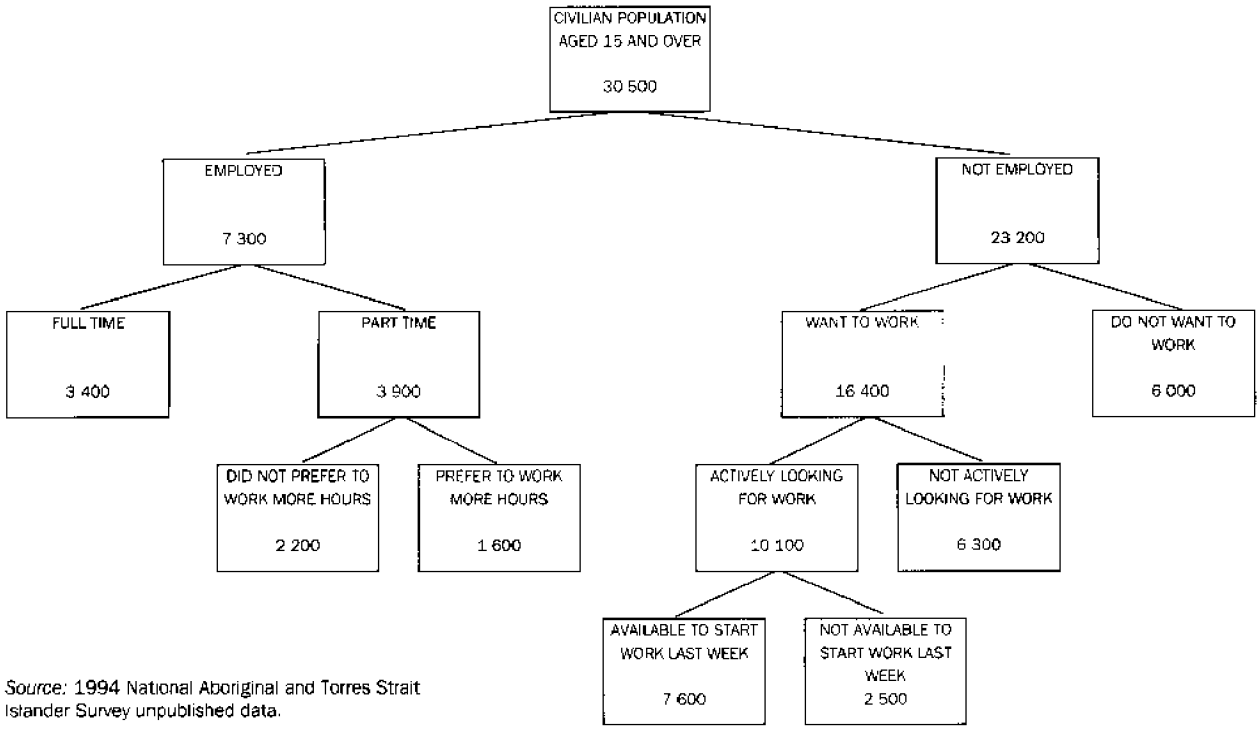
A basic divide in the labour force conceptual framework exists between persons employed and those not employed (see Appendix 1). Among the former, a distinction is drawn between those who are employed full time and those employed part time; among the latter those who want to work are distinguished from those who do not want to work. The distribution of Indigenous males and females in the 15–24 year age group across these categories in 1994 is shown in figures 6.5 and 6.6.

6.5 LABOUR FORCE CATEGORIES, INDIGENOUS MALES AGED 15–24 YEARS, 1994



Source: 1994 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey unpublished data.

6.6 LABOUR FORCE CATEGORIES, INDIGENOUS FEMALES AGED 15–24 YEARS, 1994



Source: 1994 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey unpublished data.

FULL/PART-TIME EMPLOYMENT

A large proportion of young male workers (41%) were in part-time work, although the majority were employed full time (table 6.2). This was a similar pattern to that observed for all Australian males. However, a much higher proportion of all males were in full-time work (73%) than Indigenous males (58%). Female workers displayed a quite different pattern of employment with the majority of Indigenous females in part-time work. This contrasted with the total female population, a majority of whom were in full-time employment.

6.2 FULL-TIME/PART-TIME EMPLOYMENT, PERSONS AGED 15–24 YEARS, 1994

	Males		*Females*	
	Indigenous employed 1994 NATSIS	*Total employed 1994 MLFS*	*Indigenous employed 1994 NATSIS*	*Total employed 1994 MLFS*
	%	%	%	%
Full-time	57.4	72.8	46.4	57.4
Part-time	40.8	27.2	53.2	42.6
Total employed ('000)	**11.6**	**809.3**	**7.3**	**747.9**

Note: Used March 1994 MLFS data. NATSIS totals include not stated so the percentages do not add to 100.
Source: 1994 NATSIS unpublished data, *The Labour Force Australia: March 1994* (6203.0).

NOT FULLY EMPLOYED AND PART TIMERS WHO WOULD LIKE TO WORK MORE

An additional characteristic of persons employed part time is whether they would like to work more hours or not. Part-time employed persons who would like to work more hours are referred to as *not fully employed*. Persons working part time who do not wish to work more hours are regarded as *fully employed*. It is assumed in the ABS labour force framework that persons usually employed full time are fully employed except if in the reference week of a survey the person was not at work for economic reasons. Economic reasons are such things as being stood down or placed on short-time due to insufficient work.

The NATSIS question on hours worked was phrased in terms of the number of hours *usually* worked, rather than referring to the week before the survey as a reference week. This means that it is not possible from NATSIS data to identify the group of not fully employed persons who are employed but did not work for economic reasons. This group of people is, however, quite small; for the total Australian population in September 1994, it comprised 9% of the not fully employed (*Measuring Employment and Unemployment* (6279.0)). Employed persons were asked if they would like to work more hours and thus it is possible to identify persons employed part time who would like to work more hours (i.e. the majority of the not fully employed).

Of the 4,700 young Indigenous male part-time workers, around 1,900 (40%) indicated that they did not want more hours of work (figure 6.5). The majority of male part-time workers (60%), however, would have preferred to work more hours. Interestingly, of Indigenous females employed part time the proportions were reversed, with 60% preferring not to work more hours and 40% preferring to work more (figure 6.6).

UNEMPLOYMENT

Of those males aged 15–24 years who were not in employment, half were unemployed compared to one-third of females (figures 6.5 and 6.6). It is estimated that 3,300 (or 36%) of unemployed males were long-term

unemployed whereas 50% of unemployed females were long-term unemployed.

The NATSIS also collected data on the difficulties experienced by unemployed people in obtaining a job. Much of this data has high standard errors and requires caution when being interpreted.

It appears that three factors in particular were perceived as primary obstacles to gaining employment (table 6.3). First, was the perceived absence of jobs, either being none at all, none in the local area or none suitable to a person's line of work. This was by far the main perceived difficulty in securing work in rural areas. Almost two-thirds of both male and female respondents in rural areas referred to this issue as did a large proportion in other urban areas. This suggests limited options for employment in many rural areas and country towns.

Second, a lack of education, training or skills was seen as a major constraint on successful job search, most notably in urban areas where Indigenous youth compete with other school leavers in mainstream labour markets. In rural areas, where the CDEP scheme is widely available, a lack of formal skilling is viewed as much less problematic.

Third, the simple fact of an inability to access places of work was indicated by a substantial proportion of respondents who reported transport problems as their main difficulty, particularly in capital cities. This latter finding suggests the same sort of locational disadvantage in metropolitan areas found in other studies, whereby residential areas in outlying suburbs are increasingly separated from places of work (Maher et al. 1992).

In light of these major structural barriers, it is not surprising to find that less tangible employment constraints, such as racial discrimination and ill health, were low on the list of perceived difficulties.

6.3 MAIN DIFFICULTY FINDING A JOB BY PART OF STATE, INDIGENOUS PERSONS AGED 15–24 YEARS, 1994

	Males				*Females*			
	Capital city	*Other urban*	*Rural areas*	*Total*	*Capital city*	*Other urban*	*Rural areas*	*Total*
Main difficulty	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Transport problems or too far to travel	32.3	17.1	*19.0	21.9	31.0	20.1	*21.3	24.0
No jobs at all	*6.1	18.9	30.8	18.1	*8.2	17.4	*36.4	17.3
No jobs in local area or line of work	*16.2	24.2	28.1	22.8	*8.9	13.6	*22.1	13.4
Insufficient education, training or skills	21.0	21.3	*7.3	17.8	*15.8	19.8	**3.4	15.8
Own ill health or disability	**2.5	**0.2	**0.0	**0.8	**0.0	**1.1	**0.0	**0.6
Racial discrimination	**2.1	*5.8	**0.0	*3.4	**2.5	**1.9	**7.4	*3.0
Childcare	**0.0	**0.8	**0.0	**0.4	**2.7	*6.1	**0.0	*4.0
Other difficulties	*7.5	**0.7	**0.7	*2.8	**0.6	*6.4	**0.0	*3.4
No difficulties	*11.9	*10.6	*14.0	11.8	28.1	*13.0	**8.9	17.5
Not stated	**0.0	**0.3	**0.0	**0.2	**2.2	**0.4	**0.5	*1.0
Total persons ('000)	**2.7**	**4.4**	**2.3**	**9.4**	**2.6**	**3.8**	**1.2**	**7.6**

Source: 1994 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey unpublished data.

MARGINAL ATTACHMENT

The group of persons who are not in the labour force can be further classified as *marginally attached* and *not marginally attached* to the labour force. The marginally attached are defined as those persons who are actively looking for work but are not available to start work in the previous week to the survey, or those who want to work and are not actively looking but were available to start work within four weeks. This latter group includes discouraged jobseekers (see Appendix 1 for further explanation).

The survey asked questions about whether those who wanted to work were actively looking or not. For those who were actively looking, a further question was asked as to their availability in the week prior to the survey. Thus data about this component of the marginally attached is available from the NATSIS. However there is a lack of data in the survey on whether those who want to work, but are not actively seeking employment, are available to start work within four weeks. This prevents the identification of this group of the marginally attached to the labour force and, in particular, those who may be discouraged jobseekers. Persons who indicated that they did not want to work are categorised as *not marginally attached*.

Of those males actively looking for work, 7% were not available to start in the previous week, this compared to 25% of equivalent females (figures 6.5 and 6.6). In other words, of the estimated 3,200 people who were in this sub-group of the marginally attached, 80% were female. The NATSIS also asked this group of people for the reasons they could not have started work. The small size of the resulting estimates prevent detailed analysis of this data. However some general observations can be made. Commitments to study were indicated by young males as the main explanation for being unable to start work. Among females, however, a lack of childcare arrangements was universally singled out and this together with other family commitments probably explains the predominance of female jobseekers among this subgroup of the marginally attached.

WANT TO WORK BUT NOT ACTIVELY LOOKING FOR WORK

Of those who wanted to work, the majority (71% of males and 62% females), were actively looking for work (figures 6.5 and 6.6). Persons who were not actively looking for work were asked why they were not. As to be expected with a youthful population, the primary reason given by both males and females was the fact that they were still studying or returning to further studies. This was particularly so in capital cities and even though the tendency receded in rural areas, it was still the main reason given. Presumably, this means that considerable potential exists for a large number of young people (around 5,500 individuals) to enter the labour force on completion of their studies. Results from the modelling exercise in Chapter 9 suggest that those most likely to be successful in the mainstream labour market will be the ones who go on to complete their studies and obtain Year 12 or tertiary certification. It is also suggested that they will most likely be located in capital cities and least likely to be found in rural areas. An estimated 2,000 females may be seeking work if it were not for the lack of childcare arrangements and other family responsibilities. This represents one-third of all females who wanted to work but were not actively looking for work.

6.4 MAIN REASON NOT LOOKING FOR WORK BY PART OF STATE, INDIGENOUS PERSONS AGED 15–24 YEARS NOT IN THE LABOUR FORCE WHO WANT TO WORK, 1994

	Males				*Females*			
	Capital city	*Other urban*	*Rural areas*	*Total*	*Capital city*	*Other urban*	*Rural areas*	*Total*
Main reason	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Childcare/family responsibilities	**9.2	**1.3	**0.0	**2.4	*33.4	34.6	*30.0	33.1
No jobs at all	**0.0	**5.6	*16.5	*9.3	**3.9	**2.8	*19.1	*7.3
No jobs in local area or line of work	**5.3	**5.6	*8.7	*7	**0.0	**2.6	*7.8	*3.4
Studying/returning to studies	77.1	70.9	48.7	62.2	55.8	47.1	32.2	45.2
Welfare payments may be affected	**0.0	**8.9	**0.0	**3.0	**0.0	**2.4	**0.0	**1.2
Other	**4.6	**7.7	*7.1	*6.8	**4.2	*7.0	**2.3	*5.2
No reason	**3.7	**0.0	*19.0	*9.3	**2.7	**3.5	*8.5	*4.7
Not stated	**0.0	**0.0	**0.0	**0.0	**0.0	**0.0	**0.0	**0.0
Total persons ('000)	**0.9**	**1.4**	**1.8**	**4.1**	**1.4**	**3.2**	**1.7**	**6.3**

Source: 1994 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey unpublished data.

KEY FINDINGS

The main features of this chapter were:

- The employment/population ratio for Indigenous male youth improved slightly between 1991 and 1994 while for Indigenous female youth it declined.
- Overall Indigenous youth unemployment was very high, more than twice the rate for other youth.
- The labour force status of Indigenous female youth was lower than all other groups including that of other female youth.
- One-third of unemployed Indigenous male youth were long-term unemployed while half of all unemployed Indigenous females were in this category.
- Indigenous youth were far more likely to be in part-time employment than other youth.
- Almost two-thirds of Indigenous youth who were employed part time wanted to work more hours.
- Studying or returning to further studies was the main reason given by youth for not actively seeking work although female youth also cited a lack of available childcare and other family responsibilities.

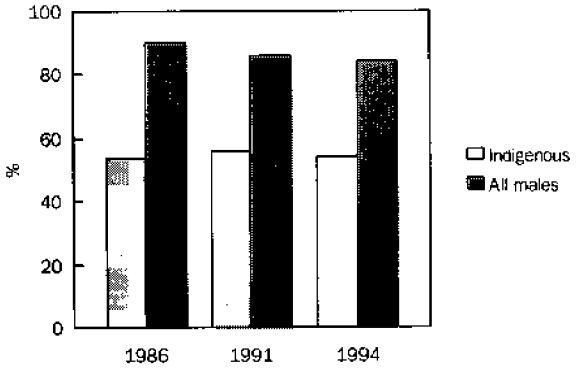
CHAPTER 7 LABOUR FORCE STATUS IN PRIME WORKING AGES

Since the early 1970s, an increasing range of government programs have been implemented towards the goal of ensuring access and equity for Indigenous Australians in the labour market. To some degree, the labour force characteristics of the prime working age group (25–44 years) represent the collective product of these efforts. This is because, on the one hand, these people have passed through years of education, training and initial entry to the workforce; while on the other, the greater effects of ill health in old age and preparation for retirement are not yet considerations.

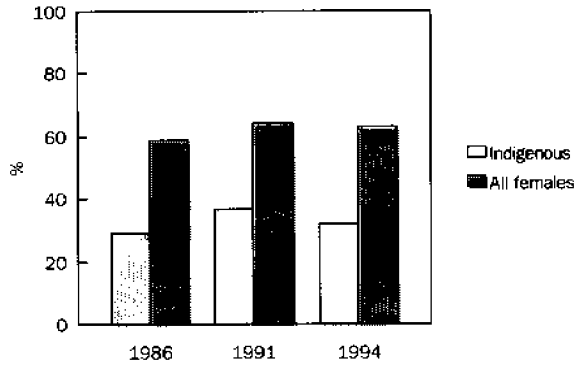
EMPLOYMENT 1986–94

Between 1986 and 1994 the employment/population ratio for Indigenous males of prime working age remained more or less steady at a time when the ratio for all males fell slightly (figure 7.1). The ratio for Indigenous females rose between 1986 and 1991, then subsequently fell between 1991 and 1994. This same pattern occurred for all Australian females, although to a lesser extent (figure 7.2).

7.1 EMPLOYMENT/POPULATION RATIO, MALES AGED 25–44 YEARS, 1986–94



7.2 EMPLOYMENT/POPULATION RATIO, FEMALES AGED 25–44 YEARS, 1986–94



Sources for figures 7.1–7.2: Census 86: Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People (2503.0), *1991 Census Aboriginal Community Profile* (2722.0), *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey 1994: Detailed Findings* (4190.0), *The Labour Force Australia: June 1986, August 1991 and March 1994* (6203.0).

According to survey estimates, less than half (42%) of the Indigenous population of prime working age had a job in 1994 while more than one-third (36%) of Indigenous people were unemployed. As in the Australian population generally, these results varied somewhat between males and females (table 7.1). Although the unemployment rate was similar

for both, male employment and participation levels were notably higher. The striking feature, however, is that Indigenous people of prime working age remained substantially behind their non-Indigenous counterparts. Variation was also evident by part of State. Indigenous males in rural areas had the highest employment/population ratio while rural unemployment rates were lowest for both males and females. This result was due largely to the availability of CDEP scheme employment in rural areas. Urban centres away from capital cities reported the highest unemployment rates for both women and men.

7.1 LABOUR FORCE STATUS, PERSONS AGED 25–44 YEARS, 1994

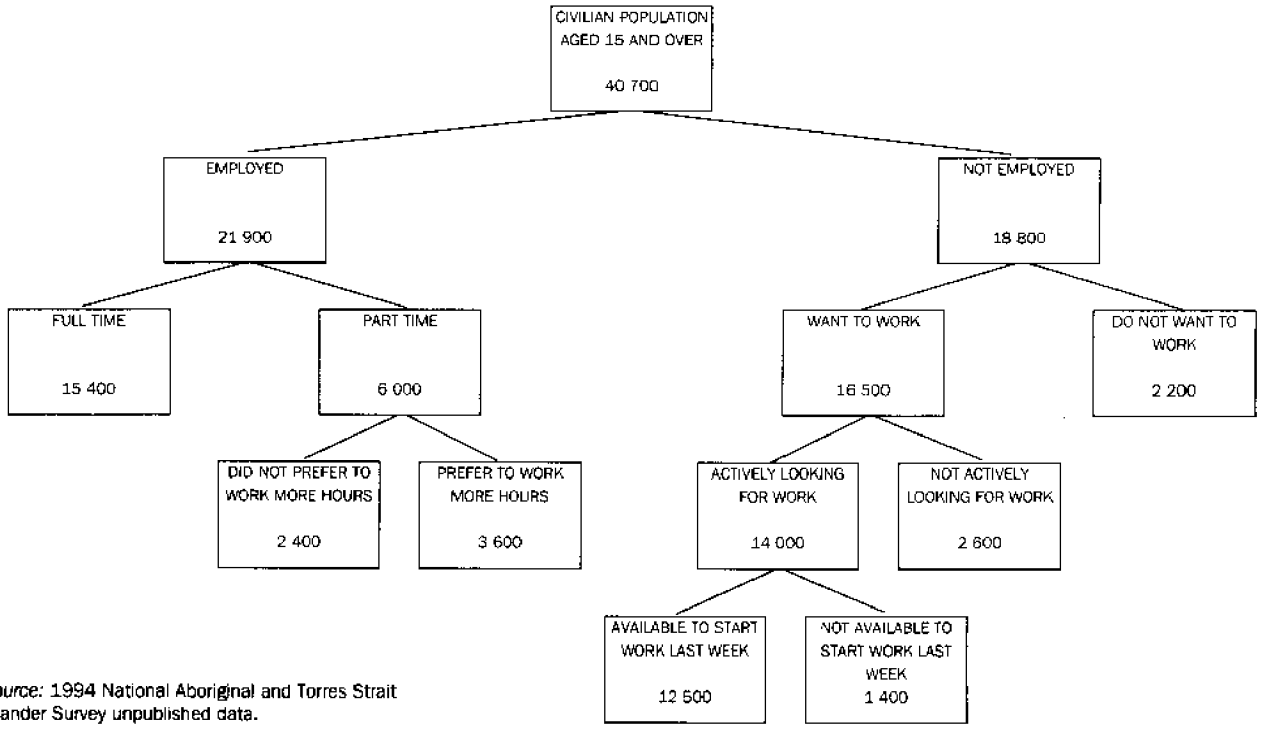
	Males		*Females*	
	Indigenous	*Total population*	*Indigenous*	*Total population*
Labour force rates	%	%	%	%
Employment/population ratio	53.8	84.2	31.7	62.9
Unemployment rate	36.4	9.2	36.2	8.4
Participation rate	84.7	92.7	49.9	68.7
Total ('000)	**40.7**	**2 723.5**	**42.9**	**2 752.0**

Source: National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey 1994: Detailed Findings (4190.0), *The Labour Force Australia: March 1994* (6203.0).

LABOUR FORCE CATEGORIES

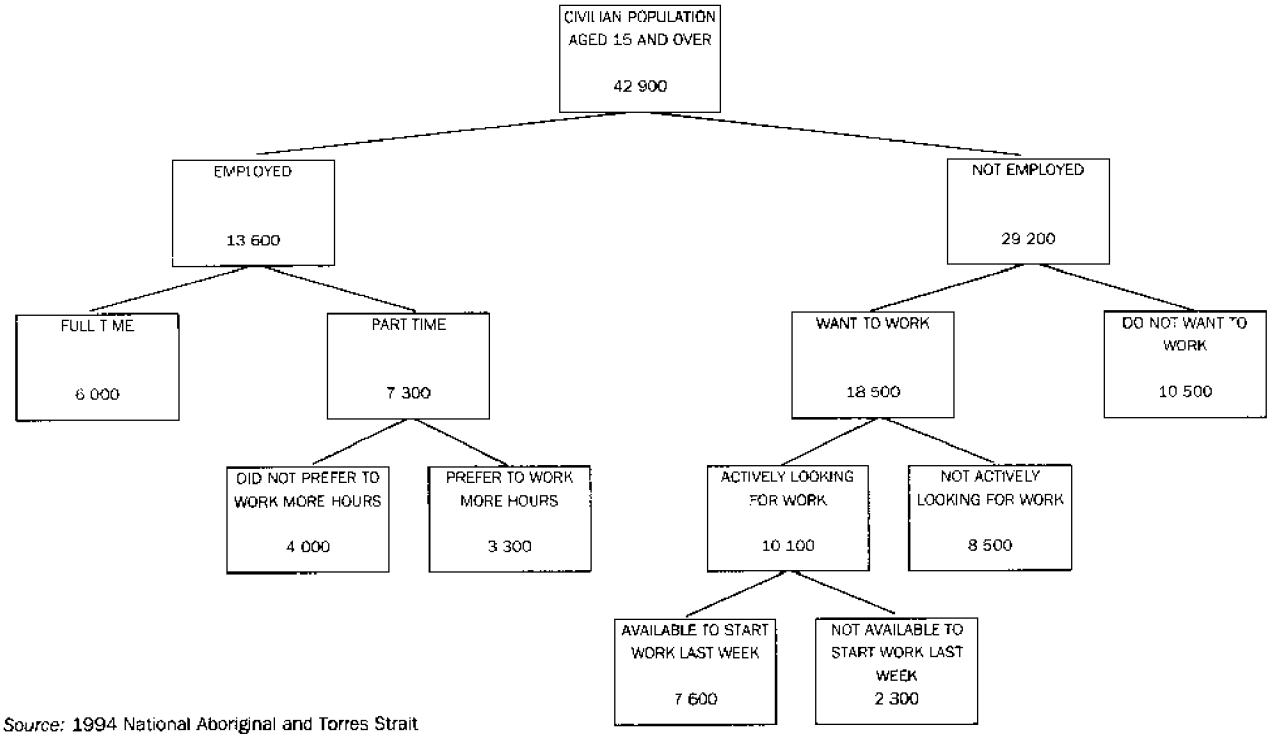
A basic divide in the labour force conceptual framework exists between persons employed and those not employed (see Appendix 1). Among the former, a distinction is drawn between those who are employed full time and those employed part time; among the latter those who want to work are distinguished from those who do not want to work. The distribution of Indigenous males and females in the 25–44 year age group across these categories in 1994 is shown in figures 7.3 and 7.4.

7.3 LABOUR FORCE CATEGORIES, INDIGENOUS MALES AGED 25–44 YEARS, 1994



Source: 1994 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey unpublished data.

7.4 LABOUR FORCE CATEGORIES, INDIGENOUS FEMALES AGED 25–44 YEARS, 1994



Source: 1994 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey unpublished data.

FULL/PART-TIME EMPLOYMENT

The proportion of Indigenous males in full-time employment (70%) was substantially higher than among younger males (table 7.2, Chapter 6). However, this was still lower than the rate recorded for all Australian males of prime working age which was 94%. Among female workers, both Indigenous and the total population, the distribution of employment by full-time and part-time work was essentially unchanged from that experienced in the youth labour market. This lack of age variation in the employment circumstances of females compared to that of males probably reflected the greater reliance of young Indigenous males on part-time work in the CDEP scheme. Nearly 40% of all employed young males were in CDEP scheme employment compared to 25% of male workers in the prime working age group. For females, participation in CDEP scheme employment also declined with age but only from around one-quarter of all jobs to one-fifth.

7.2 FULL-TIME/PART-TIME EMPLOYMENT, PERSONS AGED 25–44 YEARS, 1994

	Males		*Females*	
	Indigenous employed 1994 NATSIS	*Total employed 1994 MLFS*	*Indigenous employed 1994 NATSIS*	*Total employed 1994 MLFS*
	%	%	%	%
Full-time	70.4	94.4	43.7	59.3
Part-time	27.6	5.6	53.8	40.7
Total employed ('000)	**21.9**	**2 292.5**	**13.6**	**1 730.7**

Note: NATSIS totals include not stated so the percentages do not add to 100.
Source: 1994 NATSIS unpublished data, *The Labour Force Australia: March 1994* (6203.0).

NOT FULLY EMPLOYED AND PART TIMERS WHO WOULD LIKE TO WORK MORE

As stated in Chapter 6 and Appendix 1, the NATSIS did not collect all the required information to classify people as not fully employed. However, a subset of the not fully employed was collected; those who were employed part time and wanted to work more hours. This subset represents about 90% of the not fully employed in the general Australian population. Almost two-thirds (60%) of part-time male workers wanted to work more hours but only 45% of female part-time workers wanted more hours (figures 7.3 and 7.4). These proportions were almost unchanged from the youth age group.

UNEMPLOYMENT

Of those Indigenous males who did not have a job, two-thirds were classified as unemployed compared to only one-quarter of females (figures 7.3 and 7.4). It is estimated that 3,300 (or 36%) of unemployed males were long-term unemployed. However, 50% of unemployed females were long-term unemployed.

As with Indigenous youth, three factors in particular were perceived as the primary difficulty in gaining employment for unemployed people — lack of physical access to jobs that may be available, the simple absence of available work, and inadequate skills to compete in the labour market (table 7.3). Many of the comments made about unemployed youth in Chapter 6 in regard to these constraints also applied to the prime working age group which suggests that Indigenous people experience major structural barriers to gaining employment consistently throughout their adult lives.

Also of interest is the fact that unemployed females perceived far fewer difficulties than their male counterparts in acquiring work, especially in capital cities. While perceptions and reality may vary, of course, this greater optimism may have resulted from increases in female employment and participation in recent years (Chapter 1).

7.3 MAIN DIFFICULTY FINDING A JOB BY PART OF STATE, INDIGENOUS PERSONS AGED 25–44 YEARS, 1994

	Males				Females			
	Capital city	*Other urban*	*Rural areas*	*Total*	*Capital city*	*Other urban*	*Rural areas*	*Total*
Main difficulty	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Transport problems or too far to travel	16.8	14.1	*10.3	13.9	*12.3	12.0	**4.8	10.7
No jobs at all	*11.2	25.6	36.9	24.8	**0.9	20.9	*26.4	16.8
No jobs in local area or line of work	*12.9	15.4	23.2	16.8	**5.9	16.9	*26.3	15.9
Insufficient education, training or skills	28.0	22.9	*5.6	19.8	*16.9	21.9	**8.7	18.1
Own ill health or disability	*5.9	**1.8	**0.3	*2.5	**2.4	**0.8	**6.8	*2.4
Racial discrimination	*3.9	*5.8	*6.7	5.5	**3.9	*6.5	**1.1	*4.8
Childcare	**0.0	**0.9	**0.4	**0.6	**1.7	*4.6	**0.7	*3.1
Other difficulties	*5.9	*5.8	*6.2	5.9	**5.4	*4.2	**1.8	*4.0
No difficulties	*15.4	*7.4	*9.2	9.9	48.8	*11.2	*17.7	22.2
Not stated	**0.0	**0.3	**1.0	**0.4	**1.8	**0.8	**5.6	*2.0
Total persons ('000)	**3.2**	**6.2**	**3.2**	**12.6**	**2.0**	**4.2**	**1.5**	**7.7**

Source: 1994 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey unpublished data.

MARGINAL ATTACHMENT

Only one component group of the marginally attached was identified in the NATSIS. This comprised those persons who were actively looking for work but were not available to start work if they had been offered employment. It is estimated that 3,700 individuals were seeking work but would have been unable to start a job if one had been offered to them in the week prior to the survey. Almost two-thirds of these (62%) were female. Of those actively looking for work, only 10% of males were unavailable to start work, whereas 23% of females were unavailable (figures 7.3 and 7.4).

In contrast to younger male job-seekers, who gave commitments to study as their main reason for being unable to start work, ill health was viewed as the primary reason among males of prime working age, particularly in capital cities. This points to the possibility that the effects of deteriorating health on labour market outcomes that are commonly expected among the general population beyond the age of 55 years, may impact on the Indigenous population, and on males in particular, much earlier in the life cycle. Females, however, continued to indicate childcare as the main reason for being unavailable, especially in other urban areas. Pregnancy was also reported as a major reason for not being able to start work for females in rural areas.

WANT TO WORK BUT NOT ACTIVELY LOOKING FOR WORK

Of those persons who did not have a job but wanted to work, only 16% of males were not actively looking for work. However, nearly half (46%) of the equivalent group of females were not actively looking (figures 7.3 and 7.4). Males and females who wanted a job but who were not actively seeking work expressed quite different reasons to explain their inactivity in the labour market. For males there was also a considerable difference across part of State geography. In capital cities, a substantial proportion of males (45%) were not seeking work because they were studying. In other urban areas, study continued to be an important reason but the reason of 'no jobs at all' also became important. In rural areas the primary reasons were no jobs at all or no jobs in area/line of work. In contrast, the primary reason

given by females for not seeking work, regardless of location, was the lack of childcare support and other family responsibilities. Interestingly, concerns about reductions in welfare payments registered very low among the reasons reported by both males and females.

7.4 MAIN REASON NOT LOOKING FOR WORK BY PART OF STATE, INDIGENOUS PERSONS AGED 25–44 YEARS NOT IN THE LABOUR FORCE WHO WANT TO WORK, 1994

	Males				*Females*			
	Capital city	*Other urban*	*Rural areas*	*Total*	*Capital city*	*Other urban*	*Rural areas*	*Total*
Main reason	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Childcare/family responsibilities	**11.6	**9.3	**0.0	*7.5	62.8	67.4	53.7	62.5
No jobs at all	**0.0	*14.6	*22.9	*11.9	**4.7	*6.6	*10.0	6.9
No jobs in local area or line of work	**2.6	**7.9	*33.7	*13.2	*5.7	*3.5	*11.8	6.3
Studying/returning to studies	*44.6	*18.4	**8.3	24.6	*6.6	*6.0	*7.3	6.5
Welfare payments may be affected	**6.7	**9.2	**9.7	*8.5	**0.9	*5.4	**2.1	*3.2
Other	*31.8	*35.3	**11.5	27.5	*15.8	*9.2	*8.4	11.0
No reason	**2.8	**5.3	**13.9	*6.8	**3.4	**1.8	**5.2	*3.1
Not stated	**0.0	**0.0	**0.0	**0.0	**0.0	**0.1	**1.6	**0.5
Total persons ('000)	**0.9**	**1.0**	**0.7**	**2.6**	**2.5**	**3.8**	**2.2**	**8.5**

Source: 1994 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey unpublished data.

KEY FINDINGS

The main features of this chapter were:

- Less than half the Indigenous population of prime working age had a job in 1994 while more than one-third was unemployed.
- The highest employment/population ratio for Indigenous males of prime working age was recorded in rural areas. This was primarily due to their greater participation in the CDEP scheme.
- Non-capital city urban centres recorded the highest unemployment rates for both males and females.
- The level of full-time employment of Indigenous males of prime working age was substantially higher than among younger males. The level for females however was essentially unchanged.
- As with Indigenous youth, the proportion of males employed part time who wanted more work was notably higher than among females.
- While the unemployment rate for males and females was the same, 36% of males had been out of work for more than 12 months compared to 50% of unemployed females.
- As with Indigenous youth, lack of physical access to jobs, absence of work and inadequate skills were cited by the unemployed as the main difficulties in finding work.

- The sort of labour market outcomes due to health problems that are commonly expected among the general population beyond the age of 55 may be impacting much earlier in the life cycle of Indigenous people, particularly among males.

- Lack of available childcare and other family responsibilities were cited by females as the main reason they were not looking for work.

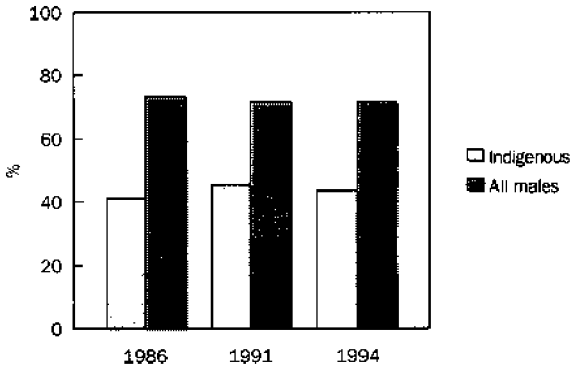
CHAPTER 8 WORK AND OLDER PEOPLE

The generation of older Indigenous Australians (45–64 years), born between 1930 and 1950, experienced their formative years under legal and policy regimes that were quite different from those impacting on the youth and prime working age cohorts examined in Chapters 6 and 7. With some variation by State, today's older people variously faced the formal labour market with restrictions placed on their movements, with limited ability to receive cash payments for work or entitlements to social security, and having had limited educational opportunity. Older Indigenous Australians also experience the greatest effects of deteriorating health status on their ability to seek, secure and maintain employment.

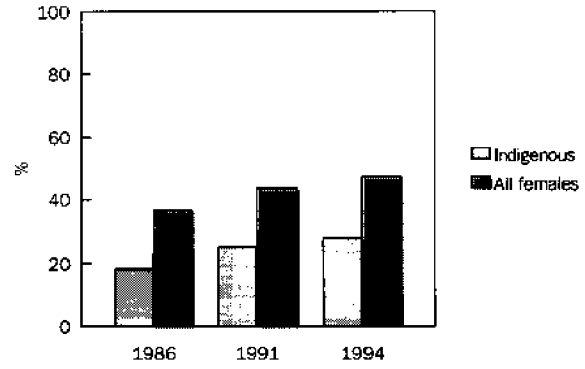
EMPLOYMENT 1986–94

The employment/population ratio for older Australian males remained stable between 1986 and 1994, although among older Indigenous males a slight decline was observed between 1991 and 1994 (figure 8.1). Ratios were consistently lower for older Indigenous males than those for all older males. A quite different trend was evident among females as the employment/population ratio increased over time for both Indigenous and all Australian females (figure 8.2). However, employment levels for Indigenous females remained consistently behind those for males as well as for non-Indigenous females.

8.1 EMPLOYMENT/POPULATION RATIO, MALES AGED 45–64 YEARS, 1986–94



8.2 EMPLOYMENT/POPULATION RATIO, FEMALES AGED 45–64 YEARS, 1986–94



Sources for figures 8.1–8.2: National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey 1994 unpublished data, *1991 Census Aboriginal Community Profile* 2722.0, 1986 Census unpublished data, *The Labour Force Australia: June 1986, August 1991, March 1994* (6203.0).

According to survey estimates, only 35% of older Indigenous people had a job in 1994. At the same time, their overall unemployment rate (21%) was much lower than for younger people, although this was set against a much reduced rate of labour force participation (45%). The same variations by sex

observed in the prime working ages persisted into older age with males displaying higher employment, unemployment and participation rates than females (table 8.1). Differences between the Indigenous and the total Australian population also persisted. However, some change was evident in the pattern of labour force status by part of State. Briefly, it seems that older people fared much better in capital cities than in other urban or rural areas, particularly in terms of lower unemployment. The key observation is the drop off in participation rate compared to the years of prime working age with some 16,000 older people (55% of the total) not in the labour force. Almost two-thirds of these were female.

8.1 LABOUR FORCE STATUS, PERSONS AGED 45–64 YEARS, 1994

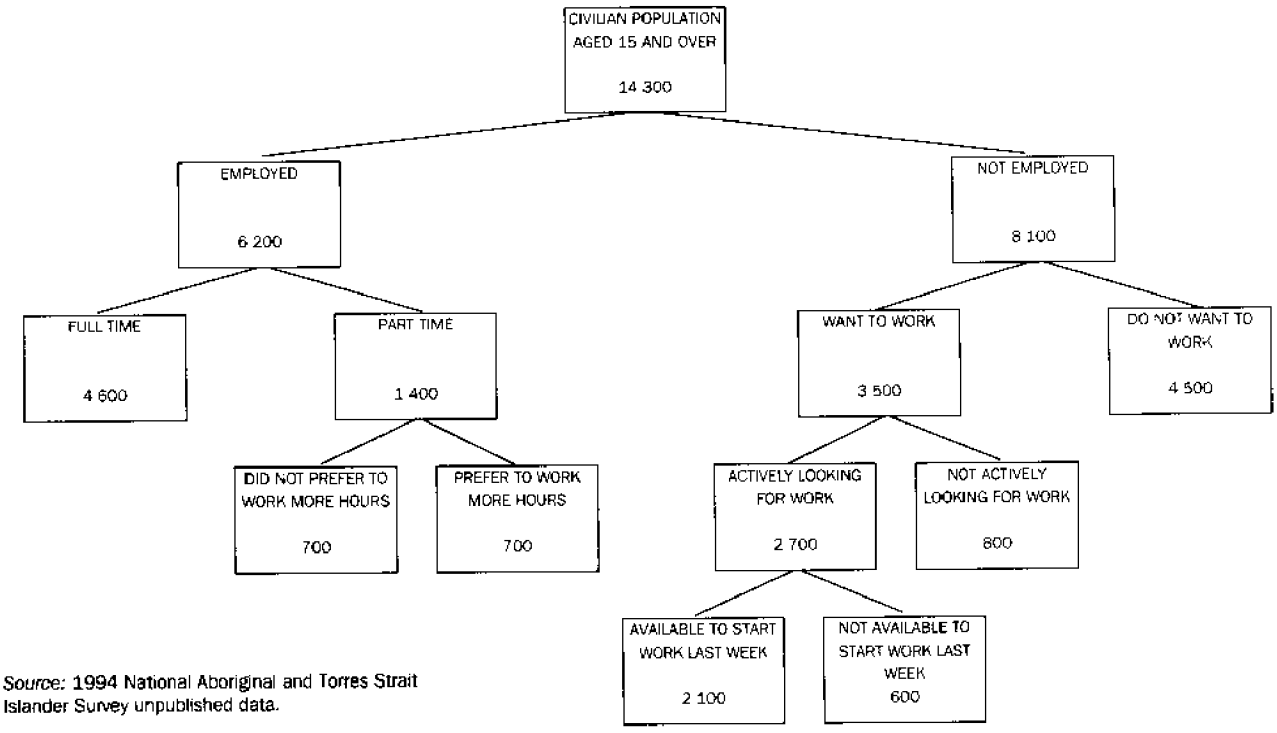
	Males		*Females*	
	Indigenous	*Total population*	*Indigenous*	*Total population*
Labour force rates	%	%	%	%
Employment/population ratio	43.5	71.5	28.1	47.3
Unemployment rate	25.4	8.7	14.2	6.0
Participation rate	58.1	78.4	32.8	50.3
Total ('000)	**14.3**	**1 826.0**	**15.1**	**1 777.0**

Source: National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey 1994 unpublished data, *The Labour Force Australia: March 1994* (6203.0).

LABOUR FORCE CATEGORIES

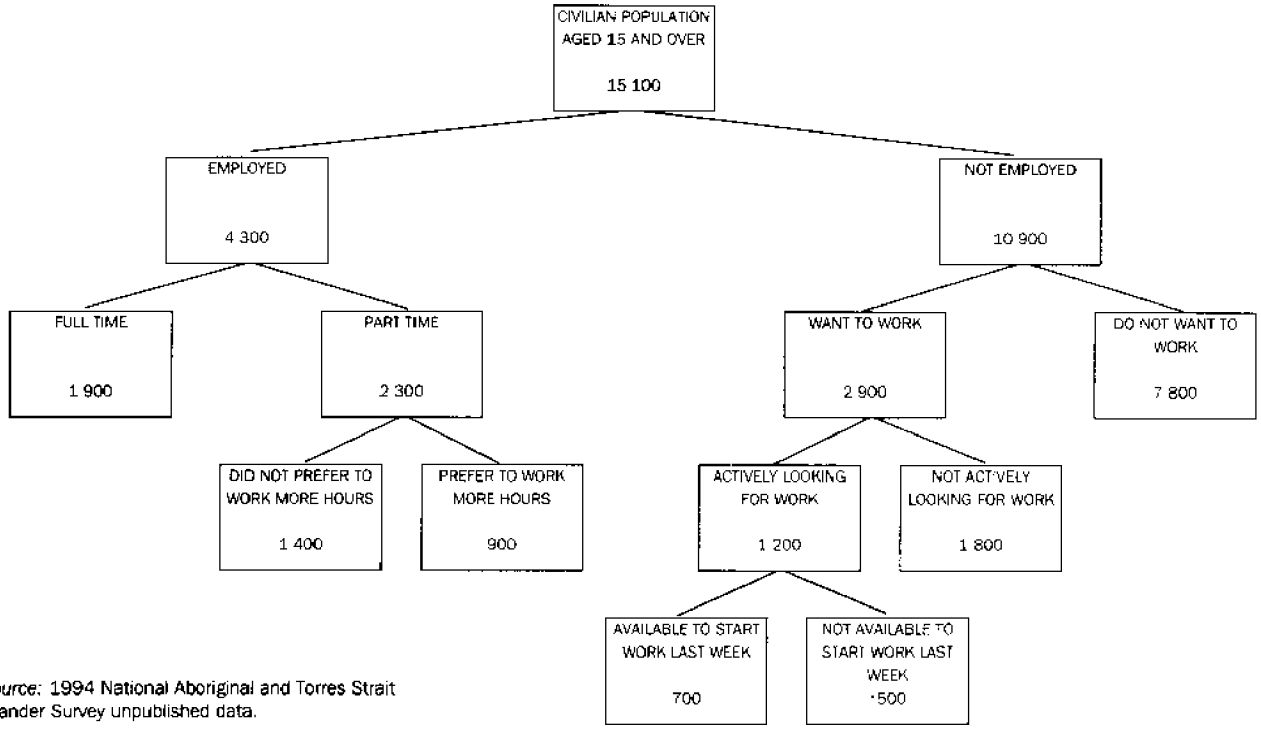
A basic divide in the labour force conceptual framework exists between persons employed and those not employed (see Appendix 1). Among the former, a distinction is drawn between those who are employed full time and those employed part time; among the latter those who want to work are distinguished from those who do not want to work. The distribution of Indigenous males and females in the 45–64 year age group across these categories in 1994 is shown in figures 8.3 and 8.4.

8.3 LABOUR FORCE CATEGORIES, INDIGENOUS MALES AGED 45–64 YEARS, 1994



Source: 1994 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey unpublished data.

8.4 LABOUR FORCE CATEGORIES, INDIGENOUS FEMALES AGED 45–64 YEARS, 1994



Source: 1994 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey unpublished data.

FULL/PART-TIME EMPLOYMENT

The proportion of male workers in full-time employment (74%) was substantially higher than among younger males as discussed in Chapters 6 and 7 (table 8.2). Among female workers the distribution of employment by full-time and part-time work was essentially unchanged from that experienced at younger ages with more than half in part-time work (54%).

8.2 FULL-TIME/PART-TIME EMPLOYMENT PERSONS AGED 45–64 YEARS, 1994

	Males		*Females*	
	Indigenous employed	*Total employed*	*Indigenous employed*	*Total employed*
	1994 NATSIS	*1994 MLFS*	*1994 NATSIS*	*1994 MLFS*
	%	%	%	%
Full-time	73.9	92.2	45.6	55.9
Part-time	22.4	7.8	53.8	44.1
Total employed '000	**6.2**	**1 306.0**	**4.3**	**840.0**

Note: NATSIS totals include not stated so the percentages do not add to 100.
Source: 1994 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey unpublished data, *The Labour Force Australia: March 1994* (6203.0).

NOT FULLY EMPLOYED AND PART TIMERS WHO WOULD LIKE TO WORK MORE

The proportion of part-time workers who wanted to work more hours was lower in the older age group than for the prime or youth age groups. In line with previous age groups, the majority of part-time workers were female and the majority of these females did not want to work more hours (61%). By comparison, male part-time workers were evenly split between wanting more hours and not wanting more hours (figures 8.3 and 8.4).

UNEMPLOYMENT

Of older males who did not have a job, one-quarter were classified as unemployed whereas less than one in ten females not in employment were unemployed (figures 8.3 and 8.4). These estimates showed a large decrease compared to younger age groups largely due to reduced participation in the labour force. It was estimated that 1,300 (or 60%) of unemployed males were long-term unemployed. However, 47% of unemployed females were long-term unemployed.

Data for the older age group is affected by high standard errors and small estimates. This compromises detailed analysis of the difficulties experienced by older people in finding a job. However, in general for both males and females the main difficulty in finding a job appears to have been the absence of work. Persons who reported no jobs at all or no jobs in local area/line of work accounted for half of those in the older age group who were unemployed.

MARGINAL ATTACHMENT

Only one component group of the marginally attached was identified in the NATSIS. These were those persons who are actively looking for work but were not available to start work if they had been offered employment. It is estimated that 1,100 individuals were seeking work but were unable to start (figures 8.3 and 8.4). Of those actively looking for work, 22% of males were unavailable to start work, whereas 40% of females were unavailable. This was an increase for both males and females from the prime working age group. The most prevalent reason given for being unavailable to start work, by those actively seeking work, was ill health.

WANT TO WORK BUT NOT ACTIVELY LOOKING FOR WORK

In contrast to younger age groups, a majority of both males (56%) and females (72%) who were not employed did not want to work. Of those who wanted to work, 80% of males were actively looking but only 40% of females were looking for work (figures 8.3 and 8.4). Unfortunately, small estimates prevent firm conclusions being drawn about the reasons given for not actively looking for work by those who wanted to work. In any case, more than a third of the reasons given by respondents were coded as *other*. Childcare and the lack of jobs continued to be important issues but a concern about the effects of working on welfare payments appeared which was not evident among younger age groups.

HEALTH AND OLDER PEOPLE

The main labour force characteristics of older people were low rates of unemployment, a tapering off of employment/population ratios and very low participation rates. Part of the explanation for very low participation rates may be found in deteriorating health status. To the extent that a reported long-term health condition was a useful indicator of health status, it appears that poor health had an important relationship with labour force status (table 8.3). The proportion of Indigenous people with a reported long-term health condition increased steadily with age and the proportion of those with a health condition who were not in the labour force also increased in the older age group. At the same time, older people without a long-term health condition were almost as likely to be in the labour force as their younger counterparts. Older people without a health condition were far more likely than those with a health condition to be employed and less likely to be unemployed or not in the labour force.

8.3 LABOUR FORCE STATUS BY WHETHER HAS LONG-TERM CONDITION, INDIGENOUS PERSONS AGED 15–64 YEARS, 1994

	Males			*Females*		
	Has condition	*Does not have condition*	*Total*	*Has condition*	*Does not have condition*	*Total*
Labour force status	%	%	%	%	%	%
15–24 years						
Employed						
Non-CDEP	19.0	25.0	23.6	18.7	17.4	17.8
CDEP	11.9	15.3	14.6	5.2	6.6	6.1
Unemployed	44.5	26.8	30.9	24.6	25.2	25.0
Not in the labour force	24.5	32.9	30.9	51.5	50.8	51.0
Total 15–24 ('000)	*7.0*	*23.3*	*30.4*	*9.4*	*21.1*	*30.5*
25–44 years						
Employed						
Non-CDEP	41.0	39.0	39.7	26.7	25.4	26.0
CDEP	9.9	16.3	14.1	4.9	6.5	5.8
Unemployed	26.3	33.2	30.8	19.5	17.1	18.1
Not in the labour force	22.7	11.4	15.3	48.8	51.0	50.1
Total 25–44 ('000)	*14.0*	*26.6*	*40.7*	*17.4*	*25.5*	*42.9*
45–64 years						
Employed						
Non-CDEP	31.2	39.4	34.4	17.4	30.9	22.4
CDEP	4.6	15.9	9.1	5.3	6.6	5.7
Unemployed	11.8	19.3	14.8	*4.3	*5.3	4.6
Not in the labour force	52.4	25.3	41.7	73.0	57.2	67.2
Total 45–64 ('000)	*8.5*	*5.8*	*14.3*	*9.3*	*5.7*	*15.1*

Note: Column total includes not stated.
Source: 1994 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey unpublished data.

KEY FINDINGS

The main features of this chapter were:

- The employment/population ratio for older Indigenous males showed some sign of recent decline whereas for older females it has steadily risen.
- The labour force participation rate of older Indigenous males and females was substantially lower than in the prime working ages with 55% of older people not in the labour force.
- Survey estimates of unemployment among older people revealed a large decrease compared to younger age groups, however this must be viewed against much lower participation rates.
- The most prevalent reason given for being unavailable to start work by those older people actively seeking work, was ill health.
- Part of the explanation for low participation rates among older people was to be found in their high levels of reported long-term health conditions.
- Older people with a long-term health condition were far less likely than their younger counterparts to be in the labour force.

CHAPTER 9 THE PREDICTORS OF INDIGENOUS EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES

Earlier chapters have demonstrated that issues relating to demography, geography, education and social factors have a bearing on Indigenous employment. The limitations of the earlier analysis based on the cross tabulation format meant that it was only possible to examine one or two factors in relation to employment at once. However, it is possible to examine simultaneously many of the factors associated with employment amongst Indigenous people by using a statistical procedure known as regression. This chapter presents results from a regression analysis of 1994 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey data.

REGRESSION

A regression analysis allows us to quantify the effect that a factor has on an outcome of interest, in this case, employment. It also allows us to examine the effect of the factor on the outcome after adjusting for many other factors which may play a role. For example, one could assess whether the experience of arrest in the previous five years is associated with the chance of employment after controlling for the influences of education, training, location and demography. More details of the analysis can be found in Appendix 2.

ADJUSTED AND UNADJUSTED ESTIMATES

An unadjusted estimate measures the direct effect of one factor on the chance of being in employment without taking into account any other factor. This is similar to the use of tables and graphs in previous chapters to demonstrate the relative advantage or disadvantage of one group compared to another. An adjusted estimate does take into account other variables and measures the effect of the factor of interest on employment after removing the effects of these other variables. So, for instance, an unadjusted estimate for arrest would simply compare the employment status of those who had been arrested with those who had not. An adjusted estimate for arrest would control for the effects of age, sex, geographic location and other variables which are included in the regression so that the effect of these other variables was removed. If the adjusted estimate is bigger than the unadjusted estimate, then the impact of the factor is greater after taking into account other factors. If it is less, then some of the influence of the factor is explained by other factors. Figures 9.1–9.16 display adjusted estimates of the magnitude of the effects of several factors on employment.

EXPLANATORY FACTORS

Variables for the analysis were selected based on suggested relationships in previous chapters and in previous research (e.g. Daly 1995; Taylor 1993b). These are listed in table 9.1. Men and women have been examined separately due to the major differences by sex seen in earlier chapters. There are two indicators of the influence of a factor on an outcome. Factors may be discussed in terms of both strength (strong or weak effect on employment) and direction (positive or negative effect).

CDEP SCHEME AND NON-CDEP SCHEME EMPLOYMENT

It is also important to distinguish employment in the CDEP scheme from other employment, given that the processes which determine whether an Indigenous person is in CDEP scheme employment are likely to be substantially different to the processes for other employment. For example, CDEP scheme employment is dependent upon whether or not the CDEP scheme is available in the local community.

An additional set of regression analyses was done after excluding people in CDEP scheme employment, to analyse the chances of being in non-CDEP scheme employment (rather than any employment). That is, people employed in non-CDEP scheme jobs were compared to people who were unemployed or not in the labour force. Results of this analysis are referred to in the following sections, and more details are provided in Appendix 2.

9.1 FACTORS ASSESSED IN RELATION TO EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLE AGED 15–64 YEARS, 1994

Factor	*Characteristics*	*Comments*
Age	15–24 years 25–44 years 45–64 years	Basic age groups, to capture possible life cycle effects.
Number of children	None One Two or three Four or more	Having dependent children may place the primary caregiver outside the labour force. Conversely, children may also act as an impetus for the primary caregiver to seek work.
Part of State	Capital city Other urban area Rural area (<1000 people)	Division according to settlement size.
Distance to TAFE	Whether more than 100 kms from the nearest TAFE	Measure of being very remote and of differences in regional infrastructure.
Highest year of school completed	No education Below Year 6 Years 6–9 Year 10 Year 12	Education and training are considered to be major factors in the possibility of employment.
Qualifications	No qualification Basic or skilled vocational Diploma, degree or postgraduate Any other qualification	Qualifications and training taken together represent the impact of post-school training.
Training	Whether undertook a training course in previous 12 months	See comment above.
Proficiency in English	Whether has difficulty communicating in English	Measure of potential disadvantage.
Social factors	Whether arrested in previous five years Whether reported a long term health condition	Possible influences on chance of employment.

REFERENCE PERSON

The simplest way of summarising the relationship of various factors on employment from the regression results is to examine what happens to the chance of employment for groups of Indigenous people with different characteristics. These changes in the chance of employment are best measured relative to a hypothetical reference person. The characteristics of the reference person chosen for this purpose are as follows:

- aged between 25 and 44 years of age;
- resided in a capital city;
- completed Year 10;
- did not have children;
- did not have a post-school qualification;
- had not completed a training course in the last 12 months;
- did not have difficulty communicating in English;
- lived within 100 km of a TAFE college; and
- had not been arrested in the last five years.

The reference person may not exist in reality but is created to provide a convenient way to summarise the regression results. In the graphs presented below, one factor is changed at a time to show the changes in the probability of employment that come about with a change in one characteristic of the reference person. The other characteristics of the reference person are held constant. So, for example, the probability of employment for males in each of the three age groups below are for those in capital cities who completed Year 10, had no children, and so on.

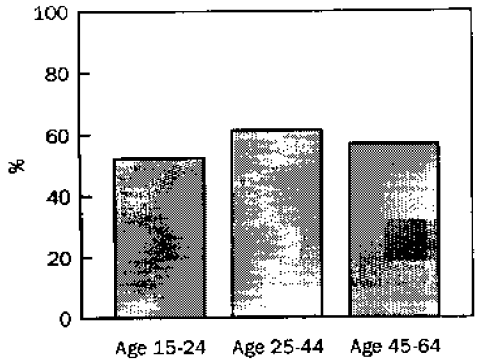
It is important to note that the reference person does *not* necessarily reflect an average person's chance of being employed. In fact, the characteristics of the reference person may make him/her more likely to be employed. For the male reference person, the estimated chance of being employed was approximately 61%, which was much higher than the overall proportion of Indigenous men aged 15–64 years who had a job (45%). Similarly, only 28% of Indigenous women aged 15–64 had a job, but the reference woman had about a 47% chance of having a job. Thus, in looking at the figures below, the focus should be on the relative differences between groups, rather than on magnitude of the estimated probabilities.

AGE

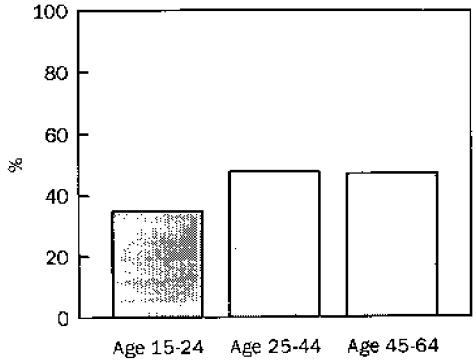
As demonstrated in Chapter 6, 15–24 year old males were less likely to be in employment than 25–44 year olds, but much of this difference was explained by factors other than age (figure 9.1). Much of the apparent lowering of employment prospects in the 45–64 age group seen in Chapter 8 was also explained by other factors.

For women, the lower chance of being employed for 15–24 year olds remained after adjustment (figure 9.2), suggesting that the employment situation was worse in relative terms for young women than for young men. The position of older women however was virtually the same as that for 25–44 year olds after consideration of factors other than age.

9.1 EMPLOYMENT CHANCES BY AGE, MALES, 1994



9.2 EMPLOYMENT CHANCES BY AGE, FEMALES, 1994

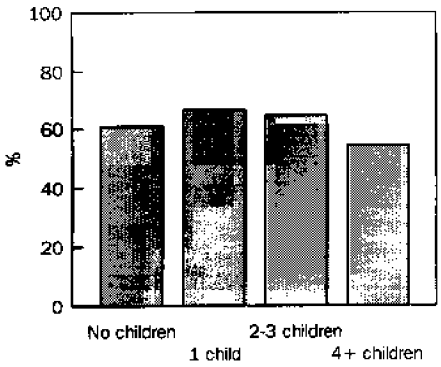


NUMBER OF CHILDREN

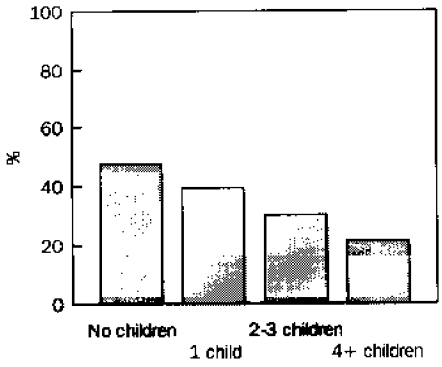
Men who had 1–3 children had a marginally higher chance of being employed than those with none (figure 9.3). However if they had 4 or more children the chances of their being employed decreased.

The impact of children on women's employment prospects was much more dramatic. Having any children reduced women's chances of employment (figure 9.4). This reduction in the chance of employment increased with the number of children. The chances of employment for women with no children began to approach the level for men.

9.3 EMPLOYMENT CHANCES BY NUMBER OF CHILDREN, MALES, 1994



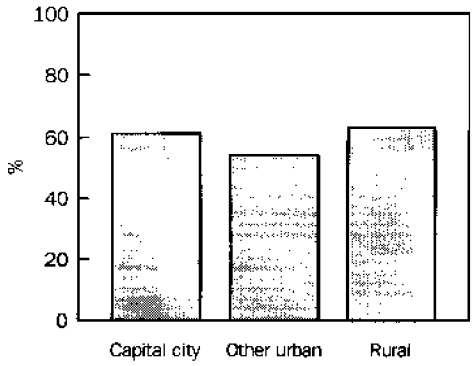
9.4 EMPLOYMENT CHANCES BY NUMBER OF CHILDREN, FEMALES, 1994



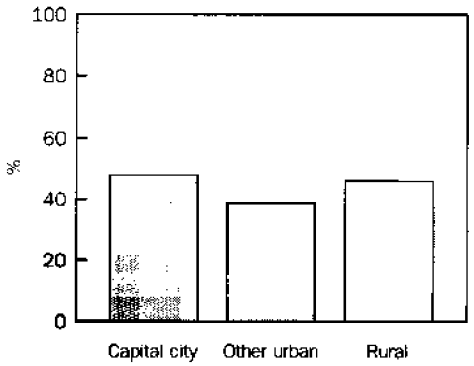
LOCATION

The likelihood of employment in rural areas was about the same as in capital cities for both men and women (figures 9.5 and 9.6); however these results are almost completely explained by the greater presence of CDEP scheme employment in rural areas. (See Appendix 2 for more details.) Persons in other urban areas were less likely to be in employment than those elsewhere. A distance to TAFE of 100 km or more also increased the chance of employment (see figures 8.17 and 8.18). Distance to TAFE is a measure of remoteness and again this somewhat surprising result is explained by the availability of CDEP scheme employment in very remote areas.

9.5 EMPLOYMENT CHANCES BY LOCATION, MALES, 1994



9.6 EMPLOYMENT CHANCES BY LOCATION, FEMALES, 1994



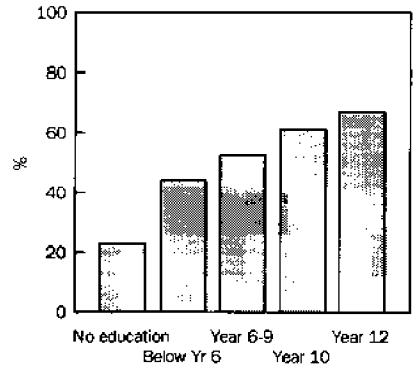
EDUCATION

A complete lack of formal education was the single biggest predictor of a lowered chance of employment for Indigenous people. Persons without education were many times less likely to be in employment than someone who completed Year 10 (i.e. the reference person). The decreased chance of employment for those with no formal education was even more pronounced for non-CDEP scheme jobs.

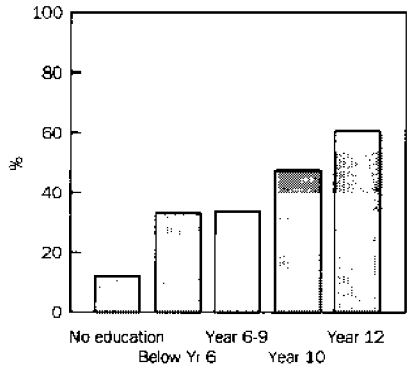
Educational attainment below the level of Year 10 also reduced the chances of employment for men and women but to a lesser extent than no education. Completion of Year 12 increased the likelihood of employment over Year 10 education, but this was more pronounced for women than men.

Overall, after removing the effects of other variables, including age, there was a clear underlying trend of increasing employment with increasing level of educational attainment (figures 9.7 and 9.8)

9.7 EMPLOYMENT CHANCES BY EDUCATION, MALES, 1994



9.8 EMPLOYMENT CHANCES BY EDUCATION, FEMALES, 1994

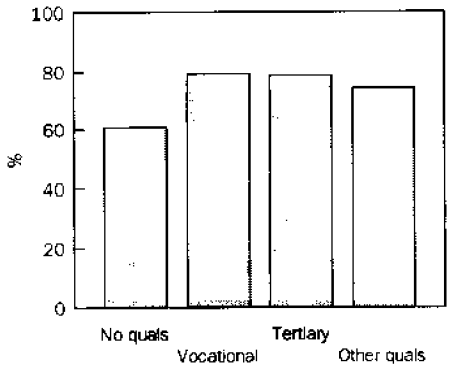


QUALIFICATIONS

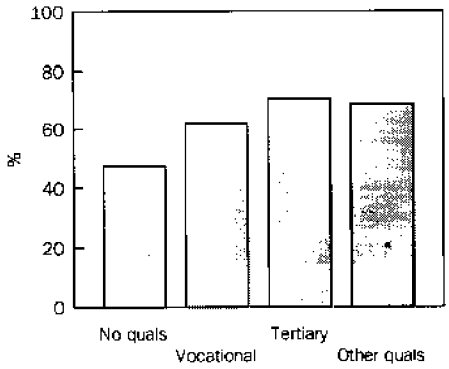
Any kind of post-school qualification improved the chance of employment for both men and women over and above the level of schooling completed (figures 9.9 and 9.10). Overall, even after adjustment, not having a qualification approximately doubled the chances of being without employment. Having a tertiary qualification increased the chance of employment more than having a vocational qualification for women but there was little difference across types of qualifications for men.

Having attended a recent training course also increased the chance of employment for both men and women, although to a lesser extent than having completed a qualification (see figures 9.17 and 9.18). It should be noted however, that some people may have been attending a training course as a consequence of being in a job and not the other way around.

9.9 EMPLOYMENT CHANCES BY QUALIFICATIONS, MALES, 1994



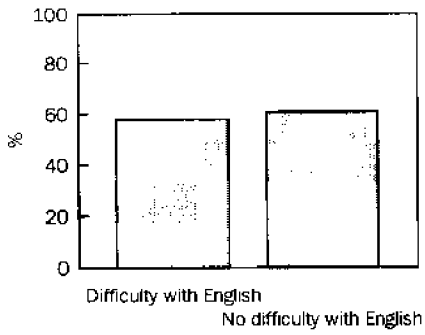
9.10 EMPLOYMENT CHANCES BY QUALIFICATIONS, FEMALES, 1994



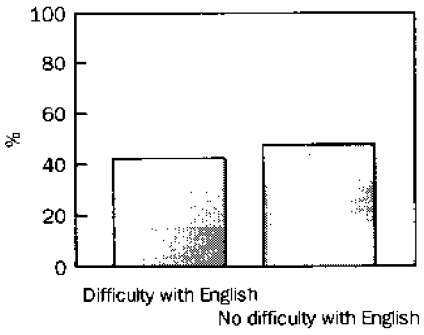
DIFFICULTY WITH ENGLISH

Difficulty with English had virtually no effect on employment prospects (figures 9.11 and 9.12). However, difficulty with English was somewhat more important for non-CDEP scheme employment (see appendix table A2.2).

9.11 EMPLOYMENT CHANCES BY DIFFICULTY WITH ENGLISH, MALES, 1994



9.12 EMPLOYMENT CHANCES BY DIFFICULTY WITH ENGLISH, FEMALES, 1994

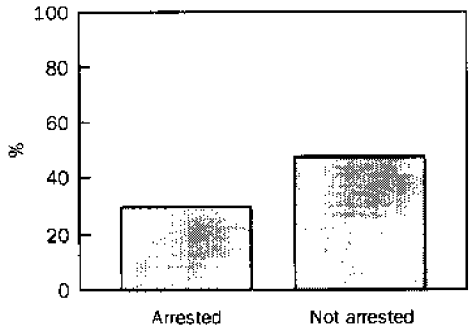


ARREST

Removing the effects of other variables revealed that people who had not been arrested in the last five years were half again as likely to be in employment compared with those who said they had been arrested, and the relationship was similar for men and women (figures 9.13 and 9.14). The decrease in the chance of employment for those who had been arrested was slightly larger for non-CDEP scheme employment (see appendix table A2.2).

9.13 EMPLOYMENT CHANCES BY ARREST, MALES, 1994

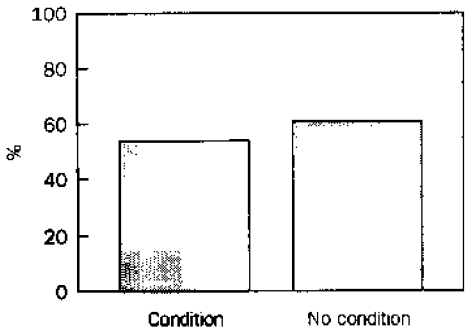
9.14 EMPLOYMENT CHANCES BY ARREST, FEMALES, 1994



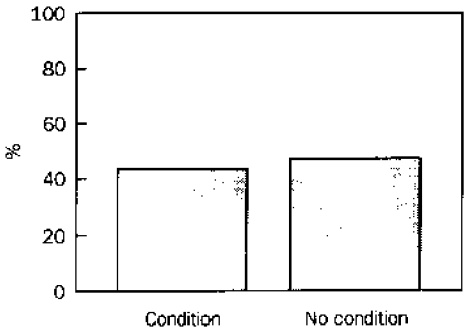
LONG-TERM CONDITION

Reporting a long-term health condition was associated with a slightly reduced chance of employment for men (figure 9.15) and women (figure 9.16) but this was not statistically significant for women. Whilst the absence of a major health effect may seem surprising, it is in part due to the nature of the survey. The range of long-term conditions asked about includes conditions which would not necessarily affect a person's chances of employment. In addition, long-term health condition is a self-reported variable which relies on respondents' knowledge of their own health status plus their willingness to report any known conditions.

9.15 EMPLOYMENT CHANCES BY REPORTED LONG-TERM CONDITION, MALES, 1994



9.16 EMPLOYMENT CHANCES BY REPORTED LONG-TERM CONDITION, FEMALES, 1994



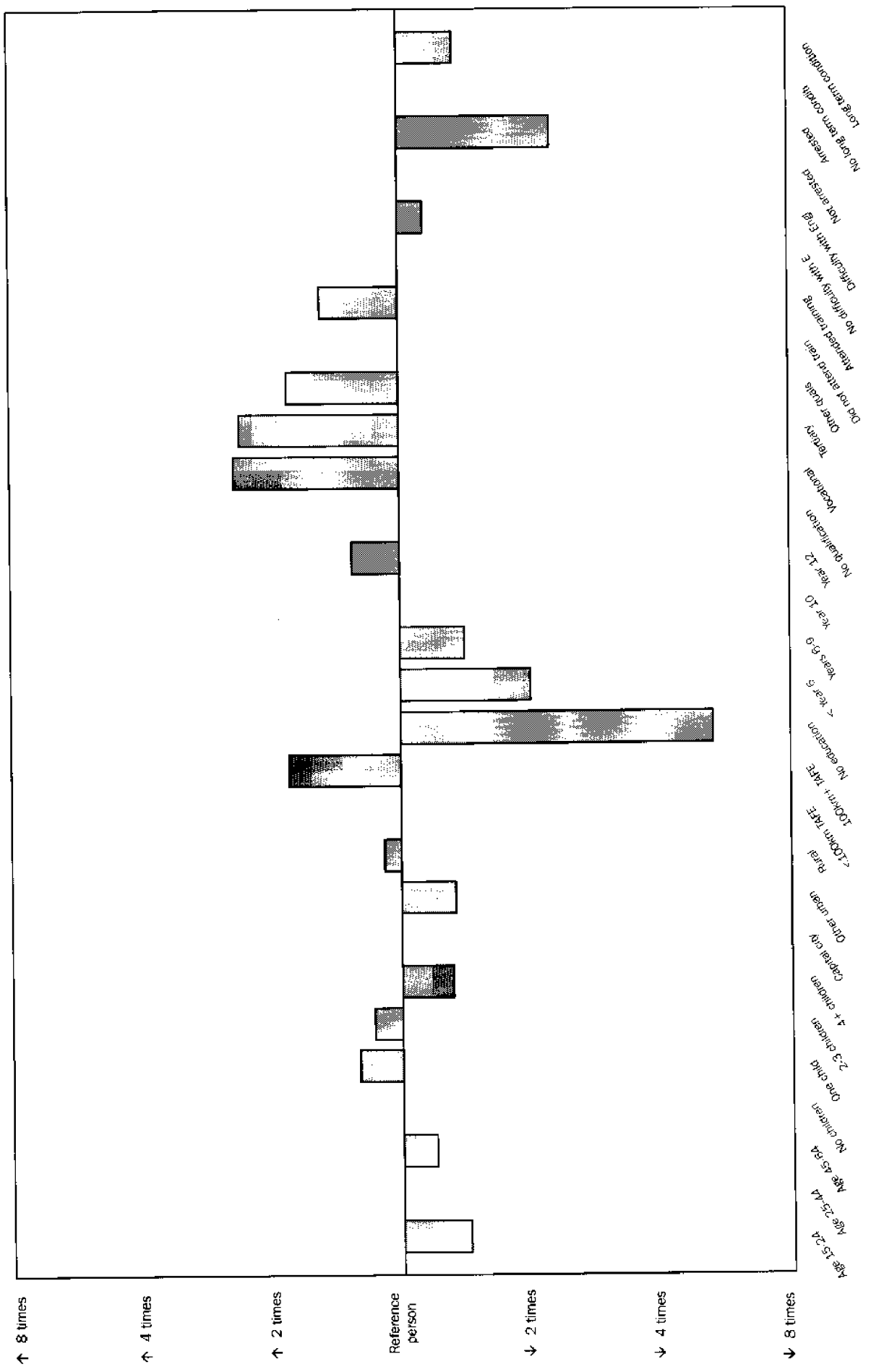
LOOKING AT ALL THE FACTORS TOGETHER

In the discussion above, changes in characteristics were examined one at a time, and their impact on chances of employment displayed in the figures. It is possible, however, to look at the effects on employment of all the factors of interest simultaneously, and figures 9.17 and 9.18 below show this, separately for men and women.

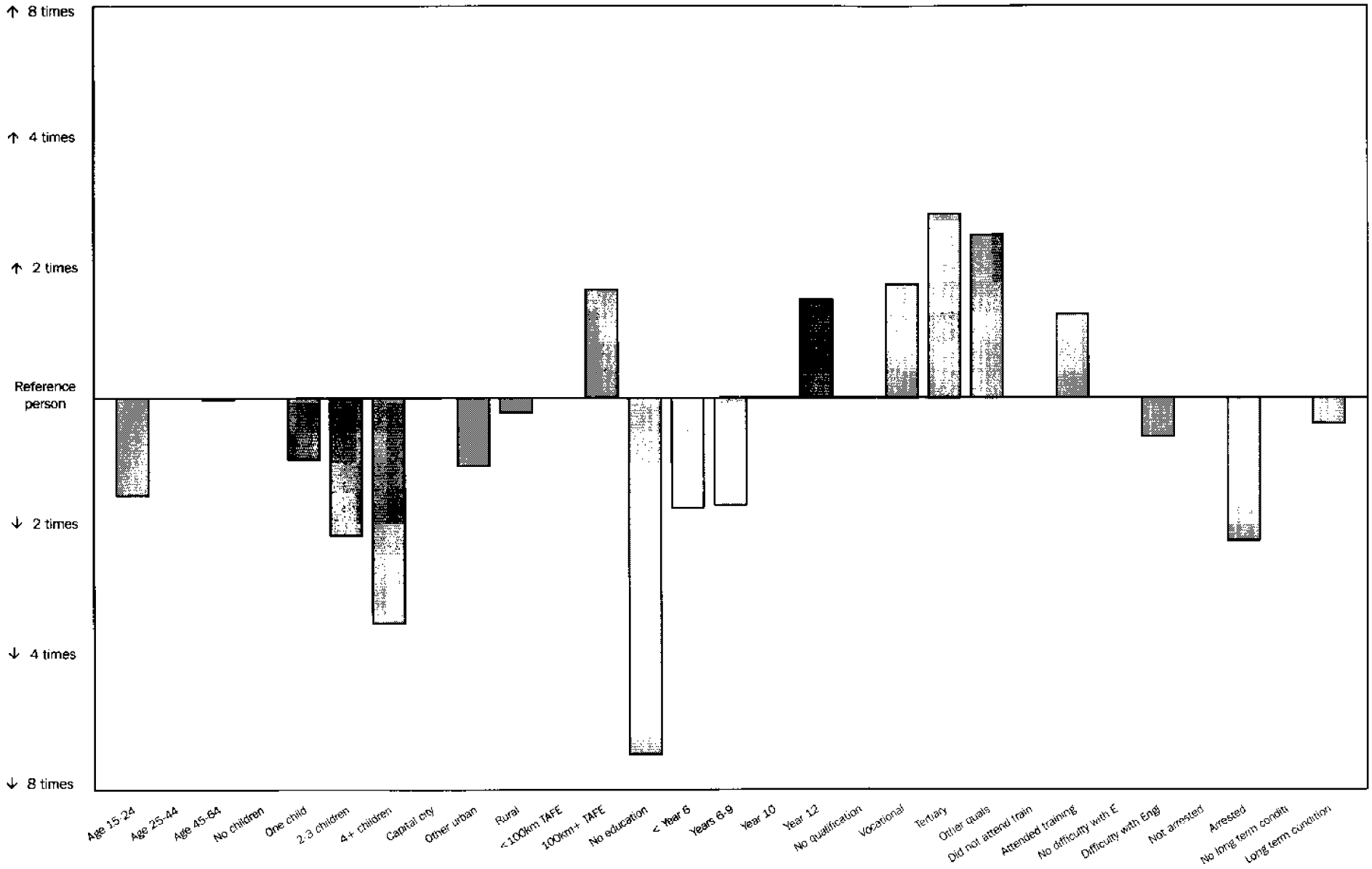
The scale of these figures is not the chance of employment as used in the other figures in this chapter. Rather than showing estimated chances of employment for an artificial reference person, figures 9.17 and 9.18 show the model parameters estimated for each predictor of employment (as given in appendix table A2.1). The length of the bars gives the parameter values, which can be added together to give the impact of a set of predictors. For example, a person in the *< Year 6* category has odds of employment half that of a person identical in other respects, but in the *Year 10* category. Factors with positive values have positive impacts on employment, and those with negative values lower the prospects of employment. The larger the absolute value (and the larger the bar in the figure), the stronger the impact. Factors which have small values, whether positive or negative, have similar effects on employment to the characteristics which have been ascribed to our reference person. These characteristics, such as being in the 25–44 year age group or living in a capital city, are shown on the figure with a value of zero.

It is possible to estimate the likelihood of having a job for people with any combination of characteristics by adding together the effects as shown in the figures. For example, for a young man of 22 years who lives in a rural area, has two children, finished Year 9, has a basic vocational qualification, has not done a training course in the last year, has difficulty with English, has been arrested in the last five years, and did not report a long-term health condition, one would add up the effects which apply to him. In some cases, such as with no reported health condition, there is nothing to add, because this is the reference category.

9.17 MALES, PREDICTORS OF EMPLOYMENT



9.18 FEMALES, PREDICTORS OF EMPLOYMENT, 1994



KEY FINDINGS

The main features of this chapter were:

- Level of education was the biggest predictor of having a job. After removing the effects of other variables, there was a clear underlying pattern of increasing employment with increasing levels of educational attainment.

- Having been arrested was a large disadvantage in terms of employment for both men and women.

- A substantial negative effect on employment of increased family size was observed for women but not for men.

- Although living in rural and remote areas, as measured by part of State and distance to TAFE, did not appear to be a disadvantage with respect to having a job, people in these areas who worked were more likely to be in CDEP scheme employment rather than in mainstream employment.

- Factors such as age and long-term health condition did not seem to affect the chances of employment to any great degree after adjusting for other factors.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

DATA SOURCES

1 This publication focuses particularly upon the demographic and social characteristics believed to influence Indigenous employment outcomes. It draws its information primarily from the first National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey (NATSIS), and also from the five-yearly Census and the Monthly Labour Force Survey (MLFS). It includes estimates of the demographic, social and economic characteristics of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations and broad time series data.

NATSIS, MLFS and the Census

2 Since the publication uses three ABS collections as sources for labour force data, some features of the collections are of interest. The first NATSIS was held between April and July 1994. The MLFS is the primary ABS source of labour force statistics for the whole population. The March 1994 MLFS included, for the first time, a question to identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents. The Census is held at five-yearly intervals, the most recent being August 1991.

Scope, sample design and sampling fraction

3 The scope of the NATSIS was all people identifying as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander who live in Australia. Non-Indigenous people who usually resided in households with Indigenous people were also included in order to give a more complete picture of the nature of households and families. The NATSIS estimates are based on information from households selected at random using a multi-stage sample design stratified by the 35 ATSIC Regions and Torres Strait Area. The survey encompassed remote, rural and urban areas and included all States and Territories and is estimated to cover 5% of Indigenous adults. For details about the NATSIS refer to *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey 1994: Detailed Findings* (4190.0).

4 The scope of the MLFS is the civilian population of Australia. The MLFS is based on a multi-stage area sample of private dwellings and a list sample of non-private dwellings. It is estimated to cover 0.7% of Indigenous adults. For details about the MLFS refer to *Labour Force Survey Sample Design* (6269.0).

5 The Census is a complete enumeration of the Australian population, it is therefore a 100% sample. However, some people are missed and some people are counted twice in a census. It is estimated that the 1991 Census missed 1.8% of persons who should have been counted (*Census 91: Data Quality Undercount* (2940.0)). For more details about the Census refer to *How Australia Takes a Census* (2903.0).

Collection methods

6 The NATSIS survey data were collected by trained Indigenous interviewers from April to July 1994. For children under 13 years of age, information was obtained from an adult responsible for the child. Persons 13–17 years were interviewed with the consent of the parent or guardian.

7 MLFS information is collected by specially trained interviewers generally during the two weeks beginning on the Monday between the 6th and 12th of each month. In remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, a shortened version of the MLFS form is used.

8 Although the Census is mainly self-enumerated, in remote areas local Indigenous people are recruited to enumerate communities by interview, using simplified census forms.

Response rate

9 The estimated response rates of the three collections was very similar, being approximately 90% for the MLFS and the NATSIS and between 85% and 95% for Indigenous people in the Census.

10 Whilst in the MLFS and NATSIS every attempt is made by interviewers to gain responses there are some respondents for whom answers are not provided. These cases of non-response are excluded from MLFS and NATSIS estimates. Usually, Census statistics do not exclude not stated responses. Labour force statistics from the Census in this publication, however, have been calculated excluding those persons who were coded as 'not stated' to labour force status.

Prisoners

11 Although a sample of prisoners was included in the NATSIS, all NATSIS estimates of labour force status characteristics exclude prisoners since prisoners were not asked questions relating to employment. Thus, the difference in population between labour force data and other data for the 15 and over population (see, for example, *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey 1994: Detailed Findings* (4190.0)) is due to the exclusion of prisoners. The MLFS includes prisoners in its estimates. In the MLFS all prisoners are classified as 'Not in the labour force'. Prisoners are treated exactly the same as other persons in the Census and can be coded to any labour force status, dependent on their answers to the questions.

Census-based estimates

12 All estimates are presented on an Estimated Resident Population (ERP) basis (see *Experimental Estimates of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Population: June 1986 to June 1991* (3230.0)). Thus population and labour force status estimates derived from census counts in this publication (see tables 1.2, 1.3, 2.1 and 2.2) have been adjusted proportionally to take account of the difference between the census count and the ERP. The ERP is produced by adjusting census counts for underenumeration and non-response. This process is outlined in detail in *Experimental Estimates of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Population: June 1986 to June 1991* (3230.0). Table E1.1 shows the difference between census count and ERP for 1986 and 1991 and the adjustment factor applied to census-derived labour force status counts.

E1.1 CENSUS COUNT AND ESTIMATED RESIDENT POPULATION, POPULATION AGED 15 YEARS AND OVER, 1986 AND 1991

	Census count	*ERP*	*Adjustment factor*
	'000	'000	
1986 Census			
Males	66.4	75.0	1.13
Females	70.7	75.0	1.06
1991 Census			
Males	77.3	85.9	1.11
Females	82.4	86.6	1.05

Source: 1991 Census Aboriginal Community Profile (2722.0), *Census 86: Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People* (2503.0), *Experimental Estimates of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Population: June 1986 to June 1991* (3230.0).

INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

13 Two types of error are possible in an estimate based on a sample survey: sampling error and non-sampling error. Both the NATSIS and the MLFS are subject to both types of error. The Census however has no sampling error, since it is a complete enumeration exercise.

Sampling error

14 Sampling error is a measure of the variability that occurs by chance because a sample, rather than the entire population, is surveyed. This means that estimates produced from a sample survey may differ from the figures that would have been produced if all persons or dwellings had been included in the survey. Since the NATSIS and MLFS estimates in this publication are based on information obtained from occupants from a sample of dwellings they are subject to sampling variability.

15 One measure of the likely difference is given by the standard error, which indicates the extent to which an estimate might have varied by chance because only a sample of dwellings was included. There are about two chances in three that the sample estimate will differ by less than one standard error from the figure that would have been obtained if all the dwellings had been included, and about 19 chances in 20 that the difference will be less than two standard errors.

E1.2 STANDARD ERRORS FOR NATSIS, 1994

Size of estimate	*Standard error*
50	37
100	55
200	79
300	97
500	125
700	147
1 000	173
1 500	207
2 000	234
2 500	256
3 000	276
4 000	310
5 000	338
7 000	384
10 000	436
15 000	502
20 000	553
30 000	628
50 000	732
70 000	804
100 000	884
150 000	979

Source: National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey 1994: Detailed Findings (4190.0).

Caution

16 Some estimates in this publication are prefaced by one or two asterisks. A single asterisk (*) indicates that the estimate is subject to a standard error of between 25% and 50%; two asterisks (**) indicates that the standard error of the estimate is greater than 50%. Estimates marked with asterisks should

be interpreted with caution because of the uncertainty about their values. For further information on standard errors refer to *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey 1994: Detailed Findings* (4190.0).

Rounding

17 In addition, estimates in this publication have been rounded. Therefore, in some instances, components do not add to the published total. This is statistically insignificant.

Non-sampling error

18 Inaccuracies may also arise from errors in responses. Inaccuracies of this kind are referred to as non-sampling errors, and may occur in any enumeration whether it be a full count or a sample. The following factors should be considered when interpreting these estimates:

- Information recorded is essentially *as reported* by respondents. Thus information may differ from that available from other sources. Questions relating to health in the NATSIS are a particular example of this. Self-reported information on medical conditions was not medically verified, and was not necessarily based on diagnoses by medical practitioners or medical records kept by respondents. Some people may be unaware of minor or major conditions, or may have conditions that have not been diagnosed. It is also probable that in some instances conditions which respondents were unwilling to talk about at an interview were not reported.

- Many types of attitudinal information collected from respondents may reflect momentary or short-term views due to some recent event. Responses to these types of questions may also be affected by imperfect recall or different understandings of some of the questions asked in parts of the survey. Incomplete responses may lead to inaccuracies within the data. Often people's desire to conform or provide responses they feel are expected leads to inaccuracies.

- Lack of uniformity in interviewing ability and experience is also a potential source of error together with impressions made upon respondents by the interviewers' personal characteristics such as age, sex and appearance.

COMPARABILITY OF LABOUR FORCE CHARACTERISTICS

19 Due to differences between Census, NATSIS and MLFS methodologies it is not possible to compare figures relating to some labour force characteristics without some qualification. For detailed discussion of the comparability of the three collections see *Labour Force Characteristics of Indigenous Australians: Statistics, Methodology and Comparisons* (6287.0).

Employment

20 The employment/population ratio is comparable between the three collections as the definition of employment used in all three is based on International Labour Organization concepts (Hussmanns et al. 1990) and the questions asked to determine whether employed were very similar. There are however some differences. First, the NATSIS questionnaire was structured so that respondents were asked to give a yes/no answer to the question which determines whether employed or not — 'Did you have a job last week?'. If the response is 'no', there are no follow up questions as there are in the MLFS, for instance, to determine whether the respondent was away from his/her usual employment 'because of holidays, sickness or any other reason'. The MLFS question to determine whether employed is more specific than the NATSIS question and asks if the respondent did 'any work at all in a job, business or farm or any work without pay in a family business'. The census form, which is self-enumerated, has five options for the question to establish whether the respondent, in the reference week, had 'a full-time or part-time job of any kind'. These options cover work for

payment or profit; unpaid work in a family business; and absence from work due to sick leave, strike or temporarily stood down.

Unemployment

21 Comparing unemployment rates between the NATSIS, the MLFS and Census is more difficult as there are major differences in the methods used to classify and distinguish between 'unemployed' and 'not in the labour force'. The NATSIS included the question 'Are you registered with the CES?' and if a respondent answers 'yes' he/she is classified as 'unemployed'. The MLFS and Census do not ask a specific question on CES registration. The MLFS allows the respondent to decide if they consider that registering with the CES is an active step to find work or not. The respondent is not prompted that CES registration is an active step. The census form, which is self-administered, does specify that CES registration is an active step.

22 Another difference is that the MLFS classifies a person as unemployed if he/she has been actively seeking work yet is unavailable to start work given the following reasons for unavailability:

- temporary illness of less than 4 weeks; or
- starting work within 4 weeks.

23 The NATSIS does not determine the reason for unavailability to start work and classifies all those not available to start work as *not in the labour force*. The available to work requirement is not asked in the Census or for Indigenous MLFS respondents in remote areas who are interviewed using a shortened form.

Status in employment

24 The NATSIS asked 'Do you work for someone else or yourself?'. The ABS standard classification for status in employment has two broad categories: 'self-employed', encompassing employers, own account workers and contributing family workers; and 'employee'. All these categories are collected in the MLFS and Census. In the NATSIS, it is assumed that all persons who work for someone else are employees and those who work for themselves are self-employed.

Marginally attached

25 The group of persons who are not in the labour force can be further classified as 'marginally attached' and 'not marginally attached' to the labour force. The marginally attached are defined as those persons who are actively looking for work but are not available to start work in the previous week to the survey, or those who want to work and are not actively looking but were available to start within four weeks. This latter group includes discouraged jobseekers.

26 The NATSIS asked questions about whether those who wanted to work were actively looking or not. For those who were actively looking, a further question was asked as to their availability in the week prior to the survey. Thus data about this component of the marginally attached is available from the NATSIS. However there is a lack of data in the NATSIS on whether those who want to work, but are not actively seeking employment, are available to start work within four weeks. This prevents the identification of this group of the marginally attached to the labour force and, in particular, those who may be discouraged jobseekers. Persons who indicated that they did not want to work are categorised as 'not marginally attached'.

Full-time/Part-time employment

27 Full-time employment is defined as work for 35 hours or more each week, part-time employment is work for less than 35 hours. In the NATSIS, respondents were asked how many hours they *usually* worked in all jobs. The Census asked how many hours the individual worked in the main job

only in the *reference week*. The MLFS asked for both the number of hours actually worked in the reference week and the number of hours usually worked. If hours usually worked were 35 or more in the MLFS, a respondent was classified as full-time, regardless of the actual number of hours worked in the reference week. If a person usually worked part time but in the reference week worked more than 35 hours he/she was also included as a full-time worker in the MLFS.

Not fully employed

28 The not fully employed encompasses two groups — part-time workers who indicate that they would prefer to work more hours; and full-time workers who worked less than 35 hours in the reference week for economic reasons (stood down, short-time, insufficient work). Although the NATSIS did not ask how many hours a respondent actually worked, usual hours worked is a reasonable proxy. Thus one subgroup of the not fully employed (i.e. persons employed part-time who would like to work more hours) is identifiable in the NATSIS. Whilst the Census asked for actual hours worked, it did not ask for information on whether part-time workers wanted to work more hours.

SYMBOLS AND OTHER USAGES

n.a.	not available
*	standard error between 25% and 50% of estimate
**	standard error greater than 50% of estimate

APPENDIX 1 THE AUSTRALIAN LABOUR FORCE FRAMEWORK AND THE NATSIS

For a number of years the ABS has used a particular model (the Australian Labour Force Framework), for structuring detailed information about the labour force status of Australian adults arising from the Monthly Labour Force Survey (MLFS) (see, for example, *Measuring Employment and Unemployment* (6279.0) and figures A1.1 and A1.2). Using this framework, users may wish to make comparisons between the labour force status statistics for the Indigenous population from the NATSIS and total Australian statistics from the MLFS. Due to slight differences in methodology and procedures between the NATSIS and MLFS this is not possible for all parts of the framework.

Figures A1.1 and A1.2 display for each category in the framework:

- NATSIS data for Indigenous people using NATSIS definitions of labour force categories (first figure);
- NATSIS data for Indigenous people using MLFS definitions of labour force categories (second figure). These two figures illustrate the numeric differences between NATSIS and MLFS definitions; and
- MLFS data for all Australians from the September 1994 MLFS (third figure).

Where figures A1.1 and A1.2 indicate that NATSIS data is not available, no suitable questions were asked as a consequence of restrictions placed on the overall size of the NATSIS questionnaire.

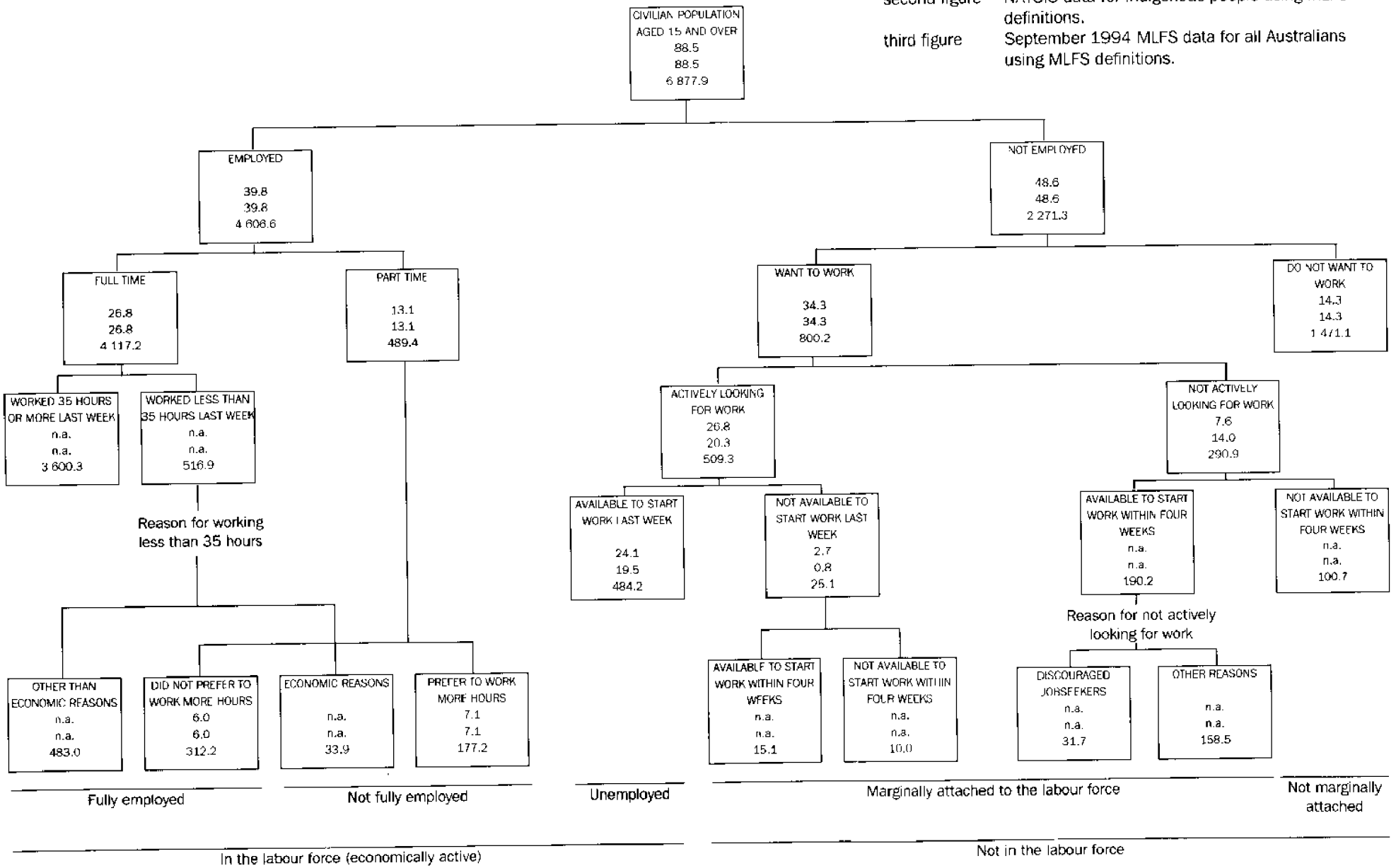
Similar but not identical questions were asked in the NATSIS and MLFS to establish full or part-time employment. In the case of the MLFS, full-time work refers to either having worked 35 hours or more *last week* or *usually*, whereas in the NATSIS full-time work was defined on the basis of responses to a single question about hours *usually* worked. Thus in the MLFS, a person is classified as a full-time worker if either he/she usually worked 35 hours or more, or usually worked part-time but worked 35 hours or more *last week*.

NATSIS AND MLFS DIFFERENCE

In the NATSIS and the MLFS, respondents were asked if they had been looking for work at any time during the 4 weeks prior to interview. Under MLFS definitions, being registered with the CES would usually constitute a job seeking activity. Whilst developing the NATSIS it was strongly suspected, and borne out in testing, that some respondents answered 'no' to looking for work even though they were registered with CES — they did not interpret this as looking for work. This led to a change in the way these people are classified at the next level of the framework classification, i.e. the 'want to work/do not want to work' level. The change in classification at this level has carry through effects right through all remaining levels. Ultimately, the different classifications resulted in some people being classified as unemployed in the NATSIS who would be classed as not in the labour force by the MLFS. Detailed analysis allows the number of such people to be estimated and these are indicated as the black numbers in some cells of the framework. Overall, about 20% of all the people NATSIS classed as unemployed would be reclassified if strict MLFS questioning applied. The data suggest that approximately 75% of these reclassified NATSIS unemployed could be classed as discouraged jobseekers by MLFS definitions. See *Labour Force Characteristics of Indigenous Australians*, (6287.0) for detailed explanation of this issue.

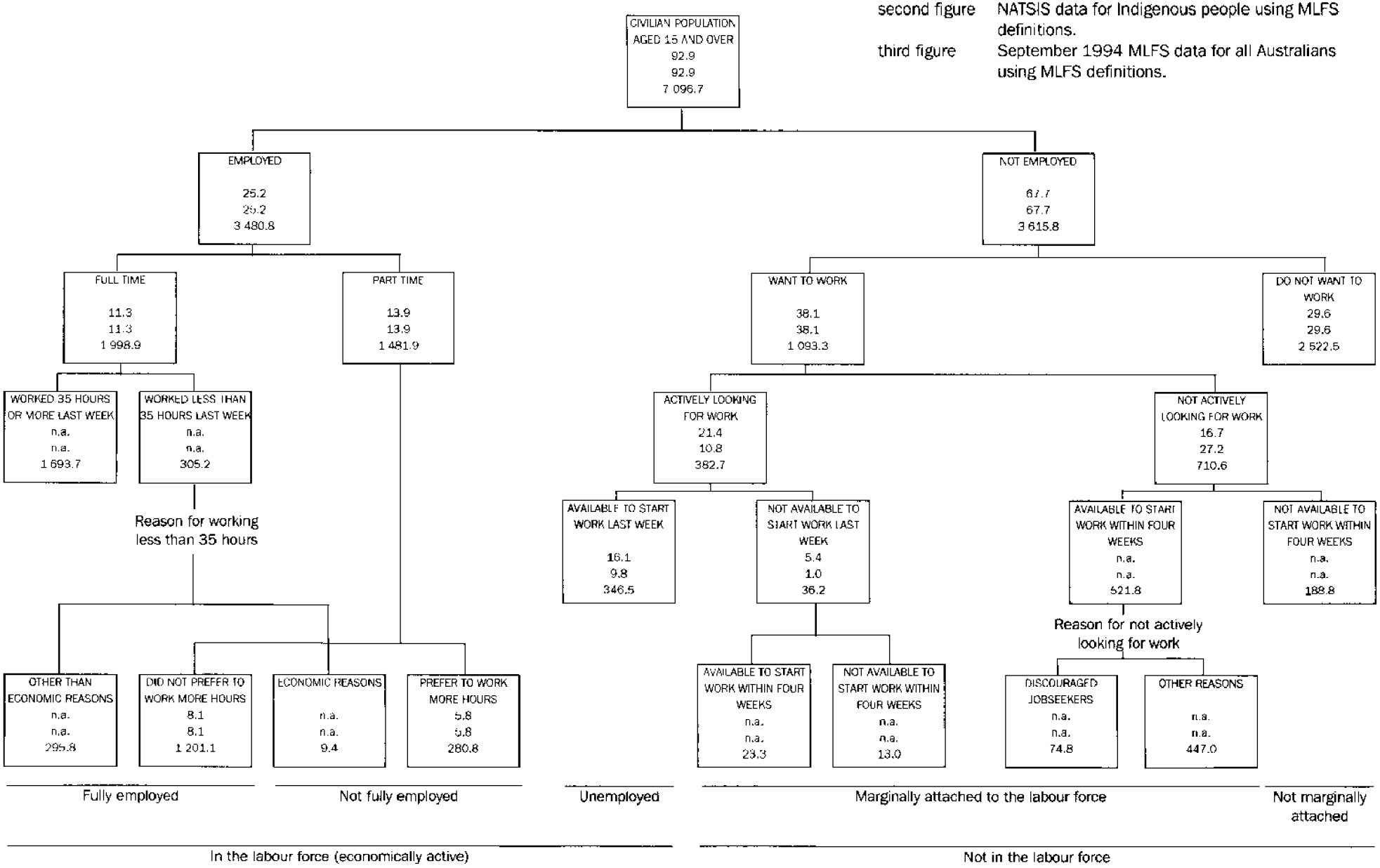
A1.1 AUSTRALIAN LABOUR FORCE FRAMEWORK, MALES AGED 15–98, 1994 ('000)

first figure — NATSIS data for Indigenous people using NATSIS definitions.
second figure — NATSIS data for Indigenous people using MLFS definitions.
third figure — September 1994 MLFS data for all Australians using MLFS definitions.



A1.2 AUSTRALIAN LABOUR FORCE FRAMEWORK, FEMALES AGED 15–98, 1994 ('000)

first figure — NATSIS data for Indigenous people using NATSIS definitions.
second figure — NATSIS data for Indigenous people using MLFS definitions.
third figure — September 1994 MLFS data for all Australians using MLFS definitions.



APPENDIX 2

LOGISTIC REGRESSION ANALYSIS OF INDIGENOUS EMPLOYMENT

In the regression analysis reported in Chapter 9, the outcome of interest was employment, which was taken to include both CDEP scheme and non-CDEP scheme employment. People with jobs were compared to those without jobs, the latter including both unemployed people and those not in the labour force. Because the predictors of CDEP scheme and non-CDEP scheme employment may differ, an additional analysis was performed in which people who were employed in CDEP scheme jobs were excluded from consideration. In this case the comparison was between people working in non-CDEP scheme jobs versus people unemployed or not in the labour force.

'Having a job' is a binary or dichotomous outcome; that is, it can take only one of two values (does have a job or does not have a job). The ordinary linear regression model is not appropriate in this case because the outcome of interest is not continuous. Logistic regression was used in the analysis because it allows for the modelling of binary outcomes, is relatively straightforward, and is commonly used in some fields.

THE STATISTICAL MODEL

Logistic regression can best be explained in the binomial case where the dependent variable (i.e. the outcome of interest) has two possible values, for example, employed and not employed. Such a dependent variable is limited in its range in that the proportion in each of the two categories must be somewhere between 0% and 100%. This can create difficulties in modelling, so a logit transformation is used to ensure that the predicted probabilities derived from the regression model lie between zero and one.

With the exception of an intercept term, the basic formulation of the logistic regression model is:

$$\text{Logit } P_i = \log\left(\frac{P_i}{(1-P_i)}\right) = bX_i + e_i$$

where P_i is the probability of the outcome occurring (e.g. having a job), b is a coefficient vector, X_i is the variable vector and e_i is the error term (see Hosmer and Lemeshow (1989) and Agresti (1990) for fuller discussions of logistic regression). Logit P_i, which is also known as the log odds ratio, is the dependent variable in the logistic regression. The logistic regression models reported here were estimated using maximum likelihood estimation techniques in the SAS software package.

The coefficients from the logistic regression can be converted into estimated probability values using the formula:

$$P_i = \frac{e^{\text{logit } P_i}}{\left(1+e^{\text{logit } P_i}\right)}$$

ESTIMATING THE OVERALL DETERMINANTS OF EMPLOYMENT

The results of the first logistic regression model, which focuses on employment irrespective of whether the person was employed in the CDEP scheme, are presented in table A2.1. These data form the basis of the figures and discussion in Chapter 9.

A negative sign for an estimate means that the probability of employment is reduced as a consequence of association with that factor. A positive sign means that the factor of interest is associated with greater likelihood of employment. The signs of the coefficients in table A2.1, are largely

consistent with the effect predicted for the variable by economic theory. For instance, the coefficients for education and training are positive and this suggests they increase the probability of being in employment.

The relationship of having children with having a job differed for men and women. While men were more likely to have a job if they had one to three children compared to having no children, women's chances of having a job decreased steadily with increasing numbers of children.

The experience of arrest in the previous five years also had a marked effect on the probability of being in employment. Being arrested appeared to reduce the probability of being in employment by about one-half for both males and females.

The geographic variables in table A2.1 are especially worth examining. While other urban areas conform with the expectation that local labour markets are less developed outside capital cities, the coefficients for distance to the nearest TAFE (as an indicator of remote rural areas) illustrate an association peculiar to the Indigenous labour market. The likelihood of employment in a rural area appeared to be similar to that in capital cities. As alluded to in Chapter 9, the most likely explanation for this lies in the geographic distribution of CDEP scheme jobs. That is, although people from rural areas appeared to be as likely to have a job as people in capital cities, the jobs in rural areas were much more likely to be CDEP scheme jobs than non-CDEP scheme jobs.

Because the CDEP scheme may also influence the relationship of factors other than geography to employment, a second analysis was performed in which employment was limited to non-CDEP scheme jobs. People who reported that they had CDEP scheme jobs were completely excluded from the analysis. The results are presented in table A2.2.

Once CDEP scheme jobs have been excluded from consideration, the expected disadvantage in relative terms of people in rural areas with respect to employment becomes more apparent. In addition, the likelihood of having a job for a person with no formal education or who has been arrested in the last five years was even lower than in the previous model. The relationship of other factors with employment was similar in the two models.

Because the CDEP scheme is not available in all communities, the model in which people with CDEP scheme jobs are excluded is not entirely satisfactory, although it does provide a good approximation of a market without the CDEP scheme. In communities where the CDEP scheme is available, a large proportion of adults might be working in CDEP scheme jobs. In other communities which do not participate in the CDEP scheme, no one in the community could have a CDEP scheme job. Thus the exclusion of respondents with CDEP scheme jobs may be related to other factors which predict employment such as government policy.

Another option which was considered was to include people with CDEP scheme jobs in a single group of people with the unemployed and not in the labour force, rather than excluding them from consideration. That is, people with *mainstream* jobs would be compared to all those without such jobs. Partly because such a comparison is essentially a dismissal of CDEP scheme jobs as being something other than *real* jobs, we have chosen not to present such a model here. Such a comparison is also conceptually flawed because it is based on the assumption that *all* people currently holding a CDEP scheme job would revert to unemployed or not in the labour force if CDEP scheme jobs were unavailable. Other models have been investigated,

such as comparing factors which influence the proportion of CDEP scheme and non-CDEP scheme jobs among those who are employed. Despite their differences, all of the models tell essentially the same story, which has been presented in Chapter 9. The models provide results which yield a consistent interpretation of the relative magnitude and direction of effect for each variable of interest on the employment status of Indigenous people.

A2.1 BINOMIAL LOGISTIC REGRESSION OF EMPLOYMENT/NON-EMPLOYMENT, INDIGENOUS MALES AND FEMALES AGED 15–64 YEARS

	Males (N = 3493)			*Females (N = 4173)*		
Variables	*Estimate*	*Standard error*	*Odds ratio*	*Estimate*	*Standard error*	*Odds ratio*
Intercept	0.452	0.111		–0.106	0.112	
Age 15–24 years	–0.358	0.087	0.70	–0.518	0.091	0.59
Age 25–44 years	REFERENCE CATEGORY			REFERENCE CATEGORY		
Age 45–64 years	–0.178	0.112	0.84	–0.010	0.114	1.00
No children	REFERENCE CATEGORY			REFERENCE CATEGORY		
One child	0.231	0.101	1.26	–0.327	0.097	0.72
Two or three children	0.151	0.093	1.16	–0.732	0.095	0.48
Four or more children	–0.274	0.135	0.76	–1.200	0.159	0.30
Capital city	REFERENCE CATEGORY			REFERENCE CATEGORY		
Other urban area	–0.287	0.092	0.75	–0.363	0.090	0.70
Rural area (<1000 people)	0.091	0.110	1.10	–0.079	0.110	0.92
<100 kms from nearest TAFE	REFERENCE CATEGORY			REFERENCE CATEGORY		
100+ kms from nearest TAFE	0.596	0.101	1.82	0.578	0.102	1.78
No education	–1.667	0.240	0.19	–1.892	0.281	0.15
Below Year 6	–0.695	0.186	0.49	–0.588	0.204	0.56
Years 6–9	–0.344	0.083	0.71	–0.571	0.088	0.57
Year 10	REFERENCE CATEGORY			REFERENCE CATEGORY		
Year 12	0.256	0.143	1.29	0.522	0.119	1.69
No qualification	REFERENCE CATEGORY			REFERENCE CATEGORY		
Basic or skilled vocational	0.887	0.123	2.43	0.605	0.134	1.83
Diploma, degree or postgraduate	0.853	0.255	2.35	0.980	0.161	2.66
Any other qualification	0.600	0.163	1.82	0.869	0.164	2.39
Did not undertake a training course in past 12 months	REFERENCE CATEGORY			REFERENCE CATEGORY		
Undertook a training course in past 12 months	0.422	0.110	1.53	0.446	0.111	1.56
Does not have difficulty communicating in English	REFERENCE CATEGORY			REFERENCE CATEGORY		
Has difficulty communicating in English	–0.135	0.114	0.87	–0.208	0.121	0.81
Not arrested in previous five years	REFERENCE CATEGORY			REFERENCE CATEGORY		
Arrested in previous five years	–0.817	0.079	0.44	–0.760	0.136	0.47
Did not report a long-term health condition	REFERENCE CATEGORY			REFERENCE CATEGORY		
Reported a long-term health condition	–0.300	0.079	0.74	–0.135	0.077	0.87

A2.2 LOGISTIC REGRESSION ANALYSIS OF NON-CDEP EMPLOYMENT VERSUS NO EMPLOYMENT, INDIGENOUS MALES AND FEMALE AGED 15 TO 64 YEARS WHO ARE NOT IN CDEP SCHEME EMPLOYMENT

	Males (N = 2804)			*Females (N = 3790)*		
Variables	*Estimate*	*Standard error*	*Odds ratio*	*Estimate*	*Standard error*	*Odds ratio*
Intercept	0.439	0.125		0.088	0.123	
Age 15–24 years	–0.554	0.104	0.58	–0.771	0.107	0.46
Age 25–44 years	REFERENCE CATEGORY			REFERENCE CATEGORY		
Age 45–64 years	–0.116	0.127	0.89	–0.011	0.128	0.99
No children	REFERENCE CATEGORY			REFERENCE CATEGORY		
One child	0.243	0.119	1.28	–0.389	0.110	0.68
Two or three children	0.196	0.107	1.22	–0.831	0.108	0.44
Four or more children	–0.401	0.164	0.67	–1.513	0.201	0.21
Capital city	REFERENCE CATEGORY			REFERENCE CATEGORY		
Other urban area	–0.397	0.102	0.67	–0.510	0.966	0.60
Rural area (<1000 people)	–0.414	0.126	0.66	–0.582	0.126	0.56
<100 kms from the nearest TAFE	REFERENCE CATEGORY			REFERENCE CATEGORY		
100+ kms from the nearest TAFE	0.025	0.126	1.03	0.224	0.125	1.25
No education	–2.029	0.368	0.13	–2.094	0.402	0.12
Below Year 6	–0.671	0.216	0.51	–0.649	0.230	0.52
Years 6–9	–0.362	0.097	0.70	–0.757	0.102	0.47
Year 10	REFERENCE CATEGORY			REFERENCE CATEGORY		
Year 12	0.435	0.158	1.55	0.601	0.130	1.82
No qualification	REFERENCE CATEGORY			REFERENCE CATEGORY		
Basic or skilled vocational	1.083	0.133	2.96	0.767	0.141	2.15
Diploma, degree or postgraduate	0.884	0.273	2.42	1.032	0.170	2.81
Any other qualification	0.707	0.179	2.03	0.932	0.177	2.54
Did not undertake a training course in past 12 months	REFERENCE CATEGORY			REFERENCE CATEGORY		
Undertook a training course in past 12 months	0.531	0.122	1.70	0.532	0.118	1.70
Does not have difficulty communicating in English	REFERENCE CATEGORY			REFERENCE CATEGORY		
Has difficulty communicating in English	–0.273	0.143	0.76	–0.472	0.155	0.62
Not arrested in previous five years	REFERENCE CATEGORY			REFERENCE CATEGORY		
Arrested in previous five years	–1.089	0.097	0.34	–1.112	0.170	0.33
Did not report a long-term health condition	REFERENCE CATEGORY			REFERENCE CATEGORY		
Reported a long-term health condition	–0.239	0.092	0.79	–0.130	0.868	0.88

APPENDIX 3 LABOUR FORCE INDICATORS FOR ATSIC REGIONS AND THE TORRES STRAIT AREA

LABOUR FORCE INDICATORS

ATSIC region	Participation rate	CDEP[1]	Long-term unemployment[2]	Employment/ population ratio	Local govt. & community sector[3]	Other private sector[3]	Hunting, fishing & gathering[4]
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Queanbeyan	70.8	**0.0	19.1	40.6	*5.9	47.1	9.0
Bourke	58.3	55.1	10.3	33.8	48.4	15.9	3.8
Coffs Harbour	59.2	9.0	16.8	28.9	15.6	53.3	8.6
Sydney	64.4	*6.2	10.8	43.5	*8.4	60.0	4.7
Tamworth	55.4	*12.3	20.0	25.7	20.3	52.3	0.5
Wagga Wagga	56.4	20.9	17.4	25.1	27.3	41.8	2.2
Wangaratta	60.9	*9.2	7.3	39.2	18.3	56.3	2.3
Ballarat	68.4	*8.6	10.5	41.8	29.2	54.1	10.8
Brisbane	60.2	**0.0	8.7	40.8	**1.2	77.1	0.6
Cairns	57.1	35.9	7.6	38.1	56.5	28.4	16.0
Mount Isa	59.7	39.2	8.7	35.1	70.9	*9.5	4.8
Cooktown	66.6	90.6	0.2	62.7	92.8	4.0	50.1
Rockhampton	63.5	*12.5	6.7	39.5	20.7	63.8	5.1
Roma	57.9	**9.6	10.9	23.1	*17.6	50.9	0.8
Townsville	55.4	29.7	7.5	39.2	40.9	27.0	6.0
Torres Strait Area	55.8	42.6	11.3	35.8	58.6	15.6	24.3
Adelaide	53.0	*12.3	14.2	29.5	34.8	33.4	1.7
Ceduna	70.1	52.9	10.1	47.5	55.4	*10.6	14.8
Port Augusta	59.3	29.7	17.3	29.9	43.4	21.8	11.1
Perth	59.9	**0.0	21.6	29.1	*11.2	27.2	0.6
Broome	63.2	55.5	7.3	44.1	25.8	26.2	35.5
Kununurra	76.5	87.3	2.3	70.2	67.1	5.7	0.0
Warburton	49.7	65.9	2.0	34.7	57.6	28.5	19.4
Narrogin	45.6	*16.3	11.3	25.9	37.6	47.9	2.9
South Hedland	59.1	*0.9	5.6	38.9	18.4	56.9	1.7
Derby	57.4	76.0	4.6	48.9	55.7	*5.7	5.4
Kalgoorlie	53.7	6.0	19.2	18.6	*26.4	38.5	1.0
Geraldton	57.4	13.1	10.6	29.9	21.6	38.7	0.3
Hobart	62.6	**0.5	8.2	44.8	6.0	75.6	6.9
Alice Springs	55.6	34.4	3.5	44.8	60.3	13.6	13.2
Jabiru	57.8	41.6	19.8	26.7	60.9	19.9	39.1
Katherine	42.6	40.1	10.2	25.7	52.7	16.1	15.8
Aputula	30.5	55.7	4.0	25.0	60.3	18.1	33.8
Nhulunbuy	58.7	49.9	9.9	42.9	51.6	16.3	63.5
Tennant Creek	59.4	65.4	7.4	37.4	73.7	*3.4	2.4
Darwin	52.5	*5.0	5.3	28.8	*7.8	47.8	12.5

[1] CDEP scheme participants as a percentage of the employed.
[2] Long-term unemployed as a percentage of all persons aged 15 years or more.
[3] Sector as a percentage of the employed.
[4] Hunting, fishing and gathering as a percentage of all persons aged 15 years or more.

GLOSSARY

Aboriginal — A person who identifies themselves to be of Aboriginal origin. In ABS collections this is ascertained by asking the question 'Are you of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin?'. In the NATSIS, persons aged 13 years and over were asked directly, whereas persons aged 12 years and under were identified by a responsible adult in the household, usually a parent.

Actively looking for work — Includes writing, telephoning or applying in person to an employer for work; answering a newspaper advertisement for a job; checking factory or Commonwealth Employment Service noticeboards; being registered with the Commonwealth Employment Service; checking or registering with any other employment agency; advertising or tendering for work; and contacting friends or relatives.

Adult — Person aged 15 years or more.

Arrested — Where a person has been arrested and taken into custody/remand by the police.

ATSIC Regions and Torres Strait area — Refers to 36 defined geographic areas, each represented by an ATSIC Regional Council or the Torres Strait Regional Authority.

Capital city — Includes all State and Territory capital city Statistical Divisions.

Civilian population — Population aged 15 years and over.

Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP scheme) — The Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP scheme), operate through grants from ATSIC to Indigenous community organisations to enable individuals to undertake community managed activities in return for wages.

Educational qualification — An award for successful completion of a course of post-school study at a recognised institution, such as TAFE or university, e.g., trade certificate, diploma, degree.

Employed persons — Persons aged 15 years and over who in the week prior to the interview worked for pay, profit, commission or payment in kind in a job or business, or on a farm (comprising employees, employers, own account workers and contributing family workers).

Employee — Wage or salary earner.

Employment/population ratio — The employment/population ratio for any group is the number of employed persons expressed as a percentage of the civilian population aged 15 and over in the same group.

Full-time employment — Employed persons who worked 35 hours or more a week.

Indigenous — Persons who identify as either Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

Labour force — Persons aged 15 years and over who were either employed or unemployed.

Labour force status — A classification of persons 15 years and over into employed, unemployed or not in the labour force.

Level of qualification The recognition by an accredited authority of the knowledge and practical ability a person possesses following the completion of an educational qualification. Covers seven levels:

- higher degree;
- postgraduate diploma;
- bachelor degree;
- undergraduate diploma;
- associate diploma;
- skilled vocational qualification; and
- basic vocational qualification.

In this publication higher degree, postgraduate diploma, bachelor degree, undergraduate diploma, and associate diploma have been combined as 'tertiary'. Skilled and basic vocational have been combined as 'vocational'.

Long-term condition Where a person had one of the following conditions which had lasted for six months or more: asthma, diabetes, heart problems, chest problems, skin problems, high blood pressure, ear or hearing problems, eye or sight problems not correctable by glasses, and/or kidney problems.

Long-term unemployment Persons unemployed for a period of 52 weeks or more.

Marginal attachment Persons marginally attached to the labour force are those who are not actively seeking work, yet want to work and are available to start work.

MLFS Monthly Labour Force Survey.

NATSIS National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey.

Not in labour force Persons aged 15 years and over who were not employed or unemployed as defined.

Not fully employed Encompasses part-time workers who indicated that they would prefer to work more hours; and full-time workers who worked less than 35 hours in the reference week for economic reasons.

Older people Persons aged 45–64 years.

Other urban Includes all centres with a total population of 1,000 or over, excluding capital cities.

Part of State A geographical split of Australia into capital cities, other urban and rural areas.

Participation rate For any group, the labour force expressed as a percentage of the civilian population aged 15 and over in the same group. Prisoners are excluded from this calculation.

Part-time employment Employed persons who worked less than 35 hours a week.

Prime working age Persons aged 25–44 years.

Private sector Non-government organisations. The private sector has been split into 'Community organisations' and 'Other private'. Community organisations are those private organisations that have been declared to be eligible for ATSIC funding.

Public sector Includes all government authorities, departments, agencies and authorities created by the Commonwealth or State/Territory Parliaments. Commonwealth includes organisations such as the Northern or Central Land Councils which were created by Commonwealth legislation. State/Territory includes organisations such as the New South Wales Land Council which was created by State legislation.

Qualification See educational qualification.

Rural Includes rural areas and towns with a total population of less than 1,000 people. Most remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities are included in this category.

Self-employed This category includes employers, own account workers and contributing family workers.

Status in employment ABS usually classifies employed persons by whether they are employers, own account workers, employees, or contributing family workers. NATSIS uses two categories only 'self-employed' and 'employee'.

Tertiary Includes postgraduate degree or diploma, bachelor degree, undergraduate diploma.

Torres Strait Islander A person who identifies themselves to be of Torres Strait Islander origin. In ABS collections this is ascertained by asking the question 'Are you of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin?'. In the NATSIS, persons aged 13 years and over were asked directly, whereas persons aged 12 years and under were identified by a responsible adult in the household, usually a parent.

Training course Includes courses which are planned to develop skills or assist in learning about a subject. Excludes courses leading to an educational qualification and on-the-job training.

Unemployed persons Persons aged 15 years and over who were not employed during the week prior to interview, and who had actively looked for work at any time during the last four weeks prior to interview, and who were available to start work in the last week.

Unemployment rate For any group, the number or unemployed persons expressed as percentage of the labour force (unemployed plus employed) in the same group.

Vocational Includes any skilled or basic vocational qualification, e.g. apprenticeships.

Voluntary work Includes any unpaid community work such as caring for sick or aged people, working for community or sporting organisations, working at a school or with youth groups, working on committees and hunting, fishing or gathering bush food.

Year 10 certificate Completion of a Year 10 certificate, Aboriginal Access Course or equivalent.

Year 12 certificate Completion of a Year 12 certificate, General Certificate of Education or equivalent.

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